COLUMBIA PORT COMMISSION March 21 , 2024

MINUTES MEETING:

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

PORT DIRECTOR: GREG RICHARDSON

Guest: Caldwell Parish Industrial Development Board -- Monty Adams, Sr.; Terral River Services, Richard Smith; and LGF: Bob Meredith

Meeting was called to order at 11:30 by Bruce at the 1927 Room of Caldwell Bank.

READING OF THE MINUTES, **motion was made by Charles Hearns, and seconded by Mark McKee to adopt the minutes.**

READING OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT**, motion was made by Mark Mckee, and seconded by Charles Hearns 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 of the work he was doing on behalf of the Columbia Port Commission as well as the work for the Port Association of Louisiana to promote the collective application of an EPA Clean Port Application for a statewide Planning grant ($3 million) and ZE Implementation Grant ($500 Million) the grant will be written and submitted by DENR on behalf of all the ports.
* Greg informed the commissioners that our concept letter for DOE GRIP Program Green Grid Resilience Port Project was rejected and we will not be completing the full application submittal.
* Greg gave status of our efforts to gather support for the TIF district.
* Greg gave an update on Port Tenants
	+ Guerrero Farms, has planted wheat and we will discuss if and where he maybe able to plant soybeans this season.
	+ McClanhan has not paid rent for last half of 2023. This has been brought to his attention.
	+ Terral Riverservices is moving aggregate and doing a good job maintaining River Campground Road in the areas where the work has not been completed.
	+ LGF’s has secured an agreement with Sumitomo and bob is on agenda to make presentation to the board.
* Greg has provided all requested audit information to our accountant Laura, who will review the documents to see if any additional information is required prior to submitting to the Auditor.
* RC Road Project -- Still waiting on approval of Union Pacific before work can be completed.
* Awarded Grants Update
	+ LaDOTD PPP we are continuing working on completing the RC ROAD, the remainder of the grant is awaiting federal funding prior to starting
	+ DRA Road – we received additional funds to assist with the road crossing but waiting on Union pacific.
	+ DRA Railspur – awarded $1 million to assist with railspur
	+ USDA Rural Development – funds spent grant award complete and closed out
	+ DHS – Greg reported that permits were submitted to Tensas Levee Board and Corp of Engineer so we can develop the bid package to get this project started this summer.
	+ RAISE - Greg reported we may have achieved a breakthrough with FHWA and we are in agreement about the reinstatement of the bathrooms and amenities building hopefully we will have the agreement signed prior to the next meeting.
	+ EDA – Everything is approved and submitted just waiting on official award of grant so we can start working on an EDA agreement.
	+ CFA – Earmark – still awaiting approval from congress

* Pending Grants
	+ Thriving Communities grant awards should be announced by the End of January.
	+ RTEPF – grants should be announced by the end of March
	+ LaCRED – NELA has agreed to award the Columbia Port Commission a portion of the requested amount, Greg resubmitted a request asking for additional funds so we will see what they decide what they which to give us. Greg praised the work Monty Adams Sr has been doing on pushing this application through NELA. Monty Adams Sr spoke of the efforts to get the port funding.
	+ Capital Outlay – Greg is pushing Neal and Glen Womack as hard as he can however their response has not be great and appears that the new governor is controlling capital outlay very tight limiting their ability to advance our request. It also appears we are not going to be able to modify our charter this year.
* Greg gave an update on his work on developing a 5 MW solar farm, greg gave the reason for reducing the solar farm from 10MW to 5 MW 1) Energy Regulations for Generators do not apply at 5MW or less, and 2) with the loss of the DOE Grip application the 5MW has a better BCA. Greg is working with ULL’s energy department and DENR to ensure we develop a very strong application which can be duplicated throughout the state. Currently the proposed project is $13 million with a BCA greater than 1, generating the Port nearly $300,000 per year. Greg stated that renewable energy could be a solution to developing the Port while generating needed revenue for operations. Greg asked for permission to proceed with the grant application as well as a need to spend $100 to initiate an application process with Entergy to assist with evaluation the installation of a solar farm. **Motion was made by Monty Adams, Jr. and seconded by Charles Hearns to spend the necessary $100 for the entergy process, motioned passed.** Greg stated that we still had time on approval to submit the solar farm grant application.
* Greg gave a report on his visit to ULL’s energy center where he was given a tour of both their biofuel gasification scale model and a 1mw solar farm. The recommended that we continue to work with ULL’s energy center and recommended that commissioners attempt to visit the site prior to LGF’s project is completed to have a better understanding of their proposed process and the impact of the operation on the community.
* Greg gave an update on BHA’s efforts to complete our NEPA study for the TPF which scheduled for completion on April 1.
* Greg told the commissioners that our appraisal on the Reynolds property had expired and we need to have it updated as well as add peanut carr’s property. **The motion was made by Mark Mckee and seconded by Charles Hearns to have Greg Wilbanks revise and perform the necessary work to have our appraisal in order, motioned passed.**
* Bob Meredith with LGF gave a brief overview of status of ongoing activities as well as their newest investor Sumitomo.
* Richards Smith gave a brief report on terral operations.

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 Charles Hearns motion passed.**

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