**SOUTH TANGIPAHOA PARISH PORT COMMISSION**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2025 9:00AM**

**CITY HALL ANNEX BUILDING - 110 W. HICKORY ST., PONCHATOULA, LA**

President Daryl Ferrara called the public hearing to order on Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at 9:05 A.M. The meeting was held at the City Hall Annex Building, located at 110 W. Hickory Street, Ponchatoula, LA.

The invocation was given by Administrative Assistant Robyn Pusey, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Commissioner Rhonda Sheridan.

Commissioners Present: Daryl Ferrara, Tina Roper, Timothy DePaula, William Sims, Rhonda Sheridan

Commissioners Absent: None

President Ferrara wished everyone a Happy New Year and welcomed the attendees, which included Patrick Dufresne, STPPC Executive Director; Robyn Pusey, Administrative Assistant; Lee Barends, ITL Accounting; Andre Coudrain, Cashe Coudrain and Bass; Paul Bartow, Specialty Diving and Richard Meek, Action 17 News.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES**

Before approval of today’s agenda port attorney Andre Coudrain told the Commissioners that an engagement letter was sent to President Ferrara and the STPPC noting legal fees and the terms of engagement (regarding the incident that occurred in January 2024 that caused damage to the Port’s property), and said the engagement letter would need to be invoked. He said if the Commissioners wanted to add this to the agenda, they would need a unanimous vote to do so. He said as it related to litigation there could be some strategy things that could affect the fees and would be discussed in executive session, but approval of that would be in open session. President Ferrara and Mr. Coudrain suggested the barge dock repair update and executive session be moved to the end of the agenda. Motion was made by Commissioner Roper and seconded by Commissioner DePaula to move agenda item #3 - Barge Dock Repair update, and a) Executive Session, to the end of the agenda. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan Nays: 0 Absent: 0

President Ferrara announced that the minutes of the public hearing and regular meeting on December 12, 2024, had been sent to the Commissioners electronically for review, and a copy of the minutes had been placed in their meeting folders. After a brief review of the minutes a motion was made by Commissioner Roper and seconded by Commissioner Sims to adopt/approve the minutes from the public hearing and regular meeting on December 12, 2024. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 0

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

The financial reports ending December 31, 2024, had been emailed to the Commissioners for their review. Port accountant Lee Barends reviewed the financials with the Commissioners. Ms. Barends said for the month of December the total revenues were $139,516.00 (rounding), and total expenses were $26,325.00, leaving a net income of $113,191.00. She said the year-to-date totals came in “wonderful” with the budget, with very little over for expenses and more over on income that under. She said the total year-to-date revenues were $1,784,925.00, total year-to-date expenses were $604,221.00, and the year-to-date net income $1,180,704.00. She asked if there were any questions or concerns with the income statements, and there were none.

Continuing with the balance sheet report, Ms. Barends said there were a few different titles added to the report to match/mimic the investment accounts listed on the monthly Edward Jones statements. She said the total in the Hancock general account was $348,292.00, and that she would email the port’s financial advisor, Shaun McArthur, to move any monies over $250,000.00 from the general account to Edward Jones.

There were no questions about the general ledger reports.

President Ferrara reminded the Commissioners of the agreement with Mr. McArthur to move monies from the expiring CDs to US Treasuries. Ms. Barends said this activity was noted in the reports from the previous month. President Ferrara thanked Patrick Dufresne, Executive Director for his hard work and dedication during the year. The Commissioners agreed with President Ferrara and with the financial reporting from Ms. Barends.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. **LA-DOTD Port Priority Program Application**

Executive Director Patrick Dufresne reminded the Commissioners that last month the LA-DOTD infrastructure application had been submitted and was being reviewed. He said upon approval by the LA-DOTD, it will be submitted (with other port applications) for approval by the legislature at the upcoming session in April. Mr. Dufresne said there was $835,000.00 in FEMA funding as part of the 10% match, and it was a good time to utilize these funds. He said the STPPC would be responsible for the engineering costs. There were no questions.



1. **Warehouse Building #3 - evaluation & maintenance schedule update**

Mr. Coudrain said the items previously identified to be repaired in warehouse building #3 had been completed and there were photographs to support the work. He said the next step would be to determine whether the Commission would want the company who had previously done the inspections to return and verify completion of the repairs, or to accept the photographs as evidence of the repairs. A discussion was had regarding when inspections should be done and who should perform them. Commissioner Roper said there needs to be some kind of oversight of the property with the tenant. Mr. Coudrain said the lease would have more specific maintenance requirements. Commissioner DePaula said there should be some kind of baseline. Ms. Barends said that $15,000 was built into budget for this. President Ferrara suggested that the executive director schedule a date for the commissioners to view the warehouse. There were no questions.

1. **Barge dock repair – update**
2. **Executive Session**

This agenda item and executive session were moved to the end of the agenda.

1. **Prospective Tenant(s) – update**

Mr. Dufresne said there was no prospective tenant update today.

1. **Invoice Payment Approval**

The following invoices for payment were presented today by Commissioner DePaula:

1. Cashe Coudrain & Bass

Services rendered through December 31, 2024

Inv# 129933 Matter # 4623-1 Amt. $ 400.00

Inv# 129934 Matter # 4623-4 Amt. $ 460.00

Inv# 129935 Matter # 4623-13 Amt. $ 700.00 Total Due $ 1,560.00

1. All Tech Specialty Services

Services rendered December 30, 2024

New motor, parts & labor for gate at the port Amt. $ 1,860.00

A motion was made by Commissioner DePaula and seconded by Commissioner Sheridan that the Commission approve payment for the invoices presented today for Cashe, Coudrain & Bass. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 0 A motion was made by Commissioner Roper and seconded by Commissioner Sheridan that the Commission approve payment for the invoice presented today for All Tech Specialty Services. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 0

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Election of Officers 2025**

President Ferrara announced the election of officersfor 2025. After a brief discussion, President Ferrara made a motion to nominate himself for President, Commissioner Roper for Vice-President, Commissioner DePaula for Treasurer and Commissioner Sheridan for Secretary. A motion was made by Commissioner Sims and seconded by Commissioner DePaula to accept the nominations of the STPPC officers for 2025 as presented by President Ferrara. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 0

1. **Audit Engagement FY 2024**
2. **Resolution**

The executive director said this resolution will start the audit engagement process for the fiscal year 2024. The state board will need to be notified that Pinell & Martinez, LLC will be performing the audit, and the resolution will state that.

Commissioner Roper introduced the resolution:

At a regular meeting of the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission held on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, the following resolution was introduced and adopted, to wit:

Moved by Commissioner DePaula, seconded by Commissioner Sheridan that the Commission approve acceptance of the proposed Audit Engagement Proposal agreement, not to exceed the amount of $6,500.00 from Pinell & Martinez, LLC, 1014 W. 21st Street, Covington, LA 70433 and execute the engagement contract as stipulated in its proposal to perform the audit for the year ended December 31, 2024 for the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission.

Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 0

1. **Barge Dock Repair – update – Engagement Letter**
2. **Executive Session**

Mr. Coudrain said in accordance with the STPPC authority from the previous meeting, a lawsuit had been filed on December 16, 2024: South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission vs. Wilco Marsh Buggies, Inc., Docket #20240004367. Mr. Coudrain recommended going into Executive Session to discuss the case. A motion was made by Commissioner DePaula and seconded by Commissioner Roper to go into Executive Session. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 0 All guests were asked to exit the meeting.

Approximately 30 minutes later, President Ferrara announced that the Commission was back in open session. President Ferrara asked that the minutes reflect that there were no votes or action taken during the executive session.

A motion was made by Commissioner DePaula, seconded by Commissioner Roper to amend the agenda to add the Engagement Letter from Cashe Coudrain and Bass. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan

A motion was made by Commissioner DePaula, seconded by Commissioner Roper to approve the Engagement Letter from Cashe Coudrain and Bass. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan

**REMARKS**

Executive Director Patrick Dufresne thanked everyone for attending the meeting today.

The meeting adjourned at 10:07 AM.

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Rhonda Sheridan, Secretary STPPC Daryl Ferrara, President STPPC