

May 13, 2025

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

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT DURING ROLL CALL: Ryan Byrd, Peter “Pete” Dufresne, Mark Harrell, Edwin Parker

ALSO ABSENT: Brian Lezina, CPRA

ALSO PRESENT: Larry Marino, Oats & Marino, Randy Clouatre, Sr., PLD, Ed Knight, LADOTD; Sam Cramptom, Dewberry; Garvin Pittman, The Water Institute of the Gulf, 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 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 Raiford, seconded by Cointment to approve April 8, 2025, regular meeting minutes, as presented.

5. Financial Statements. There were no public comments.

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Bailey, seconded by Cointment, to approve March 31, 2025, and April 30, 2025, General Fund and CRDC Fund financial statements, as presented.

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

- Capital Outlay. Upper Amite Flood Reduction and Restoration Project. This is the Capital Outlay project for which ARBC currently has \$2 million in cash. ARBC is doing an inventory of properties in the upper area. A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Resource Conservation Service in Alexandria, Louisiana. They have resources available that could help with restoration efforts. ARBC currently has another request for Capital Outlay for \$2 million that is currently being reviewed in legislature.
- ARBC has submitted 17 congressional appropriations requests directly for ARBC and on behalf of parishes which will be catalogued and sent to commissioners and to the public.
- Sawyer mentioned that tomorrow morning, they are presenting to the House Committee on Natural Resources two bills introduced by Rep. Kathy Edmonston, which the Commission supports. 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.
- Master Plan. Sawyer stated public meetings to present the Master Plan are being scheduled in Livingston, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana and East Ascension Parishes. Dates will be provided at a later time. They will be meeting with OCD, which manages LWI, to discuss items they need to address, including some projects that are in the ARBC Master Plan.
- Comite River Diversion Canal Project. The Corps plans to advertise and hopefully execute the last six remaining contracts on the CRDC Project by the end of this calendar year.
- East Baton Rouge Parish “5 Bayous” Flood Project – USACE Project costing approximately \$255 million. These are essentially 5 separate projects in various stages of progress. The 2 bayous in the north, Black Water and Beaver Bayous, are under preliminary actions in terms of rights-of-entry and access points for the Corps to get into the water bodies. Much of the work has been done on the lower 3 water bodies, Bayou Fountain, Wards Creek, and Jones Creek. Hopefully, these projects will be completed by 2028 with a timeline to finish in 2029-2030. Raiford stated they are meeting with the Corps on June 12, 2025 to go over the status of these projects. This project is funded by the USACE and EBR Parish. Delatte asked Sawyer if he could find out if Allen Bayou in Livingston Parish can qualify for LWI. Sawyer will add that to his list to discuss with LWI.

- Clark stated HB 172 that extends the Scenic Rivers Act exemption to Bayou Manchac has nothing to do with changing the natural integrity, the static value or function of the rivers. Sawyer stated that even the minor things of moving the obvious trash and tree stumps out of the water could not be done because the Scenic Rivers Act would not allow it to happen. There is no intention to disrupt or affect the scenic value and integrity of any of these water bodies, but there has to be some give and take.
- **Report by Legal Counsel.** There were no public comments. Bankston mentioned that if the Scenic Rivers statute had not been extended in the Comite, there is a question as to whether or not the Corps could have continued to construct the weir that will be there. Because of the date in which the Comite River Diversion Canal Project will be completed, the weir will be one of the last features to be done. If that is done past 2026, there is a question as to whether or not the Corps would proceed with the construction of the weir that would divert water into the diversion canal. For that project alone, the legislation is necessary. Bankston stated they are monitoring any legislation that may have an effect on the ARBC. Sawyer stated that Larry Bankston has been, with his experience, assisting and guiding ARBC through what will potentially be acquisitions in the Upper Amite.

7. Old Business. There were no public comments.

- Master Plan – Sam Crampton, with Dewberry, presented a summary of the proposed Master Plan. The full Master Plan can be located at www.amitebasin.org/master-plan-1. The summary included the following: Improve the accuracy of FEMA flood maps, Encourage participation and support ARBC communities in the CRS program, Encourage ARBC communities to adopt more consistent ordinances and codes, Implement programs that reduce flood risk, Implement robust operation and maintenance of programs, Facilitate capacity building for the local community of practice and public, Provide tools and datasets to support emergency preparedness and response, Funding, and Reduce flood risk through physical projects. In 2025, the average annual direct flood losses are approximately \$210 million. By implementing the Master Plan flood risk reduction projects, the average annual direct flood losses could see a 52% reduction by the year 2050. Without implementing the plan flood risk reduction projects there could be a 260% increase. Sawyer thanked Livingston Parish for their help and input on the Master Plan's CRS portion. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Cointment, seconded by Raiford. Roll call vote was as follows:

Yeas: John Clark, Jack Harris, Lionel Bailey, Clint Cointment, Randy Delatte, Brin Ferlito, Fred Raiford

Nays: None

Absent: Ryan Byrd, Peter "Pete" Dufresne, Mark Harrell, Edwin Parker

Abstain: None

Clark stated that ARBC Commissioners Mark Harrell and Ed Parker both supported the passing of the Master Plan but were unable to attend today. Raiford commented that the commitment of these 7 parishes on the ARBC Board in trying to reduce flooding for residents, says a lot in the direction we are headed. Ferlito thanked Dewberry and the team which includes HNTB, Forte and Tablada, ELOS, and La Terre on the outstanding job they did in putting the Master Plan together and for participating in and encouraging all the dialogue. She said that many man-hours were spent reading and fine-tuning it. On behalf of the Board, she is extremely grateful for the process of being part of it. Harris said this is a milestone that was completed in less than a year. Thanks to Dewberry, after a lot of meetings and effort, the Master Plan is put together. He said it is not one of the studies that will sit on a shelf and collect dust. This is a roadmap and a plan. We have \$100 million that is going on projects that are listed in the plan, as well as the Upper Amite Restoration Project. He stated that all 7 parishes are pulling together in the same direction and the Commission is well served. Bailey stated this is a significant milestone and thanked everyone who participated. Clark said this Master Plan was needed and was based on local input from stakeholders and leaders who occupy the Amite River Basin. He said we now have a steering mechanism to help guide current and future efforts in flood protection and conservation. He thanked the contractors who had only 4 months to complete this. Ferlito also thanked Garvin Pittman, with The Water Institute of the Gulf.

- Monthly Report/Presentation by Garvin Pittman, The Water Institute of the Gulf. Region 9 Coordinator Update. Pittman stated as a lifelong resident of this watershed, he wanted to thank the Board and Dewberry in putting together and approving this Master Plan and for letting him be a small part of it. This month was spent on the Master Plan by attending the Committee and one review of Master Plan update. There were no

Louisiana Watershed Initiative Coordinator meetings last month. He reviewed 3 months of Dewberry Invoices and ARBC invoices for CPRA. He mentioned he is moderating a session at State of the Coast.

8. New Business. There were no public comments.

- Resolution 1188 – Bankston & Associates Contract Renewal: The Board unanimously approved a motion by Cointment, seconded by Raiford to approve said contract (Resolution 1188), as presented through June 30, 2026.
- ARBC President John Clark appointed a Nominating Committee for ARBC Officers as follows: Fred Raiford, Clint Cointment, Randy Delatte, Ed Parker and Mark Harrell. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Delatte, seconded by Bailey approving the selection for the Nominating Committee. The election for ARBC Officers will be held at the ARBC Regular Meeting to be held on June 10, 2025.
- The Board was reminded to submit their Tier 2.1 Financial Disclosure forms to the Ethic's Board by May 15, 2025, for the year 2024.

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

10. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Harris, seconded by Cointment, to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

APPROVED:

/s/John Clark/ARBC President
Date: June 10, 2025

/s/ Toni B. Guitrau, Executive Secretary