**MINUTES OF JULY 18, 2017**

**Board of Commissioners of**

**Bayou D’Arbonne Lake Watershed District Regular Meeting**

Union Parish Courthouse Annex

303 East Water Street

Farmerville, LA 71241

1. Roll Call – President Bruce Hampton called the meeting to order. Commission members present were Bruce Hampton, Trotter Hunt, Steve Cagle, Cary Brown, Jake Halley and Guy Fortenberry. Terri Towns was absent. Also present were Bill Carter, Ron Riley, Robert Lemoine, Waylon Wheelis and Jerry Taylor.
2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance – Jake Halley led the invocation, and Cary Brown led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Public Comment Registration – Waylon Wheelis and Jerry Taylor signed up to make public comments.

D. Agenda Approval – Motion was made by Trotter Hunt and seconded by Steve Cagle to approve the July 2017 Agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Approval of Minutes – Motion was made by Steve Cagle and seconded by Guy Fortenberry to approve the minutes of the June 2017 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Treasurer's Report:

1. Approve June 2017 Bank Account Summary – Cary Brown made a motion and Trotter Hunt seconded the motion to approve the June 2017 Bank Account Summary. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Approve June 2017 Bank Statement Reconciliation – Cary Brown made a motion and Trotter Hunt seconded the motion to approve the June 2017 Bank Statement Reconciliation. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Approve June 2017 Financial Report – Cary Brown made a motion and Trotter Hunt seconded the motion to approve the June 2017 Financial Report. The motion passed unanimously.

G. Old and New Business:

1. Channel Markers – (a) FEMA Claims, and (b) Repair Status – Ron Riley stated that we received the FEMA grant. They have GPS’d 30 poles on the lake and plan to do the rest tomorrow. Steve Cagle made a motion to authorize the President to sign all documents concerning the FEMA grant and to advertise for bids for repairs pursuant to the FEMA grant. Trotter Hunt seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ron Riley also stated that there is a course next week in West Monroe to do LCDBG participation in FEMA grants. The FEMA grant was 75%/25% and, with this, there is a possibility we will get the $40,000 contributed by the Commission back. Mr. Riley was of the opinion that it would be worth it to attend the course to find out more. Cary Brown made a motion to authorize Ron Riley’s attendance at the course on behalf of the Lake Commission and pay Mr. Riley’s fees and expenses to attend the course. The motion was seconded by Guy Fortenberry and the motion passed unanimously. Steve Cagle stated that he may also attend.

2. New Lake Maps – Steve Cagle stated that he sent everyone a drawing of the back of the map. There are 16 advertising spots that are being sold for $300 each. Two of the ads will be free – one for the D’Arbonne Lake Commission and one for the State Park. One side of the map will be the D’Arbonne Lake Commission with a picture of the lake and the other side will be the State Park. He spoke with the man at the State Park, and there is a possibility they can get funding for the State Park, but that is difficult. When the map is opened, Ludwig said they want all four spots which are visible. Mr. Cagle stated that he is still working on it, and there are four spots left. He has not yet spoken with anyone outside Union Parish. There was some discussion regarding people he has approached. They have not yet decided whether it is ethical for Terri Towns to advertise. Mr. Cagle also stated that there is a price break once you purchase 2500 maps or more. Bill Carter stated that we need an updated list as more advertisers are added. Mr. Hampton reminded everyone to check the list and make certain no one is added who is related to the Commission members. If there is a distant relation, that may be different, but this needs to be discussed if a relative is wanting to advertise to make sure they are approved.

3. Discussion and Action, if Necessary, Regarding Policy for Primary Financial and Business Functions to Include Those for Cash – Bruce Hampton stated that he does not have the last written step, so this will remain on the Agenda for next month. By then, he may have received what he needs and can have them typed and put in the form of a policy for approval.

4. Discussion and Action, if Necessary, Regarding Ramp Below Spillway – Mr. Hampton stated that he was under the impression we are only waiting for money to be released on this. Ron Riley stated that he spoke with DOTD today because they thought there was $13,000 in funds left over from the tainter gate project. However, DOTD informed him they have $9,000 remaining. At any rate, they said in the next two to three weeks, they will buy the materials to repair the road and their people will repair it. The project is moving forward; we just need to get through the last little paperwork.

5. Discuss and Take Action, if Necessary, on Temporary Mowing Contract – Mr. Hampton stated that Mark Bryan has mowed the ramps twice and he and Steve Cagle got together about how much to pay him. Based on the contract they had in the past, and the fact that it has not been mowed all year, the average to mow all the ramps is $1,000 per month. Trotter Hunt made a motion that Mr. Bryan be paid $1,000 per month to mow all the ramps (including the past two months when he previously mowed) until a permanent contractor is hired. Steve Cagle seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. Bill Carter requested that someone call Mr. Bryan to let him know. Steve Cagle agreed to do that and Bruce Hampton asked Jake Halley to contact Janet Cowart to have her prepare Mr. Bryan’s check, and he stated that he would drop the check off to him. Bill Carter stated that once we let Mr. Bryan know, he will prepare an invoice for the Board.

6. Discuss and Take Action, if Necessary, on Permanent Mowing Contract – Bruce Hampton has spoken with Jonathan Williams, who is interested in mowing on a permanent basis, and sent him the contract material. Mr. Williams asked for Steve Cagle’s number. Steve Cagle said the temporary contractor, Mark Bryan, is also very interested. Mr. Hampton stated that he will contact Mr. Bryan to get him the contract material, as well. Bill Carter reminded the Board that the proposals are due by August 14, the day before the next meeting.

7. Status of DOTD Blocking Access to Spillway on Downsville Side – Ron Riley stated that there was some previous discussion about vandalism problems there. If you go there, you will notice rip rap piled everywhere. A bulldozer will be needed to clean it up now. Mr. Cagle stated that the Sheriff’s Department and Wildlife & Fisheries are doing a good job there.

8. Discuss and Take Action, if Necessary, Regarding Request for Union Parish Police Jury Regarding Dumpster on Spillway Road at Spillway – Mr. Hampton contacted Paula with the Police Jury to get a written request as to what they want to do about a dumpster there, but Richard at the landfill has indicated that they do not believe it is a good idea to put the dumpsters down there. Therefore, there is no request to take up.

9. Reminder Regarding Filing Financial Disclosure Statements by Commissioners – Mr. Hampton stated that the deadline for this year has passed, but we are leaving this on the Agenda for the new members as a constant reminder.

10. Reminder Regarding Board Member Ethics Training by Commissioners – Mr. Hampton reiterated that ethics training can be done online, and the Board has until the end of the year to do this. He reminded everyone when you do take the seminar, the certificates should be emailed to him or Janet Cowart to print for the auditors.

H. Public Comment – Waylon Wheelis stated that he owns Tater Bugs Sporting Goods. He fishes for pleasure and at tournaments on Lake D’Arbonne. He stated that there have been complaints about the way the drawdowns affect fishing. He would like to see the drawdown lengthened out or work with Wildlife & Fisheries during the drawdown to drop the daily limit on bass or crappie. He also suggested a boat ramp fee to help improve the boat ramps.

His last question was whether the Board has received a recent report from the biologist with Wildlife & Fisheries. Mr. Hampton stated that it was last Fall or close to December the last time we heard from him. We have not received a report for Spring or Summer. Mr. Hampton stated that it may be time to ask him to come back. Mr. Carter stated that they did sampling. Steve Cagle said they do not do sampling every year but, rather, we hear from them about every two to three years.

The last thing Mr. Wheelis asked was whether the Lake Commission is willing to support a change in creel limits. Mr. Hampton stated that as far as limits are concerned, the Legislature and Wildlife & Fisheries will have to recommend that. If they do, then he would guess most of the Board members would support that. As far as ramp fees, he and Steve Cagle has discussed that recently and Mr. Cagle is in the process of getting information on that. As far as the biologist, Mr. Hampton stated that they do not generally return except every two or three years, but last Fall the biologist stated that he was willing to return when asked. Mr. Hampton stated that he may ask him to return to discuss the issues addressed by Mr. Wheelis.

Mr. Cagle stated that Mr. Wheelis is only seeing it from a fisherman’s standpoint, but the Board has to consider economics, the land owners, and the hydrilla and salvania. He further stated that the drawdown moves the fish; they are not all caught because of the drawdown. Wildlife & Fisheries has submitted numbers to prove that the drawdown does not hurt the fishing. It only moves the fish from shallow water to the deep water and it takes a year for them to migrate back. The weights will be back the next year. Mr. Hampton also stated that the people who own homes on the lake are paying property taxes so there are more constituencies than just fisherman. Mr. Cagle also stated that Wildlife & Fisheries have mentioned possibly doing the drawdown every two years so hope it never gets that bad.

Jerry Taylor then addressed the Board. Mr. Taylor is a Police Juror in District 3 but he stressed that he was not there in any official capacity for the Police Jury but he was speaking as a land owner who lives on the lake. He wanted to discuss the four-year drawdown because if you look at the lake as a whole you are missing something. The year after the drawdown, the fishing goes to nothing. He would like to expand the drawdown. Mr. Taylor stressed that he was not being critical of the Board but, as a land owner, he is concerned. He encouraged the Board to consider that and look at options and how the drawdowns affect the lake.

Mr. Taylor also stated that during the recent flood, he got a lot of calls from people wanting to know what they are doing on the tainter gates. He was in the Spearsville area last time, and his area was hit the hardest. They received 12-13 inches of rain in a 24-hour period. The State was closing State highways because of flooding but there was only one gate opened and it was three feet. He walked onto his pier and logs and debris were going by and the water was rising like crazy. People are asking him why we can’t be proactive 24-36 hours prior to the big events, and open the gates. Mr. Hampton stated that they did during the last two big events. In fact, Mr. Hampton stated that it was opened before the regulations called for it because they could see from forecasts that it would rise. But the reason they only open the gates partially the first and second time is because they cannot take it down at the beginning more than four inches a day because of engineering issues that could cause damage to the retaining walls. They have a protocol and Mr. Hampton agreed that they need to look at it and possibly open it quicker based on projections, but in the last two (in March 2016 and the most recent one), the gates were opened prior to the event. However, they can only start and open them a little initially but they were eventually opened quite a bit.

Mr. Cagle said the water has to go through D’Arbonne Bayou. When the gates are only opened three feet, it is not because they don’t want to get rid of water. It is because D’Arbonne Bayou won’t let us. If it is all the way down at pool stage, it will not allow them to get rid of water. We have a protocol of numbers that state where they can start. Mr. Taylor said the Police Jury is about to spend $15,000-$20,000 this week to rebuild Rocky Branch Road. If they could open the gates a little quicker and not have to go to eight feet, it might save the road and save the parish some money. Mr. Cagle said they opened it at three, then they opened two at three, then two at four, two at six, and two at eight. They stepped it just like that trying to protect that one road. Mr. Hampton stated that those regulations were developed and passed a year and a half ago, and at that time everyone, including DOTD, knew it was a work in progress and there might have to be some tweaks in it. Since that event, Mr. Hampton has spoken with other Lake Commissioners about possibly going back to DOTD to revise it, especially based on projections by the National Weather Service, rather than waiting until it hits a certain spot. In this particular case, though, it was opened before it hit that spot. The Lake Commission, Marshall Hill and Jeff Shapiro with the DOTD took a proactive step to do that. That decision was based on calculations, so no one is to blame. There are a lot of factors to take into consideration. Mr. Taylor stated that perhaps the Lake Commission should better communicate with the public so they would know that the Lake Commission is being proactive. Mr. Hampton stated that we have a website now so we may be able to post that in the future.

I. Adjourn – A motion to adjourn was made by Steve Cagle and seconded by Guy Fortenberry. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned.