COLUMBIA PORT COMMISSION Dec 15, 2022 MINUTES

 MEETING:

COMMISSIONERS: DARRON MCGUFFEE, President; Bruce Frazier, Charles Hearns, Monty Adams, Jr. DIRECTOR: GREG RICHARDSON Guest: Laura Hartt accountant

Meeting was called to order by Darron McGuffee, Port President at the Police Jury Meeting Room in the Caldwell Parish Courthouse.

READING OF THE MINUTES, **motion was made by Charles Hearns with the amendment that his name be added to those present during the November meeting (oversight in minutes), and seconded by Monty Adams, Jr. to adopt the minutes**

**Reading Bank Statements, motion was made by Charles Hearns, and seconded by Monty Adams, Jr. to accept the bank statements motion passed.**

 ITEMS DISCUSSED DURING MEETING Greg informed the Commission of activities since last port meeting:

* Greg informed Commissioner we were not award our EDA Grant, only 1 grant was awarded in the Nation, we were offered opportunity to discuss our project with the selected group, at this time pursuit of the EDA grant is not worth the effort. Greg discussed status of Grants and ongoing activities associated with implementing the awarded grants . Still waiting to hear about the MDPG grant Rural ($30 million) should be awarded before the end of the year.
* Greg informed commissioners of meeting with USDA to discuss grant.
* Greg discussed the success of our ground breaking ceremony and thanked LGF for a lot of the work required to host such an event. The publicity and solidary of our community (175 people attending) sends a positive message to LaDOTD and elected officials about the Port and our Project.
* Progress report on RC Road Improvements, Progressive Construction mobilized on site Dec. 1 and has started limited work on drainage and earthwork in preparation of construction activities. The major effort is on the relocation of the waterline and the phone line which is located within the construction right of way.
* Greg Informed Commission about meeting with Union Pacific to discuss railroad crossing. The UP representative said based on the existing road design Union Pacific would charge approximately $400,000 to relocate the two signal arms and signal house located at the crossing. The UP Representative also said they informed LGF that no overpass permit would be provided unless a rail crossing in the Parish was closed. The next day Greg investigated existing crossing to better understand Union Pacific standards. After review and discussions with UP Representative information was obtained that if the width of the road was reduced by 1 foot and curbs and guardrails placed around signal arms, we could build road through existing signals without having the expense of relocation thus saving $400,000.
* BHA was instructed to realign RC Road which will require some modifications to the drainage system between railroad tracks and la Hwy 165. While this modification will increase engineering fees as well as anticipated change orders it will be well beneath the $400,000 estimate provided by UP.
* Greg stated due to the interpretation of our lease with LGF and their nonpayment for 2023 the pursuit of a 2nd bond to expedite the rail road construction and the purchase of the adjacent property and been postponed. We anticipate having approximately $2.5 million in available funding in October from LADOTD to pursue the purchase of the property. The Port cannot pursue a second bond without a verified revenue stream. Resolution for securing land purchase option from LGF was tabled.
* The second capital Outlay request has been submitted and the necessary documents from the proposed tenants has not been received. Greg will continue to work with both parties and will inform Neil Riser if we wish to suspend the application.
* No conversations outside of discussing ground breaking ceremony have been held with LGF.
* Greg discussed PAL meeting in Natchitoches and contacts made with ITS to assist with DHS grant.
* Greg discussed his taking 12 Pal members and associate members to Pelican game prior to Pals December meeting to develop stronger relationship with our Partners. Greg also outlined his proposed Pre Pal Mixer on Jan 4th in Baton Rouge to solidify our relationship with entities which have help the Port as well as those which will be able to assist with future projects.
* Greg and Laura presented the revised budget for 2022 which reflects not receiving LGF’s lease payment. The 2023 budget was also presented to the Board. Due to loophole in LGF’s lease the anticipated $160,000 to be paid in December of 2022 for the 2023 year will not be received. The Commission has enough money to operate and meet its obligations however the Port will be operation with borrowed money from our bond. The Port will not be able to retire the entire bond in October 2023 after reimbursement from LaDOTD PPP.
* **Motion was made by Charles Hearns and seconded by Bruce Frazier to adopt the 2022 revised budget; motion passed.**
* **Motion was made by Charles Hearns and seconded by Bruce Frazier to adopt the 2023 budget as presented with the understanding that modification may have to be made within 6 months, motion passed.**
* **Motion made by Charles Hearns and seconded by Bruce Frazier to pay all outstanding bills presented to the board motion passed.**

**Motion was made by Bruce Frazier to adjourn the meeting second by monty Adams jr. motion passed meeting was adjourned.**