

Spring Bayou Lake Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2018

Chairman Jimmy Landry called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Landry said the opening prayer and led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Secretary Terry Laborde called the roll. Attendance: Chairman Landry, Vice-Chairman Rayford Laborde, Secretary Terry Laborde, Dr. L.J. Mayeux, Artha Hale, Roland Dugas III, Philip Lamartiniere, Mansura Mayor Kenneth Pickett, Juror Mark Borrel, Juror Trent Clark, and Police Jury President Charles Jones. Commissioner Jules (JK) Bordelon was absent.

Commissioner Dr. Mayeux presented the motion to accept the minutes from the October 17, 2018 meeting, Rayford Laborde added the second. There was discussion over concern from the district attorney's office that at the October meeting a motion was passed to "allow any donations/funding received by the Spring Bayou Lake Commission to be deposited into a bank savings account under the Spring Bayou Restoration Team". The motion was amended to read "to allow any donation/funding received for Spring Bayou projects be made payable to Spring Bayou Restoration Team and deposited into a bank savings account of Spring Bayou Restoration Team".

Chairman Landry updated the commission members concerning the upcoming visit by Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Secretary Jack Montoucet to the Spring Bayou Complex on October 29, 2018.

Concerning the "water level markers" planned to be installed in the complex, Director Kevin Bordelon said four instead of three markers were planned to be installed. With more discussion from the committee, the four elevation markers will be according to engineering elevation and labeled from 39-feet to 47-feet. The Avoyelles Police Jury will pay for the four markers.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries Biologist Jody David presented an introduction on the history of efforts in the complex. Vice Chairman Laborde questioned Mr. David about dredging permits. Mr. David said applications have been filed, but the problem is where to put the spoil from the dredging. His recommendation is to put the spoil on the west side, but it will be an eyesore. Commissioner Hale made a recommendation to dredge approximately seven feet. Mr. David suggested presenting many options to the dredging process and the location to deposit the sludge. Commissioner Hale recommended going to landowners with a definite plan to secure right-of-ways. Commissioner Dugas said he was not in favor of a drawdown and asked Mr. David about the evolution of the lake. Vice Chairman Laborde questioned the control of sedimentation in the complex. He continued about the Madame Gilbere structure and its function. Mr. David responded two to three feet of sediment has been added since the dredge of 1989. Mayor Pickett questioned the method of getting back to January and February water levels. Mr. David responded it is a result of rainfall. Scott Laborde added that the sediment is from rice fields and from the back of the wildlife reserve.

Director Bordelon presented plans the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury is considering implementing regarding the Spring Bayou Complex control structure at the end of Little River. The first process will be the removal of approximately three feet of silt lodged in front of the gates. Once the sediment is removed, the next phase will be the attempt to mechanically open and close the three gates. Before this phase is attempted, the plans are to have "super sacks" ready to drop and barricade the opening in the event the gates don't function properly. Ron Bordelon, with Pan American Engineers, plans to visit the control structure with local officials to determine the best possible alternative to operate the Police Jury owned structure. Director Bordelon's recommendation is to wait until summer when the access road is dry and accomplish the job with an estimated cost to be about \$2,500.00.

Commissioner Dugas asked the committee who would be considered an expert to operate the mechanism to open and close the gates as well as the determination when the gates can be opened/closed. Norris Greenhouse, representing the District Attorney's Office, stated the office feels this phase should evolve legally as a civil function because it involves public water being used for recreation, agriculture, and aquaculture. Ronald Coco emphasized opening the gates will not flood because the control structure is at the end of the complex draining into natural waterways. When asked by Commissioner Dugas for the rationale for opening the gates in the first place, Scott Laborde and George Israel both responded to flush the complex at that location. Juror Mark Borrel responded a current would be necessary to flush the sediment. Jody David cautioned about the timing which could affect spawning in the complex.

Concerning alternative water sources, Commissioner Philip Lamartiniere suggested getting water down the Coulee des Gruis with RRABB working the gates on Hwy 1 near the paragon Casino. Next came the issue of right-a-ways required from landowners to clear the debris from Hwy 1 north towards the Red River along the Coulee des Gruis. Commissioner Lamartiniere added he and Commissioner JK Bordelon recommended looking into the creation of reservoirs along the Chatlin Lake areas with controlled releases of water into the Coulee des Gruis.

The next item that came up for discussion was to raise the level of the current dam, but Jody David cautioned this could cause the flooding of camps and agricultural property. Chairman Landry suggested that the dam's elevation could be raised with "removable" barriers to the point where an acceptable level is reached.

Commissioner Artha Hale explored the dredging issue. He stated dredging Boggy Bayou should be the priority, but the method to dredge will determine cost and servitudes for right-a-ways as to deposit the spoil material. George Israel suggested depositing the spoil on the west bank and leaving gaps every 300-feet to allow for the circulation of the water. His suggestion was to also deposit the spoil on top of existing spoil banks on the west side. Jody David and Ron Bordelon confirmed the suggestion to be a possibility, but public meetings would be necessary to inform the public.

Jody David stated capital outlay funding was at an all-time low. Commissioner Hale suggested the dredging option on Boggy Bayou could qualify in the Governor's Watershed Plan if the project is tied to the prevention of flooding. Police Jury President Jones added the option to use the scenario of dredging for flood prevention seemed a valid option.

Chairman Landry opened discussion to the topic of water pumping. Commissioner Hale presented his position that pumping should be stopped at any time water no longer goes over the dam and water is considered scarce. Commissioner Dugas admitted no one in the meeting room pumps water from the complex but his operation. Dugas added that the Spring Bayou Complex is a reservoir and agricultural land owners who use water for irrigation affect the livelihood of many people. A general discussion took place over the pumping issue. Assistant District Attorney Norris Greenhouse added the position of the District Attorney's office is that this is a civil issue and the water can be used but cannot be depleted. He added that the farmers can use the water and the sportsmen can use the water, but neither have the right to deplete the water.

The meeting concluded as Commissioner Lamartiniere made the motion to adjourn at 8:07 pm followed by a second by Commissioner Mayor Pickett. The vote was unanimous.