

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE
AMITE RIVER BASIN DRAINAGE & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Location: Louisiana State Capitol 900 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

September 12, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT DURING ROLL CALL: John Clark, Jack Harris, Kenneth Dawson, Brin Ferlito, LeeAnn Fitch, Mark Harrell, Edwin Parker, Ruth Phillips, Fred Raiford, Rick Webre

MEMBERS ABSENT DURING ROLL CALL: Robert Carter, Clint Cointment, Gary O’Neal

ALSO PRESENT: Bren Haase, CPRA; Monica Gorman and Blaine Sheets, Pontchartrain Levee District; ARBC Executive Secretary Toni Guitrau, ARBC Legal Counsel Larry Bankston; Lawrence E. Marino, Oats & Marino
Not Present: Ed Knight, LADOTD

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by ARBC President Clark.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call: See above.

4. Minutes – There were no public comments.

- The Board unanimously approved a motion by Webre, seconded by Dawson to approve the August 8, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented.
- The Board unanimously approved a motion by Harris, seconded by Phillips to approve the August 29, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes, as presented.

5. Financial Statements – There were no public comments.

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Bailey, seconded by Dawson to approve the August 2023 General Fund and CRDC Fund financial statements, as presented.

6. Report by ARBC President – There were no public comments.

President Clark stated that the Amite River Basin Commission “ARBC” has been working together to further the goals and objectives of the ARBC. They have successfully rated all of the LWI, Region 9 pre-application, Round 2 Projects. The Commission then passed a resolution of support for Region 9 projects that was submitted with a list of projects to the LWI Council on Watershed Management. President Clark added that they have worked closely with state representatives and the governor for an amendment to the LWI action plan that would provide Region 9 with \$100 million for large transformative flood risk reduction projects. He then stated that the ARBC is getting together the paperwork for the Region 9 Coordinator funding. Regarding the ARBC Executive Director position, President Clark stated that the Commission worked through a list of over 40 applicants. The Commission is currently working with CPRA to finalize a task order for the ARBC Annual Plan. They are also working with the state delegation to secure operating funds. He stated that a Letter of Intent will be submitted for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding.

7. Report by Legal Counsel – No public comments.

Bankston reported that he and ARBC Executive Secretary Guitrau had a conference call yesterday with Ms. Genea Lathers regarding the LWI Region 9 Coordinator funding. Ms. Lathers will email Bankston a skeleton copy/outline to use as a sample of the application that is required. The application is for \$800,000 over a 3-year period. Bankston said that the new Executive Director will soon be working on putting the information together. There is no specific deadline as per Ms. Lathers, but it should be done as soon as possible. He reminded the Board that ARBC President Clark has been doing much of the work until an Executive Director is hired.

8. A presentation on the Greensburg Wastewater Treatment System was given by Kristi Trail, Executive Director of the Pontchartrain Conservancy. The discussed project is in Region 7, St. Helena Parish. Commissioner Harrell said that since he lives in St. Helena Parish, he would be willing to help with locating funding for the project. Michael

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Levy, with Senator Cassidy's office, said that there is approximately \$12 million over the next couple of years available through the EPA, Lake Pontchartrain Restoration Program. It is for water quality, habitat restoration, and environmental education. Ms. Trail clarified that the Pontchartrain Conservancy is not associated with that funding source.

9. Old Business - There were no public comments on Old Business agenda items.

- **Appointment of ARBC Executive Director.** Bankston informed the Board that the Executive Committee met with Ms. Rachael Lambert to discuss the contract that was emailed to each Board member and is in the Board's packet. Ms. Lambert addressed the Board and gave a brief review of her qualifications. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Raiford, seconded by Parker to approve the contract, as presented to hire Rachael Lambert as ARBC Executive Director. The contract expires on June 30, 2026. The annual salary is \$145,000 and the beginning hire date is October 1, 2023.
- **LWI Region 9 Coordinator Funding, Resolution 1171, \$800,000.** Clark reminded the Board that LWI requires an application from Region 9, as previously discussed under the Legal Report. Resolution 1171 will be prepared to include with said application. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Parker, seconded by Harris for Bankston to prepare and submit Resolution 1171 to support the application to request and secure \$800,000 for Region 9.
- **\$3.5 million/GOHSEP Hazard Mitigation Funds for Region 9.** President Clark said that one very much needed project in Region 9 is in the Bayou Manchac Watershed. It is an EBR Parish project in cooperation with Ascension and Iberville Parishes. The project would redirect the mouth of Wards Creek where it enters Bayou Manchac where it flows downstream as opposed to flowing upstream toward the Frog Bayou and Alligator Bayou floodgate backwater flood control structures. There are projects being proposed in EBR Parish for channel improvements within Wards Creek that may increase the downstream impacts so this project will help to mitigate those downstream impacts rather than sending the water upstream toward Ascension and Iberville Parishes. This will send it downstream toward the Amite River. Raiford noted that the project lessens the water impacts on EBR, Ascension and Iberville Parishes. The channel as it is now creates a problem by pushing water back towards Iberville and Ascension Parishes. By realigning this channel, it will help facilitate the flow. He believes the project can be done for the \$3.5 million. This \$3.5 million does not require any matching funds. Harrell requested that Raiford and Clark acknowledge that realigning the waterway will have a negative impact on the Amite River, Livingston Parish. He said he is for the project 100%, however it will put more water in Livingston Parish. He asked that they acknowledge this and keep in mind that the \$100 million from LWI needs to go toward moving that water out of Livingston Parish by dredging the Amite River. Clark said it is acknowledged. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Ferlito, seconded by Harris to submit a letter of intent before September 29, 2023.
- **ARBC Annual Plan.** ARBC previously authorized CPRA to develop a task order, so no action is needed today. Commissioner Haase, CPRA, said that they have been working the scope and a task should be issued this week.
- **CRDC Project Status.** Updates can be found on the ARBC website at www.amitebasin.org as provided by the USACE. The ARBC does not have a role in construction. Bankston said that ARBC Commissioners can participate and hear the reoccurring monthly meetings if they wish. The USACE and DOTD continue to work on the project. The major issue is the Florida Gas Pipeline relocation. Congressman Graves has secured funding.

10. New Business - There were no public comments on New Business agenda items.

- **Resolution 1172.** A resolution that authorizes Rachael Lambert, P.E., in her capacity as Executive Director of the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District, and/or John Clark, ARBC President, to execute acts of subordination, right-of-entry agreements, right-of-way agreements, and servitude agreements, subject to review and approval by legal counsel, in connection with the Amite River Diversion Project, State Project No. H.007811, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana (the "Project"). Bankston will amend this resolution to include authorizing the ARBC President to execute same. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Bailey, seconded by Parker to approve Resolution 1172, as presented, and amended.
- **EBR Parish ROW Agreement for DEMCO.** ARBC received a request for ROW agreement on McHugh Rd. to move DEMCO powerlines and poles. They requested utilizing the servitude that comes across where the

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CRDC diversion land area. Bankston said that once the CRDC Project is complete, the property within the canal will be turned over to EBR Parish. EBR Parish has also agreed to this servitude agreement. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Parker, seconded by Bailey to grant said servitude.

- **Bank Resolution – Update Signature Authorities.** Executive Secretary Guitrau explained that Hancock Whitney requires a vote of the board to add someone as an authorized signer. Rachael Lambert, ARBC Executive Director, needs to be added as an authorized signer. The Board also needs to include the Louisiana Asset Management Pool ARBC accounts. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Dawson, seconded by Bailey to add Rachael Lambert as an authorized signer of ARBC Hancock Whitney accounts as well as LAMP ARBC accounts.

11. General Public Comments. There were no public comments.

12. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Parker, seconded by Phillips to adjourn the meeting.

APPROVED:

/s/John Clark/ARBC President
Date: October 10, 2023

/s/ Toni B. Guitrau, Executive Secretary