COLUMBIA PORT COMMISSION July 27,2023

MINUTES MEETING:

COMMISSIONERS: Bruce Frazier, Monty Adams Jr, Mark McKee and Charles Hearns

PORT DIRECTOR: GREG RICHARDSON

Meeting was called to order by Bruce Frazier at the Police Jury Meeting Room in the Caldwell Parish Courthouse.

READING OF THE MINUTES, **motion was made by Monty Adams jr, and seconded by Mark Mckee to adopt the minutes**  (greg commented that the auditors had requested additional information recorded within the minutes, greg discussed difficulty talking and taking notes during meeting discussed using recorder with ability to transcribe meeting notes to assist or evaluate hiring someone to take notes. Gave example of issue auditors had with discussion of Change order and approval of change order 1)

**Reading financial Statements, motion was made by Charles Hearns, and seconded by Mark McKee to accept the bank statements motion passed.** Greg gave financial report and discussed cash flow.

 ITEMS DISCUSSED DURING MEETING Greg informed the Commission of activities since last port meeting:

* Greg discussed the award of the RAISE GRANT $10.5 million for the construction of the Truck Parking facility. Greg informed the commission what a tremendous accomplishment this was considering 1100 applications and only 113 grants were awarded. Greg stated that the trust and support provide to him by the Commission made the difference in being awarded these types of grants. Greg stated that award of the raise grant would not have been possible without the support of our community and partners in developing the application. Truly a team effort. Greg, informed the Commission it will be interesting to see if we have cracked the code when dealing with federal grant application and eagerly await the announcement of the PIDP grant. Should the Port be successful with a second major grant application we could establish ourselves as a dominate entity in North Central Louisiana with supporting our projects with both state and federal funding. Greg discussed the RAISE webinar which outlined the procedures for the upcoming grant award. We should soon find out if the project will be administered by MARAD or Highway department. While we received all the funds requested our letter stated that the admin building was ineligible. It is my hope that this will require a modification of the building however I’m concern that the Truck parking facility will not function properly without bathrooms.
* Greg gave speech about transitioning from Grant application to grant award to grant implementation stating that as we move to implementation of the grant will be harder. Greg stated that the Port is currently not prepared to execute the awarded grants and this must be a collective approach to prepare the port to success. The load the wagon state ($34.2 million) of the project is winding down, our focus must turn to moving the wagon. The steps to move the wagon to identify consultants with expertise to strengthen our team. Greg discussed the possibility of using companies similar to CSRS which has a division which specializes in administering federal grants. During the PAL meeting next Thursday Greg has a meeting with Donald Bickman CSRS to discuss their company’s potential participation in support our administrative efforts associated with our RAISE Grant. While these services may appear expensive and will take funds away from our engineers, because the port has limited resources it will be critical that the required submittals for reimbursement and reporting is performed in a timely manner to ensure payments to our contractors and pace of the project. N. Riser, called concerned about what the Port was doing to prepare for the awarded funds, after a short discussion of our limitations and plans he agreed with our approach and stated that CSRC has also been mentioned as a strong candidate to assist the Port. Another issue will be the necessity to borrow more money to implement the RAISE Grant, $2.5 million is not enough funds to bridge the financing between construction and reimbursement. Greg anticipates that with the awarded projects the Port needs to expand its borrowing capacity to 5 to 8 million to complete the awarded grants within the next 5 years. The Port currently is not in a position to borrow more funds and will have to identify additional resources like the industrial board to move our wagon. Greg is working with the Industrial board, police jury as well as other individuals to identify alternative financing. Greg has scheduled meeting with Bill Boyles a bond attorney in Monroe. Bruce asked if I had put money in the grant for administration? I had not because I was trying to ensure our BCA passed, we did include money for engineering to assist with these tasks. I hoping that this will be one of the issues we will be able to work out when I have my kickoff meeting with DOT.
* Greg discussed Earmark funds for $5 million dock, the bill has moved to the house of representatives and we were able to get Rep. Letlow to public address the award to the Port stating that it is contingent on the bill passing but the funds should be made available next year. I also wanted to state what a great job Letlow did at the Raise announcement and believe we have a strong ally in Rep. Letlow and look forward to working with her.
* RTEFP Greg discussed our application stated we had submitted and the deadline was delayed allowing us to revise our application to be a duplicate/backup for our PIDP request for Railspur and electrification of the Port. Greg initially we where the only port in Louisiana to submit an application, then the deadline was extended. Joking with DOTD PPP Greg picked at how slow the big ports moved on these grant applications.
* EDA disaster supplement application the port is working on developing a $2.5 million grant application for an Emergency Staging area which will be used to support emergency responders as well as provided an area for LGF’s construction crews to work during building the Plant as well as be used to attract additional tenants. Greg is working with our local homeland security person and Entergy to strengthen our application. If awarded we would be the first ESA in Louisiana.
* Deadline for INFRA grant is fast approaching Greg stated desire to complete the application however with all the awarded grants and potential of submitted grants it might be in the port’s best interest to pass on this grant application. Greg focus has been to identify all the necessary infrastructure improvements requested by LGF and place within this grant. Which basically includes the overpass and other dogs which adversely impact our BCA. Greg will attempt to develop an application which will support a passing BCA.
* Audit discussion Greg updated the commissioners of the status of our audit and provided correspondence pertaining to concerns. The auditors were told multiple times that the Port desired to have the audit submitted on time this year since last years filings were late. Greg submitted all files to the auditor in March. Laura our accountant expressed to the importance Greg was placing on the Audit. Up until the last day she was assured that they would finish the audit in time. The letter provided showed that they requested an extension. It should be noted that the request should have come from the Port on our letterhead, but we were never told they would not complete in time. I wrote a letter expressing my concerns. They waited until the end of the month to begin what should have been a three-day audit during my grant submittal period for RTEFP. I help and assisted where I was need but most of the issues was their inability to keep working files with them and errors made by them with scanning. I received an email from the state saying the audit was due at the end of the month. I informed Bosch & Statham about the email and hope they are able to complete. Greg expresses his desire to evaluate looking for a new audit firm which will be more responsive to our needs. Outline the critical nature of the audit and its potential impact on the flow of funds from the state and federal government. |Bruce mentioned we had once used a firm out of Monroe.
* One item that the auditors did recommend which we need to address it the purchase of a scanner. Greg discussed what it took for him to scan something at delta printing then file or transmit. A motion was made by Monty Adams,Jr. and seconded by Mark Mckee to purchase a scanner motion passed.
* The LaDOTD PPP has sent a resolution and replacement agreement for our FOIK Infrastructure Project for signatures. The purpose of these documents is to reimburse the port for requested funds for RC Road. The Resolution to allow Greg to perform the necessary tasks associated with executing our agreement with LaDOTD PPP was made by Charles Hearns and seconded by Mark McKee motion passed. All Documents were signed Greg stated he would catch up with Darron after meeting and get his signature.
* Greg Discussed the RC road progress 1) we had finally received agreement with Union Pacific which required a payment of $10,000 which was signed by Darron and electronically submitted in an attempt to expedite the project. 2) The Police Jury did an excellent job dressing up the turn rows in Drew Keahey’s cotton field to allow an emergency route during rail crossing construction. 3) The Engineers and Progressive have been investigating and testing the road way to develop a plan of action for repairs and monitoring. Addition cores were taken which showed that not all cracks in the concrete pavement area cracked completely through the thickness of the pavement. However, an agreement to the solution has not been finalized. The Port confirmed that we had the last say and as it stands the port requires the 75 feet of pavement in the area of Terral Road be replaced and the remaining section in question be monitored over the next two years. We hope to have this resolved by next meeting.
* Greg reviewed all the outstanding invoices and requested a motion to pay bills. Motion was made by Mark McKee, seconded by Monty Adams, Jr. motion passed.
* Greg Discussed meeting with LGF’s Bob Meredith. Purpose of meeting was to discuss the RAISE award and our proposed EDA application. Meeting did not go well, bob expressed concerns with disagreement about grant infrastructure placement and was generally opposed to any development of grants which did not align 100% with their plans. Greg informed bob that with the RAISE grant the port was in a position to purchase the land and build the necessary roads without any support of LGF. The purchase of the property would have to be within the guidelines of the RAISE Grant which based on NEPA report could take 6 to 8 months. Greg stated the RAISE grant had a clause that stated with a wavier match money could be spent prior to the agreement being signed and he would check into see if we could purchase property prior to end of year. Bob stated they wanted to modify the agree to allow the Port to Exercise their purchase option for the property requesting that LGF be given the Pore space rights. The meeting then proceeded to get worse with multiple issues being raised and bob denying conversation. In summary, Greg feels LGF is feeling pressure from lack of funds to continue the project. This situation needs to be monitored and Greg requested that the Board authorize a letter to clarify some potential issues with LGF’s lease and agreements. The Commission agreed that a letter requesting information from LaDOTD PPP would not be beneficial to the project at this time. However, a Motion was made by Mark McKee and seconded by Monty Adams, Jr. to produce a letter to LGF outlining the Port’s position, motion passed.
* Greg discussed DNR working on developing Carbon Sequestration Laws and that he had been in touch with DOTD to determine who would have input into the process. Greg was able to get the name and number of the individuals within DNR who are writing the current laws. Greg also expressed concerns with our legislatures, and was assured that when the draft of the laws was sent to them for comments, he would allow the Port to participate in the comment process.
* Greg discussed issue with not being able to actively seek prospective tenants for the Port. Greg did say he was reaching out to multiple sources in an attempt to identify a secondary alternative green power source (Solar, Hydrogen etc.) to determine possible opportunities to identify a second tenant as well as develop an additional revenue stream to support the port’s construction schedule.
* Greg discussed impact of Exxon purchasing Carbon Dioxide company in Delhi which ones the majority of Carbon transmission lines in Louisiana.
* Greg informed commission of Alexandria ‘s Port announcement of SUNGAS developing a similar project in Pineville.
* Greg stated that the private port adjacent to the Terral Rockyard received a contract to move nearly 100 tons of aggregate through their port to support Tensas Levee Board’s ongoing levee improvement project.
* Greg apologized for not listing individual port commissioners in watchmen article announcing RAISE award, will not happen again.
* Greg encouraged those that did not complete ethic Training course at the library, to please complete as soon as possible. The link to the sexual harassment class was corrected and provided [www.lma.teachable.com](http://www.lma.teachable.com)

**Motion was made by Charles Hearns to adjourn the meeting second by Mark McKee motion passed meeting was adjourned.**

**COLUMBIA PORT COMMISSION**
**July 27, 2023**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING:**

**COMMISSIONERS:** Bruce Frazier, Monty Adams Jr., Mark McKee, and Charles Hearns
**PORT DIRECTOR:** GREG RICHARDSON

The meeting was called to order by Bruce Frazier at the Police Jury Meeting Room in the Caldwell Parish Courthouse.

**READING OF THE MINUTES:** A motion was made by Monty Adams Jr., and seconded by Mark McKee, to adopt the minutes. Greg commented that auditors had requested additional information to be recorded within the minutes. Greg discussed the difficulty of talking and taking notes during the meeting, and discussed using a recorder with the ability to transcribe meeting notes to assist or evaluate hiring someone to take notes. He gave an example of an issue auditors had with the discussion of Change Order and the approval of Change Order 1.

**Reading Financial Statements:** Charles Hearns made a motion to accept the bank statements, and Mark McKee seconded. Greg gave a financial report and discussed cash flow.

**ITEMS DISCUSSED DURING THE MEETING:** Greg informed the Commission of activities since the last port meeting:

* Greg discussed the award of the RAISE GRANT of $10.5 million for the construction of the Truck Parking facility. He noted what a tremendous accomplishment this was, considering 1100 applications and only 113 grants were awarded. Greg stated that the trust and support provided by the Commission made the difference in being awarded these types of grants. He mentioned that the award of the RAISE grant would not have been possible without the support of the community and partners in developing the application, emphasizing it was a team effort. Greg informed the Commission that it would be interesting to see if they had cracked the code when dealing with federal grant applications, and he eagerly awaited the announcement of the PIDP grant. He discussed the possibility of establishing the Port as a dominant entity in North Central Louisiana by securing both state and federal funding for projects.
* Greg gave a speech about transitioning from grant application to grant award to grant implementation, stating that as they move to the implementation phase, it will be harder. He emphasized the need for a collective approach to prepare the port for success.
* Earmarked funds of $5 million for dock construction were discussed. The bill had moved to the House of Representatives, and they were able to get Rep. Letlow to publicly address the award to the Port, stating that it was contingent on the bill passing, but the funds should be made available next year.
* RTEFP was discussed; they had submitted an application, and the deadline was extended, allowing them to revise their application to be a duplicate/backup for the PIDP request for Railspur and electrification of the Port.
* An EDA disaster supplement application for a $2.5 million grant was discussed, intended for an Emergency Staging Area to support emergency responders and LGF's construction crews, as well as to attract additional tenants.
* The deadline for the INFRA grant was fast approaching, and Greg expressed the desire to complete the application. He focused on identifying necessary infrastructure improvements requested by LGF and placing them within the grant application.
* Greg discussed the audit status and provided correspondence pertaining to concerns. Greg expressed the need for a more responsive audit firm and outlined the critical nature of the audit's potential impact on the flow of funds from the state and federal government.
* One recommendation from the auditors was to address the purchase of a scanner. Greg discussed the challenges of scanning documents and a motion was made to purchase a scanner.
* The LaDOTD PPP had sent a resolution and replacement agreement for their FOIK Infrastructure Project for signatures. The purpose of these documents was to reimburse the port for requested funds for RC Road.
* Greg discussed progress on the RC road, including agreements with Union Pacific and road repair plans.
* Outstanding invoices were reviewed, and a motion to pay bills was made and passed.
* Greg discussed a meeting with LGF's Bob Meredith, challenges with grant alignment, and LGF's financial pressure.
* Greg mentioned difficulties in seeking prospective tenants for the Port and exploring alternative green power sources.
* Greg discussed the impact of Exxon purchasing a Carbon Dioxide company in Dehli.
* Greg informed the commission of Alexandria's Port announcement of SUNGAS developing a similar project in Pineville.
* The private port adjacent to the Terral Rockyard received a contract to move nearly 100 tons of aggregate to support Tensas Levee Board's ongoing levee improvement project.
* Greg apologized for not listing individual port commissioners in the Watchmen article announcing the RAISE award.
* Greg encouraged those who hadn't completed the ethics training course to do so soon, providing the corrected link to the sexual harassment class.

**Motion to Adjourn:** A motion was made by Charles Hearns to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mark McKee. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned.

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