

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

Location: LSU Center for River Studies, 100 Terrace Ave, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

July 11, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT DURING ROLL CALL: John Clark, Jack Harris, Lionel Bailey, Clint Cointment, Peter Dufresne, Brin Ferlito, LeeAnn Fitch, Steve Kistler, Gary O’Neal, Edwin Parker, Fred Raiford

MEMBERS ABSENT DURING ROLL CALL: Robert Carter
One Vacant “At-Large” position

ALSO PRESENT: Bren Haase, CPRA; Ed Knight, LADOTD; Monica Gorman, Pontchartrain Levee District; ARBC Executive Secretary Toni Guitrau, ARBC Legal Counsel Larry Bankston; 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 Bailey, second by Parker to approve the June 20, 2023, Regular Meeting minutes, as presented.

5. Financial Statements – There were no public comments.

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Parker, second by Harris to approve the June 2023 General Fund and CRDC Fund financial statements, as presented.

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

- President Clark thanked the LSU Center for River Studies for allowing ARBC to hold meetings at the facility.
- Clint Willson, Interim Dean of College of the Coast and Environment, welcomed ARBC and the public to the LSU Center for River Studies. Students and groups are welcome to schedule tours.
- Chip Kline informed the Board he recently resigned his position as chairman of the CPRA Board. He encouraged ARBC to continue working together for the benefit of the Amite River Basin.

7. Report by Legal Counsel – There were no public comments on the following:

- **Review/Analyze uses of Master Plan funding:** Bankston said the \$4M in HB 560 is limited to the implantation of the formulation/completion of ARBC Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Plan, formulation/ completion of the initial ARBC Master Plan, and drafting/promulgation of ARBC administrative rules/regulations for floodplain management. The development of the Initial Annual Plan is January 1, 2024. The development of Master Plan deadline is prior to the 2025 Legislative Session. The Promulgate Regulation deadline is January 1, 2026.

- Regarding the Annual Plan, the Board unanimously approved a motion by O’Neal, second by Bailey to add to the agenda for action to begin to engage CPRA for assistance in the scope of work, schedule, and budget. There was no opposition. Haase suggested the Executive Committee to get together with CPRA to develop a scope, schedule, and budget to present to the full Board. This can then be distributed to the full Board to act on at the next ARBC meeting. The Board can refer to the CPRA Annual and Master Plans for format ideas but there is no format that must be used. The ARBC Annual Plan can be much simpler. It should show how much money may be needed for the year, and list what the Board wants to accomplish that year. Cointment suggested that the entire Board should have input on the development process. Once the Annual Plan is approved by the legislative committee, any requested amendments would have to be resubmitted.

- **User Agreement for Public Record Request of Data:** The Board unanimously approved a motion by Parker, seconded by Bailey to approve the User Agreement for Public Record Request of Data, as presented.

- **ARBC Proposal and Qualification-based RFP/RFQ Procurement Process.** Bankston provided to the Board draft procurement rules, a set of professional service contract guidelines and a draft RFQ. The Board unanimously

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approved a motion by Cointment, seconded by Harris, to delay action on this item until an Executive Director is hired. In the meantime, CPRA would assist ARBC as long it falls within the terms of the IGA between ARBC and CPRA.

8. Old Business - There were no public comments on Old Business agenda items.

- **OCD Director, Pat Forbes to speak on LWI funding/Q&A.** Due to miscommunication in the invitation, Mr. Forbes was not available. He will be invited to speak at the August 8, 2023 ARBC Regular Meeting.
- **LWI Discussion:** In 2020, the Louisiana Office of Community Development (OCD), received \$1.2 billion in Community Development Block Grants for Mitigation or “CDBG-MIT” funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for flood mitigation. The Board is seeking answers as to how much funding remains for projects that do not qualify for Low to Moderate Income “LMI.” Which project(s) have been funded and completed to mitigate the impact of another Great Flood like the one in August 2016. Cointment said he wanted to bring attention to three projects that were submitted for funding that would mitigate the impact of future floods. These three projects are to remove sediment and other blockages in Bayou Manchac and the Amite River and build new pumps to drain the flood-prone Spanish Lake basin. All three would work together to get flood waters into Lake Maurepas. It was discussed that funds are being used to facilitate watershed initiative in the whole State of Louisiana. The ARBC has parish-presidents/or designees seated from 7 parishes including those parishes that were heavily impacted in the August 2016 flood. Cointment said that whoever is listening at the state and makes the decisions should not miss another opportunity to allow these parishes to solve this problem, to mitigate this and save lives.
- **LWI – Round 2 deadlines/ranking criteria/timelines as Region 9 Steering Committee.** LWI will provide the project list to be ranked by July 13, 2023. The Board will act on this at the August 8, 2023, ARBC Regular Meeting.
- **Approve Auditor for 3 fiscal-year period beginning 2023:** After discussion, the Board unanimously approved a motion by Bailey, seconded by Dufresne to hire Diez, Dupuy, Ruiz, LLC from Gonzales, La.
- **ARBC Executive Director Search:** Deadline for submission is July 14, 2023. O’Neal volunteered to create a spreadsheet listing the qualified applicants to be presented to the Board prior to the August 8, 2023 meeting.
- **ARBC Employee Annual/Performance Review Policy:** The Board unanimously approved a motion by O’Neal, seconded by Raiford to approve said policy, as presented.
- **Report on Work Performance of Executive Secretary and Salary Adjustment:** The Executive Committee presented to the Board the Annual Performance Review of the Executive Secretary. They gave a rating of excellent and recommended a 7% raise. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Cointment, seconded by Bailey to approve a 7% raise for Toni Guitrau, ARBC Executive Secretary.
- **CRDC Project Status.** Updates can be found on the ARBC website at www.amitebasin.org as provided by the USACE. The ARBC does not have a role in construction or review, but it does participate in what is transpiring. Bankston stated that Congressman Graves should be thanked for his diligent work in securing funding for this project.

9. New Business - There were no public comments on New Business agenda items.

- **Stokka Brown, CSRS.** Mr. Brown said the 2016 Interactive Map’s annual license is up for renewal to keep the map online and accessible to the public. The online license is \$2300 annually, and data storage is \$500 annually. This doesn’t include hourly service to make updates or maintenance. Currently there are over 100 potential updates from public feedback. The Board discussed the disclaimer on the site. Mr. Brown will send a proposal to the Board so it can act at its next meeting.

General Public Comments: There were no public comments.

- 10.** The Board unanimously approved a motion by O’Neal, second by Raiford to adjourn the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

APPROVED:

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/s/John Clark/ARBC President
Date: August 8, 2023

/s/ Toni B. Guitrau, Executive Secretary