

April 8, 2025

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT DURING ROLL CALL: Jack Harris, Lionel Bailey, Randy Delatte, Peter “Pete” Dufresne, Mark Harrell, Edwin Parker, Fred Raiford, Ron Savoy

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT DURING ROLL CALL: Ryan Byrd, John Clark, Brin Ferlito

ALSO PRESENT: Randy Clouatre, Sr., PLD, Ed Knight, LADOTD; Seth Bradley, Dewberry; ARBC Executive Director Paul Sawyer; ARBC Executive Secretary Toni Guitrau; ARBC Legal Counsel Larry Bankston, Bankston & Associates

1. Call to Order

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

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 March 11, 2025, regular meeting minutes, as presented.

5. Financial Statements. There were no public comments.

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Bailey, seconded by Parker, to approve February 28, 2025, General Fund and CRDC Fund financial statements, as presented.

6. Administrative Budget 2024-2025, Amendment #2. No Public Comments. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Parker, seconded by Bailey to approve the Administrative Budget 2024-2025, Amendment #2, as proposed.

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

- Sawyer mentioned that the Louisiana Legislature is in session. In addition to seeking \$2 million in additional capital outlay this session, there are two bills before the Legislature introduced by Rep. Kathy Edmonston, which effect the Commission. H.B. 165 removes the deadline for the Commission to promulgate rules by January 1, 2026, and H.B. 172 extends the Scenic Rivers Act exemption to Bayou Manchac until 2030. These bills will be discussed further when we take up resolutions in support under New Business. It is appropriations season in the U.S. Congress. The ARBC has already submitted funding requests to Rep. Letlow to fund Upper Amite Restoration and the Digital Twin concept (as proposed in the draft master plan). We expect to make as many as 17 requests for more projects that will be described at the next meeting.
- Sawyer stated there are ongoing conversations with LWI about available money so that projects can be identified and pursued in those two parishes that are feasible, ready for funding, and will also comply with the ARBC Master Plan. He will report on the progress and the status of these at upcoming meetings.
- Capital Outlay. Sawyer stated there was an initial kickoff meeting with Facility Planning and Controls. He and Mr. Bankston are going to initiate further discussions about moving the logistical ball down the road. They have identified properties. Commissioner Parker is also engaged in specifically identifying areas for ARBC to pursue. This Capital Outlay is for the upper Amite Flood Reduction and Restoration Project. After identifying properties, the next step is to secure those properties. He stated that along these lines, there have been discussions with the Division of Administration. DOA has asked to meet with them to talk about further Capital Outlay requests to support this initiative.
- Comite River Diversion Canal Project. On April 11, 2025, the USACE is hosting a ceremony for Brooks Lake Closure. Sawyer stated he believes the nature and the purpose of this event is to recognize that the Corps of Engineers in the State of Louisiana have signed an agreement and executed perhaps its last biggest hurdle, which is to identify the tracts of land in the alignment for the Brooks Lake feature of the project. The pipeline crossing has been the most disruptive part of getting the Comite River Diversion Canal completed, and it was

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE AMITE RIVER BASIN DRAINAGE & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Location: **Livingston Parish Council Chambers, 20355 Government Blvd., Livingston, La, 70754**

discovered that another pipeline was at the Brooks Lake Closure. The project could not be completed until the issue of that pipeline was resolved and this is a ceremony to essentially recognize that it has been resolved, and that final alignment acquisition can continue and be completed, and the project can be constructed.

- Annual Plan. Sawyer will present an updated ARBC Annual Plan to the Joint House and Senate Transportation Committee on April 14, 2025. This update includes minor changes.
- Master Plan. A drafting session to complete the Master Plan has been scheduled for April 21, 2025, 10 am. He stated ARBC has been pursuing the completion of the Master Plan. However, it is the legislature's interpretation that ARBC has satisfied its requirement to present them with a plan with the submission of the ARBC Annual Plan a year ago.

8. Report by Legal Counsel. There were no public comments. Bankston stated they are monitoring for any pre-filed legislation that may have an effect on the ARBC.

9. Old Business. There were no public comments.

- Monthly Report/Presentation by Garvin Pittman, The Water Institute of the Gulf. Region 9 Coordinator Update.

10. New Business. There were no public comments.

- Resolution 1185 – The board unanimously approved a motion by Raiford, seconded by Harrell to approve Resolution 1185, as presented. A Resolution of the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District to support H.B. 172 by Representative Kathy Edmonston to extend the period for which the Comite River and Bayou Manchac are exempt from certain provisions of the Louisiana Scenic Rivers Act.
- Resolution 1186 – The Board unanimously approved a motion by Delatte, seconded by Bailey to approve Resolution 1186, as presented. A Resolution of the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District to support H.B. 165 by Representative Kathy Edmonston to remove the deadline for the Amite River Basin Commission to promulgate regulations for watershed management and other purposes.
- Resolution 1187 – The board unanimously approved a motion by Harrell, seconded by Parker to approve Resolution 1187, as presented. A Resolution authorizing Paul Sawyer, in his capacity as Executive Director of the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District, and/or John Clark, ARBC President, to execute acts of subordination, right-of-entry agreements, right-of-way agreements, and servitude agreements, subject to review and approval by legal counsel, in connection with the Comite River Diversion Project, State Project No. H.007811, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana (the "Project").

11. Public Comments and/or ARBC Board Members discussion on General or Non-Agenda Items. There were no comments.

12. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Bailey, seconded by Parker, to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

APPROVED:

/s/John Clark/ARBC President
Date: May 13, 2025

/s/ Toni B. Guitrau, Executive Secretary