

**SOUTH TANGIPAHOA PARISH PORT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2024 9:00AM  
CITY HALL ANNEX BUILDING - 110 W. HICKORY ST., PONCHATOULA, LA**

President Daryl Ferrara called the regular meeting to order on January 10, 2024 at 9:10 AM. The meeting was held at the City Hall Annex Building, located at 110 W. Hickory Street, Ponchatoula, LA.

The invocation was given by Administrative Assistant Robyn Pusey, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Commissioner Jimmy Schliegelmeyer, Jr.

Commissioners Present: Daryl Ferrara, Jimmy Schliegelmeyer, Jr., Tina Roper, Timothy DePaula, William Sims, Rhonda Sheridan

Commissioners Absent: William "Bill" Joubert

President Ferrara welcomed the attendees. Others Present: Patrick Dufresne, Executive Director; Robyn Pusey, Administrative Assistant, Lee Barends, ITL Accounting; Andre Coudrain, Cashe Coudrain & Bass; Richard Meek, Hammond Daily Star.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES**

It was moved by Commissioner Sheridan and seconded by Commissioner Roper that the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission approve the regular meeting agenda for January 10, 2024 as presented. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Joubert.

President Ferrara announced that the minutes of the public hearing and regular meeting on December 12, 2023, had been sent to the Commissioners by email for review, and a copy of the minutes had been placed in their meeting folders. After a brief review of the minutes, a motion was made by Commissioner Roper and seconded by Commissioner Sheridan to adopt/approve the minutes from the public hearing and regular meeting on December 12, 2023. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Joubert.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Prior to the meeting today the financial reports for the period ending December 31, 2023, had been emailed to the Commissioners for their review and a copy was placed in their meeting folders. Commissioner/Treasurer Schliegelmeyer, Jr. reviewed the reports with the Commissioners, saying the total monthly interest income was \$118.38 and the monthly investment dividend & interest was \$36,921.98. He said the rental income was \$117,006.20 with total revenues of \$163,196.56. He said the total expenses were \$25,909.51 and the net income was \$137,287.05. A brief discussion was had regarding the current assets, and how much money should be moved from the Hancock general account to the Edward Jones money market account. It was agreed to keep a minimal amount of money in the operating account to manage monthly expenses, and then move the remaining funds to the money market account, as there is no issue moving funds back and forth when necessary and this would give the most return. Port accountant Lee Barends suggested that

there be a specific dollar amount that is to be sustained in the operating account. It was agreed to keep \$250,000.00 in the operating account and move the overage to the Edward Jones account each month. President Ferrara asked that Shaun McArthur of Edward Jones be invited to the next STPPC meeting in February to update the commission on the STPPC account standings and advise of any current financial opportunities.

It was moved by Commissioner Roper and seconded by Commissioner DePaula that the Commission accept/approve the financials for the month ending December 31, 2023. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Joubert.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. LA-DOTD Port Priority State H. 011927 – Transload Improvements – update Truck scale container update and electrical update.**

Executive Director Patrick Dufresne told the Commissioners that after multiple delays and labor issues, the contractor (LA Contracting Enterprise, LLC) had to locate another container company. Mr. Dufresne said the new container company will be providing some of the container modifications and all the electrical work will be completed by the projects electrical contractor. He said that he had seen the new container unit, and he hoped the container would be ready as soon as possible. There were no questions.

### **2. Warehouse Building #3 - evaluation & maintenance schedule update**

Patrick Dufresne, Executive Director told the Commissioners that a commercial inspection of Warehouse Building #3 had been completed by Advanced Building Inspections. A copy of the report had been emailed to them prior to the meeting, and a copy was placed in their meeting folders. Commissioner Roper said she “was very concerned” by the initial findings in the report. She asked port attorney Andre Coudrain “who is responsible for this?” Mr. Coudrain stated general maintenance and reasonable, ordinary wear and tear things are to be fixed by the tenant, however the current lease does not give clarity. He said the Commission would decide as part of negotiations with the tenant (Premier Chemicals) that any repairs needing to be done, and certainly anything the tenant has damaged, would also need to be repaired by the tenant. President Ferrara said now that we have the findings, we need to present this to the tenant. Commissioner Sheridan said there are serious concerns in the building, and negotiations with the tenant need to determine what our responsibility is and what is theirs. Additional safety concerns were expressed by Commissioner Roper, who felt there was a lack of oversight regarding the maintenance of the building by the port director and felt 50 – 60% of the findings were “our fault”. Commissioner DePaula did not agree, saying we have no information as to what actually caused the damage, and thought the report only showed the obvious need for repairs, but not what caused it. He said this is why initially he wanted to have a structural engineer evaluate Building# 3. Commissioner DePaula said the report findings should be sent to the tenant to “see what they come up with” and said we need to push for an ongoing maintenance schedule from the tenant. Commissioner Roper said, “Now that there is documentation in a very inexpensive manner to say that there are some serious issues going on in this building, we need to address it, not just for our knowledge, but if there are safety concerns, we need to assure that they are addressed.” President Ferrara agreed with Commissioner Roper. She also said to Commissioner DePaula “Now we can look at the next steps, and that may be getting into conversations with the tenant and also a structural review to look at some of the issues that have been observed.”

Discussion about the report findings continued among the Commissioners. Clarification of one of the photographs in the report that appeared to show roof damage was given by Mr. Dufresne, stating it was not part of the roof replacement project, that it was a very small section of the unloading rack over the track that was damaged in Hurricane Ida. President Ferrara asked Mr. Dufresne what will happen moving forward. Mr. Dufresne said he had previously presented 3 engineering inspection quotes to the Commission, and that he could ask the company with the lowest quote to issue an evaluation report. Commissioner Sims said he preferred to go to the tenant first, that during a previous meeting “the tenant appeared to be open to helping with a lot of this.” Commissioner DePaula agreed, saying we should go to the tenant first with the findings showing what needs to be repaired and discuss implementing a maintenance schedule. Commissioner Roper referred the Commissioners to page 5 of the report which said the inspector couldn’t get to the interior electricals due to chemicals on the ground. Commissioner Schliegelmeier, Jr. said this is where the tenant is washing down his containers, in the northeast corner of the building, and that he had concerns about the chemicals being washed inside and out of the building. President Ferrara said he spoke with Manchac Fire Chief George Coxen, and that Chief Coxen had the same concerns, and that he doesn’t think the “filtrate system” or “washdown system” being used by the tenant is significant enough to cover what they are doing. Commissioner DePaula said “We need to be sure before we throw accusations at people about what is going on, and what is the law and what he is doing, and whether he gets inspected and does it pass, and did any of these concerns ever come up.” He said he understands that everyone is concerned about this but said we should be careful before saying “it’s not good enough before we have proof that it’s not, legally.” He said that the inspection report should be sent to the tenant, advise them that the damage to the building needs to be repaired, and get an ongoing, regular maintenance schedule from them. President Ferrara wanted to add a disclaimer that Fire-Chief Coxen said he knows that the DEQ inspects the property on a regular basis, that the statement about the “filtrate system” or “washdown system” was only Chief Coxen’s personal opinion. Lee Barends suggested getting a copy of the DEQ reports, that may ease the minds of concerned citizens.

Commissioner Roper asked port attorney Andre Coudrain to get a formal response from the tenant and Commissioner Sims asked for a timeline for repairs and maintenance. President Ferrara asked him to itemize each concern. Mr. Coudrain said the first issue is safety, and the second is repairs, and, “we don’t know if what was reported was normal or happened on one particular day.” Commissioner Roper said she wants to know the exact chemicals being processed in Building #3, that she had asked for this information, but had not seen any reports. She said, “We need to be assured over what is happening in Building #3 before discussing a lease for Building #2.” Mr. Coudrain said he will work with Mr. Dufresne to find out the intentions of the tenant and go from there.

### **3. Warehouse Building #2 – update**

Port attorney Andre Coudrain said the lien period had passed, there were no claims, and the final payment could be released to L King Company, LLC. There were no questions.

### **4. Barge Dock Repair – update** a) **Resolution**

President Ferrara asked Mr. Dufresne to give a timeline of the barge dock repair to date. Mr. Dufresne said that FEMA had been to the port and inspected the barge dock on several occasions, and now they are at the point of trying to determine what repair method would be approved, and what the cost estimates would be. After a preliminary review of the dock performed by the project Engineer of Record, Jim Ragland, provided 3 options. A summary of these findings had been

emailed to the Commissioners, and copies were placed in their meeting folders. Mr. Dufresne said the first 2 options were for repair, and the third, which was the most recent request by FEMA, to replace the entire dock. The first option was to replace the wood with 14 x 14-inch wood beams, and the general estimate would be \$1,250,000.00. The second option would be replacement steel under the dock and fender system, which FEMA considers a mitigation project, and the general estimate would be \$1,650,000.00. The third option was for the engineer to give an estimate for a new dock. FEMA wanted to determine if the repair costs would be more than 50% of a new dock, and if so, may consider funding a new dock. Mr. Dufresne said it would be around \$1,000,000.00 for demolition of the old dock, soil testing, etc., and total costs would be close to \$5,000,000.00. He said FEMA would make the final decision about the repairs and it's obvious that FEMA would not pick option #3, that it would cost much less to repair the dock than build a new one. He said that FEMA would fund 90% of the project, and STPPC is responsible for 10%. Mr. Dufresne stated that the estimated project engineering fees would not be in excess of \$135,000.00 and that a resolution would be required to proceed. After a brief discussion by the Commissioners, a resolution was read by Commissioner/Secretary Roper.

At a regular meeting of the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission held on January 10, 2024 the following resolution was introduced and adopted; to wit:

Moved by Commissioner Sheridan, seconded by Commissioner DePaula that the Commission authorize Patrick J. Dufresne, Executive Director, to enter into an agreement with Ragland, Aderman and Associates for professional engineering services for the construction phase of the barge dock repair project at the Port Manchac Inter-modal terminal. The professional engineering service fees for the project shall not exceed \$135,000.00 and 90% will be funded by the FEMA infrastructure grant funding program.

Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Joubert.

#### **5. Prospective Tenant(s) – update**

Mr. Dufresne told the Commissioners there was no prospective tenant update today, however he had an update on the tree-loading operation by ECO/RESTORE, a company that the port signed an agreement with and is currently working at the port. He said they had requested an additional acre of parking. Port Attorney Andre Coudrain updated the agreement with ECO/RESTORE, adding an additional \$1,000.00 per acre per month to the current agreement in January and February 2024. Mr. Dufresne also said he had a meeting with LA-DOTD and the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration regarding grants for additional port infrastructure and is trying to determine what is the best fit for the port.

#### **6. Insurance Package for FY 2023-2024 – update**

Mr. Dufresne told the Commissioners there were no additional updates at this time. He said that it is time to get Requests for Insurance Proposals, and there will be a resolution presented for approval at the next STPPC meeting to begin the RFP advertisement process. Commissioner Roper requested the RFP be placed in multiple papers beyond the Ponchatoula Times.

#### **7. Invoice Payment Approval**

Commissioner/Treasurer Schliegelmeyer presented the current invoices for payment approval.



At a regular meeting of the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission held on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, the following resolution was introduced and adopted; to wit:

Moved by Commissioner Schliegelmeyer, Jr., seconded by Commissioner Sheridan that the Commission approve acceptance of the proposed Audit Engagement Proposal agreement, not to exceed the amount of \$6,500.00 from Pinell & Martinez, LLC, 308 South Tyler Street, Suite 4, Covington, LA 70433 and execute the engagement contract as stipulated in its proposal to perform the audit for the year ended December 31, 2023 for the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission.

Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0  
Absent: 1 Joubert.

**Remarks:**

Mr. Dufresne told the Commission that a couple of weeks ago Air Products had a barrel of drilling mud that spilled into the pass and the DEQ was called out to the port. He said the spill was contained and cleaned up quickly. Mr. Dufresne said Air Products has an emergency response team on site 24 hours a day for anything that could happen at the rig or at the port site itself and is constantly being monitored. Commissioner Roper asked that if something like this happens again to please contact Dawson Primes with the Tangipahoa Parish Office of Emergency Response. Port Director Patrick Dufresne said that he did call Mr. Primes, however Commissioner Roper said she spoke to him, and he said he received a call from DEQ only. In the future she wants to be clear that Dawson Primes should also be notified of these incidents by Mr. Dufresne. She also said new District 73 Representative Kim Coates had called her and asked for a brief rundown of what had happened. She told Ms. Coates that the Executive Director was "on top of it", and that everything had been handled. Ms. Coates followed up in a few days to say she had done her own investigation, and that it was her understanding that everything was handled as she was told.

President Ferrara said that the next STPPC meeting was during Mardi Gras week and asked if anyone wanted to change the date to February 21<sup>st</sup>. The Commissioners decided to keep the meeting as scheduled on February 14, 2024.

President Ferrara asked the administrative assistant to reach out to Manchac Fire Chief George Coxen and invite him to the next STPPC meeting to discuss his needs at the port. He also reminded her to contact Financial Advisor Shaun McArthur of Edward Jones to attend the next STPPC meeting for an account update. The Commissioners also discussed whether to invite Andy Parker with Premier Chemicals and decided to wait and invite him to attend the March meeting.

Having no further business, a motion for adjournment was made by Commissioner Sheridan and seconded by Commissioner DePaula. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Schliegelmeyer, Jr., Roper, DePaula, Sims, Sheridan. Nays: 0 Absent: 1 Joubert.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 AM.

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Tina Roper, Secretary STPPC

Daryl Ferrara, President STPPC