

***Avoyelles Parish Port Commission  
170 Honeybee Lane  
P.O. Box 126  
Simmesport, Louisiana 71369***

***Regular Meeting***

July 15, 2024

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

Commissioner Scott Williams called to order the regular meeting of the Avoyelles Parish Port Commission 5:30 p.m. on July 15, 2024, at Port Commission Headquarters 170 Honeybee Lane, Simmesport, Louisiana, 71369.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

By Commissioner Scott Williams

**III. PRAYER:**

By Mr. Stacy Auzenne

**IV. ROLL CALL:**

Port Director Samuel Ducote conducted the roll call. The following individuals were present giving the meeting a quorum of four commissioners present:

Commissioner Jason Bordelon

Commissioner Scott Williams

Commissioner Patrick Deshotels

Commissioner Chris Lacour

Stacy Auzenne (Port Counsel)

Representative Daryl Deshotel

## **V. PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS:**

There were no comments regarding agenda items.

## **VI. DELEGATES – FIVE MINUTE RULE:**

There were no comments.

## **VII. ADOPT APRIL AND JUNE PORT MEETING MINUTES:**

Commissioner Deshotels made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 15, 2024, meeting. Chairman Bordelon seconded the motion. The motion to approve the April 15, 2024, meeting minutes passed unanimously. Chairman Bordelon made a motion to approve the June 18, 2024, meeting minutes. Commissioner Lacour seconded the motion. The motion to approve the June 18, 2024, meeting minutes passed unanimously.

## **VIII. COMMISSIONER PAT DESHOTEL:**

### **a) Representative Daryl Deshotel – Sugar Mill**

Commissioner Patrick Deshotel approached the Port Commission about moving or new construction of a sugar cane mill at the Port of Avoyelles. Points of interest or topic of discussion were as follows:

**Freight** – The expense of shipping to sugar mill in New Iberia. Wear on highway infrastructure.

**Loss of sugar cane acreage in South Louisiana:** According to the Farm Bureau Convention there are 500,000 total sugar cane acres in Louisiana. Solar farms potentially could encroach into the total amount of sugar cane acres. As of this year 250,000 acres of the total 500,000 are signed up in solar programs. While it does not necessarily mean that they will become solar farms, this amount of acreage dictates the interests of the landowners in solar farms. Urban development is another issue that affects the loss of sugar cane farm acreage. This has led to new sugar cane acreage in Avoyelles (approximately 21,000 new acres as of 2022), Rapides (approximately 12,000 new acres as of 2022) and Point Coupee (approximately 72,000 new acres). It is estimated that 40,000 acres are needed to make a mill viable. It is also estimated that there are more than

41,000 loads generated that are traveling on state and federal highways in Avoyelles parish.

**Opportunities for Port of Avoyelles:** Tax breaks, available acres to lease, access to the river and job creation for the Parish of Avoyelles.

b) **H2B workers -**

Commissioner Deshotels and Chairman Bordelon met with Billy and Bruce to go over the duties and expectations for their jobs in hopes of the grounds being presented. Commissioner Deshotels also talked about hiring H2B employees in the future if maintenance job does not get done. Also, the commissioners discussed using a contract service for maintenance of the ground. At the time, it was decided to wait and see how the current maintenance crew works out. Commissioner Williams entertained a motion to hire Bruce Coco as an additional maintenance employee at a rate of \$15.00 per hour. Chairman Bordelon made the motion. Commissioner Deshotels seconded the motion. The motion to hire Bruce Coco passed unanimously.

c) **Purchase of cab tractor -**

The commissioners decided that a cab tractor was not needed. Chairman Bordelon will inquire on the shape of the second zero turn owned by the Port of Avoyelles.

**IX. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – JASON BORDELON:**

a) **Port Director Samuel Ducote retiring -**

Director Ducote will continue until the August meeting. For the time being the Chairman Bordelon recommended to not replace the director's position. Everyone expressed their appreciation to "Sammy" for the work and time he put in as Port Director and congratulated him on retirement.

b) **Billy Ducote Maintenance Report/Equipment needs –**

Billy was given clear instructions for job requirements. Chairman Bordelon requested time report for Billy and Sammy to be emailed. Commissioner Deshotels recommended that no labor time be paid until the commissioners approved the time.

c) **Louis Dreyfus Interest –**

Chairman Bordelon spoke to his contact with Mr. Dreyfus. Mr. Dreyfus has expressed a sincere interest in exploring options for doing business with the Port of Avoyelles.

d) **Bookkeeper, bill pay –**

Bills that can be paid online or automatic payment will be changed to reflect that. All bills will go to the bookkeeping service for processing. The monthly check amounts and descriptions are attached as an exhibit to these minutes. The bookkeeping service will need to provide the commissioners with copies of invoices for review and approval before signing of checks.

**X. VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – SCOTT WILLIAMS:**

a) **Helena Tank Project –**

Commissioner Williams spoke with Mr. Cox of Cox Tank Construction regarding the tank project. Commissioner Williams and Chairman Bordelon will meet with the Red River Waterway for additional funds. Chairman Bordelon made the motion to accept the bid offered and grant the bid by Cox Tank Construction in the amount of \$1,040,900.00 to build liquid fertilizer tank. Commissioner Lacour seconded the motion. The motion to approve the bid and grant the bid to Cox Tank Construction passed unanimously. Counsel Auzenne will notify Mr. Cox that his bid has been accepted and shortly there will be a contract with Mr. Cox to construct the tank. Also, Counsel Auzenne will pick back up with the DOTD on funding the \$150,000.00 in capital outlay funds approved by the State of Louisiana.

b) **Tractor Shed, Ben Spinner –**

Due to inconsistencies with the bid advertisement and specifications the tractor shed construction will have to be rebid with new specifications.

c) **Port Cleanup –**

i. Kevin Bordelon, Police Jury -

Commissioner Williams spoke with Kevin Bordelon with the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury about looking at some work to be done at the port that falls under the Police Jury's purview.

ii. RRAB -

Commissioner discussed having the levees mowed by RRAB.

iii. Brad Augustine, Brudd Construction –

Chairman Bordelon made a motion to enter into an agreement with Brudd Construction for the removal, cleaning, and dressing of fifty-one trailer sites on the Port of Avoyelles property amount of \$14,300.00.

Commissioner Deshotels seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Williams made a motion to accept bids on cleanup of Port property per the bid advertisement. Commissioner Deshotels seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

d) **Obie Ryland, more duties –**

Commissioner Williams requested Mr. Ryland to include upon Director Ducote's retirement extra duties other than creating meeting minutes. Those duties are as follows: Initiate with each commissioner what items they wish to discuss at each meeting. Create the agenda for each subsequent meeting. Confirm with each commissioner by no later than the day before the who will be attending.

**XI. CHRIS LACOUR:**

a) **Cottonport Bank Checking Account –**

Commissioner Lacour discussed with Cottonport Bank about moving money to an interest-bearing checking account. Cottonport Bank declared that it would offer an interest rate of 1.5% for up to \$250,000.00 and 2.5% for monies deposited above \$250,000.00. Commissioner Lacour made a motion to accept the offer to place over \$250,000.00 into the interest-bearing account at 2.5%. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## **XII. ADJOURN MEETING:**

Chairman Bordelon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lacour seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Avoyelles Parish Port Commission will take place on August 19, 2024, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Port Headquarters. The meeting adjourned.