



Louisiana Planning District 5

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING**

Wednesday, October 22, 2025, 12:00 PM
2nd Floor, East Conference Room
HENNING SEED CENTER,
4310 Ryan Street, Lake Charles, LA 70605
ZOOM: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9583967845>

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Jacob Dillehay
Chair

II. Roll Call

Mike Hollier
Director

Mr. Jacob Dillehay – Responded Present
Mayor Hal McMillan – No Response
Ms. Mary Kay Eason – Responded Present
Mr. Ben Boudreaux – Responded Present
Ms. Lisa Adams – Responded Present
Ms. Katie Armentor – Responded Present
Mayor Mike Danahay – No Response
Mayor Michael Harris – Responded Present
Ms. Kim Monte – No Response
Ms. Carter Prejean – Responded Present
Mayor Marshall Simien – No Response
Mayor David Vidrine – No Response
Mayor Neal Watkins – Responded Present

Mr. Hollier announced that a QUORUM was present.

III. Reading and Adoption of Minutes

Mary Kay Eason
Secretary

A. Draft Minutes of Meeting held on August 27, 2025

Action requested.

A MOTION to accept the August 27, 2025 meeting minutes was made by Mayor Neal Watkins and seconded by Ms. Lisa Adams. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

IV. Financial Reports

Ben Boudreaux
Treasurer

A. August 2025 Financial Report

Action requested.

A MOTION to approve the August 2025 Financial Report was made by Mayor Michael Harris and seconded by Mayor Neal Watkins. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

B. September 2025 Financial Report

Action requested.

A MOTION to approve the September 2025 Financial Report was made by Mayor Michael Harris and seconded by Mayor Neal Watkins. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

V. Resolution No. 2322 Approving and Adopting an Amendment to Administrative Memorandum No. 10

Mike Hollier

Action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier requested a deferral since the resolution was placed on the agenda with the anticipation that the audit report would be completed, but it is not.

A MOTION to DEFER Resolution No. 2322 Approving and Adopting an Amendment to Administrative Memorandum No. 10 was made by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason and seconded by Mayor Neal Watkins. Hearing no objections, the MOTION to DEFER carried.

VI. Resolution No. 2323 Approving and Adopting Signatories and Authorized Representatives with Financial Institutions of the SWLA-RPC requiring accounts, checks, and other accounts requiring discretion.

Mike Hollier

Action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier stated that this applies to the RPC's accounts at the Southwest Louisiana Credit Union. Some members have left the Board, and others have been elected to officer positions. The Credit Union requires the adoption of a resolution identifying the authorized signatures on each account. This resolution identifies the accounts and the signatures being added and removed per account. Mr. Hollier also explained that the RPC Board has a policy requiring two signatures at any given time.

A MOTION to approve Resolution No. 2323 Approving and Adopting Signatories and Authorized Representatives with Financial Institutions of the SWLA-RPC Requiring Accounts, Checks, And Other Accounts Requiring Discretion was made by Mayor Neal Watkins and seconded by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

VII. Resolution No. 2320 Approving and Authorizing the Executive Director's Signature for the Louisiana Lake Charles MPO Carbon Reduction Grant Application For 2025. Mike Hollier

Action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier stated that the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area has accumulated \$1.2 million in Carbon Reduction Funds. The MPO is preparing a grant application to fund a Transportation Management Center (TMC) for the region that the was approved by the MPO, with the Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission (SWLA-RPC) serving as the corporate entity. Pending approval by the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC), staff will be authorized to submit the application for consideration, this is for the preparation in funding the TMC.

A MOTION to approve Resolution No. 2320 Approving and Authorizing the Executive Director's Signature for the Louisiana Lake Charles MPO Carbon Reduction Grant Application For 2025 was made by Mayor Michael Harris and seconded by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

VIII. Resolution No. 2319 Approving and Authorizing Draft Alternative Options to Establish Southwest Louisiana Collaborative Entity or Entities. Mayor Neal Watkins
Mayor Mike Danahay

Action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier reported that several mayors have been meeting to discuss regional collaboration, including exploring the formation of a Regional Mobility Authority. This idea was born of the rising cost of the I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge and the long-term toll arrangement. The Board agreed it would be beneficial to pursue the idea and approved moving forward, pending identification of specific projects.

With the recent legislation allowing the creation of Land Banks, Mr. Hollier proposed establishing a Southwest Louisiana Land Bank, which aligns with ongoing work under the Louisiana Watershed Initiative.

Twenty-nine governments are eligible to participate in this collaborative effort, with twenty-seven presently involved. There is no grant funding currently available, so expenses are being covered through the general fund. While regional collaboration is increasing, many local governments still work independently.

Ongoing pilot programs include support for pavement overlays. Limited contractor availability previously prompted member governments to combine funding and resources to coordinate work. The effort also provided valuable insight into pricing, standards, and resurfacing needs. A regional FHWA grant application was considered but delayed due to fluctuating oil prices.

Mr. Hollier asked whether the Board would like staff to continue pursuing regional collaboration across all areas.

Mayor Neal Watkins stated that although collaboration is often discussed, some divisions remain. He shared an example where the parish and the Town of Iowa were

unknowingly working on the same project until both agreed it would be more effective to coordinate.

He also noted ongoing discussions with Jefferson Davis and Allen parishes and stated that regional cooperation could benefit all communities. Mayor Watkins emphasized that while each area has its own needs, working together strengthens the region and supports future development.

It was also noted that the Town of Iowa is relocating twelve-inch water and sewer lines to support new business growth and make surrounding undeveloped property more suitable for future development.

Mayor Henry Guinn of the Town of Jennings asked whether a funding source other than the Federal Highway Commission could support the effort and reduce reliance on the General Fund for staff time. He also asked if any funding opportunities are available before the initiative is formally established.

Mr. Mike Hollier responded that funding options will depend on whether state or federal sources are pursued. He stated that the organization has the contacts, staff, and general fund resources needed to move forward in seeking those opportunities.

Ms. Katie Armentor asked if a copy of the resolution was available for the Board to review.

Mr. Ben Boudreaux stated that he would like to understand the labor burden this initiative would place on the Board, since it would be funded through the General Fund.

Mr. Mike Hollier was also asked if there was an estimated funding amount. He stated that if a figure were available, he may be able to propose resolutions that would not rely on the general fund, possibly including support from a private individual to fund the effort for at least one year.

Mr. Hollier responded that the estimated cost is between five and ten thousand dollars and noted that funding could also come from the Louisiana Watershed Initiative's nine-parish allocation. He added that work to form a collaborative Watershed Region entity is already underway and could advance at the same time as this initiative.

Ms. Jamie Gaines stated that most of the work so far has been handled by the mayors and Mr. Hollier, with minimal staff involvement, though that may change as the effort grows. She added that funding options are being reviewed and appear promising and emphasized that participation from all members will be necessary.

It was also noted that the organization manages Enterprise Services, which operate outside dues or grant funding. One example is a GIS project where staff costs are covered by project funds, and any remaining profit goes to the General Fund.

Ms. Katie Armentor requested that the resolution clearly defines the scope of what is being established with the entity and that it be made available for review prior to the next meeting.

A MOTION to DEFER action on Resolution No. 2319 Approving and Authorizing Draft Alternative Options to Establish Southwest Louisiana Collaborative Entity or Entities was made by Ms. Katie Armentor and seconded by Mr. Ben Boudreaux. Hearing no objections, the MOTION to DEFER carried.

- IX. Resolution No. 2317 Approving and Authorizing Southwest Louisiana Housing Initiative.** Mike Hollier
Action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier stated that housing was identified as a regional priority and that thirty thousand dollars has been budgeted to begin work, although no grants have been secured yet. He noted that several meetings have been held with potential partners to address housing challenges in Southwest Louisiana. One of the key goals of the housing initiative is the creation of the Southwest Louisiana Land Bank. He explained that if the Land Bank supports housing, transportation improvements, and related projects, it could become a valuable regional asset. He concluded that this is the recommended path for the housing initiative.

A MOTION to approve Resolution No. 2317 Approving and Authorizing the Southwest Louisiana Housing Initiative was made by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason and seconded by Mayor Neal Watkins. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

- X. Resolution No. 2321 Approving and Authorizing Executive Director to enter negotiations with the South Central Planning and Development Commission for Residential Steel Construction Program in Southwest Louisiana.** Mike Hollier
Action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier reported that South-Central Planning and Development Commission (SCPDC) recently presented a steel-built fortified housing pilot program. The first home is under construction, a second will begin next week, and an insurance underwriter has agreed to insure a 2,000sq ft home for one hundred dollars per month. About half a million dollars has been invested, including a facility for operations and steel fabrication. Mr. Hollier asked if the Board is interested in further discussion on the initiative.

After being asked what would be negotiated with SCPDC, Mr. Mike Hollier stated that further discussion would focus on what participation might look like, whether through a partnership, corporation, subsidiary, or a Memorandum of Understanding. He noted that SCPDC is open to options and are interested in topics such as product availability, costs, financing, insurance, and whether the region could secure exclusive access in Southwest Louisiana.

He clarified that this effort would not be led by the Board but would likely be handled by a collaborative entity or non-profit. He added that he had previously considered

the Calcasieu Parish Public Trust as the only multi-parish option, but after discussions, it appears SCPDC may be a more suitable path for advancing the housing initiative.

A MOTION to approve Resolution No. 2321 Approving and Authorizing Executive Director to enter negotiations with the South-Central Planning and Development Commission for Residential Steel Construction Program in Southwest Louisiana was made by Mr. Ben Boudreaux and seconded by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

XI. Southwest Louisiana Pavement Overlay Collaboration Network Steve Jiles
Inventory and Status.

Information only. No action is requested.

Mr. Steve Jiles explained that an initiative began approximately two years ago to help small municipalities and parishes improve their road systems, since little maintenance or long-term work had been done. The plan was to group projects in a region to share equipment and lower costs, but many municipalities could not meet the twenty percent funding match, which remains the main challenge.

He used the Town of Oberlin as an example, noting its population decline and the difficulty of maintaining 21.5 miles of roads with limited resources. He stated that many rural towns face similar conditions and suggested that the legislature consider funding assistance to help meet the match requirement for federal grants.

Mr. Jiles noted asphalt costs are currently trending downward, making this a good time to discuss options. He emphasized that maintaining roads is essential, as delaying repairs will lead to much higher costs in the future.

Mr. Ben Boudreaux added that they are considering an overlay project using a state contract with an asphalt company. This would allow asphalt to be purchased directly from the plant, reducing costs for the project contractor.

Mr. Mike Hollier stated that the MPO maintains a full inventory of monitored roads, including resurfacing schedules, base repairs, and applied standards, which allows detailed tracking of roadway conditions. He shared an example from the City of Lake Charles showing streets where the city boundary runs down the center, with one side newly resurfaced and the other deteriorated with potholes.

XII. SWLA-RPC Board Workshop on Cooperative Initiatives Jamie Gaines
Scheduled Date and Time.

Wastewater Systems
Potable Water Systems
Street/Road Overlays
Housing Initiative
Economic Technology Enterprise Centers
Fresh Water Commodity Reservoirs
Regional Mobility Authority
Digital Mapping Services and Depository

Adjudicated Properties Management
Public Fiber Infrastructure
Downtown Development

Ms. Jamie Gaines stated that a workshop is being planned to review current initiatives and set direction. It will also serve as a direction in the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy plan. The workshop will serve as the November Board meeting and is expected to last about two hours.

- XIII. December Meeting Date and Time** Chair
For information only. No action is requested.

Ms. Jamie Gaines stated that a Board meeting is planned for December 17, 2025, at noon, when the annual audit will be presented.

- XIV. Public Comment** Chair

Ms. Jamie Gaines stated Mayor McMillion is recovering following his recent surgery. She also welcomed Ms. Carter Prejean, who will represent the City of Jennings on the Board.

- XV. Adjournment** Chair

A MOTION to ADJOURN was made by Ms. Mary KayeEason and seconded by Mr. Ben Boudreaux. Hearing no objections, the MOTION to ADJOURN carried.


Jacob Dillehay, Chair

ATTEST: 
Michael Hollier, AICP
Executive Director