

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE AMITE RIVER BASIN DRAINAGE & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
Location: **Ascension Parish Council Chambers 607 E. Worthey St., Gonzales, LA 70737**

**February 11, 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT DURING ROLL CALL: John Clark, Jack Harris, Lionel Bailey, Clint Cointment, Peter “Pete” Dufresne, Brin Ferlito, Mark Harrell, Fred Raiford

MEMBERS ABSENT DURING ROLL CALL: Ryan Byrd, Randy Delatte, Edwin Parker

ALSO PRESENT: Greg Grandy, CPRA; Ed Knight, LADOTD; Randy Clouatre, Sr., PLD; 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. There were no public comments.**

- The Board unanimously approved a motion by Cointment, seconded by Harrell to approve January 14, 2025, regular meeting minutes, as presented.

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

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Bailey, seconded by Cointment, to approve the December 31, 2024, General Fund and CRDC Fund financial statements, as presented.

**6. Report by ARBC President. There were no public comments.**

- Clark discussed an Army Corps of Engineers’ article, “Sediment Gets New Life” found in a Mississippi magazine.
- Clark recognized an audience member Louisiana Representative Wiley.

**7. Report by Executive Director Paul Sawyer. There were no public comments.**

- LWI Region 9 Transformational Projects Overview – ARBC is the Region 9 Steering Committee. These projects are monitored by ARBC but were allocated individually to the parishes Ascension, St. James, Livingston, and EBR. Sawyer has been assisting EBR Parish as a go-between. He spent time with OCD to identify any chokepoints to help manage and expedite project consideration and delivery. The applicants are handling these projects on their own, but ARBC is standing by to assist.
- Round 2 Project(s) – One project was by E. Feliciana Parish to clear and snag the upper Comite River. This was later deemed to be ineligible. At the last ARBC meeting, the Board passed a resolution to reallocate the approximate \$27M with preference toward lower Amite River dredging. OCD is ready to work with ARBC to reallocate the funds, but they want to discuss this with the applicant first to be certain the applicant does not have any other projects and that they are willing to allow the funds to be reallocated. On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, he and Commissioner Parker attended a East Feliciana Jury meeting. At the meeting, the jurors approved a motion to entertain a resolution to support the reallocation of said funds back to Region 9, and particularly toward dredging the lower Amite River. Once passed, OCD will close it out with E. Feliciana Parish. ARBC has committed to working with E. Feliciana Parish to identify opportunities for flood mitigation. Clark reminded the Board that the Round 2 Projects had LMI and environmental requirements whereas the \$100 million allocated to MID did not.
- Capital Outlay – Last year \$2M was approved for ecosystem restoration in the upper Amite. The ARBC Commission has identified sand gravel pits for ecosystem restoration. Clark has identified a working group to identify options for ARBC to take to FP&C so there can be a kickoff meeting to commence with spending \$2M. This would put ARBC in place to secure additional capital outlay funds in the next legislative session to continue that work.

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- Master Plan – Sawyer stated that Dewberry is solidifying the Master Plan. Input is requested by the ARBC Commissioners. There has to be a roll-out plan to communicate it to the public. He reminded the Board that the Master Plan must be delivered to the legislators by April 14<sup>th</sup> when session begins.
- Annual Plan – At the last ARBC meeting, 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. They have since approved this request. This will allow for the required submittal of the Master Plan and not a separate Annual Plan.
- CRDC Project – The CRDC Project is the largest regional project in the Amite River Basin. It is a USACE Project costing approximately \$1 billion to divert water from the system and into the Mississippi River.
- East Baton Rouge Parish Flood Project – This is another USACE Project costing approximately \$255 million that is designed to essentially clean the plumbing of EBR Parish to evacuate that water into the Amite River and Bayou Manchac. Much of the work of that project has been done, which is primarily clearing and snagging in the lower bayous of EBR Parish. There is more work to be done in the upper parts of the parish. He stated it is years away for both the CRDC Project and the EBR Parish Flood Project.
- Sawyer mentioned to the Board that the deadline for FEMA funding opportunities through FMA and BRIC may be extended past April 2025.
- SCR 79 of 2024 Regular Session by Senator Valarie Hodges – Sawyer stated this SCR was to request the DOTD to conduct an engineering study on the upper Amite River Basin and evaluate all areas with the potential capacity to detain or retain stormwater runoff through a system of structures. These are largely items already captured in the ARBC Draft Master Plan. It is important because with the major component of the ARBC Master Plan along with legislative initiative, there is legislative momentum, there is an opportunity for ARBC to work with the legislature to accomplish project initiatives in the upper Amite. DOTD, ARBC Commissioner Knight encouraged all the ARBC Commissioners to read SCR 79 by Senator Valarie Hodges. He stated Senator Hodges had the vision to look at the upper Amite for detention along with asking for the cooperation of all the entities to put a report together which saved the state a lot of money. It is important in treating the Amite Basin system as a whole.
- Next month, City of Central Mayor Evans will be a guest speaker at the ARBC's regular meeting to explain their highly effective efforts to reduce flood risks and flood premiums.

**8. Report by Legal Counsel. No public comments**

- Bankston reported the upcoming legislative session begins April 14<sup>th</sup>. He stated if there is a desire for modifications to ARBC existing legislation, that decision will need to be made by the next ARBC meeting. He also thanked Representative Wiley for his help in the last session with getting legislation through.
- Bankston has been working on a "time-extension" amendment to the IGA between ARBC and CPRA to extend the deadline of spending the money to June 30, 2026. Any funds left over after development of the Annual and Master Plans can be used toward promulgation of procedures and recommendations.

**9. Old Business. There were no public comments.**

- Monthly Report/Presentation by Garvin Pittman, The Water Institute of the Gulf. There is no report as Mr. Pittman is not present.
- 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 to be submitted as soon as possible. Bayou Manchac Restoration and Wards Creek Realignment - Dewberry has obtained the models from PLD and are running and incorporating "all project features" into the plan. 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. The Board will approve the final plan at its April 8, 2025 board meeting.
- Status of Four Parish President Board Member's Projects through Region 9/LWI/\$100M for the most impacted and distressed "MID" areas.
  - EBR Parish – Bayou Manchac Channel Improvements and Realignment of Ward Creek – Raiford stated he met with Paul Sawyer about the CEA with OCD, which is being put together. Raiford mentioned that since there is a new administration change, they may need to go back to them since it was the previous administration that approved the resolution. They are developing the Scope of Work. It is an important project for EBR, Iberville and Ascension Parishes and everyone wants this project done fast.

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- Livingston Parish/Lower Amite River Channel Restoration Project. Harrell, on behalf of Livingston Parish, stated they are moving forward with sediment removal. They are trying to remove sediment from north of where Manchac hits the Amite River to the lake or to the 6000-7000 feet before the lake that has already been done. They are currently waiting on funding that is to be reallocated from E. Feliciana so they can do the complete waterway. Harrell stated that over the last few years, Livingston Parish has agreed to accept water from other parishes but with the hopes of removing sediment on the Amite River. He stated we are all part of the Amite River Basin and projects must work in a certain order so everyone can benefit. Clark stated that the nature of the ARBC Board is to work together on projects, in sequence, so there are no downstream impacts.
- St. James Parish President Peter “Pete” Dufresne – West Shore Connector Levee Project. Dufresne deferred to engineer Kevin O’Gorman of IntraCoastal Consultants. O’Gorman stated the application was submitted in December 2024 for the \$10 million that was voted on by the ARBC. They submitted for a permit in September 2024 for the levee component and the pump stations along that feature. They have addressed comments from OCD.
- Ascension Parish Project – No update.
- CRDC Project Status. Monthly updates can be found on the ARBC website at [www.amitebasin.org](http://www.amitebasin.org). Sawyer stated that much has been done on the 12-mile-long project, however there is a 1959, 52” gas pipeline that has intersected with it, so it has taken years to negotiate with the pipeline. The USACE can’t tell a pipeline company that they have to move because a pipeline is governed by FERC. Sawyer stated the project will commence and relocations will continue. The design is yet to be finalized on the Comite River Diversion Control Structure. On the river side there are new risks in the outfall where the pipeline is located. Clark noted that the USACE and DOTD are working on it and Senator Valarie Hodges with the CRDC Task Force will not let up on it, going full throttle.

**10. New Business. There were no public comments.**

- Flood Awareness Month Proclamation. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Dufresne, seconded by Harrell to proclaim March 2025 as Flood Awareness Month.

**11. General or Non-Agenda Item(s) Public Comments.** PLD, ARBC Commissioner, Randy Clouatre, Sr. stated that based on 50% completion, the CRDC Project can lower flood insurance premiums. He appreciates the fight to complete the CRDC Project, and in representing the people.

**12.** The Board unanimously approved a motion by Cointment, seconded by Bailey, to adjourn the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

APPROVED:

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

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/s/ Toni B. Guitrau, Executive Secretary