

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE AMITE RIVER BASIN DRAINAGE & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
Location: Livingston Parish Council Chambers 20355 Government Blvd., Livingston, La, 70754

**January 14, 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT DURING ROLL CALL: John Clark, Jack Harris, Lionel Bailey, Clint Cointment, Randy Delatte, Brin Ferlito, Mark Harrell, Fred Raiford

Note: ARBC Commissioner Peter “Pete” Dufresne entered the meeting following the Finance Report at 10:10 a.m.

MEMBERS ABSENT DURING ROLL CALL: Ryan Byrd, Edwin Parker

ALSO PRESENT: Brian Lezina, CPRA; Ed Knight, LADOTD; Randy Clouatre, Sr., PLD; Garvin Pittman, The Water Institute of the Gulf; Sam Cramptom, Dewberry; ARBC Executive Director Paul Sawyer; ARBC Executive Secretary Toni Guitrau; ARBC Legal Counsel Larry Bankston, Bankston & Associates; Lawrence E. Marino, Oats & Marino

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by ARBC President Clark.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Roll Call:** See above.

**4. Minutes. No Public Comments**

- The Board unanimously approved a motion by Delatte, seconded by Bailey to approve December 10, 2024 regular meeting minutes, as presented.
- The Board unanimously approved a motion by Delatte, seconded by Raiford to approve December 18, 2024 special meeting minutes, as presented.

**5. Financial Statements. No Public Comments**

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Bailey, seconded by Harris, to approve the November 30, 2024 General Fund and CRDC Fund financial statements, as presented.

**6. Report by ARBC President – No Public Comments**

- Clark introduced and welcomed Paul Sawyer. Clark noted that Paul Sawyer is working for ARBC under Professional Services contract. Clark stated Sawyer has over 30 years of experience working with high-level government and has been very instrumental regarding flooding in the Amite River Basin. He has helped with project funding, communities, and the whole area with their natural resources, particularly dealing with flood protection. Sawyer was formally Congressman Graves’ Chief of Staff. He will work with ARBC to move forward with flooding solutions in the Amite River Basin.  
Sawyer spoke regarding problem solving, delivering solutions and working for the people of the Amite River Basin. He stated the problems are difficult, but obvious. The solutions are complex, but with this newly constituted Board, ARBC has the ability to be aligned, focused and deliver results for the people. He stated he appreciates the opportunity to work for and with the Board and to continue serving in the capacity that benefits the constituents and citizens of the Amite River Basin.
- Clark asked the Board to add to the agenda the item, “Request for Amendment to IGA 2000758493 between ARBC & CPRA.” As requested, the Board unanimously approved a motion by Harris, seconded by Bailey to add to the agenda the item “Request for Amendment to IGA 2000758493 between ARBC & CPRA.” The Board unanimously approved a motion by Harrell, seconded by Delatte to modify said motion to include upon completion of data in final form it can be released to any agency.
- The Board unanimously approved a motion by Bailey, seconded by Harrell, to Request for Amendment to IGA 2000758493 between ARBC & CPRA and upon completion of data in final form it can be released to any agency. The agreement has a deadline of March 31, 2025, and this amendment is to extend the deadline to June 30, 2025.

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- Clark requested the Board to add to the agenda that it be requested to OCD/LWI to use the \$27M toward the “Lower Amite River Sediment Removal and Channel Restoration Project formally for the Comite River Snagging Project. At the January 14, 2025 meeting, the Upper Comite River Clearing and Snagging Project was withdrawn and tabled by vote of the Board. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Harrell, seconded by Delatte to add said item “Resolution 1184” to the agenda.
- The Board unanimously approved a motion by Harrell, seconded by Bailey to approve Resolution 1184. A Resolution of the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District to Request from the Louisiana Office of Community Development the reallocation of Louisiana Watershed Initiative funds from the Upper Comite Clearing and Snagging Project to the Lower Amite River Sediment Removal and Channel Restoration Project.

#### **7. Report by Legal Counsel – No public comments**

- Bankston reported that in a meeting with Paul Sawyer regarding the Master Plan, Sawyer recommended transmitting a letter to the Louisiana Transportation Committee Chairman of the Senate and House requesting their approval to modify the timetable of the Commission’s required Annual Plan deliverable to the Committee and Legislature. If approved this will allow for the required submittal of the Master Plan and not a separate Annual Plan. He stated a draft letter to the Legislature is in the Board’s packet requesting to modify the timetable so ARBC can focus on the Master Plan this year. Bankston stated the letter will go out to the two committees and the ARBC delegation members.
- Discussed any suggested changes to legislation the Board may deem necessary. If there are suggestions for changes, Board input will be needed soon so the full board can vote on it before the next upcoming legislative session.

#### **8. Old Business – No public comments**

- Report/Presentation by Garvin Pittman, The Water Institute of the Gulf. This presentation is available on the ARBC website at [www.amitebasin.org](http://www.amitebasin.org). He stated he will be assisting with Paul Sawyer’s transition. Sawyer stated the ARBC Board has been reconstituted and are engaged in a Master Plan. ARBC needs projects that have been accomplished. There are efforts underway, but projects need to be completed. He stated there have been record events and record funding in and around the Amite River Basin. There have been intrapariish projects done and efforts underway, but noted we are 8 years outside of the August 2016 flood. It was the 4<sup>th</sup> costliest natural disaster in US history at the time. The importance of the Master Plan will establish the reputation of the ARBC and in turn enable ARBC to get funding to put protections in place. Delatte stated that in his opinion, in Livingston Parish the federal liaison keeps these projects from being completed whether it is the EPA, FEMA, and/or the USACE, etc. Livingston Parish is one year into a permit application and doesn’t see an end in sight. He said he believes the state has been doing its job. The Board discussed this further as a major setback to many projects. Clark thanked Garvin Pittman for all the work he does to help administer reimbursement for ARBC.
- Monthly Report/Presentation by Sam Crampton with Dewberry – Status of the ARBC Master Plan. This presentation is available on the ARBC website at [www.amitebasin.org](http://www.amitebasin.org). On December 31, 2024, a draft was submitted to the Board for their comments and input. Comments are requested by January 20, 2025. An updated draft will be provided to the Board by March 14, 2025, with Board comments due by March 26, 2025. The Final Plan will be delivered by April 4, 2025.
- Status of Four Parish President Board Member’s Projects through Region 9/LWI/\$100M for the most impacted and distressed areas.
  - EBR Parish – Bayou Manchac Channel Improvements and Realignment of Ward Creek – Raiford stated the application is done and verified by OCD. The model has been completed. It is an important project for EBR, Iberville and Ascension Parishes. They are pushing hard to get this project underway. Going through a process of getting an engineer on record on this project, they go through a selection board. Clark said this project is the result of a tri-parish IGA.
  - Livingston Parish President Randy Delatte - The Lower Amite River Channel Restoration Project. Delatte stated this was \$20M with LWI Region 9/ARBC and they are still in the process of working on the CEA. Survey is completed with the exception of one sight to recheck. Modelers have been reviewing existing H&H Model information. Elos submitted the environmental permit application last year. They are waiting for a letter of clearance. Delatte stated he would work hard to assist St. James Parish in the same way Ascension Parish President Cointment has helped Livingston Parish.

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- St. James Parish President Peter “Pete” Dufresne – Westshore Connection Levee Project. Dufresne stated their application was submitted and they are currently addressing comments from OCD. H&H Model was completed and submitted with the application. The permits to cover the work were submitted as part of the levee permit application in September 2024. This is a very large-scale project that is progressing. Dufresne stated it means everything to the east bank of St. James Parish. The Board discussed negative impacts of projects that may not proceed concurrently, as proposed. Clark said there needs to be a method and a sequence to offset any downstream impacts.
- Ascension Parish President Clint Cointment – New River Pumpstation and Channel Improvements. Cointment stated most of the projects being discussed have been worked on for the last few years. He stated that Ascension Parish has invested its own money into its project. The LWI funding gets all the projects being discussed to the finish line. Ascension Parish has done surveys, elevations etc., and is negotiating for right of way and property acquisitions for getting these waters to the pump station. It has committed \$21M in local funds in addition to the LWI \$40M to get to the \$61M to build the station. This includes the improvements, Hwy. 74 diversion to get water into the Marvin Braud Basin from the Bluff Swamp and Spanish Lake. When there are storms in Ascension, EBR and Iberville Parishes, Manchac stays elevated, and they have to close the gates. When this happens, there is no way to get the water out. This pump station will divert that water under Hwy. 74 into Marvin Braud Basin, send it to the pump station then into the Mississippi River which has unlimited capacity. Sending it to the Mississippi River only has positive impacts. It will not negatively impact Livingston or St. James Parishes. He stated these 4 projects are all interconnected, and they are doing all they can to expedite them. This is why ARBC is important, and it is imperative to push these projects, reduce bureaucracy and do whatever it takes for constituents.
- CRDC Project Status. Bankston provided the monthly update. Larry Marino stated Brooks Lake is to be determined. Bankston said some Florida Gas items that have not started are 500 calendar days, 360 calendar days and 300 calendar days. Monthly updates can be found on the ARBC website at [www.amitebasin.org](http://www.amitebasin.org).

**9. New Business –No public comments**

Bank Resolution. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Cointment seconded by Harrell to authorize Paul Sawyer as a signer to the ARBC accounts with Hancock Whitney.

**10. General or Non-Agenda Item(s) Public Comments.** Mr. Ricky Goff of Walker, Louisiana, Livingston Parish Council District #7. As a councilman and constituent, he thanked the Board for anything they can accomplish in getting rid of the water that causes the constituents problems. He stressed the importance of putting funding where it was the most impacted after the August 2016 flood. He also stated regarding the New River Pumpstation, putting water into the Mississippi River instead of downstream is awesome.

**11.** The Board unanimously approved a motion by Cointment, seconded by Harris, to adjourn the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

APPROVED:

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/s/John Clark/ARBC President  
Date: February 11, 2025

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/s/ Toni B. Guitrau, Executive Secretary