COLUMBIA PORT COMMISSION March 23,2023

MARCH MINUTES MEETING:

COMMISSIONERS: DARRON MCGUFFEE, President; Bruce Frazier, Monty Adams Jr, Mark McKee and Charles Hearns

DIRECTOR: GREG RICHARDSON

Meeting was called to order by Darron McGuffee, Port President at the Police Jury Meeting Room in the Caldwell Parish Courthouse.

READING OF THE MINUTES, **motion was made by Charles Hearns, and seconded by Bruce Frazier to adopt the minutes**

**Reading Bank Statements, motion was made by Charles Hearns, and seconded by Bruce Frazier to accept the bank statements motion passed.**

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

* Greg informed commissioners of request from Rep Letlow’s office for the Columbia Port Commission to submit a grant for the FY2024 Community Funding Projects Appropriation (earmarks). The Port was only given an eight-day notice of the opportunity. Greg submitted the application in 48 hours which requested $1.5 million to cover the match for LaDOTDD PPP, however it was rejected and the Port was asked to resubmit. Rep. Letlow’s office stated they were looking for Projects pertaining to Port infrastructure investments in which the CFPA will be the majority of the funding for the request. We were able to modify our FY2022 PIDP grant application, in the remaining 5 days to submitted a $5 million dollar request for the construction of a Dock with supporting gravel access roads. The Port was only able to submit an application within the time allowed because of previous investments the Commission made in preparing applications during the FY2022 Grant cycle.
* Greg informed commissioners of activities with USDA, DRA and DHS pertaining to awarded grants as well as discussed submittals of quarterly reports and requested reimbursements. Greg gave update on progress and requested he be given the opportunity to identify someone to assist with the DHS Port Security Grant Program. Greg expressed concern with the volume of reports required with these grants and it would be in the best interest of the Port to evaluate utilizing consultants familiar with federal funds.
* Greg is submitting change orders and reimbursement request to LaDOTD monthly; however, no payments will be received prior to October 2023.
* Progress report on RC Road Improvements, Progressive Construction and discussed payments.
* Greg discussed meeting with Sen Womack about the modification of the Port’s Charter. Greg Requested approval of the Commissioners to pursue the legislation which would expand the jurisdiction of the Columbia Port Commission as well as modify how Commissioners would be appointed. **Motion was made by Charles Hearns and Seconded by Bruce Frazier to continue work on the modification of the Columbia Port Commission Charter.**
* Greg discussed upcoming grant cycle, FY2023 PIDP is due April 28th and the Port plans on resubmitting our FY2022 PIDP applications with modifications the Port plans on requesting $11.25 million for the construction of a Dock and the Railspur and loading area. Greg believes the inclusion of the Railspur with the Dock will present a better application utilizing our awarded rail funds from LaDOTD PPP as the nonfederal match.
* Greg has completed and provided all audit information to our accountant for submittal to the auditors.
* The Port Commissioner had a discussion pertaining to Port Funding. We discussed numerous sources of potential funding and various methods to secure funds. The Port in the past has not had the willingness to pursue taxation as an avenue to secure funding. The Port’s success with state and federal grants ($18.7) raises concern of the Port’s ability to execute these grants without additional support. The Port will have another $30 million in grant request for the FY 2023. The Port currently has the ability to cash-manage and administer approximately $3-5 million dollars per year. Should the port be successful with additional state or federal funding the port will need an additional revenue source to execute larger scopes of work ($8-10 million per year). It was generally agreed that we should evaluate options to develop both short- and long-term financial plans, but action should be delayed until LGF has finalizes our agreement by Dec.31, 2023 or funding becomes a problem with executing the grants. The availability of funds is critical to the success of both the Port and LGF’s Project.
* **Motion made by Charles Hearns and seconded by Bruce Frazier to pay all outstanding bills presented to the board motion passed.**

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