

**LOUISIANA FORESTRY COMMISSION
BATON ROUGE, LA
SEPTEMBER 10, 2018
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER

The Louisiana Forestry Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Scott Poole at 1:39 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Epney Brasher

Members Present:

Chairman Scott Poole, Gradon Clemons, Wayne Hagan, Michael Hudson, Bill Jenkins and Dr. Allen Rutherford

LDAF Staff Present: Wade Dubea, Epney Brasher, Emily Andrews, David Campbell, Brent Cutrer, Dena Ginn, Patricia Dayberry, Damian Johnson, Don Smith, and Roy St. Pierre

Guests Present: George Tiley and Buck Vandersteen

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Scott Poole announced that public comments will be dispensed at the end of the meeting, prior to adjournment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Dr. Allen Rutherford made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on June 12, 2018; Gradon Clemons seconded the motion. All were in favor.

BUDGET

Epney Brasher reported that the Office of Forestry got a significant budget cut for this fiscal year. There were five funded positions taken along with the budget funding for those positions and the usual \$250,000 from the State Fire Marshal's office was not received this year. A total of about \$600,000 was cut from the budget this fiscal year. An agreement was made to hold off on paying the rent for our facilities to the Department until the end of the fiscal year to see where we stand at that time. Maybe we can make up the difference at that point in time. Hopefully, that will allow us to fill some of those positions that we were not able to fill earlier. Management and Finance does not anticipate a mid-year cut, so that would be good. As far as major purchases, it will be the same as last year. We will paint some planes and install the air conditioners in some of the planes. We had talked about replacing some of the trucks, but decided to put off that discussion until next year.

Wade went over that at the last meeting; it was discussed that any budget cuts would come out of the supply budget, but we were not allowed to do that. It had to come out of the five positions and from the money that we received from the Fire Marshal's office because the appropriations were not available to them. The money from the Fire Marshal's office was a portion of the homeowner's insurance money that is paid each year. The money was cut because it was reallocated somewhere else. Discussion followed on possible alternative sources for "donations" of equipment or possible funding for the Forestry Office and how the Office of Forestry is going to proceed with the current budget cuts. The positions that we lost will currently not hurt our current firefighting crews. Wade has made recommendations for replacing planes, dozers, and transports to be done a few at a time instead of all for each category at once, getting a systematically replacement system in place.

DIVISION REPORTS

Program Directors are present if you have any questions. Scott Poole inquired about the chip hauling theft. Roy explained an investigation into chip hauling in Natchitoches; a contracted hauler was picking up chips and

turning them in under another contract, which happened over a period of time. We also had a timber theft in Tangipahoa parish involving an elderly lady, theft by appropriation.

Wade gave a recap on the nursery properties as requested by Scott Poole. The nursery property in Columbia was sold by State Lands. The Commissioner was negotiating with State Lands to try and get a percentage of that sale. The Forestry Office still has to pay the insurance on the nursery properties with Office of Risk Management and any maintenance needed. The Beauregard Nursery & Deridder property is LAFA property and may be sold soon. The Texas seed orchard has not been sold yet; it is in a remote area that takes a lot to get access across other properties. Monroe nursery is still part of the Monroe complex which belongs to LAFA.

OLD BUSINESS

FPP: The projections forward were made by using a five year average of the past. Wade explained the graphs. We can ask for more budget authority to raise the maximum obligated. There is roughly half a million dollars recycled every year, so we would not come anywhere near using up all the money in the program in any year. If a sweep occurs, even obligated funds can be taken if it is a constitutional sweep. Other than that, we could get a 5% or 10% sweep. Offering a 75/25 cost share would help the landowner and be competitive with the federal programs. There was a discussion of the minimum acreage to qualify for the program. The state use value assessment is a minimum of 10 acres.

MOTION: Michael Hudson made a motion to amend rule 1307 part D from 50% to 75%; Bill Jenkins seconded the motion. All were in favor.

MOTION: Dr. Allen Rutherford made a motion to amend rule 1307 part A from 5 contiguous acres to 10 contiguous acres; Michael Hudson seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Emily will give an update at the December meeting on these motions.

Wade brought to the Commission the problems with the cut-off date and the question of the right of appeal. The Commission left the enforcement of the rules to the Office of Forestry, with their full backing that our policy stands as is.

Wade reported that the outside study from Forest to Market used for determining the severance tax rates would cost \$10,000 which cannot be done. We're looking into other programs for pulling the data together to supplement what we get to have the reports done. Discussion covered chip and saw, pine timber and hardwood timber along with reporting methods. Wade will check on using the FPP administrative fee to subscribe to the Forest to Market service and what the bidding process would involve.

NEW BUSINESS

Two study resolutions came from the last legislative session. One is on selling green timber and the other is looking at the permit system and road bond. A committee will work on looking at the problem. The other item is accepting electronic signatures by Graphic Packaging. The rules for capturing that electronic signature have to be worked out. "Reasonable doubt" is a real problem with swiping cards or electronic signatures. There will be a meeting to discuss this soon before we work out the rules with our legal team. Theft could be a real problem because this system can cause reasonable doubt and it would be hard to prosecute theft.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Buck Vandersteen mentioned that there is a meeting on September 20 at 10 a.m. at DOTD regarding road ordinances if anyone would like to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Wayne Hagan made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Allen Rutherford seconded the motion. All were in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 3:39 p.m.