

MINUTES  
OF THE  
RED RIVER WATERWAY COMMISSION MEETING  
DECEMBER 20, 2023  
10:00 AM  
RED RIVER WATERWAY COMMISSION  
5941 HWY 1 BYPASS  
NATCHITOCHEs, LOUISIANA

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Red River Waterway Commission was called to order by Chair Designee, Troy Roussell, in the Board Room of the Red River Waterway Commission Office located at 5941 Highway 1 By-Pass in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Roll was called and a quorum was present. Others in attendance were asked to identify themselves and offer any comments they may have regarding the agenda. However, no comments were offered.

**Present:** Chair Designee, Troy Roussell, Commissioner Versa Clark, Commissioner David L. Crutchfield, II, Commissioner Paul Fleming, Commissioner Charles R. Greer, Commissioner David Jones, Commissioner James F. Maxey, Commissioner Kenneth Richardson, Commissioner Michael Simpson.

**Absent:** Commissioner Michael P. Deville, Commissioner Jacques Goudeau, Commissioner Ronald Lattier

**RRWC Staff Members Present:** Mr. Colin Brown - Executive Director, Mr. Marcus Long - Operations & Maintenance Director, Ms. Stephanie Bonnette - Executive Assistant, Mr. Luke Pearson - Real Estate Manager, Mr. Kyle Smith - Engineering Supervisor, Mr. Dustin Hayes - Marketing Director, Mr. Brian Cespiva - Staff Engineer, Mr. Greg Upton - Legal Counsel.

3. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD PURSUANT TO LRS 42:14**

**Others Present:** Ben Russo with Central Louisiana Regional Port and Emily Mott with Red River Valley Association

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

By motion of Commissioner Greer, seconded by Commissioner Clark, the agenda was unanimously approved. Comments from the public were called for, however, none were offered.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

By motion of Commissioner Simpson, seconded by Commissioner Clark, the minutes of the November 15, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved.

6. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

By motion of Commissioner Clark, seconded by Commissioner Crutchfield, the Expenditures, Financial Statements, Investment Reports, & Fund Balance Report for the month of November 2023 were unanimously approved.

7. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

a) **Contracts**

**Consideration of Approval of Change Order No. 6 (Final)/RRWC Project No. 21-11/Contract No. RRW-809/Pland Floating Dock and Comfort Station:** By motion of Commissioner Clark, seconded by Commissioner Crutchfield, the Commission unanimously approved the change order which provides a decrease in contract cost of \$34,360.88, bringing the construction cost to \$1,428,864.12 due to not using erosion control matting to establish grass on the slopes and provides for an increase in time of 25 additional days.

**Consideration of Approval of Change Order No. 4/RRWC Project No. 21-08/Contract No. RRW-799/Grand Ecore Additional Amenities:** By motion of Commissioner Clark, seconded by Commissioner Richardson, the Commission unanimously approved the change order which provides for a decrease in contract cost of \$40,685.50 due to redesigning the pool and splash pad and a decrease in cost with changing the splash pad from a recirculation system to a flow-through system. And included an increase in construction time of 21 days.

**Consideration of Approval of Meeting Policy Revisions/Open Meetings Law:** By motion of Commissioner Clark, seconded by Commissioner Crutchfield, the Commission unanimously approved revisions to the Red River Waterway Commission's meeting policy and the revised meeting notice language in order to be in compliance with the recently enacted Act 393 by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor.

b) **Land Management, Legal Affairs & Affirmative Action**

**Consideration of Award of Public Bid Land Lease/St. Maurice Realignment-Hampton Island/108 Acres:** By motion of Commissioner Greer, seconded by Commissioner Clark, the Commission unanimously approved award of lease to the high bidder, Angler's Paradise, LLC, for \$9,450.00 for the 5-year term.

**Consideration of Request for Land Lease Extension/Hadden Ft. DeRussy Realignment/Tracts 45, 46 & 47/235 Acres:** By motion of Commissioner Crutchfield, seconded by Commissioner Clark, the Commission unanimously approved the request for the 5-year lease extension to Aubrey McNeal for a total of \$25,850.00 for the 5-year lease term.

**Consideration of Request for Land Lease Extension/Lock & Dam 4/Tracts 2, 3 & Part of 4/65 Acres:** By motion of Commissioner Crutchfield, seconded by Commissioner Clark, the Commission unanimously approved the request from Chris Turner for the 5-year extension for a total of \$7,162.38 for the 5-year lease term.

**Consideration of Request for Right of Use Dredging Agreement/Pool 4 Tracts 18, 19 & 20 Segment A:** By motion of Commissioner Crutchfield, seconded by Commissioner Clark and with one abstention from Commissioner Simpson, the Commission approved the request from Chesapeake Energy for a Right of Use Agreement to dredge/mine sand from approximately 443 acres of Commission owned water bottoms in Pool 4 adjacent to the Red River Parish Port for use in fracking gas wells.

c) **Recreation**

**Consideration of Approval of Cooperative Endeavor Agreement/Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission:** By motion of Commissioner Greer, seconded by Commissioner Clark, the Commission unanimously approved the funding request for a \$55,000.00 cooperative endeavor agreement for 2024 events to be held on the Red River.

**Recreation Area Status Report** - Mr. Marcus Long highlighted the prepared report provided in the meeting packet, noting that there had been 75,000 visitors to the District recreation areas during the month of November 2023. Updated maintenance items include, but not limited to:

- Grand Ecore RV Park – Continued cleanup of undeveloped property areas
- Continued routine maintenance duties at all parks and at headquarters
- Noted increased usage and income of the RV parks in November

d) **Ports**

**Consideration of Approval of Supplemental Agreement No. 1 to Cooperative Endeavor Agreement/Central Louisiana Regional Port:** By motion of Commissioner Jones, seconded by Commissioner Crutchfield, the Commission unanimously approved development of a supplemental agreement granting authority for the Central Louisiana Regional Port to re-allocate the remaining funds from the original CEA approved in August 2023 to further additional Port expansion in the following manner: 1) Build up the lower dock and clear area for additional hardstand to be constructed adjacent to the newly constructed fabric warehouse 2) Allocate \$45,000.00 of the remaining funds towards the installation of a dual-gender restroom container and 3) Invest the remaining funds towards the acquisition of a 14-acre tract of land adjacent to the Port, currently owned by the City of Alexandria.

e) **Public Awareness & Marketing**

**Marketing Update** - A prepared report was provided in the meeting packet. In addition, Marketing Director, Dustin Hayes discussed:

- Colfax RV Park Website and Checkfront programs will roll out January 8, 2024
- Grand Ecore RV Park policy changes are in affect
- Bass stocking completed
- 2024 Travel Calendar with program dates is forthcoming
- Red River Waterway Commission was nominated for the Best of Natchitoches Public Service Award
- Red River Rumble F1 Powerboat Showdown scheduled for May 24- May 26, 2024
- King Kat Tournament Trail cooperative endeavor agreement is to be voted on by the City of Natchitoches at their January meeting
- Bassmaster College/High School Tournaments – verbal commitment received and will follow up
- LSUS Fishing coach, Charles Thompson, interest in event/tournament on Red River – will follow up
- Todd Wolf, LA Teen Trail, interest in event/tournament on Red River – will follow up
- Interview with Steve Graf, Hook'n Up and Trackin Down, to discuss the Red River and upcoming events

f) **Personnel** - None

g) **Revenue, Banking & Budget**

**Consideration of Authority to Unreserve/Undesignate Remaining Project Funds:** By motion of Commissioner Crutchfield, seconded by Commissioner Greer, the Commission unanimously approved unreserving/undesignating remaining funds from completed projects and projects not constructed in the amount of \$286,359.41 to be used towards future projects.

**Consideration of Approval of Audit Engagement Letters:** By motion of Commissioner Crutchfield, seconded by Commissioner Clark, the Commission unanimously approved the 2023 Audit Engagement Letter with the revised fee of \$23,500 and the 2023 SAUP Engagement Letter with Payne, Moore & Herrington.

**Consideration of Approval of 2024 Budget:** By motion of Commissioner Crutchfield, seconded by Commissioner Greer, the Commission unanimously approved/adopted the 2024 Budget as presented and the Resolution was read aloud:

**RESOLUTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE 2024 BUDGET FOR THE RED RIVER WATERWAY COMMISSION**

WHEREAS, the Red River Waterway Commission has appointed Executive Director, Colin Brown, to prepare and submit a proposed budget to said governing body; and

WHEREAS, Executive Director, Colin Brown, has submitted a proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024, beginning January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024, to this governing body on December 20, 2023 for its consideration, and;

WHEREAS, upon due and proper notice, published and posted in accordance with the law, said proposed budget was open for inspection by the public at a designated place, a public hearing was held on December 20, 2023, and interested taxpayers were given the opportunity to inspect and comment as to said proposed budget, and;

WHEREAS, the budget remains in balance, as required by law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE Red River Waterway Commission of the State of Louisiana:

Section 1. That the budget as submitted, amended, and summarized by fund, hereby is approved and adopted as the budget of the Red River Waterway Commission for the year stated above.

Section 2. That the budget hereby approved and adopted shall be signed by the Secretary/Treasurer and Executive Director.

ADOPTED, this 20th day of December, 2023 after vote of the Red River Waterway Commission.

h) **Legislative – None**

8. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- 2024 monies from DOTD and Capital Outlay are allocated for 12' Channel. Possibility of beginning in 2024
- Commissioner Fleming welcomed back after absence due to illness
- Announcement of the passing of Commissioner Deville's mother
- Reminder of annual requirements deadline of December 31<sup>st</sup>
- Requested Commissioners submit per diem and expense requests as quickly as possible prior to year-end
- Words of appreciation to Commissioners and staff for their rolls during the budget process
- Holiday wishes

9. **STATUS OF RIGHTS-OF-WAY/ENGINEERING REPORT** - Prepared reports were provided in the meeting packets.

- Fort Buhlow and 12 Mile Bayou projects are progressing
- Fish Lake Master Plan – initial presentation at the February Commission meeting
- Poland Floating Dock & Comfort Station project is at substantial completion
- Grand Ecore RV Park Additional Amenities project – Landscaping in place, fire pit in construction phase, gunite to be applied to swimming pool on Friday, Trail – awaiting benches at overlook area. Trail is being well used by RV Park guests already.

10. **GENERAL COUNSEL REPORT** - None

11. **CORPS OF ENGINEERS REPORT** - None

12. **RED RIVER VALLEY ASSOCIATION**

- Successful trips to Washington, D.C.
- Cost of 36.5 million dollars for gates at Lock 1
- Port projects and usable waterway are of great importance
- Words of appreciation for the support given by Richard Brontoli, former director of the Red River Valley Association and to the Red River Waterway Commission for its support
- Red River Valley Association Annual Convention – February 21-22, 2024
- Southwest Arkansas Navigation study is in forward progress


13. **OTHER BUSINESS** - None

14. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

15. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to conduct at this time, by motion of Commissioner Richardson, seconded by Commissioner Crutchfield, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned.

  
JAMES F. MAXEY  
SECRETARY/TREASURER

  
TROY ROUSSELL  
CHAIR DESIGNEE