**SOUTH TANGIPAHOA PARISH PORT COMMISSION**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8,** **2023 9:00AM**

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

President Daryl Ferrara called the Regular Meeting to order Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 9:15AM. 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 William Sims.

Commissioners Present: Daryl Ferrara, William “Bill” Joubert, Jimmy Schliegelmeyer, Jr., Timothy DePaula, William Sims, Rhonda Sheridan

Commissioners Absent: Tina Roper

President Ferrara welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked Ginger Cangelosi of the Tangipahoa Economic Development Foundation and Andy Parker of Premier Chemicals for their attendance. Others Present: Patrick Dufresne, Executive Director; Lee Barends, ITL Accounting; Andre Coudrain, Cashe Coudrain & Bass; Richard Meek, Hammond Daily Star

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES**

It was moved by Commissioner Schliegelmeyer, Jr. and seconded by Commissioner DePaula that the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission approve the meeting agenda for November 8, 2023, as presented. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Joubert, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Roper.

Commissioner/Vice President Joubert announced that the minutes of the regular meeting on October 11 2023, had been sent to the Commissioners by email prior to the meeting 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 DePaula and seconded by Commissioner Schliegelmeyer, Jr. to adopt/approve the minutes from the regular meeting on October 11, 2023. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Joubert, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Roper.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Port accountant, Lee Barends of ITL Accounting told the Commissioners that due to a scheduling error, the financial report for October 31, 2023 was not yet ready. She said the reports would be completed and ready for review tomorrow, and she would email them to the Commissioners.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. **LA-DOTD Port Priority State H. 011927 – Transload Improvements – update**

**Truck scale repair update, percentage of work completed, estimated time of completion.**

Executive Director Patrick Dufresne told the Commissioners that since the last meeting he had received an update from the contractor regarding the truck scale house container unit, that there had been a couple of delays with preparation and an issue with the delivery schedule. He said he was expecting delivery any day now and should have a substantial update on the project at the next meeting. There were no questions.

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

Patrick Dufresne, Executive Director told the Commissioners that as asked at the previous STPPC meeting he had contacted the Port of South Louisiana to inquire about the maintenance of their buildings. He said he was told that there was someone on staff that periodically inspects the buildings, that if they find something minor, they will discuss the issue with the tenant, and if they find something major, they will have a structural engineer evaluate the issue. Mr. Dufresne reminded the Commissioners that at the last STPPC meeting he had provided three (3) quotes from structural engineers for assessment and maintenance of Warehouse Bldg. #3. At that time, he was asked to obtain additional quotes from commercial inspection companies to provide an evaluation and maintenance assessment of Warehouse Building #3, and four (4) quotes were presented today. He said if the commission chooses, they can proceed with the lowest bid, provided by Advanced Building Inspections. Commissioner Joubert asked Mr. Dufresne if the quotes were from Louisiana companies, and Mr. Dufresne replied that all (4) companies were located on the North Shore. Commissioner DePaula said he didn’t think that the commission was ready to decide between a commercial inspection/assessment or structural engineering assessment. He asked that the quotes from all companies be compiled in some sort of report to better determine the type of inspection/maintenance assessment needed for Warehouse Building #3. Mr. DePaula said he would also like to see the background of each company and wondered if they might have a website. Mr. Dufresne told him all of the companies have a website, and that he would forward the website information, to be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Dufresne then introduced Andy Parker, of Premier Chemicals (Bayou Diesel). Mr. Parker told the Commissioners that he is proactively working on a maintenance schedule for Warehouse Building # 3. He said that there are some issues with the building, that the northeast corner of the building is “getting pretty ratty”, meaning the sheeting needed to be changed out, and they are getting quotes to do so. He said as soon as the quotes are received, he would present the quotes to Executive Director, Patrick Dufresne and that he wants to work together to create an annual maintenance program. He said he did not want to make any repairs without permission from the commission. He said most of the repairs would be cosmetic. Port attorney Andre Coudrain said the port is not obligated to make repairs, and anything structural should be reported to the Executive Director. Mr. Coudrain said the lease reads that the tenant is obligated to return property to the point with “reasonable wear and tear”. Mr. Parker said the repairs needed are “a little bit more than just putting a band aid on” but would not be structural, and that he would always run repairs by the Executive Director first “to be an open book about it.” Mr. Parker said that he’s already put money for repairs in their budget and would like to have the project done by March. Commissioner DePaula said regardless of what Premier Chemicals had planned for maintenance of the buildings, that going forward STPPC should have some sort of maintenance schedule in place. President Ferrara said he thought that we should go out and review the buildings for any issues. Commissioner Schliegelmeyer, Jr. said it was important to stay proactive and “ahead of the curve”, to maintain the buildings annually, and for the commission to add a maintenance line item to the budget. Commissioner Sheridan agreed. Mr. Dufresne said that he and Commissioner Schliegelmeyer, Jr. had discussed ideas on how to help keep dirt out of the buildings and thought paving with asphalt at the north end of both warehouse buildings might help, and if the Commission wanted, he would try to get some quotes for this process. Mr. Parker said that idea might help but said trucks drive through the buildings all the time and when it rains and it is humid, it becomes almost impossible to keep clean. He said the most important thing is to keep the areas dry and swept, and that paving around the buildings might help but would not fix the problem. Mr. Parker said, “The building might look dirty but that doesn’t mean it’s not being taken care of.” Commissioner Sheridan added “You can’t’ change the nature of the business.” Mr. Parker said in the next week or two he will have quotes for repairs and will send them to Mr. Dufresne for review and said he would not do anything until he receives approval from the commission. Mr. Parker thanked the Commissioners for their time and left the meeting.

1. **Warehouse Building #2 – update**

Mr. Dufresne told the Commissioners that the final invoice from L King Company, LLC had been received and approved by the project engineer, Jim Ragland of Ragland, Aderman and Associates. The invoice was added for review today as part of the Invoice Payment Approval. Port attorney Andre Coudrain said that today’s approval by the Commission would begin the acceptance of work process, and the retainage process, in which after 45 days if no one files a claim the final payment would be released. Mr. Coudrain recommended that the agenda be amended to add and approve the substantial completion of work by project contractor L King Company, LLC. A motion was made by Commissioner DePaula and seconded by Commissioner Sheridan to amend the agenda to add approval of the substantial completion of work by project contractor L King Company, LLC. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Joubert, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Roper.

Mr. Coudrain also recommended a vote by the commissioners to accept the substantial completion of work completed by project contractor, L King Company, LLC. A motion was made by Commissioner DePaula and seconded by Commissioner Sheridan to accept the substantial completion of work by L King Company, LLC. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Joubert, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Roper.

1. **Barge Dock Repair – update**

Mr. Dufresne told the Commissioners that the project engineer, Jim Ragland, is still developing the final cost estimate and scope of work for the barge dock repair, and should have an update at the December meeting. He said Mr. Ragland would forward the scope of work and cost estimate for the professional engineering services for the bid advertisement and construction phase to the commission for review when completed.

1. **Prospective Tenant(s) – update**

Mr. Dufresne told the Commissioners that since the last meeting he had received requests from 2 companies interested in transloading equipment by barge, on the land side adjacent to dock. He said they are still doing their research had that he had a meeting scheduled today with one of the companies. He said he would have additional information for the commission at the next meeting.

1. **Insurance Package for FY 2023-2024 – update**

Patrick Dufresne, Executive Director told the Commissioners there were no new insurance quotes this month from the port’s insurance broker, Jackson-Vaughn. Mr. Dufresne said he informed the insurance broker of the repairs being done to the buildings, but the request for insurance was still denied. Commissioner DePaula reminded everyone that the insurance was for wind coverage.

1. **Invoice Payment Approval**

Commissioner/Treasurer Schliegelmeyer, Jr. presented the current invoices for payment approval.

1. Cashe Coudrain & Bass

Services rendered through October 31, 2023

Inv# 126522 Matter # 4623-1 Amt. $300.00

Inv# 126523 Matter # 4623-10 Amt. $400.00

Inv# 126524 Matter # 4623-12 Amt. $160.00

 Total due = $860.00

1. L King Company, LLC

Project # STPPC 2023-01B / LKC 23-007

Pay App 7 Amt. $21,622.95

1. Loren C. Scott

For services rendered on November 2, 2023

Honorarium Amt. $3,500.00

1. Loren C. Scott & Associates, Inc.

LA Economic Forecast report - for distribution to attendees at event on November 2, 2023

Royalty fee Amt. $500.00

There were no questions from the Commissioners regarding the invoices. A motion was made by Commissioner DePaula and seconded by Commissioner Joubert that the Commission approve for payment the invoices presented today by Commissioner/Treasurer Schliegelmeyer, Jr. for Cashe, Coudrain & Bass, L King Company, LLC, Loren C. Scott, and Loren C. Scott and Associates, Inc. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Joubert, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Roper.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Financial – Proposed Budget – FY 2024**

Executive Director Patrick Dufresne said he met last week with the port’s accountant Lee Barends and Commissioner/Treasurer Jimmy Schliegelmeyer, Jr. to discuss the proposed budget for FY 2024. The draft was forwarded by email from Ms. Barends to the Commissioners, and a copy was placed in their meeting folders. He said that since that meeting, he asked Ms. Barends to add $5,000.00 to the legal expenses because the legal advertisement fees in the Official Journal of Record had increased. Mr. Dufresne said another item he wanted to discuss during the budget meeting but did not have the opportunity, was an increase in his salary, and salary adjustment for the administrative assistant position. Regarding his salary, Mr. Dufresne requested to receive the same amount as last year plus the amount he didn’t receive that he had requested, which equals approximately $165,000.00. Mr. Dufresne said, in addition, the administrative assistant position has not had a salary adjustment in the last 10 years and asked that an increase be considered. Ms. Barends reminded the Commissioners that this is just a proposed budget, that now is the time to talk about it, and that the final budget would be approved in December.

Reviewing the proposed 2024 budget, Commissioner DePaula said we don’t know what the insurance will be in 2024, however based on what was paid for this year, he thought the number was low. Ms. Barends said we can start with a higher number. She also said we don’t have an inspection/maintenance plan budget line item, and that is something to discuss as well, and asked if she should “add a number” for this item. Discussion was had regarding the types of maintenance to be done, such as painting, pressure washing the building, etc. Commissioner Schliegelmeyer, Jr. suggested that we could use money from the grant, however Mr. Dufresne said he would have to apply for a new LA-DOTD grant, and that it would take approximately 2 years to receive that money. It was agreed that Ms. Barends would add an inspection and maintenance line item to the proposed 2024 budget of approximately $50,000.00.

Discussion continued regarding the portfolio income. Ms. Barends said there is $50,000.00 in unrealized gains and losses on investments. The smaller amount ($600.00) is the interest income on the checking account. The other income ($1,300.00) is for small amounts that may come from refunds or other small income.

President Ferrara said that regarding Mr. Dufresne’s salary request, he thought that last year they had agreed on an annual evaluation process to be in place. Mr. Dufresne said that he had already given the commission his self-evaluation last year, and that it is basically the same for this year.

President Ferrara also said he intended to ask Andy Parker a few more questions before he left the meeting over concerns he had for issues inside of the warehouse buildings. Commissioner DePaula said the best way to monitor the buildings is to have our own quarterly inspection of the buildings to determine a historical record as to what the building looks like and what needs to happen. Commissioner Sheridan said she thought any company should have a protocol for spills including notification to the tenant, and Mr. Dufresne said there is one in place. President Ferrara asked about the possibility of getting cameras on the property. A brief discussion was had as to the value of having a camera on site. Executive Director Patrick Dufresne said Air Products has a camera that they are using for their own issues. Mr. Dufresne said he has the capability to see “stills” from the camera with Air Products, but the bandwidth “is a little sketchy”. Commissioner Sheridan said the cameras covering City Hall and maintenance yard store information up to 30 days. Commissioner Joubert said “I don’t think cameras are the answer.”

Port Attorney Andre Coudrain asked to “circle back” to Executive Director Pat Dufresne’s request for increased compensation. Commissioner DePaula said last year there was no process in place to properly evaluate the Executive Director to be fair, that there was a handbook, but he had never seen the finished product. He said that the administrative assistant had only been employed for six (6) months at the time of last year’s evaluations, and Mr. Dufresne was responsible for completing her evaluation. Mr. Coudrain said “One issue is for evaluation and one is for pay, that you don’t necessarily have to do both at the same time, however the evaluation could inform you on the decision to pay.” He said, “the most important thing is to follow through.” Commissioner DePaula agreed, said that a form had been created for the Executive Director’s evaluation, and he thinks the right thing to do is to have the form completed by the Executive Director every year. Mr. Dufresne said that he had already completed the form last year and that “it’s the same.” Commissioner DePaula said “If it’s the same information, it’s the same information, but in order to follow the rules properly, it is part of the process we have to go through.” Commissioner DePaula said he couldn’t recall what happened last year and asked Ms. Barends if she remembered. She said initially the anticipated salary increase was added in advance to the 2023 proposed budget and then removed. She said she was not sure when the actual salary increase occurred, but suggested checking the time frame from the meeting minutes. Ms. Barends said the commission should choose a date annually for evaluations, whether a salary increase is involved or not, that it is important for evaluations to be recorded. She suggested that each December of every year would be a good time to perform evaluations. Ms. Barends also said there was an employee handbook that an individual was paid over $5,000.00 to provide to the commission. Commissioner DePaula said that he had seen a draft of the handbook but felt there were a lot of problems with it. Commissioner Sheridan asked if all these issues would be on the agenda next month. Commissioner DePaula said they should be. Mr. Coudrain said to make a notation on the agenda that the commissioners may go into executive session to discuss.

Ms. Barends confirmed that at this time the only changes on the 2024 proposed budget will be to increase the insurance from $75,000.00 to $150,000.00, the legal expense from $10,000.00 to $15,000.00 and to add a line item for the inspection/maintenance program, starting with $50,000.00. She said she this is still a working document that she would modify and send with the October financials tomorrow morning, allowing plenty of time for conversation and adjustments before the next STPPC meeting in December. She reminded the commissioners again that the budget can always be amended.

A resolution for the public hearing was introduced by Commissioner DePaula.

At a regular meeting of the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission held on Wednesday, November 8, 2023 the following resolution was introduced and adopted; to wit:

Moved by Commissioner Sheridan, seconded by Commissioner Sims, that the Commission adopt the following resolution with regards to the Public Hearing for the proposed Budget for calendar year 2024, a copy being attached. The Public Hearing for the proposed 2024 Budget will take place Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at 9:00 a.m., Ponchatoula City Hall Annex, 110 W. Hickory St., Ponchatoula, LA. A Public Hearing Notice will be published for the 2024 Proposed Budget, as required by Louisiana Law, in the Ponchatoula Times, Official Journal of Record, on the following dates: November 16, November 23, November 30, and December 7, 2023.

Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Joubert, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Roper.

**Remarks:** Executive Director Patrick Dufresne thanked Commissioner Joubert and Commissioner Sheridan for the successful event with Dr Loren Scott. Commissioner Joubert said it was a group effort, and thanked the sponsors involved.

Having no further business, a motion for adjournment was made by Commissioner Sheridan and seconded by Commissioner DePaula. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Joubert, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Roper.

The meeting adjourned at 10:09 AM.

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Tina Roper, Secretary STPPC Daryl Ferrara, President STPPC