

**LOUISIANA AGRICULTURAL FINANCE AUTHORITY (Lafa)**  
**MINUTES**  
**July 1, 2021**  
10:00 AM

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) Commissioner Mike Strain at 10:07 AM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by Melanie Tullier.

**Present:** Commissioner Strain, Kent Brown, Devin Davis, Jennifer Hill, Ronald Petree, Rep. Christopher Turner, and Bill Waguespack. Katie Sistrunk entered the meeting at 10:22 am.

Mrs. Tullier stated there was a quorum with eight members present.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

Commissioner Strain asked the board members to review the minutes from the February 18, 2021 meeting.

A motion was made by Rep. Turner to approve the minutes from the February 18, 2021 meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Waguespack and passed unanimously.

**V. 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. Petree to accept the Financial Statements. It was seconded by Rep. Turner and passed unanimously.

**VI. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

- The Louisiana Legislative Auditor found no weaknesses during their annual audit of Lafa.

- Commodity prices are generally increasing. The American economy is predicted to increase by 6-7% this year.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Indian Creek**

The construction of a new fishing pier and 35 RV sites has been completed.

### **B. Lacassine Industrial Park**

Three of seven building that were damaged by two recent hurricanes have been fully repaired. The bid process has been completed and contractors secured for the remaining four buildings.

### **C. South Louisiana Rail Facility Loan**

Mr. Petree updated the board on status of the South Louisiana Rail Facility Mill Project. The producers have put \$500,000 of seed money up to fund the project. The bid package is complete and ready to be advertised with a projected bid opening date of August 10, 2021.

A motion was made by Mrs. Sistrunk to authorize Commissioner Strain to negotiate with the Jefferson Davis Parish Police Jury on leasing Lot B and C. It was seconded by Mr. Waguespack and passed unanimously. Mr. Petree abstained from voting on the motion.

### **D. Certified Louisiana Program**

Deana Erdey and Laura Lindsey updated the board on the activities of the Certified Louisiana program and SUSTA. There are currently 456 members in the Certified Louisiana program and 101 in SUSTA.

### **E. Agricultural Workforce Development Program**

Michelle Ribera reported the final rules for the program will be published on July 20, 2021 and the program will begin August 1<sup>st</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Certified Louisiana Program Grants**

Deana Erdey came before the board to present the proposed LAFA Marketing budget for FY 2022 and to review the proposed grants for the Certified Louisiana program.

## **B. FY 2022 Budget (LAFA and Indian Creek)**

A motion was made by Mr. Waguespack to accept the proposed budget for LAFA. It was seconded by Mrs. Sistrunk and passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Waguespack to accept the proposed budget for Indian Creek. It was seconded by Mrs. Sistrunk and passed unanimously.

## **C. Leases**

### **i. Opelousas**

- a. A motion was made by Rep. Turner to accept the proposed terms of \$6.00 per square foot for a total annual lease payment of \$64,104.00 for the Acadiana Workforce Development Board's lease. It was seconded by Mr. Petree and passed unanimously.
- b. A motion was made by Mr. Petree to allow LAFA's staff to negotiate new terms for the City of Opelousas lease on behalf of the board. It was seconded by Mr. Waguespack and passed unanimously.

### **ii. Baton Rouge**

- a. Melanie Tullier updated the board on the status of the DEQ Laboratory remodel.

## **D. 2016 Louisiana Farm Recovery Grant Program**

Melanie Tullier notified the board that the 2016 Louisiana Farm Recovery Program was successfully monitored by the Louisiana Office of Community Development with no findings of deficiency or areas of concern to report.

## **E. Discussion of Equipment Sheds (Lacassine and Baton Rouge)**

A motion was made by Mr. Petree to authorize Commissioner Strain to investigate the cost to build equipment sheds in Lacassine and Baton Rouge. It was seconded by Mr. Waguespack and passed unanimously.

## **F. Bee Grant**

A motion was made by Rep. Turner to provide \$15,000.00 to assist the LDAF Bee Grant to reimburse students for expenses incurred to participate in the program. It was seconded by Mrs. Sistrunk and passed unanimously.

## **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Petree expressed his interest in continuing the growth of Indian Creek.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Waguespack and passed unanimously at 11:40 AM.