

March 11, 2025

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT DURING ROLL CALL: John Clark, Jack Harris, Lionel Bailey, Ryan Byrd, Clint Cointment, Randy Delatte, Peter “Pete” Dufresne, Brin Ferlito, Mark Harrell, Edwin Parker, Fred Raiford

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT DURING ROLL CALL: None

ALSO PRESENT: Brian Lezina, CPRA; Ed Knight, LADOTD; Seth Bradley, Dewberry; ARBC Executive Director Paul Sawyer; ARBC Executive Secretary Toni Guitrau; ARBC Legal Counsel Larry Bankston, Bankston & Associates; Lawrence E. Marino, Oats & Marino

MEMBERS ALSO ABSENT: Randy Clouatre, Sr., PLD

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 Parker, seconded by Bailey to approve February 11, 2025, regular meeting minutes, as presented.

5. Financial Statements. No Public Comments

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Bailey, seconded by Parker, to approve January 31, 2025, General Fund and CRDC Fund financial statements, as presented.

6. Proposed Administrative Budget 2025-2026. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Harrell, seconded by Harris to approve the Budget of 2025-2026, as proposed. Note to Minutes: The budget includes Total Income \$572,000, Total Expenses \$567,700. General Government \$177,000 which includes a 7% raise for Toni Guitrau, Executive Secretary. Professional Services \$390,700 which includes \$250,000 for Amite River Solutions/Paul Sawyer, Executive Director, as per Professional Services contract.

7. Report by ARBC President. There were no public comments.

- Clark recognized an audience member Louisiana Representative Wiley.
- Clark introduced Mayor of Central Wade Evans as ARBC Guest Speaker.

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

- Comite River Diversion Canal 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. The project is moving forward, but the biggest hurdle is the relocation of major interstate gas pipelines. There are no official timelines.
- East Baton Rouge Parish Flood Project – 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. This project is funded by the USACE and EBR Parish. There are no LMI requirements, but it does benefit LMI areas.
- The LWI Projects are being done by the parishes. ARBC and E. Feliciana Parish have met all requirements to reallocate the funding. ARBC Commissioner/Livingston Parish President Delatte thanked ARBC Commissioner Parker and E. Feliciana citizens. He stated the funding will be utilized to help the whole region, including them.

- Master Plan – Sawyer stated that Dewberry is in process of completing the Master Plan. Input is requested by the ARBC Commissioners, including resolving any questions they may have. The Master Plan will be voted on at the April 8, 2025, ARBC meeting.
- Capital Outlay – Last year \$2M was approved for ecosystem restoration in the upper Amite. ARBC is scheduling a meeting with FP&C to take the next steps.

9. Guest Speaker – Presentation by Mayor of Central Wade Evans and Stokka Brown of CSRS (available on ARBC website) City of Central Stormwater Management Transformation – Mayor Evans and Stokka Brown of CSRS presented detailed information on the following: Living Data and Hydraulic Model Management, Stormwater System Maintenance, Stormwater System Improvements, Funding Strategy/Grant Applications, Regulatory Improvements, Community Engagement and Education, Flood Warning System, and FEMA Community Rating System (CRS).

10. Report by Legal Counsel. No public comments

Bankston stated the “time-extension” amendment to the IGA between ARBC and CPRA to extend the deadline of spending the money to June 30, 2026, has been fully executed.

11. Old Business. There were no public comments.

- Monthly Report/Presentation by Garvin Pittman, The Water Institute of the Gulf. Region 9 Coordinator Update. This report is available on the ARBC Website.
- Approval of Master Plan Recommendations. Sawyer stated there was a Master Plan Workshop #3 Meeting where recommendations were made for the full ARBC Board Members to consider for approval. By roll call vote, the Board unanimously approved a motion by Cointment, seconded by Harrell to approve proposed recommendations, as amended to include the St. James West Shore Connector Levee Project. Yeas: Bailey, Byrd, Clark, Cointment, Delatte, Dufresne, Ferlito, Harrell, Harris, Parker, Raiford. Nays: None. It was then noted that the St. James West Shore Connector Levee Project is included in the Master Plan and will not need to be added. For the record, Cointment stated the Highway 22 Gapping Project allows flood waters to enter Ascension Parish’s 8000 acres of swamp. It retains the water in wetlands instead of it going downstream so that it has a benefit to parishes south of it. Highway 22 is a dam causing more water to be forced down the diversion canal which forces more water into Blind River which impacts St. James. For the record, Harrell asked that references to the Lower and Upper Amite be defined. Sawyer stated that the Lower Amite is the convergence of Comite River and Amite River South. Harrell suggested this be defined in the Master Plan.
- Status of Master Plan by Dewberry. Seth Bradley, with Dewberry, stated that the St. James project is confirmed as listed in the Master Plan. He stated a draft of the Master Plan will be provided to the Board by March 14, 2025. Dewberry will need comments from the Board as soon as possible, as well as notification if there are no comments. The “All Projects Model” is running, which will tell how many structures will be removed from being considered as in a floodplain if all the projects are implemented. There would be annualized flood risk reduction and projected insurance policy savings if all the projects are implemented. The sequencing of projects was discussed per Harrell’s request to place project sequencing in the Master Plan. Cointment stated the previous item that was already concluded and passed by the Board would then have to be reconsidered. He stated the impacts of sequencing should be talked about by every member of the Board. Cointment stated that if this were the order, then nothing in the Lower Amite could be done until St. James does theirs first, then no project would meet the OCD deadlines. He explained more regarding the impact of sequencing projects, since this is the first time sequencing is being discussed. In response to Cointment’s comments, Ferlito stated that backup data is needed to decide these projects, and to leap into a sequence at this point may delay projects. At this time, we don’t have the backup data to say the consequences of each individual project to put that in a sequence. She is concerned about determining the sequence in such a short time and possibly getting it wrong because it was done on a big picture and not actually valuating each project for what it is worth and then defining the consequences to determine the sequence. Harrell stated OCD should never allow any project to move forward that may have a negative impact. He stated he feels this should be spelled out in the Master Plan and sequencing should be done before moving forward because most of the projects on the books effect Livingston Parish. It was noted that they also effect St. James Parish. Harris stated this was all taken into consideration at Master Plan meetings, and that the Master Plan is a concept. He explained that each project stands on its own merit and any negative impact it may have. In the Master Plan, there were asterisks placed on some projects that need to be further addressed. In discussion, members of the Board expressed the pros and cons of Harrell’s request. A motion by Parker, seconded by

Harrell to reconsider the previous motion to include sequencing of projects in the Master Plan failed due to a tie vote. Yeas: Byrd, Clark, Harrell, Parker, Raiford and Nays: Bailey, Cointment, Dufresne, Ferlito, Harris. Not Present: Delatte. Note: ARBC Commissioner Ed Knight exited the meeting at 11:30 a.m. ARBC Commissioner Delatte exited the meeting at 11:34 a.m. Seth Bradley stated there will be critical sequencing where needed and estimated impacts in the draft this Friday. The projects were conceptually analyzed and not fully engineer designed. Brian Lezina, CPRA, stated that as a non-voting member of ARBC, the Master Plan is not an engineering document and ARBC does not have the availability to vet the projects through 90% design. The Master Plan is to give a good first look at what are beneficial projects for the Amite River Basin Commission. There is a sense of feasibility of the projects, and it is also a menu. There is no way to say which project will be done first without knowing what funding is on hand and what the priorities are. It would be tough to implement a plan that has a prescribed implementation of order, and it may derail the whole thing. He urged the Master Plan team to include as much information as they currently can in the Master Plan. If negative impacts are known, then put it in the Master Plan. The ARBC needs to be given as much flexibility as possible to implement these projects. Seth Bradley stated the Master Plan does include a forecasting section. The Amite Basin-wide model will leverage all available National Service products including gage and rainfall forecasting. It will be an instant product you can pull up based in a GIS user-friendly system. Also, in regard to ground water recharge, the Upper Amite detention will address this by helping recharge the Southern Hills Aquifer and potentially provide drinking water.

12. New Business. None. There were no public comments.

13. General or Non-Agenda Item(s) Public Comments. Cindy O'Neal asked about LWI's proposed deadlines for projects. LWI would have to answer the question.

14. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Harrell, seconded by Harris, to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

APPROVED:

/s/John Clark/ARBC President
Date: April 8, 2025

/s/ Toni B. Guitrau, Executive Secretary