

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

Regular Meeting

February 20, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Barry Laiche called to order the regular meeting of the Avoyelles Parish Port Commission 5:40 p.m. on February 20, 2024, at Port Commission Headquarters 170 Honeybee Lane, Simmesport, Louisiana, 71369.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

By Commissioner Webb

III. PRAYER:

By Commissioner Williams

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:

Chairman Barry Laiche

Commissioner Scott Williams

Commissioner Andre Webb

Stacy Auzenne (Port Counsel)

Chairman Laiche instructed Director Ducote to prepare and submit letter to the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury of the vacancy created by the departure of Commissioner Pierite.

Commissioner term limits were discussed and commissioners with expired terms are still in good standing unless they specifically resigned.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS:

There were no members of the public present.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Commissioner Webb did not have anything to report. Chairman Laiche entertained a motion to continue to pay the standard monthly bills, including, employees, legal, bookkeeping. Commissioner Webb made the motion.

Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. There was no further discussion, and the motion was passed unanimously.

VII. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

Minutes for the December 18, 2023, meeting was reviewed by all present commissioners. Commissioner Williams motioned to approve and adopt the minutes. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. The motion to accept the minutes for the December 18, 2023, meeting passed unanimously.

VIII. DELEGATES FIVE MINUTE RULE:

There were no members of the public present.

IX. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Chairman Laiche wanted to emphasize getting the bid resolutions for the tractor shed to allow the Port to begin construction of said shed. Counsel Auzenne prepared the resolutions and is waiting for approval of the resolutions to begin the bid process. There was no need for any formal action.

X. VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Commissioner Williams briefly again went over the specs for the tractor shed that is to be built.

XI. DIRECTORS REPORT:

Director Ducote did not have anything to report.

XII. CONSIDERATION OF ANY OTHER MATTERS:

A) RATIFICATION OF WATERLINE REPLACEMENT TO OFFICE FOR \$900.00.

Director Ducote briefed the commissioners on the broken waterline to the Port office. The cost of rerouting the waterline away from the tree and to repair was \$900.00. Commissioner Williams made the motion to pay the \$900.00 to repair the waterline. Chairman Laiche amended the motion to be a ratification since it will be paid as an emergency cost. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

B) DISCUSS COMMISSIONER TERM LIMIT.

This was discussed at the start of the meeting. It was legal counsel's appreciation of Louisiana law, confirms that commissioners who have termed out are still in good standing to perform their duties as commissioners of the Port of Avoyelles.

C) DISCUSSION OF THE 3 PORT PROJECTS AT HAND, ADVERTISING, BIDDING: (1) TRACTOR SHED. (2) CLEANUP PROJECT. (3) TANK PROJECT.

The tractor shed was discussed previously. The cleanup project was discussed in terms of how to manage the way to manage the cleanup. First was the absolute removal of all structures as previously discussed. The second option was to salvage all materials of value, i.e., pipe, concrete and blacktop. Counsel created bids for advertisement for both options. Commissioner Webb suggested inviting a representative of Brudd Construction to lend aid in determining the value of the material. The final decision was made to postpone the advertisement and gather more information on the value of the material from different sources by Director Ducote. The tank project discussion consisted of Counsel Auzenne relating the new specs for the short-form advertisement to be released to accept bids. To begin the process the resolution needs to be signed and the bid process could begin. The resolution as of February 20, 2024, read as follows: Resolution to authorize President Barry Ray Laiche to put out for advertisement bids for the construction of a one-million-gallon fertilizer tank at the Avoyelles Parish Port Commission. And it would be at the February 20, 2024, meeting of the Avoyelles Parish Port Commission, President Barry Ray Laiche was unanimously authorized to put out the advertisement for bids on the construction of a one-million-gallon fertilizer tank. Helena Chemical to store additional fertilizer for the Avoyelles Port Commission Facility, be it resolved on the 20th day of February 2024. President Barry Ray Laiche was unanimously authorized by the port commissioners to put out an advertisement for bids on the construction of a one-million-gallon fertilizer tank for Helena Chemical to store at the Avoyelles Parish Port Commission facility whereas the Avoyelles Parish Port Commission who authorizes President Barry Ray Laiche to put out an advertisement for bids on the construction of a one million gallon fertilizer tank for the purpose of Helena

Chemical to store additional fertilizer at the Avoyelles Port Commission Facility. The resolution was proposed on a motion by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Webb and unanimous approval on this the 20th day of February of 2024, the regular meeting of the Avoyelles Parish Port Commission held in Simmesport, Avoyelles Parish.

D) PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST.

Counsel Auzenne received a public request regarding legal fees. Counsel Auzenne replied that the amounts paid Auzenne Law Firm related to representation to the Avoyelles Parish Port Commission from November 30th, 2020, to August 31st, 2023, the total amount paid in 2021 by the Port Commission was \$43,826.71; the total amount paid in 2022 was 38, 786.93; the total amount paid in 2023 was \$27,869.46. In response to this letter a second letter was received date February 14, 2024, titled follow up to public records request for the for the billing documents for the work performed for the Port. Please send the billing invoices and summary statements for each monthly billing 2021, 2022 and 2023. Mr. Auzenne informed the commissioners of article 44:22.1, 44:4.1-C and finally Louisiana Code of Evidence article 506 which considers the requested items to fall under attorney-client privilege. Commissioner Williams recommended that the Commission respond to this request as legal counsel on their behalf. The commissioners agreed with this recommendation. Chairman Laiche made it clear that his wishes are whatever needs to be done for the Port be done, comply with any requests because he does not view anything as secret, but he does want to comply with whatever statutes that come into play that would set precedence in the future.

XIII. ADJOURN MEETING:

Commissioner Ware made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. The next regular meeting of the Avoyelles Parish Port Commission will take place on March 18, 2024, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Port Headquarters. The meeting adjourned.