

**LOUISIANA AGRICULTURAL FINANCE AUTHORITY
(Lafa) BOARD MINUTES
February 6, 2023
11:00 AM
LACASSINE INDUSTRIAL PARK
BAYOU RUM DISTILLERY CONFERENCE AND EVENT CENTER
20909 FRONTAGE ROAD, LACASSINE, LA 70650**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) Commissioner Mike Strain at 11:01 AM.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Faith Folse.

Present: Commissioner Strain, Hugh Andre, Kent Brown, Devin Davis, Ronald Petree, and Bill Waguespack.

Mrs. Folse stated there was a quorum with six members present.

III. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Chairman Strain made a call for nominations for the position of board chair.

Mr. Petree nominated Commissioner Mike Strain. No other nominations were made.

Mr. Andre moved to close the nominations for the position of board chair. The motion was seconded by Mr. Waguespack.

Nominations were closed and Commissioner Strain was elected chairman of the board by acclamation.

Chairman Strain then made a call for nominations for the position of board vice chair.

Mr. Brown nominated Ronald Petree. No other nominations were submitted.

A motion to close nominations was made by Mr. Waguespack. The motion was seconded by Mr. Davis.

Nominations were closed and Mr. Petree was elected vice chairman of the board by acclamation.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commissioner Strain welcomed the board to the Bayou Rum Distillery Conference and Event Center in Lacassine, Louisiana and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. There were no other public comments.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Commissioner Strain asked the board members to review the minutes from the September 8, 2022 meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Petree to approve the minutes from the September 8, 2022 meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Davis.

The motion passed unanimously.

VI. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mrs. Catrina Irvin presented LAFA's financial statements to the board and answered the members' questions.

A motion was made by Mr. Brown to accept the financial statements. It was seconded by Mr. Andre.

The motion passed unanimously.

VII. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Strain introduced Mr. Nicholas Cole.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry

Michelle Ribera updated the board on the status of the loan request for the department website update. The loan would be for LAFA to provide LDAF with \$1.5 million over a five-year period.

B. Property Purchase – North Ardenwood Property

Commissioner Strain gave a report on the purchase of the 3.2 acres of land adjacent to the Baton Rouge Headquarters. The land purchase has been executed.

C. Lacassine Industrial Park Improvements

Michelle Ribera gave an update on improvements to LAFA owned structures regarding safety inspections, on-site cranes and ventilation fans at Catalyst Recovery of Louisiana, LLC.

A motion was made by Mr. Andre to allow Commissioner Strain to execute all actions and documents necessary to make improvements to LAFA owned buildings at Lacassine Industrial Park up to \$250,000. It was seconded by Mr. Waguespack.

The motion passed unanimously.

D. Board Member Trainings and Disclosure

Michelle Ribera reminded the board members of the required training and the May 15 deadline for Board of Ethics-financial disclosure.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of New Director of LAFA

Mr. Petree made a motion to appoint Nicholas Cole as the Director of LAFA. The motion was seconded by Mr. Andre.

The motion passed unanimously.

B. South Louisiana Rail Facility LLC

Mr. Don Gauthier, President of the Board of SLRF requested amending the loan terms of the previously approved \$3.5 million loan to build a grain/rice storage facility at the Lacassine Industrial Park.

Mr. Davis made a motion to amend the \$3.5 million loan to be split into 2 loans: \$500,000 for completion of the current rice mill project and the remaining \$3 million loan to be for the new project of a grain/rice storage facility. The motion was seconded by Mr. Waguespack.

Mr. Petree recused himself from this vote.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Andre made a motion to allow Commissioner Strain as chairman to execute all documents necessary to finalize this endeavor and sign all acts or documents necessary or appropriate. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brown.

Mr. Petree recused himself from this vote.

The motion passed unanimously.

C. Jefferson Davis Parish Economic Development Council

Creed Romano and Alex Guillory made a presentation to the board regarding the Jefferson Davis Parish Economic Development Council's future endeavors.

Mr. Andre moved to authorize Commissioner Strain as chairman to negotiate the terms of this endeavor in order to move forward and present findings to the LAFA board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Brown.

Mr. Petree recused himself from this vote.

The motion passed unanimously.

D. Grain Facility – Port of Lake Charles

Commissioner Strain discussed the potential acquisition of the grain facility at the Port of Lake Charles.

Mr. Andre moved to authorize Commissioner Strain as chairman to negotiate the terms of this endeavor in order to move forward and present findings to the LAFA board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Davis.

Mr. Petree recused himself from this vote.

The motion passed unanimously.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Don Gauthier recognized the LAFA board for all they have done for the parish and the raw potential of the Lacassine property.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Petree and seconded by Mr. Waguespack. It passed unanimously at the meeting was adjourned at 12:32 PM.