

Iberia Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday – May 28, 2020

Board of Commissioners of the Iberia Economic Development Authority
met on Thursday – May 28, 2020 at 7:30 a.m. at
101 Burke Street, New Iberia, LA 70560

Jody Suire called the meeting to order and called for the roll.

Members Present: Roy Pontiff, Jody Suire, Fran Henderson, Cecil Hymel

Members Absent: Damon Miguez

Others Present: Michael Tarantino, Evelyn Ducote, Matt Landry

Mr. Tarantino announced that the Iberia Parish Council had approved the nomination of Damon Miguez to serve as an IEDA Commissioner. He noted that Mr. Miguez was unable to attend today's meeting, but anticipates being at next month's meeting.

On a motion by Cecil Hymel seconded by Roy Pontiff, the public hearing to amend the 2019-2020 IEDA operating budget was opened. The amended budget was presented, and there were no public comments. On a motion by Roy Pontiff, seconded by Cecil Hymel, the public hearing was closed.

On a motion by Roy Pontiff, seconded by Cecil Hymel, the public hearing to adopt the proposed 2020-2021 IEDA operating budget was opened. The proposed budget was presented, and there were no public comments. On a motion by Cecil Hymel, seconded by Roy Pontiff, the public hearing was closed.

With there being no public comments, Mr. Suire to asked the commissioners to review the minutes of the regular February 2020 meeting. On a motion by Fran Henderson, seconded by Cecil Hymel the minutes were unanimously approved. Mr. Suire asked the commissioners to review the February, March and April 2020 financials. On a motion by Roy Pontiff, seconded by Cecil Hymel, the financials were unanimously approved.

Mr. Suire asked the commissioners to discuss and consider a resolution to adopt the 2019-2020 amended operating budget as presented. On a motion by Roy Pontiff, seconded by Cecil Hymel, the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Mr. Suire asked the commissioners to discuss and consider a resolution to adopt the proposed 2020-2021 operating budget as presented. On a motion by Roy Pontiff, seconded by Fran Henderson, the resolution was unanimously adopted.

Mr. Suire asked the commissioners to discuss and consider authorizing the IEDA Chairman to sign an audit engagement letter with Postlethwaite & Netterville (P&N) to perform a financial review of the IEDA financials for FY ended June 30, 2020. Mr. Tarantino explained that the level of financial review (compilation, review or audit) was dependent on the amount of income received during the fiscal year. We have been in close contact with P&N regarding the cost, and we have budgeted an amount based on our anticipated income for this fiscal year. On a motion by Cecil Hymel, seconded by Fran Henderson, the motion passed.

Mr. Suire asked Mr. Tarantino to proceed with his business park funding and economic development updates. Mr. Tarantino reported the following:

- 1) Reported that Ross Dress For Less has opened in the old K-Mart shopping center, thereby filling the refurbished center retail spaces for now.
- 2) Reported on the status of the Airport access road project, noting he was at the bid opening last week. Parish Government is; now waiting on Facility Planning and Control for bid approval.
- 3) Announced that work on the sewer Progress Point sewer project was continuing, with rights of way and easements being secured. Matt Landry noted that the design work should start next week. He stated

that all rights-of-way and easements are located on public property, and local public entities are aware of the value that bringing sewer and water services to the airport area are to the ARA.

4) Reported that LAWCO was working on the right-of-way and calculating crop damage payments needed for water line construction. Mr. Pontiff inquired if we were going to accept the landowner/farmer estimates for the crop damage amounts. Matt Landry said that he felt it should be dependent on LAWCO to review the estimates and verify that the amounts were valid and not inflated. Mr. Pontiff asked Mr. Tarantino to please see if he could talk with our local county agent to see if there was some kind of formula the LSU-Ag Center uses value crops. Mr. Tarantino said he would check with local ag agent Blair Hebert and see if he could assist us. Mr. Suire asked why the difference in pipe sizes between the line we will be connecting to and the new pipe we are having installed. Matt and Landry and Mike Tarantino answered that we are installing the new pipe to service future growth and the need for additional capacity. Noted that is very beneficial to the parish, the airport and for the future growth of the business park area.

5) Reported he and Mr. Suire will be reaching out to Parish Government soon regarding Capital Outlay local match for Progress Point.

6) Reported he has been talking with Cleco regarding serving Progress Point and the new airport access road.

Mr. Pontiff noted it was probably time to address the need for broadband and telephone services to the park. Mr. Hymel felt that we needed to try to get at least three bids for service, preferably capable of handling 5G service. Mr. Pontiff suggested we check with the USDA rural Development Office and see if there were any rural broadband grants available to assist us. Mr. Tarantino said he would check into it and get back to the Commissioners.

Mr. Tarantino noted that he has had 2-3 recent inquiries from businesses about locating at the park. He provided a short economic development update, and encouraged everyone to visit the IDF website for up-to-date information regarding information to help businesses responding to COVID-19 closures and openings. Noted he had a meeting with the IDF Executive Committee yesterday to discuss how we could start a serious discussion on diversifying our local economy.

General discussion was held regarding fabrication activity going on at the Port of Iberia and the general state of the oil and gas industry, as well as the health of the local tourism and food service industries due to COVID-19.

On a motion by Roy Pontiff, seconded by Fran Henderson, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 25, 2020 at 7:30 AM. The meeting will be held at the IDF Offices.