



Louisiana Planning District 5

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, August 27, 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 Mc Millan – No Response
Ms. Mary KayeEason – Responded Present
Ms. Lisa Adams – No Response
Ms. Katie Armentor – Responded Present
Mr. Ben Boudreaux – No Response
Mayor Mike Danahay –No Response
Mayor Henry Guinn – Responded Present
Mayor Michael Harris – Responded Present
Ms. Kim Monte – Responded Present
Mayor Marshall Simien – No Response
Mayor David Vidrine – Responded Present
Mayor Neal Watkins – Responded Present

III. Reading and Adoption of Minutes

Mary KayeEason
Secretary

A. Draft Minutes of Meeting held on June 18, 2025

Action requested.

A MOTION to accept the June 18, 2025 board meeting minutes was made by Ms. Kim Monte and seconded by Ms. Katie Armentor. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

IV. Financial Reports

(Position Vacant)
Treasurer

A. June 2025 Financial Report

Action requested.

A MOTION to approve the June 2025 Financial Report was made by Mayor Neal Watkins and seconded by Ms. Mary KayeEason. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

B. July 2025 Financial Report
Action requested.

A MOTION to approve the July 2025 Financial Report was made by Mayor Henry Guinn and seconded by Ms. Mary KayeEason. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

V. Election of Treasurer

Chair

A. Call for Nominations
Action requested.

Mr. Jacob Dillehay opened the floor for nominations for the position of treasurer, to which Mr. Ben Boudreaux.

A MOTION by Ms. Kim Monte was made to close the nominations and seconded by Mayor Henry Guinn. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

B. Election of Treasurer
Action requested.

A VOTE was called by Mr. Jacob Dillehay. Hearing no objections, Mr. Ben Boudreaux was unanimously elected treasurer.

VI. Resolution No. 2314 Approving and Endorsing the Lake Charles MPO Carbon Reduction Program "Call for Projects" schedule and package.
Action requested.

Mike Hollier

Mr. Mike Hollier stated that this resolution is to approve advertising a call for projects under the MPOs Carbon Reduction Program beginning in September. The MPO has approximately \$1.3 million available in this effort, with a number of priorities identified.

Mayor Henry Guinn asked for an example of what a project may be under the program, and Mr. Hollier replied that federal legislation is very broad. However, the MPO has narrowed the interpretation down.

Mr. Hollier cited the Motorist Assistance Program (MAP) as one example, and anything else that would reduce the carbon footprint, including planting trees, transit services, electric vehicle stations, and signal light management.

A MOTION was made to approve Resolution No. 2314 Endorsing the Lake Charles MPO Carbon Reduction Program Call for Projects by Mayor Henry Guinn and seconded by Mayor Michael Harris. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

- VII. Resolution No. 2313 Approving and Authorizing the Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission (SWLA-RPC) to apply for a "Louisiana Hubs for Energy Resilient Operations (HERO): Integrated Community Energy Planning" grant and authorizing Executive Director, Michael Hollier signature to execute the Grant Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources (LDENR).** Mike Hollier
- Action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier deferred to Ms. Jamie Gaines, who explained that the application will be an energy grid resilience planning grant for our rural parishes, Allen, Beauregard, Cameron and Jefferson Davis. We have a verbal commitment from energy providers in those parishes to work with us on a pre-application. If we are approved, we'll move forward to apply for additional funding. The amount of funding initially is \$150,000.

A MOTION was made by Mayor Henry Guinn and seconded by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason to approve Resolution No. 2313, Authorizing the Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission (SWLA-RPC) to apply for a "Louisiana Hubs for Energy Resilient Operations (HERO): Integrated Community Energy Planning" grant and authorizing Executive Director, Michael Hollier signature to execute the Grant Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Energy and Natural Resources (LDENR). Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

- VIII. Resolution No. 2315 Approving and Adopting the Introduction (Draft) of the Marion "Butch" Fox Southwest Louisiana Regional Rail Plan.** Mike Hollier
- Action requested to introduce Resolution pending a Public Hearing.

Mr. Mike Hollier stated that when this resolution was added to the agenda, he'd hope that the draft document would be ready for review. However, it is not as we are still working on maps. However, he reported that it does include approximately 15 major rail projects, identifies extra properties that have been abandoned, which could be used for the auxiliary buildings and services that we are providing, and railroad crossings.

One recommendation from the plan is to establish the Southwest Louisiana Rail Research Institute in partnership with McNeese State University, the Port of Lake Charles, SOWELA, and other entities. The board previously approved an MOU to partner with IronBox, who will demonstrate its IronLev prototype in Abu Dhabi this October.

If we are interested, IronBox is willing to bring the prototype to Southwest Louisiana as part of the Rail Research Institute at a cost of approximately \$84,000. We are approaching three separate entities to help with the cost. Mr. Hollier requested that this Resolution be either deferred till next the meeting or introduced with the document being sent out as soon as it is available.

A MOTION to DEFER was made by Mayor Michael Harris and seconded by Mayor Henry Guinn to defer action on Resolution No. 2315 Approving and Adopting the Introduction (Draft) of the Marion "Butch" Fox Southwest Louisiana Regional Rail Plan. Hearing no objections, the MOTION to DEFER carried.

IX. Resolution No. 2316 Approving and Authorizing the Introduction (Draft) of the Southwest Louisiana Hike and Bike Recreational Trail Plan.

Jamie Gaines

Action requested to introduce Resolution pending a Public Hearing.

Ms. Jamie Gaines stated that the trails plan is in a similar situation as the rail plan, so she is asking for a deferral. She did report on Guillory Street in Westlake, for which funding was received in 2023, to create a 10-foot multi-use path to run from Bob Hardy Drive to John Stein Road. Since there wasn't enough money to complete the total project, it was divided into two phases: First from Garden to John Stein followed by Bob Hardy to Garden. The city is also asking the Calcasieu Parish School Board to fund a 10-foot multi-use path in front of Westlake High School that would connect with the Guillory project. A private partner donated \$75,000 for signalized pedestrian crossing at both the elementary school and high school on Guillory. This is more than a \$1 million project and is being completed in conjunction with a rehab of Guillory St. In addition, the Entergy right of way runs right through this intersection of Guillory and John Stein. Ms. Gaines requested a deferral.

A MOTION to DEFER was made by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason and seconded by Ms. Kim Monte. Hearing no objections, the MOTION to DEFER carried.

X. South Central Planning and Development Commission Regional Housing Initiative Presentation

John Boudreaux

Information only. No action is requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier introduced Mr. Cullen Curole, Attorney, Special Projects Manager, and Economic Development Administrator, and Mr. John Boudreaux, Affordable Community Housing Program Manager, with South Central Planning and Development Commission (SCPDC), to discuss SCPDC's housing pilot program.

Mr. Cullen stated that SCPDC covers coastal communities that include Houma and Thibodaux, which have been impacted by a number of major hurricanes and floods in 2016. We began our housing initiative by issuing disaster recovery loans. The state and federal governments were looking for an organization to help by giving some small business loans. This resulted in money that we were then relending. Dane Bergeron, who is housed in this building, can serve small businesses in your area with low interest economic development money. We do not compete with banks. However, a business must have a turn down letter from a bank before qualifying for the program. Then it comes before the SCPDC board to present their project to determine if we could fund that. This is now a \$96 million project.

Mr. Cullen continued by explaining that SCPDC is using proceeds from that program to fund the non-profit South Central Regional Affordable Housing (SCRATCH), which eases some of the bureaucratic burden. The need for affordable housing has increased with each storm. South-Central staff operates the program, and a variety of trade workers have been hired, so that they have good benefits to run the program.

SCRATCH is building fire-resistant, affordable houses, or starter homes, out of steel. There is roughly 1950 sq. ft. under roof, or 1675 sq. ft of living space, in a 3 bedroom 2

or 2½ bath home, with a 161 mile per hour wind rating. We expect to sell these units for approximately \$230,000. Mr. Cullen said that they still have to perfect the technique. Subcontractors for plumbing, HVAC, and electrical are used for construction. The subcontractors love these houses because they only spend one day at the building.

The land was provided by Terrebonne Parish with the stipulation that each house is sold to someone who makes no more than 80% of the LMI average for that parish. Buyers will complete applications and be qualified. Houses will not be donated.

XI. Resolution No. 2317 Approving and Authorizing the Southwest Louisiana Housing Initiative Plan. Mike Hollier

Action requested to Introduce Resolution pending a Public Hearing

Mr. Mike Hollier asked for a deferral as there are a number of items relating to the Housing Initiative yet to be completed, including meeting with school superintendents throughout the region to promote trades training. Mr. Hollier also referenced the recent Land Bank Legislation, which could boost the RPC housing initiative.

A MOTION to DEFER was made by Mayor Henry Guinn and seconded by Mayor Neal Watkins. Hearing no objections, the MOTION to DEFER carried.

XII. Resolution No. 2318 Approving and Authorizing Citian Master Subscription Agreement for a period of One Year and Two Discretionary One Year Renewals as Determined Appropriate by the Executive Director. Mike Hollier

Action requested.

According to Mr. Mike Hollier, Southwest Louisiana has the highest rate of traffic fatalities and serious injuries in the state and has consistently held this ranking for at least five years. We were part of the state's safety coalition but withdrew because it wasn't addressing issues fast enough. One of the frustrations is that the crash data reports take such a long time. It is imperative that we accelerate this process so that we can increase the safety in the area.

Mr. Hollier explained that Citian, a young, vibrant company, has submitted a proposal to work with local law enforcement and gather crash data, analyze it, ensure it's correct, and publish it quickly so that we can address the causes of these fatalities and serious injuries. The initial contract is for one year at a cost of \$50,000, with two-year renewal option.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason and seconded by Mayor Henry Guinn to approve Resolution No. 2318 Authorizing the Citian Master Subscription Agreement for a period of One Year and Two Discretionary One Year Renewals as Determined Appropriate by the Executive Director. Hearing no objections, the MOTION carried.

XIII. SWLA-RPC Board Workshop on Cooperative Initiatives
Scheduled Date and Time.

Mike Hollier

Wastewater Systems
Potable Water Systems
Street/Road Overlays
Housing Initiative
Economic Infrastructure and Centers
Fresh Water Commodity Reservoirs
Regional Mobility Authority
Digital Mapping Services and Depository
Adjudicated Properties Management

Mr. Mike Hollier reported that staff has been listening to you, with your needs, wants and shovel-ready projects, and is now focusing on board priorities to focus on a number of significant opportunities that may be available. As such, we are asking for approximately two hours in a workshop to focus on board priorities.

Ms. Jamie Gaines stated that district initiatives identified by the board in 2021 were the foundation for the Southwest Louisiana Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This workshop could be the beginning of our new CEDS development, which is due next year. It's a critical piece, whether we do it now or we do it later.

Ms. Gaines asked the board to look at October 8, 2025, as a possible date. She will send a placeholder.

XIV. September Meeting Date and Time

Chair

For information only. No action is requested.

Ms. Jamie Gaines will send a poll to determine a date for the September board meeting.

XV. Public Comment

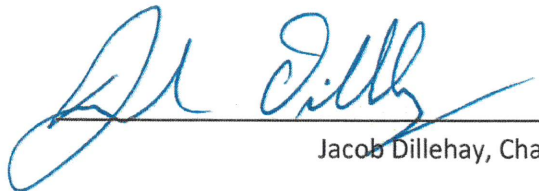
Chair

There were no public comments.

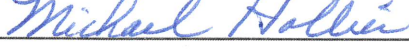
XVI. Adjournment

Chair

A MOTION to ADJOURN was made by Ms. Mary Kaye Eason and seconded by Mayor Michael Harris. Hearing no objections, the MOTION to ADJOURN carried.



Jacob Dillehay, Chair

ATTEST: 

Michael Hollier, AICP, Director