

**LOUISIANA AGRICULTURAL FINANCE AUTHORITY BOARD
Lafa Board Minutes**

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2025, 10:30 A.M.
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY
VETERANS' MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM
5825 FLORIDA BLVD., FIRST FLOOR
BATON ROUGE, LA. 70806**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Commissioner Mike Strain, at 10:34 A.M.

II. ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

The roll was called by Christopher Lowery.

Members Present: Commissioner Mike Strain, Brayden Blanchard, Kent Brown, Jennifer Hill, Ronald Petree, and Bill Waguespack

Members Absent: Devin Davis, Katie R. Sistrunk, Representative Chris Turner

Advisory Board Members Present: Representative Troy Romero

Mr. Lowery stated there was a quorum.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr. Petree made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 20, 2025, meeting.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Waguespack.

The motion passed unanimously.

V. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Jeremy Waller presented Lafa's financial statements to the board. Mr. Waller and Mr. Cole addressed and clarified questions from the board.

Mr. Brown made a motion to accept the financial statements as presented.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Waguespack.

The motion passed unanimously.

VII. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Strain presented the Commissioner's report. He began by emphasizing the need for more storage space for farmers and their crops, specifically for rice.

He discussed his trips to the United Kingdom, and the potential for a new market. He also spoke about the benefits and growth of the Certified Louisiana Program, department plans to continue to test and properly label seafood, and to expand the seafood industry in Louisiana.

The board talked about the possibility of LAFA providing funds for Commissioner Strain to travel for promotion and marketing.

A. Motion to Amend the Agenda

Chairman Strain asked for a motion to amend the meeting agenda to add an item under New Business for LAFA to help fund international travel for the purpose of marketing and promotion.

Mr. Petree made a motion to amend the agenda.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Hill.

The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update on Lacassine Paving Project

Mr. Cole stated that the project was completed in early July, and the total project cost came in less than the bid and estimate.

He then provided engineer drawings for the pavement of the remainder of the park. He focused on a portion of the property that needs to be paved, which is from the scales to the rice mill.

It has an estimated cost of around FOUR HUNDRED SIXTY-FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$460,000.00). The board discussed the pending reimbursement from Louisiana Economic Development (LED) for FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$400,000.00) as a potential means to fund the project.

Mr. Cole addressed and clarified questions from the board.

Mr. Petree made a motion to authorize Commissioner Strain to expend the funds necessary for the second phase of the Bod Odom paving project to cover from the scales to the rice mill at an expense of up to FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$500,000.00), pending reimbursement of current funds owed by LED.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Hill.

The motion passed unanimously.

B. Legislative Appropriation for Rice Marketing

Mr. Cole provided a breakdown of the funds (\$6.5M) from the legislature for rice marketing. LAFA executed an MOU with LDAF to transfer those funds into LAFA accounts. Around \$3.1M will be used to pay back the three million dollar (\$3,000,000.00) line of credit to South Louisiana Rail Facility (SLRF) for their grain bin project in Lacassine. One million four hundred thousand dollars (\$1,400,000.00) will go to the construction of their new warehouse at the Lacassine Mill and bagging operation; LED will provide financial assistance for this project as well. The two million dollars (\$2,000,000.00) remaining will go towards the Port of Lake Charles loading terminal construction.

Mr. Cole addressed and clarified questions from the board.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. FY26 Budget Amendments

1. Indian Creek

Mr. Cole presented the amended FY26 Indian Creek budget to the board. The board reviewed the Indian Creek budget. Mr. Cole also addressed questions from the board.

2. Lacassine

Mr. Cole presented and explained the amended FY26 Lacassine budget to the board. The board reviewed the Lacassine budget.

3. LAFA

Mr. Cole presented the amended FY26 LAFA General budget to the board. The board reviewed the LAFA budget. Mr. Cole also addressed questions from the board.

Mr. Petree made a motion to accept the FY26 Budget Amendments, in globo, as presented.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Hill.

The motion passed unanimously.

[A recess was taken that started at 11:29 A.M. and ended at 11:36 A.M. Meeting resumed at 11:36 A.M.]

B. DOTD Maintenance Reimbursement Resolution

Mr. Cole provided details on the DOTD GA Maintenance Program, for which LAFA was awarded \$723.00, and the process for reimbursement from DOTD.

Mr. Brown made a motion to adopt the resolution provided by DOTD for reimbursement, as read, authorizing Commissioner Strain as Chairman to execute the agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development for improvements at the Woodworth airport.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Petree.

The motion passed unanimously.

C. Louisiana Agricultural Workforce Development Program Rule Changes

Mr. Cole provided details on potential program rule changes to the Louisiana Agricultural Workforce Development Program; this was followed by a presentation from Mr. Lowery. Mr. Cole addressed and clarified questions from the board.

Mr. Petree made a motion to authorize the Director of LAFA and staff to promulgate changes to the administrative rules for the Louisiana Agricultural Workforce Development Program in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Waguespack.

The motion passed unanimously.

D. Funding for International Promotional Travel

Mr. Petree made a motion for LAFA to help fund international travel of the Commissioner and executive staff for the purpose of marketing and promotion with a cap of \$50,000.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Hill.

The motion passed unanimously.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

The board discussed the next location and date for the December 2025 board meeting.

Mr. Cole reminded the board members to complete their sexual harassment training. Mr. Petree thanked the board for all their work.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Petree made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Blanchard.

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:53 A.M.