

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
AMITE RIVER BASIN DRAINAGE & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

3535 S. Sherwood Forest Boulevard, Suite 135, Baton Rouge, LA

**July 17, 2018**

MEMBERS PRESENT DURING ROLL CALL: Ben Babin, Jerry Thibeau, David Hoover, Lionel Bailey, Willie George Lee, James Little, Don Thompson, Kenneth "Wade" Welborn

MEMBERS ABSENT: Matt Milazzo, Tamiara Wade, Larry Thomas

*Vacancy: East Feliciana Parish, St. Helena Parish*

ALSO, PRESENT: ARBC Executive Director Dietmar Rietschier, ARBC Executive Secretary Toni Guitrau, ARBC Legal Counsel Larry Bankston, Patrick Landry and Susan Douglas, LA DOTD

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Babin.

2. Prayer/Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Comments on Agenda Items:

4. Minutes

The Board unanimously approved a motion by Thompson, second by Thibeau to approve the June regular meeting minutes, as presented.

5. Financial Statement Report:

- Hoover presented to the Board the June 2018 General Fund and CRDC Fund financial statements. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Thibeau, second by Hoover to approve the June 2018 General Fund and CRDC Fund financial statements.

6. Executive Director Report

- DOTD and ARBC are working on the utility relocations at the crossing of the future canal and LA Hwy. 61. ARBC is required to provide the permitting and right-of-entry for all property owned by ARBC.
- Federal funding for the CRDC has been declared as fully federal funded. Nevertheless, non-federal funding from DOTD and ARBC is still needed at this time. ARBC will advance \$10 million as part of the White Paper agreement among all the project partners. The USACE and DOTD will share the responsibility of the construction of the canal and its features. The Corps is preparing a guidance document outlining the responsibilities of the federal-USACE-and non-federal-DOTD, ARBC and EBRP – partners in the process towards completing the project. ARBC will continue to pay for its commitments. Currently, we operate under existing agreements and the "white paper." We have begun the process of relocating utilities at US Hwy. 61 at the future crossing of the canal.
- Strategy for execution is a four-year timeline as mentioned at the CRDC Project Task Force Meeting of July 17, 2018. ARBC attended a meeting on July 12, 2018 with the pipeline and other utility companies and resolved issues they were facing. Two pipelines relocations are ready to start.
- Contracts for construction of the two bridges should be issued in January 2019.
- Land acquisitions are expected to be accelerated as a consequence of the USACE providing taking-lines for right-of-way in the next two weeks.
- Issued right-of-entry to the USACE for rehabilitation work at the Lilly Bayou Control Structure and Pilot Channel. The Corps is looking at this and the channel that has scoured over the years by rain.
- Approximately 2500 acres for the project has been purchased.
- LA DOTD requested \$10 million from Amite River Basin Commission for the cash contribution, per the US Army Corps of Engineer's White Paper. These funds will be combined with monies from DOTD to perform Utility Relocations for the US Hwy. 61 Bridge and the KCS Railroad Bridge. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Bailey, seconded by Lee to approve forwarding the \$10 million, as requested.
- The CRDC Project will proceed generally from west to east to achieve functionality of sections of the canal, but additional work will be done simultaneously at other sections of the canal in order to accommodate the construction schedule of four years.
- The USACE is upgrading the H&H Model for the Comite River Diversion Canal considering the changes in the Comite River since the original H&H Model was developed in the initial phases of the project. Anticipated dead-line for completion is August 2018.
- DOTD Report by Susan Douglas: DOTD is currently waiting on the right of way information from the Corps before they can move forward with acquiring the construction servitude associated with the Bypass Road tie ins at US61 and the permanent servitude needed for the Barnett Road relocation. Utility relocation

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designs are ongoing at this time. DOTD is working with the utilities and the Corps to provide any assistance possible in clearing wetland concerns in areas where HDD pits and pipe laydown will be occurring. The pipelines on the east side of US61 have begun discussions with ARBC about assistance in getting temporary construction workspaces for HDD pits and pipe laydown areas. For those areas east of US61 that will be constructed under the supplemental funding, DOTD is moving forward with identifying additional temporary construction servitudes needed for pipeline relocations for Florida Gas, EBR Sewer, and Exxon Bengal. DOTD's contractor will shortly begin a screening survey for additional utilities in the project right of way and any identified utilities will be contacted and relocations discussions initiated.

7. ARBC Legal Counsel:

The latest from Congress is that \$346 million will be advanced for the Project. This is in addition to the \$14 million in the workplan, \$6 million on hand by the USACE, \$14 million from DOTD, and \$10 million from ARBC. "Guidance" will be coming out from the USACE on how this works. There were questions, at the meeting on July 9, 2018, as to whether there is a 30-year payback from the local sponsors (DOTD). Duplantier was of the belief that it would be waived, but Sen. Cassidy's staff person was concerned that this provision was still in the law. We will have a better idea concerning this issue within the next 30 days. There will have to be a new PCA with the new conditions. The White Paper would still proceed as previously discussed. The funds mentioned above would proceed as previously discussed. Sec. Wilson and Col. are in discussions concerning how we should proceed. This should be resolved within the next 30 days. Discussions are going on for DOTD to construct all remaining bridges. The discussion of working west to east is not relevant since all the money is available. USACE anticipates that construction will happen in all 5 functional elements. USACE expects to have taking lines for Functional Element 1 within two weeks. Also, USACE has contracted with Arcadis to review all of the hydrology in the basin. This report is due August 1, 2018. This will examine issues such as width of the canal and weir at the headwaters at the Comite River. USACE says it will take 3 to 5 years to complete. We may have issues with Mitigation. DOTD has sent information on the property that was acquired in McHugh Swamp. USACE says that mitigation banks have very little credit for sale. We will need the acquired property for mitigation. USACE is proceeding with a scope of necessary rehabilitation of Lilly Bayou. They hope to have that complete within the next 30 days. Contracts will be issued by the USACE to rehab Lilly Bayou. Brooks Lake is still in the Project functional elements, but they expect to remove and replace with just additional flowage easement. Because of the Comite and EBR project, USACE is considering opening an office in Baton Rouge. At this time, February 2019 is the date for a construction contract. DOTD real estate is waiting on Maps for Highway 61 Bridge. Expect to receive in 2 weeks. DOTD have meetings set for Wednesday just for pipeline. Also, a meeting on Thursday is set with DOTD, ARBC, and utilities to discuss process. ARBC advised that GCR has developed Asset Tracker and will be made available to the partners. This should be helpful going forward with acquisition and mitigation.

8. Old Business

- GCR Contract: Discussed the AssetTracker IQ Program to update files with recent land acquisitions. This is a GIS based program that centralized all information regarding land acquisition by tract numbers. The upper limit is \$18,500. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Thompson, seconded by Thibeau to approve the contract between ARBC and GCR, as presented.

9. New Business

- Pay adjustment for the ARBC Executive Secretary: The ARBC Executive Board recommended a pay increase of 5% for the ARBC Executive Secretary. Rietschier reminded the Board that in recent years there was a six-year period and a two-year period where the ARBC employees received no pay increase. He stated that she is an excellent, and extraordinary Executive Secretary and Office Manager. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Thompson, second by Thibeau to approve a 5% pay increase for the ARBC Executive Secretary.

10. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Hoover, second by Thompson to adjourn the meeting.

APPROVED:

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/s/ Ben Babin, ARBC President  
Date: August 21, 2018

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/s/ Toni B. Guitrau, Executive Secretary