**MINUTES**

**Multimodal Commerce Advisory Commission**

Thursday, May 11, 2023

Louisiana State Capitol

Senate Committee Room E

2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

**Commission Members:**

Renee Lapeyrolerie

Don Pierson

Eric Kalivoda

Sen. Patrick McMath

Rep. Mark Wright

Sen. Mike Reese

Rep. Scott McKnight

David Rabalais

Z. David Deloach

Scott Gammel

Renee Amar

Carmack M. Blackmon

Don Sanders

Aaron Smith

John Spain

Sen. Patrick “Page” Cortez

Blane Sheets

1. Meeting called to order, 2:04 P.M. by Commissioner Lapeyrolerie

II Roll Call by Secretary and a Quorum was determined.

Members Present: Renee Amar

Z. David Deloach

Scott Gammel

David Rabalais

Secretary Eric Kalivoda

Renee Lapeyrolerie, Chairperson

Sen. Patrick McMath

Sen. Mike Reese

Don Sanders

John Spain

Secretary Don Pierson

III Commissioner Lapeyrolerie gave a general overview, history and update of Multimodal Commerce Advisory Commission. (See PowerPoint presentation.)

Commissioner stated that after July 1, 2016, the Commission exists in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner and the office I hold and we are here to update the Commission and the public on our programs. I will give a general overview, and the section heads will give more detail of current port, aviation, rail and commercial trucking projects. Commissioner reviewed and gave brief history of the Port Construction and Development Priority Program:

Created by Act 452 in 1989; provides equitable distribution of state funds; prevents duplication of infrastructure; manage taxpayer funds to insure maximum return on investment on port investments for the state of Louisiana. From 1989 to 2022, there have been 234 funded projects and $839.3 million net amount was funded. While this amount was not funded in one fell swoop, it has been done with a great amount of consistency with support from governors and the legislature. From inception of the Port Program, the number of jobs created or retained is 16,338, and $8.04 billion. These figures were provided to us by the Louisiana Department of Economic Development. Funds Committed by port and region is important to give you the regional impact of the Program. Where we are today in 2023, we have 7 proposed new projects, with $61.1 million appropriation or authorization. We take applications quarterly. In 2023, we have 15 continuing projects with required appropriation of $108.3 million. Comparison of Mobile, Alabama and New Orleans, Louisiana with imports and exports and bulk and containerized, all goods.

Sen. McMath asked for just the container numbers and how much was breakbulk. Commissioner Lapeyrolerie will get that information to Sen. McMath.

Commissioner reviewed and gave a brief history of the Airport Construction and Development Priority Program:

From 1989 through 2023, there have been 2,770 funded projects with $508.2 million funded by the state. There have been 58,407 jobs created or retained with an economic impact to the state of $6.8 billion. There are opportunities in Aviation when you talk to higher ed and other partners there is a shortage of pilots, shortage of mechanics and though unemployment in Louisiana is at historic lows there are opportunities with our airports. Investing in infrastructure is one way to do that. In 2023 through 2024, there are 117 proposed new projects with required appropriation or authorization of $29.8 million. There are 397 continuing projects with $156.9 million in appropriation.

Commissioner Lapeyrolerie recognized Mr. Don Sanders Vice-Chairman with the Louisiana Board of International Commerce (LaBIC) to give an update on their last meeting. Mr. Sanders stated that LaBIC’s business is bringing business into Louisiana and the board reports to Secretary Don Pierson. LaBIC has enough members to have regular meetings and working on a new master plan for the State of Louisiana to give direction not only relative to what has brought us to this point, fossil fuel and agriculture products, but also what is possible for the state. LaBIC has hired a consultant. LaBIC’s next meeting is scheduled in June, a workshop type meeting and Multimodal will be represented and hopefully by the third or fourth quarter of this year we will have a report we can give to our board and the legislature. LaBIC and Multimodal need to collaborate because of the synergy that exists.

Secretary Don Pierson, Louisiana Economic Development (LED) was recognized and stated that Louisiana remains number one state in foreign direct investment per capita over the last decade and the 2022 annual report reflects $1.8 billion of foreign direct investment in our state. LED works with the Ports and Port Association of Louisiana (PAL) our business is not always visible to everyone because we deal with confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements.

IV. Mode specific updates:

1. Update on the Aviation program by Director Bradley Brandt (See Aviation briefing and PowerPoint)
2. Ports and Waterways, Director Randall Withers introduced Mary “Molly” Bourgoyne, Port Director and Christopher Collins. Waterways Director and they updated members on their programs and projects. (See Ports and Waterways PowerPoint briefing)
3. Freight and Passenger Rail Director, Mr. Dean Goodell updated members on all the various statewide rail programs ongoing. (See Rail PowerPoint and briefing.)
4. Trucking Director Stephen Holliday updated members on the state of trucking in Louisiana. (See Trucking PowerPoint briefing)

V. Senator McMath voted to approve the minutes from the June 16, 2022 meeting and Renee Amar seconded it. Motion carried.

VI. Comments from Commission members:

Mr. Gammel: Appreciated the informative updates. As the current President of LAMA he thanked Brad Brandt and his team for looking for ways to do things better in the state of Aviation. The State of Louisiana is the benchmark and we are doing things right, especially with the amount of money we have.

Sec. Pierson: Very enlightening and a compressive overview of this important work, technical work, and development work dominated by award applications, project executions, and contract administration. Appreciate the great job LA DOTD does with this important activity.

Mr. Spain: Thanked members for the presentation.

Z. David Deloach: Stated that this is his last meeting since he sold his business and has retired. The commission has made improvements from where we started but I want to reiterate a few things. I think we can do better by improving bridges that cross the intercostal waterway. We have some bridges that are a real restraint on trade. Thirty years ago, I participated in a group who discussed expansion and capacity of ports and doubling the amount of cargo at ports. Consider the same canal with the same obstructions and one lock can only handle half the size of the tows being pushed, you have to break it in half to move it through, Bayou Sorrel. Shippers are hesitant to ship on the intercostal canal because you cannot predict when something will be broken along the way. Someone needs to be looking at how Port of New Orleans’ new facility, Violet, in St. Bernard Parish to replace a couple of bridges on the intercostal at Industrial Lock and they do not want to improve them rebuild them they just do not want them. I do not know how you will get things out of the port across the intercostal and someone needs to be looking at what type of system or rail will be put in.

VII. Public Comments: None

VIII. No date set for next meeting at this time; members will be contacted about future date.

Motion to adjourned by Sen. McMath and seconded by Ms. Amar, all in favor, no opposition.

Meeting adjourned at 3:38 P.M.