



Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission
(SWLA-RPC)
Louisiana Planning District 5

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday November 20, 2024

I. Call to Order

Mayor Marcus Renfrow, Chair

Mayor Marcus Renfrow called the meeting to order

II. Roll Call

Mike Hollier, Director

Mayor Marcus Renfrow – Responded present
Jacob Delahay – No response
Mayor Hal McMillin – Responded present
Mayor Nic Hunter – No Response
Lisa Adams – Responded present
Katie Armentor – Responded present
Ben Boudreaux – Responded present
Mayor Mike Danahay – Responded present
Mark Kay Eason – Responded present
Mayor Henry Guinn – No response
Kim Monte – Responded present

Mr. Mike Hollier reported that a QUORUM had been reached.

III. Reading and Adoption of Minutes

Mayor Marcus Renfrow
Chair

Action requested.

A MOTION to adopt the minutes of the meeting held October 16, 2024, was made by Mayor Mike Danahay and seconded by Mayor Hal McMillin. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

IV. Financial Reports

Mayor Hal McMillin
Treasurer

Action requested.

A. October 2024 Financial Report

Action requested.

A MOTION to adopt the October 2024 Financial Report was made by Mayor Hal McMillin and seconded by Ms. Kim Montie. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

- B. Resolution No. 2291 Approving and Adopting Amendment to Administrative Memorandum No. 9 FY2023-2024 Budgeted Revenues.**
Action requested.

Mike Hollier

Mr. Mike Hollier stated that the board packets contain a copy of Resolution 2291, Administrative Memorandum No. 9, which adjusts the FY 2023-24 budget. He explained that the Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission operates through grants, and at times, in order to get contracts finalized and authorized, it can take anywhere from 6 to 12 months. Within that time, budgets must be rectified, which Memorandum No. 9 addresses. He added that FY2023-24 expenses were below revenues.

A MOTION to approve and adopt Resolution 2291 Amendment to Administrative Memorandum No. 9 FY2023-2024 Budgeted Revenues was made by Mayor Hal McMillin and seconded by Ms. Kim Montie. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

- C. Resolution No. 2292 Revising and Establishing Annual Dues for Port Membership.**
Action requested.

Mike Hollier

Mr. Mike Hollier explain that the intent of Resolution No. 2292 was to address monetary amounts for Port membership dues.

Ms. Jamie Gaines explained that each Port member gets a bill for their membership dues. She stated that The Port of Vinton is billed \$3,000, while West Calcasieu Port is billed \$500. She further explained that Chennault International Airport, Lake Charles Regional Airport, and Port of Lake Charles are also paying \$3,000, while Cameron Parish Port, Terminal and Harbor District is only charged \$500 annually. She added that Mr. Jerry Merchant, director of the Port of Vinton, requested to be charged the same amount that Cameron is being charged.

A MOTION to DEFER Resolution No. 2292 Revising and Establishing Annual Dues for Port Membership for 30 days to consult with each port regarding the fee structure was made by Mayor Hal McMillin and seconded by Ms. Kim Montie. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

- V. Resolution No. 2288 Approving, Adopting, and Authorizing Establishment of the Southwest Louisiana Regional Mobility Authority**
Action requested.

Mike Hollier

Mr. Mike Hollier introduced a list of potential funding options for the Southwest Louisiana Regional Mobility Authority (RMA) gathered from around the United States; however, he stated that a decision to approve, adopt and establish the RMA did not have to be made at this time.

Mr. Ben Boudreaux asked about the structure for governing the RMA. Mr. Hollier Explained that the board would determine the structure. Mr. Boudreaux then asked

if the board had the authority to create the RMA. Mr. Hollier replied that no, the board had recommended to the 13 members of the area legislative delegations to consider and pursue establishing the Southwest Louisiana Regional Mobility Authority. These legislators will contact the board or commission staff asking how we would like to see this structured. The legislative staff will pull existing examples, one of which, the Capital Area Road and Bridge District, is included in the board packet. This would be a governmental agency, with the power to tax and propose taxes – not pass taxes. Mr. Boudreaux asked if the RMA could potentially clash with other local governments. Mr. Hollier replied that he believed the RMA would be a supplement to and not a replacement of.

A MOTION to DEFER Resolution 2288 Approving, Adopting, and Authorizing Establishment of the Southwest Louisiana Regional Mobility Authority for 30 days was made by Mayor Mike Danahay and seconded by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason. Hearing no objection, the MOTION was DEFERRED.

VI. Resolution No.2280 Approving and Adopting a Revised and Updated SWLA-RPC Rules of Policy and Procedure.

Mike Hollier

Action requested

Mr. Mike Hollier informed the board members that the changes that have occurred in the policy and procedures manual are tagged and opened the floor for questions regarding the establishment of an Assistant Director position. Mr. Ben Boudreaux asked if the position was by default a promotion for that position, if it would be posted and interviews conducted for the position. Mr. Hollier stated it would be internal.

Mayor Hal McMillin asked if there would be a salary change to which Mr. Hollier answered that it had not been decided if there would be a salary change. Mr. Mike Harper inquired about the hiring process. Mr. Ben Boudreaux stated that he believed a normal process should be followed.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Ben Boudreaux and seconded by Mayor Hal McMillin to advertise and have a normal interview process for the new position.

Ms. Mary Kaye Eason stated that she understood it would validate the process, but noted that the board knows there was already someone in that position and who that person is and questioned whether it would be misleading to advertise and invite people to apply and think they have a chance when it's really internal.

Mayor Marcus Renfrow asked if it had to be advertised or whether it could be an appointed position.

Mayor Mike Danahay agreed with Mayor Renfrow and asked if it was an appointed position or a position that the director hires. According to Mayor Danahay, if the board was selecting a director, it certainly would require advertising and an interview process. However, this is under the director's jurisdiction, so he wasn't sure it was something that would need to be advertised for.

Mayor Renfrow suggested that the board would want to director to appoint his

assistant versus the board appoint someone that he doesn't work well with.

Mr. Mike Harper suggested that the director recommend this appointment to the board.

Mr. Boudreaux withdrew his original motion and made a MOTION that the director submit his recommendation for assistant director. Mayor McMillin withdrew his second of the original motion and seconded the MOTION that the director submit his recommendation for assistant director.

Hearing no objection, the MOTION approve and adopt Resolution No.2280 A Revised and Updated SWLA-RPC Rules of Policy and Procedure as amended carried.

- VII. Resolution No. 2293 Approving and Adopting the Jefferson Davis Parish "5 Page Comprehensive Plan" as a Foundation Component Part of the Southwest Louisiana Regional Plan and Economic Development Strategies.** Mike Hollier
Action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier thanked Mr. Ben Boudreaux for following through and getting the information for the Jefferson Davis Parish 5 Page Comprehensive Plan to the SWLA-RPC. Mr. Boudreaux stated that a public hearing would not occur until December 2024, and requested a deferral until the public hearing could be held.

A MOTION to DEFER Resolution 2293 Approving and Adopting the Jefferson Davis Parish "5 Page Comprehensive Plan" was made by Mr. Ben Boudreaux and seconded by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason. Hearing no objection, the MOTION to DEFER carried.

- VIII. Resolution No. 2294 Approving and Authorizing the Regional Housing Initiative Pilot Program in the Town of Lake Arthur.** Mike Hollier
Action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier explained that the Town of Lake Arthur has their "5 Page Plan" pending some revisions. He added there is a housing element that addresses primary and secondary housing. The "5 Page Plan" is primarily focused on the lake since there are numerous threats to the lake. The board previously approved \$30,000 to address housing and the mayor of Lake Arthur is interested in a pilot project which would be sponsored by the town.

A MOTION was made to approve and authorize Resolution No. 2294 The Regional Housing Initiative Pilot Program in the Town of Lake Arthur by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason and seconded by Mr. Ben Boudreaux. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

- IX. Resolution No. 2295 Approving and Adopting the Lake Arthur "5 Page Plan " as a Foundation Component Part of the Southwest Louisiana Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies.** Mike Hollier
Action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier stated the mayor of Lake Arthur is focused on six threats to the lake, so the focus of his comprehensive plan is on finding remedies.

A MOTION to approve and adopt Resolution No. 2295 The Lake Arthur "5 Page Plan" as a Foundation Component Part of the Southwest Louisiana Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies was made by Mr. Ben Boudreaux and seconded by Mayor Mike Danahay. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

- X. Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) Cooperative Project.**
Information only. No action requested.

Jamie Gaines

Ms. Gaines explained that the RPC was collaborating with the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) Cooperative Project, which was awarded \$49.9 million by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the implementation of Critical Greenhouse Gas Reduction Measures over the next five years.

Tulane University Cooperative Project.
Information only. No action requested.

Jamie Gaines

Ms. Gaines explained that the RPC was collaborating with the Water Institute at Tulane University, which was awarded a \$1.988 million Climate Resilience Regional Challenge Grant by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. This award is for a multipronged approach for community-based regional planning and governance for addressing storm and sea level rising impacts.

- XI. McNeese State University Cooperative Project**
Information only. No action requested.

Jamie Gaines

Ms. Gaines explained that the RPC is working with McNeese State University on a potential Rail Institute which is in the preliminary stages.

Mr. Hollier stated that the institute would be named after Ms. Marion "Butch" Fox who was an advocate for rail development in Southwest Louisiana.

- XII. LSU Louisiana House Cooperative Project**
Information only. No action requested.

Jamie Gaines

According to Ms. Gaines, Louisiana State University has a pending application for \$15 million for the Louisiana Disaster Resilience Initiative through the National Science Foundation. This award aims to enable clean energy transition for the state by advancing research and commercialization efforts in the areas of Carbon Capture, the use of Hydrogen as an alternative fuel, Carbon Dioxide as a feedstock and sustainable water and sustainable manufacturing for clean energy promote pathways to decarbonization across the state.

The National Science Foundation has awarded \$1.5 million to La House Research and Education Center at Louisiana State University Agricultural Center for redock flood mitigation sandbox, a software prototype aimed at reducing flood risk across the 5 coastal parishes.

XIII. Resolution No. 2296 Approving and Authorizing the SWLA Trade Training Initiative

Action requested.

Mike Hollier

Mr. Mike Hollier stated he has had conversations with area contractors, school superintendents, and trade association leaders to collaborate to facilitate and enhance the perception of trades training.

MOTION to approve Resolution No. 2296 Approving and Authorizing the Southwest Louisiana Trade Training Initiative was made by Mayor Hal McMillin and seconded by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

XIV. Director's Report

Mike Hollier

- a. Cameron Parish "Jack-up Public Market Facility" Grant is a potential solution to the housing needs as well as public infrastructure along coastal Cameron Parish.
- b. The Metropolitan Planning Organization has tentatively approved moving ahead with a Transportation Management Center (TMC), which will be operated initially by the RPC but ideally would be governed by the Regional Mobility Authority.
- c. Region 4 of the Louisiana Watershed Initiative has until the end of 2025 to complete a comprehensive plan for the region. Grants are in play from both rounds 1 and 2 of funding.
- d. The Congressional requests were prepared and mailed to the legislative delegations and include a request for an adjudicated property law to reduce the redemption period from 30 years to 3 years in Southwest Louisiana and for the establishment of the Regional Mobility Authority.
- e. Economic Technology Enterprise (ETE) Centers are primarily in downtown areas, and three (3) are in the developmental stages.
- f. The City of DeRidder was recently removed from the board but Mayor Randy Larken was present at the November meeting so there is hope that DeRidder may rejoin.

XV. December Meeting Date and Time

Chair

The next meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2024, at noon.


XVI. Public Comment.

Chair

There were no public comments.

XVII. Adjournment.

A MOTION to adjourn was made by Mayor Hal McMillin and seconded by Ms. Kim Montie. Hearing no objection, the meeting ADJOURNED.

ATTEST: 
Jamie Gaines, Assistant Director


for Mayor Marcus Renfrow, Chair