

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE AMITE RIVER BASIN DRAINAGE & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
Location: Louisiana State Capitol, 900 N. Third Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

**December 10, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT DURING ROLL CALL: John Clark, Jack Harris, Clint Cointment, Cindy O’Neal, Gary O’Neal, Ed Parker, Fred Raiford

MEMBERS ABSENT DURING ROLL CALL: Lionel Bailey, Ryan Byrd, Brin Ferlito, Mark Harrell, Rick Webre

Note: ARBC Commissioner Lionel Bailey entered the meeting during the ARBC President’s Report at 10:10 a.m.

Governor-Appointed Vacancies - 1

ALSO PRESENT: Brian Lezina, CPRA; Executive Secretary Toni Guitrau, ARBC; ARBC Legal Counsel Larry Bankston, Bankston & Associates; Lawrence E. Marino, Oats & Marino

ALSO ABSENT: Ed Knight, LADOTD, Randy Clouatre, Sr., PLD, Garvin Pittman, The Water Institute

**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.** The Board unanimously approved a motion by Parker, seconded by G. O’Neal to remove the agenda line item listed as the ARBC Master Plan: Authorize ARBC Legal to enforce data use sharing agreement-PLD’s latest H&H Model for Bayou Manchac Watershed. There were no public comments.

**5. Minutes.** There were no public comments.

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Parker, seconded by Harris to approve November 12, 2024, regular meeting minutes, as presented.

**6. Financial Statements** – There were no public comments.

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Harris, seconded by Raiford, to approve the October 2024 General Fund and CRDC Fund financial statements, as presented.

**7. Report by ARBC President**

Clark stated that the commission is without an Executive Director and will be looking for one to fill the position.

**8. Report by Legal Counsel**

- Bankston stated that to hire an Executive Director through a Professional Service Contract, advertising for the position is not required. The person would not be a state employee therefore would not participate in LASERS or State Group Benefits.

**9. Old Business**

- Upper Comite River Project: Parker stated that after several meetings with LWI and the Police Jury, there was approximately \$27M to do the project. However, after he and ARBC President Clark met with LWI on November 26, 2024, it was determined that a feasibility study showed it would not be less than .3% effective by snagging and clearing of the Comite River. The Police Jury had done part of Pretty Creek which flows into the Comite to help reduce flooding in the town of Clinton. At this point, Parker stated he wishes to withdraw this project from the table, but mentioned he was assured that LWI would leave the \$27M with Region 9. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Parker, seconded by Raiford to withdraw said project. Public Comments: Multiple Public Comment Cards were received opposing the project along with other individuals speaking in opposition to the project. Individuals speaking against the project were as

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follows: Kirwin Ross, Wilson, La; Julie Doucet, Ethel, La; Arlene Culpepper, Clinton, La; Isis Longo, Ethel, La; John Day, Zachary, La; Alison Ligon, Clinton, La; John Sablatura, Zachary, La.  
These Public Comment cards will be recorded with the minutes of the meeting.

- The Louisiana Water Institute. Handout/Report by Garvin Pittman was read by Clark. This report is available on the ARBC website at [www.amitebasin.org](http://www.amitebasin.org).
- 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). Discussed Freeboard Recommendations, Amite Diversion Canal Weir, 2050 No-Action Alternative, Potential Impacts of Updating FEMA Maps Preliminary Numbers, CRS, and Data Management Recommendations. Dewberry is on schedule to deliver draft Master Plan 12/30/24, board review 12/30/24 to 1/17/25 and final draft by 4/11/25. G. O’Neal stated two things that can help communities lower flood insurance costs are through CRS and remapping of flood risks areas compared to decades ago. He also suggested inviting the USACE to attend the next ARBC meeting to provide updates. Clark reminded the Board that this may be duplication considering the USACE provides this information at the Comite River Diversion Task Force, of which ARBC Commissioner Harrell is a member representing ARBC.
- CRDC Project Status. Bankston provided the monthly update. Larry Marino stated FERC approved the permit so relocation is proceeding. Brooks Lake is to be determined. Monthly updates can be found on the ARBC website at [www.amitebasin.org](http://www.amitebasin.org).

**10. New Business – None.** There were no public comments.

**11. General or Non-Agenda Item(s) Public Comments.** No public Comments. Commissioner G. O’Neal stated relative to the Public Comments made earlier today, any project that comes before the ARBC that goes before the OCD, LWI, has to demonstrate there is no adverse impact if they are going to provide drainage improvement. Regarding archeological, environmental, historical protection, federal laws require reaching out to the appropriate jurisdictional authority if you are going to begin to move or study, you must explain the scope of the project, and then receive a Letter of No Objection. Without this, you are not allowed to proceed. All of this is to safeguard proper procedures are followed before a project is implemented. Cointment thanked the Board for their hard work in 2024 and for public participation.

**12.** The Board unanimously approved a motion by Cointment, seconded by Harris, to adjourn the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

APPROVED:

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/s/John Clark/ARBC President

Date: January 14, 2025

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/s/ Toni B. Guitrau, Executive Secretary