COLUMBIA PORT COMMISSION February 15, 2024

MINUTES MEETING:

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

PORT DIRECTOR: GREG RICHARDSON

Guest: Richard Smith, Terral Riverservices

Meeting was called to order at 11:30 by Darron McGuffee at the Police Jury Meeting Room in the Caldwell Parish Courthouse.

READING OF THE MINUTES, **motion was made by Mark Mckee, and seconded by Charles hearns to adopt the minutes, and the motion passed.**

READING OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT**, motion was made by Charles Hearns, and seconded by Bruce Frazier to accept the bank statements, and the motion passed.**

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

* Greg informed the Commissioners that we need a resolution accepting the DRA Railspur Grant of $1 million to assist with the construction of the railroad spur. **Motion was made by Monty Adams Jr., seconded by Bruce Fraizer to pass resolution associated with the DRA funds allowing both Greg Richardson and Darron McGuffee be able to sign necessary DRA documents, motion passed** The told commissioners about delays within DRA due to portal issues and that he planned to request DRA expedite the signed agreement.
* Greg presented Grant Implementation Plan to the port which outlined the spending of nearly $40 million dollars over the next 8 years. Greg assured commissioners that no money would be spent on LGF infrastructure without assurances of reimbursements.
* Greg gave update on Port Tenants; Terral Riverservices is finally starting to move a little more rock with the rise in Ouachita River Levels; Guerrero Farms has agreed to farm again next year, they have been permitted to plant wheat with a decision about soybeans to be made this summer; McClanahan is still 6 months behind in rent greg will work to correct; LGF has received support from Sumitomo which appears to be sufficient funding to ensure the finalization of the engineering and design phase of the project.
* Status of the Riverton Campground Road Project – project is currently on hold due to issues with Union Pacific, engineers are working on obtaining a permit to complete final phase of construction.
* Status of Awarded Grants
	+ LaDOTD PPP – RC Road held up due to Union Pacific, Railspur waiting on additional funding to commence construction (DRA funding should facilitate submitting design to Union Pacific for approval), Land purchase is waiting on NEPA from BHA and timing with RAISE Grant, Truck Access Road and perimeter roads are waiting on RAISE, EDA, and Earmark. Since LaDOTD PPP is used as the match for most of our federal awarded grants activities associated with these tasks will be performed with the implementation of the federal grants.
	+ DOT RAISE – Truck Parking Facility the port has reached an agreement with LGF about the placement of the TPF as well as obtaining the rights to purchasing the Reynolds property. We are currently on our 4th revision of the Federal Agreement working out issues with the amenities building.
	+ EDA -Disaster Supplemental, Emergency Staging Area, all paperwork has been submitted and approved waiting on EDA to provide the Port with an agreement so that work can begin.
	+ DHS – Port Security, Fencing the Port has met with Tensas Levee Board to determine the best way to proceed with the construction of the proposed fencing. Tensas Levee Board requires a permit be submitted to them for approval which will be sent to USCOE for approval. BHS will submit the permit and develop the bid documents for the first phase of the Fencing Construction. The Port hopes to receive funding from LaCRED (pending) to assist with the match requirement for this grant.
	+ DRA RC ROAD – on hold waiting on Union Pacific, received notice of addition funds which had been requested to assist with rail crossing.
	+ DRA Railspur – received notice of funding, need to resubmit resolution and signed agreement so we can get this project started.
	+ CFA (earmark) – Dock still waiting on Congress to pass budget.
* Status of Pending Grants
	+ Capitol outlay – pending approval conversations with neil riser and glen Womack do not look promising for this year. Lot of uncertainty with new governor.
	+ DOT RTEPF – pending we have not heard anything other than they should be announced in first quarter of 2024.
	+ DOT’s Thriving Communities – pending we have not heard anything other than we made it to the second round and announcements should be made in the first qtr. 2024.
	+ LCRED – Monty Sr. is working hard to push this funding through, NELA has stated they wish to hire a new director prior to releasing these funds which should happen within the next 30 days. The Port believes through Monty sr. efforts, will be receiving some funding to assist with implementing our federal grants.
* Status of pending Grant applications:
	+ LaDOTD PPP – the port plans on submitting a grant application for a 10 MW solar farm to support port activities. Grant due date is March 1, 2024.
	+ DOE Grip – the port submitted a concept letter to seek support of upgrading the electrical grid associate with the Port. This application includes a solar farm, energy storage and upgrades to the transmission lines necessary for LGF power plant.
	+ EPA Clean Port Program – currently waiting on the NOFO to be released, the port is promoting the submittal of a statewide application which will provide funding for all the ports to decarbonize our operations. Greg has been successful in getting approval from PAL and has a planned meeting with DENR and DOTD to discuss the application.
	+ CFA Earmarks FY2025 – Greg discussed potential opportunity to purchase Liquid Bulk facility in Ouachita Parish from Mr. Davidson. Commissioner expressed concern about potential environmental issues. Greg said this is very preliminary and just wanted to see if they would be interested.
* Greg gave update on the status of our efforts to create a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) in Caldwell Parish.
* Greg provide commissioners with information about Louisiana Legislative Report on Public Port System stating that some of the recommendations would be beneficial for our port specifically Infrastructure Loan Program.
* Greg is finishing up preparing documents to provide to Laura for subsequent submittal to our Auditors. Greg discussed letter to LLA about why we changed auditors.
* Greg informed the commissioners that they needed to update the Personal Financial Disclosure statements prior to next meeting if they have not already completed.
* Richard Smith gave update on Terral Riverservices activities and agreed to keep an eye on the RC Road and attempt to keep the uncompleted portion of the rail crossing in good shape. The Commissioners agreed to pay any out of pocket expenses incurred by Terral.

Greg read over all outstanding invoices and requested a motion to pay bills. **Motion was made by Monty Adams, Jr. to pay all outstanding bills, seconded by Mark McKee motion passed.**

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