**Special Meeting**

**July 29, 2020**

**The Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners for the Lafourche Basin Levee District met this day at its official domicile at 21380 Highway 20 in Vacherie, Louisiana. The public was invited to attend via Teleconference and at the LBLD office in accordance with the Louisiana Governor’s Proclamation Number 97 JBE 2020, extending Phase 2, LBLD office access is limited to 50% of the total occupancy as determined by the State Fire Marshal, which is 44 individuals at one time, including our employees. Every individual SHALL wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when entering the building. You can refer to gov.louisiana.gov for guideline exceptions. The meeting was called to order by its President, James P. Jasmin, at 6:00 P.M.**

**The following Commissioners were in attendance: Commissioner Michael McKinney, Sr., Ascension Parish; Craig Carter, Assumption Parish; Jeffery Henry, Ascension Parish; President James P. Jasmin, St. James Parish; Marlin Rogers, St. Charles Parish; Gary Watson, St. John the Baptist Parish; Arthur Bosworth IV, St. James Parish; Eric Matherne, St. Charles Parish; Kevin Hebert, St. Charles Parish; and Larry Sorapuru, St. John the Baptist Parish. Russell Loupe, St. Charles Parish was absent. Ivy Chauvin, Assistant Executive Director and Donald Ray Henry, Executive Director were present. Attorney Larry Buquoi was present.**

**Adoption of the agenda was motioned by Commissioner Michael McKinney, Sr. and seconded by Vice-President Craig Carter. President Jasmin called for a roll call vote. Roll call vote thereon as follows:**

**YEAS:**

* **Michael McKinney, Sr.**
* **Arthur Bosworth IV**
* **Larry Sorapuru**
* **Gary Watson**
* **Jeffery Henry**
* **Craig Carter**
* **Eric Matherne**
* **Marlin Rogers**
* **Kevin Hebert**
* **James P. Jasmin**

**NAYS: None**

**ABSENT:**

* **Russell Loupe**

**ABSTAINED: None**

**By a roll call vote of 10 yeas, 0 nays, 1 absent and 0 abstained. The motion passed.**

**The meeting was opened with a prayer and the pledge of allegiance to the flag.**

**St. Charles Parish President, Matthew Jewell, was on the teleconference line to make a public comment. President Jewell thanked everyone for letting him speak. He stated he was speaking on behalf of St. Charles parish residents on the construction of the Lafourche Basin Levee District’s board room. The main objective of LBLD is to build and maintain levees. The people of St. Charles’ west bank pay their millage close to 60% to build and maintain levees. He found that this came about to mitigate the Corona virus. He opposes the building of the new board room. If there is funding available, it needs to be kept available. We need to focus our energy on looking at grant money with critism. The money that St. Charles residents are spending every year faithfully as they pay their property taxes are for levee protection. WBV 71 and WBV 72 need to be lifted before the recertification in 2023. This money could be used for processes such as that. Some certain time, we are going to have to lift those levees. WBV 71 and WBV 72 has already been identified by CPRA as levees that will need to be lifted. Again, the recertification is coming in 2023. That is a better use of that money. The oppose the idea. Pontchartrain Levee District is offering the use of their board room to Lafourche Basin Levee District. On behalf of St. Charles residents, he opposes and its better to use that money for the lift of the Sunset Levee.**

**Vice-President Craig Carter introduced himself to Mr. Jewell and informed him that we need a board room down here to meet at, and if he would have come to Vacherie instead, he would see how hot it is. Mr. Carter informed him we needed a building like yesterday. So far as PLD offering their building, he doesn’t know anything about that. It is so hot in here right now, he’s sweating. During the winter, it’s said that the floors sweat in the shop. We need our own board room. We shouldn’t have to depend on anyone letting us use theirs.**

**President Jewell stated to respond respectfully, if you guys want to come meet at the St. Charles Parish Council chambers, he would be more than happy to facilitate that. If you want to come meet in the meeting center, you can spread out over the gym. He has residents that would offer their meeting centers too. Commissioner Larry Sorapuru stated to President Jasmin that he thought public comments were for public comments, not discussion or to over step boundaries. He requested that it be shut down. President Jasmin asked if there were any other public comments. There were none. He asked if there were any comments from the commissioners. Commissioner Marlin Rogers had a comment.**

**Commissioner Rogers stated a few weeks ago that was the first he had heard about it and on the agenda, it said presentation. He didn’t know what the presentation was about. We were given this at the meeting ang again he didn’t know anything about this. He said that President Jasmin had asked who wanted to be on the committee. He didn’t know if that committee has formed or not and yet we having a special meeting for this. He didn’t know why they were having a special meeting to perfectly honest. If a committee is going to meet, if there is a committee, they should lead on it. This is two options from one company. He doesn’t think they need everything in the building they are proposing. If it’s just space, they need to meet in, they can have a smaller building or addition if that’s what this board wants to do. He agrees with his Parish President that there are much more pressing matters in the district. Spending from $600,00 to $1,000,000, we can spend that helping the people, not making the Board comfortable. He is against it for now. This is something to look at that happened way to quick. Are there other companies that will cost less money? A part of the problem is that we don’t know. We can potentially make a decision tonight that he doesn’t think they need to make.**

**President Jasmin asked Mr. Rogers if he doesn’t think they should facilitate this building, what is his suggestion? Commissioner Rogers said to have committee meetings to look at all the options, not just one. President Jasmin said he asked at the committee meeting on July 15, 2020 if there was anyone who wants to be on the building committee. Commissioner Rogers asked if there was anyone who wanted to be part of the committee. President Jasmin said that three people volunteered, besides Mr. Rogers. The other three volunteers attended a group discussion to hear what the accountant, Mr. Wayne Theall, had to say about the budget. President Jasmin asked Commissioner Larry Sorapuru for his comments on the discussion. Commissioner Sorapuru thought it was the best option from the designs for the front of the building. Commissioner Rogers states that he agrees about the place but the agenda says construct. We don’t need that design, that is what needs to be discussed. President Jasmin said in the discussion we asked the accountant if we can financially afford to do it. As you all know the budget comes up next month. There are several items in the budget that was allocated but never spent. It wasn’t allocated for the levees. It was money that can be utilized from Capital Outlay. President Jasmin also asked for the opinions of Commissioner Jeffery Henry and Kevin Hebert about the discussion with the accountant.**

**Commissioner Eric Matherne stated he has a metal building that is insulated, has a bathroom, electrical wiring and he didn’t pay over $50,000. They need a building; he is not against it. But the presented design is ridiculous. He can afford to buy a Rolls Royce but prefer a Ford truck. He doesn’t want to spend the extra money that he can use for other stuff such as medical. Just because you have the money, saying it wasn’t for the levees. Yes, the items on the list wasn’t necessary for the levee lifting. Yes, we need a building to have meetings in but $600.,000 is ridiculous. He went to a company to see what it would cost. He thinks they need to do research and look at different things. We have cameras and a TV in the temporary room. Mr. Donald Henry stated said the TV was done in house and the cameras from the camera company we been using for years. Mr. Matherne said he thinks we should do as much in house as possible. Commissioner Sorapuru stated the project will go out on bid. The $600,000 isn’t necessarily the price that is set in stone. Once the bids come in, we don’t have to accept any of them. Commissioner Matherne said it definitely will have to go for bid but it will probably come back with similar prices. He feels that the building plans don’t need all the bells and whistles, just what we need and we can use the left-over money for something useful.**

**Commissioner Rogers stated that no one said we don’t need the new building, just not the one that was presented. A committee need to get together and talk about this. The agenda says to discuss and/or take action on the new construction of this building. He is totally against that. Commissioner Kevin Hebert said that they all got laptops to meet virtually in the comfort of their own homes with the new lap tops. Mr. Donald Henry said that they had been meeting for three years and no one thought about the space in the board room. When Covid happened and we started meeting in the substitute board room, it came to his mind to call the Fire Marshall to see how many people from the public and commissioners can meet in this space. He asked the Assistant Executive Director, Ivy Chauvin, to get in touch with the Fire Marshall, initiated by himself, so that we wouldn’t be in any violations of the law coming from the Governor or the Attorney General office. So we found out the information that was presented. Mr. Henry is assuming that their dispositions about the wording of the agenda. Any meeting we have had or will have the option for the Commissioners to take action or not. The day the agenda went out was a very busy day, and he was walking out the door for a meeting when his secretary asked about the wording. In hindsight he would have put to discuss the proposal form the engineers instead of construction of the building. The computers are not purchased for a virtual meeting exclusively, but inclusively, virtual meetings and many other reasons to utilize them. Commissioner Rogers said he understands, but the agenda says construction. When we have an agenda, we are supposed to talk about what’s on the agenda only. It says construction. If something else is meant, we don’t know what else is meant. He doesn’t know. Is says construction. Mr. Henry stated most agenda items aren’t always clear. There are general discussions of what you already know that we are having among the Board of Commissioners here. So the discussion is about the proposals here and also what you have added here tonight. And after speaking with the engineers, Chuck and Joseph Savoie, the engineering, no matter what decision is made, does not mean it will include the Rolls Royce addition. It will be however you al want it. Commissioner Matherne made the recommendation that the building committee get together and look at some building design companies and see what kind of prices and designs they have and do some research and come back and look at it for more options. There are only two options here. He isn’t against builders building it, just against these two proposals that are too costly for us. Mr. Henry reminded Mr. Matherne that we only have two proposals because of the space we are in. if we could have built it on another lot, we would have had that proposal. The only two places we can put it is here in this space or the front of the building. Perhaps the proposal that Mr. Henry brought up to a few commissioners he was kicking around, being proactive and leading as the Executive Director, which was to open the wall up by the board room and extend it to the property line. We can discuss why that wasn’t feasible with the engineers as compared to Mr. Ivy Chauvin’s idea, which was to put it in the front. Commissioner Matherne said he isn’t saying to build it in a different place than what the proposal is. It’s the building is great, it’s just the cost of it. Commissioner Sorapuru said that he knows that the purpose of this is to protect, that’s a priority. We need to put things in place for the long haul. We not only represent St. James, St. John, Ascension, Assumption and St. Charles parishes, but Louisiana as well. We need to accommodate the public as necessary, not just for Covid. Commissioner Sorapuru made the motion to enter into contract with Savoie and Associates for designing the building, option 1, in the proposal. Vice-President Craig Carter seconded the motion. President Jasmin called for a roll call vote. Roll call vote thereon as follows:**

**YEAS:**

* **Michael McKinney, Sr.**
* **Arthur Bosworth IV**
* **Larry Sorapuru**
* **Gary Watson**
* **Jeffery Henry**
* **Craig Carter**
* **James P. Jasmin**

**NAYS:**

* **Eric Matherne**
* **Marlin Rogers**
* **Kevin Hebert**

**ABSENT:**

* **Russell Loupe**

**ABSTAINED: None**

**By a roll call vote of 7 yeas, 3 nays, 1 absent and 0 abstained. The motion passed.**

**Commissioner Rogers asks if they are going to enter into an agreement when the committee has not officially met not one time, beyond belief. He asked why have a committee? Vice-President Carter informed him he had a chance to attend the discussion but didn’t. Mr. Rogers said the committee did not meet; it was an organizational discussion.**

**Commissioner Michael McKinney, Sr. moved to adjourn and was seconded by Vice-President Craig Carter.**

**President**