

Spring Bayou Lake Commission Minutes July 22, 2019

The July 15, 2019, meeting was cancelled by Chairman Jimmy Landry due to the threats of Hurricane Barry. The July 22, 2019, meeting in the Police Jury meeting room was called to order by Chairman Landry at 6:00 pm. Chairman Landry led the opening prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Terry Laborde called the roll and the attendance was as follows: Chairman Jimmy Landry, Vice Chairman Rayford Laborde, Secretary Terry Laborde, Commissioner Dr. LJ Mayeux, Commissioner Roland Dugas III, Commissioner Jules JK Bordelon, Juror Mark Borrel, Juror Trent Clark, and Police Jury President Col. Charles Jones. Absent were Commissioner Artha Hale, Commissioner Philip Lamartiniere, and Commissioner Mayor Kenneth Pickett. Also in attendance were Ronald Coco, Bill Jupp, Mike Ducote, Scott Laborde, Jacques Goudeau, George Isreal, Bobby Bordelon, Van Moreau, Donna Desoto, James Desoto, William Desoto, Chris Robichaux, Gary Robichaux, & Estella Desoto.

The meeting began as Commissioner Dr LJ Mayeux made a motion to accept the minutes from the June 17, 2019 meeting. Vice-Chairman Rayford Laborde added the second and the motion was unanimous. Chairman Landry welcomed all the visitors and asked the audience to identify themselves.

Chairman Landry stated the water level markers were to be installed in mid-July, but because of recent rains, the process will be delayed again. The same situation exists with the inspection of the Little River dam and control structure. Regarding Little River, George Isreal said the water level was at 45.2-feet which is approximately 2-inches below the level of the 2011 flood.

Police Jury President Col. Charles Jones updated the commission on the attempts to clean the “junkyard” near the Grand Lac landing. He was reluctant to say the next step may be litigation because the property could be considered a hazard to the complex as appliances have floated away and because of the possibility of leaking refrigerant. He stated he and the Police Jury personnel have attempted to “work-out” the problems at the property which violate parish ordinances. He classified the conditions as “unacceptable”. Usually these circumstances force the termination of utilities. Chairman Landry classified the property as an “eye-soar”. Juror Mark Borrel said it appears the occupant is “adding-on” to the building. Commissioner Terry Laborde added it seemed more material was on the property and the utilities were definitely still turned on evidenced by lights. Commissioner Laborde also commented that there were campers in the campgrounds. Others added the LDWF owned facility was locked prior to the approach of Hurricane Barry but was recently reopened. Some of the sites have electricity and others don’t have utilities to code. The LDWF is awaiting offers to manage the campground.

The next issue was an update on the Capital Outlay monies. Chairman Landry and Col. Jones said the approximate \$300,000.00 grant was originally stated for the maintenance of the Little River dam and control structure. It’s awaiting the signature of the governor. Discussion ensued on options to repair or replace the dam & control structure with the assistance of Pan American Engineers. The parish's engineering firm will map out the scope of the project before the project goes to the bonding commission & facility planning & contract. Commissioner Dugas questioned Col. Jones about the cost involved for the planning and Col. Jones responded that 25% is the usual engineering limit pulled out with 7% of the project cost. Next came a discussion on the composition of the dam which is simply sheet metal pilings topped by a concrete cap. Here discussion ensued on the stability of the foundation built in 1955 to stabilize the water levels of Spring Bayou. Commissioner Dr. LJ Mayeux cautioned the possible deterioration of the structure caused by rusting of the metals underneath the surface of the water. Ronald Coco explained the gates have gear boxes with brass gears and stainless steel mechanisms. Chairman Landry cautioned on the opening of the

possible frail components. George Isreal added the wings on the dam were failing and had been repaired before. Commissioner Bordelon questioned the process of getting to the dam and Commissioner Dugas replied the original documents state the Avoyelles Police Jury was to have built & maintained a road to reach the dam. From another inquiry by Commissioner Bordelon, it was stated the Police Jury has the "title" to the dam, but DOTD has authority over the dam's safety. Commissioner Bordelon recommended an inspection by DOTD. Commissioner Dugas requested multiple options be explored by Pan American Engineers to determine the best solution for the monies. According to Col. Jones, each of the options would be cost-out and the Police Jury would put up 25% of matching funds on the grant.

Next, discussion centered on the Master Plan submitted to approximately twenty agencies and entities for funding sources. Chairman Landry said the plan which includes recommendations to dredge all or part of Boggy Bayou is available on the Avoyelles Police Jury website for downloading. Figures began to roll in on the cost for such a project. Up to a \$3.5 million estimate was given if a professional service does all the work to dredge and remove the sediment from the complex using its own equipment. However, it is estimated to cost approximately \$400,000 to use a dredge on a barge and pile the sediment in a spoil bank. An estimate of \$350,000 was given to buy a small used dredge on a barge. There was discussion of the RCPP program of a silt prevention program with NRCS. Vice-Chairman Rayford Laborde again expressed the urgency to remove the siltation process from the facility as a priority. He recommended a study to determine where a weir should be placed to assist the complex and stop siltation in Old River. Commissioner Bordelon agreed with a previous suggestion by Vice-Chairman Laborde and suggested the location where the Madame Gilbert weir had been removed to be replaced and direct the flow of water towards Little River instead of the widening Old River tributary which slows the water and deposits sediment

Chairman Landry discussed some commitments that have been received including the upcoming evaluation by NRCS, Mike Ducote's explanation that the Spring Bayou Restoration Team will contribute \$25,000.00 as "seed money" for leverage, Delta Waterfowl's verbal commitment of \$4,000 to \$6,000, a verbal commitment by the Tunica Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana to possibly purchasing a dredge boat, and technical expertise by the Red River, Atchafalaya, Bayou Boeuf Levee District.

From the audience, William Desoto expressed that the residents along the proposed dredging area do not want a spoil bank in front of their property. Others echoed on the same statement. James Desoto questioned the reasoning to dredge Boggy Bayou and Chairman Landry explained the rationale was to make the channel navigable and have a deeper bed to hold water for the survival of aquatic species when rainfall amounts decrease in the summer months. Another reason it to cut out the "hill" in the curve as Boggy Bayou leading into Little River. George Isreal added that there is an existing spoil bank along the channel. In response to a question by William Desoto, Chairman Landry suggested a dedicated year-round crew on the dredge boat.

Commissioner Dugas added that the commission should highly consider a recommendation to purchase a dredge boat with a specific crew to continuously remove silt in the entire complex throughout the year instead of paying contractors to dredge specific areas which will revert back over time. Secretary Laborde and other commissioners expressed support of this suggestion. Jacques Goudeau pointed out his observance that most other parishes and states require a "silt-fence" any time construction is occurring, but he has rarely seen one in Avoyelles, thereby contributing to siltation in bodies of water.

Chairman Landry stated Congressman Abraham running for Governor of Louisiana was a potential support of the commission's endeavors. Police Juror Mark Borrel reminded the commission

of the recent visit by Secretary Jack Montoucet where the secretary was driven to the Boggy Bayou landing and informed the road leading to the facility, in dire need of repair, was owned by the LDWF. Suggestions were made to receive assistance to make repairs to the road. In continued discussions about the flooding being caused by increased rainfall in 2019 draining into the Red River and Mississippi River and the recent rains of Hurricane Barry, Ronald Coco said this was now year two where biologist classify the flooding of the hardwood forest in local WMA's as an area strained by the flooding. The longest similar condition on record was for three years and trees began to die.

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, Commissioner Rayford Laborde recognized the retiring of the parish corner, Commissioner Dr LJ Mayeux. At 7:16 pm, Commissioner JK Bordelon presented a motion to adjourn. Secretary Terry Laborde added the second, and the motion to adjourn was unanimous.

Terry Laborde, Secretary Spring Bayou Lake Commission