**MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2018 REGULAR MEETING**

**Board of Commissioners of**

**Bayou D’Arbonne Lake Watershed District Regular Meeting**

Union Parish Courthouse Annex

303 East Water Street

Farmerville, LA 71241

1. Roll Call – President Trotter Hunt called the meeting to order. Commission members present were Trotter Hunt, Bruce Hampton, Cary Brown, and Jake Halley (Guy Fortenberry arrived late). Steve Cagle and Terri Towns were absent. Also present were Bill Carter, Ron Riley, and Robert Lemoine (Bernice Banner) and two members of the public.
2. Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance – Cary Brown led the invocation, and Bruce Hampton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Public Comment Registration – No one signed up to make a public comment.

D. Agenda Approval – Motion was made by Cary Brown and seconded by Jake Halley to approve the February 2018 Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Approval of Minutes – Motion was made by Cary Brown and seconded by Bruce Hampton to approve the minutes of the January 2018 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Treasurer's Report:

1. Approve January 2018 Bank Account Summary – No financials received. No action taken.

2. Approve January 2018 Bank Statement Reconciliation – No financials received. No action taken.

3. Approve January 2018 Financial Report – No financials received. No action taken.

G. Old and New Business:

1. Channel Markers – (a) FEMA Claims, and (b) Repair Status – Ron Riley stated that he has been waiting since September to hear from FEMA about splitting the project into two jobs. Ron Riley spoke to the contact with FEMA who informed him that he had been off for six weeks and was just returning. He again reiterated that if they split the project into two jobs, they can pay the Lake Commission upfront. Ron Riley said they are good through September of 2018 and if nothing has happened by July, they will ask to extend it again. Ron Riley said that a loan could be taken out, but he wanted to wait one more month.

2. New Lake Maps – Ron Riley stated that Steve Cagle is still working on advertising. Bruce Hampton stated that the public is asking for maps. Jake Halley inquired about just printing a few and Bruce Hampton was in favor. Ron Riley said that a new quote may be needed because of the delay. It was agreed that discussion will be had when Steve Cagle returns.

3. Discussion and Take Action, if Necessary, Regarding Policy for Primary Financial and Business Functions to Include Those for Cash – No action taken.

4. Discuss and Take Action, if Necessary, Regarding As Needed Repairs at Various Boat Ramp Sites, Including Piers – Bruce Hampton indicated that he had a report from Steve Cagle. Mr. Hampton stated that the ramps at Stowe Creek and Highway 2 were finished. Mr. Hampton stated that Steve Cagle would like the Commission to consider repairing the two docks at the spillway. Steve Cagle has an estimate of $2,000 or less for each dock and only one dock would be done each month. A motion was made by Bruce Hampton and seconded by Cary Brown to authorize Steve Cagle to have repairs done to both spillway docks, not exceeding $2,000 and one to be done in each of the next two months. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Discuss and Take Action, if Necessary, Regarding Damage to Dock at Highway 2 West Ramp – Cary Brown stated that he is to get in touch with the insurance adjuster, but he was never given contact information. Bruce Hampton stated that he will get the contact information and pass along to Cary Brown.

6. Discuss and Take Action, if Necessary, Regarding Request to Cut Trees at Terral Island Boat Ramp - Bruce Hampton stated that Steve Cagle was authorized to handle this matter and Steve Cagle indicated the tree was supposed to be cut down February 19, 2018, but he did not know if that had been done.

7. Discuss and Take Action if Necessary, Regarding Public Survey Relating to Crappie Creel Limits – Jake Halley indicated that he wanted to have a public survey regarding various issues relating to the lake and go through online portals as well as printed copies at various locations. He suggested a few different methods, the first would be handling it in house. He stated there would be a GIS component and he can take care of that. Some personal information would have to be obtained which would not be released to the public, to include only the opinions of individuals who are residents of Lincoln and Union Parish. Jake Halley stated that the Commission can go over the topics the survey would include, e.g. creel limits, size limits, drawdown schedules, etc. He stated it may be better to have Louisiana Tech perform the survey since they have a full GIS program. With this option, Louisiana Tech could produce the results and conduct the survey as an outside agency and the results could be presented to the Legislature.

Trotter Hunt stated that it would be helpful if the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (DWF) could do another study of the lake. He also stated that it would be good to outline the role of the Lake Commission and the role of the DWF to show who is responsible for what and that it would be helpful to indicate that this information is being gathered to share with Legislature and the DWF. Bruce Hampton stated that creel limits and the drawdown are different issues and he would not oppose a survey on the creel limits, but he was not so sure about taking a survey about the drawdown. Bruce Hampton asked Jake Halley if he had any complaints about the drawdown and Mr. Halley said that he has heard from fisherman and homeowners. Mr. Halley indicated that the homeowners’ general consensus is to extend the drawdown schedule to every six or eight years instead of every four years. Trotter Hunt suggested that everyone taking the survey should be educated on the background information of each topic and that one topic should be handled at a time. Cary Brown agreed and stated that before anyone provides an opinion, they should have all of the information, including the report from the biologist with the DWF concerning the health of the lake.

Cary Brown stated that he felt that if the DWF has a concern with creel limits, they would have an obligation to inform the lake commission of that concern and the DWF take appropriate action. Mr. Carter said that is correct. He also said he had some information on the current view of the DWF on the creel limit of crappie on the lake. Mr. Carter stated that he spoke to Ryan Daniel, DWF Biologist from Monroe, who oversees D’Arbonne Lake as well as Rickey Moses, the statewide DWF Biologist in Baton Rouge. He said both Mr. Daniel and Mr. Moses are very knowledgeable of the lake.

Mr. Moses said that the DWF does not recommend a change in the crappie creel limit on the lake but if a change was to be made it would have to be done one of two ways. The process typically used is to go through the DWF, started by a request from a DWF Commission Board Member or possibly the Lake Commission. Mr. Moses stated that any changes recommended would be based on biological data based on fish sampling from the lake. He said that if a change was recommended, a notice of intent would be posted by the DWF and there would be a comment period which would allow anyone to go to the DWF website and comment on the recommendation. After the comment period is over, the DWF would take the recommendation to the DWF Board after which the Board would decide if they accept the recommendation and vote to make a change. If the DWF Board accepts the recommendation, the recommended change still has to be sent to the Natural Resources Committee in the Louisiana Senate for review. The other option is to go through the Legislature by a legislator introducing a bill and then taking it through the legislative process. Although that process is not used as much as going through the DWF, when it is used the Legislature will typically request the DWF input as to any change.

Mr. Moses stated that there had been a recent request from Bill Hogan, a DWF Commission member from Ruston, regarding the crappie creel limits on the lake. Mr. Moses stated that the DWF’s position was the 50-fish creel limit had no significant detriment to either crappie size or numbers (which is discussed below). Mr. Moses said this was summarized in a letter to Mr. Hogan.

Mr. Carter asked for a copy of the letter and Mr. Moses suggested he request it from Mr. Hogan. Mr. Carter said he then called Mr. Hogan and requested a copy of the letter, which was provided and Mr. Carter passed out copies.

After reviewing the letter, Trotter Hunt said the letter contained good information and asked if anyone thought it could be publicized. Bill Carter suggested first getting Ryan Daniel to a Commission meeting to discuss the issues.

Trotter Hunt stated that he didn’t think a survey was necessary due to the recent study. Jake Halley stated he still wanted to know what the public thought. Bruce Hampton stated that he was not opposed to the survey, but he thinks it is premature and the decision of creel limits needs to be driven by the DWF and it needs to be based on biological data.

Bill Carter indicated that no matter what process is used, the legislature is the ultimate authority, but relies on the DWF. He also stated that because this letter to Mr. Hogan is so recent, he doesn’t think the DWF will change its position, plus the new 3-year study is set to begin next year. Cary Brown agreed and said he thinks the survey is premature and does not know how much weight the DWF would give it with the new 3-year study to begin. Bruce Hampton said that he is not opposed to the survey but would like to know the cost. Jake Halley said that he has looked at it and it costs about $50 a month and would check with Tech on this. Mr. Halley stated he just wants to show the main topics people are concerned about and use that information to pass along to the DWF.

Bruce Hampton said that if they are going to do the survey, he wants to know what the cost is and then the commission can vote on it. He also stated that he would want it to be scientific. Cary Brown stated he agreed with Mr. Hampton and wanted to know what the questions would be as a survey can provide any result depending on the questions and also can be expensive. Trotter Hunt stated he would contact Ryan Daniels to come to the March meeting and suggested publishing it in the local paper. Robert Lemoine suggested having Ryan Daniels do a town hall presentation outlining the responsibilities and rules of the DWF and also have someone from the lake commission do the same. He also suggested passing out a questionnaire about the concerns for the lake. Bruce Hampton said that if the commission were to take that route, it would need to occur at a special meeting.

8. Reminder Regarding Filing Financial Disclosure Statements by Commissioners – Bill Carter stated that the deadline for this year is May 15. Bruce Hampton said that you have to go online to fill out the form.

9. Reminder Regarding Board Member Ethics Training by Commissioners – Mr. Hampton reiterated that ethics training can be done online, and the Board has until the end of the year to do this. He indicated this must be done every year.

10. Public Comment – No public comment.

I. Adjourn – A motion to adjourn was made by Cary Brown and seconded by Guy Fortenberry. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned.