

**SOUTH TANGIPAHOA PARISH PORT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2025 9:00AM
CITY HALL ANNEX BUILDING - 110 W. HICKORY ST., PONCHATOULA, LA**

The regular meeting was held on Wednesday, September 10, 2025 at the City Hall Annex Building, located at 110 W. Hickory Street, Ponchatoula, LA. President Daryl Ferrara called the regular meeting to order at 9:08 A.M.

The invocation was given by Administrative Assistant Robyn Pusey, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Commissioner William Sims.

Commissioners Present: Daryl Ferrara, Tina Roper, William Sims, Rhonda Sheridan

Commissioners Absent: Timothy DePaula,

President Ferrara welcomed the attendees to the meeting this Wednesday morning. Others in attendance included Patrick Dufresne, Executive Director, Robyn Pusey, Administrative Assistant, Andre Coudrain, Cashe Coudrain and Bass, Lee Barends, ITL Accounting, Richard Meek, Action 17 News.

The Oath of Office was administered to new commissioners, Logan Davis and Brandon Schanzbach by the port's attorney, Andre Coudrain. President Ferrara congratulated them and suggested a tour of the port in the near future.

Former commissioner William Joubert was unable to attend the meeting today for the plaque presentation.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

It was moved by Secretary Sheridan and seconded by Vice President Roper that the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission approve the regular meeting agenda for September 10, 2025, as presented. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Sheridan, Schanzbach, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 1 DePaula

President Ferrara told the commissioners that the minutes from the August 14, 2025 meeting were sent electronically and the administrative assistant said there were no changes. After a brief review, a motion was made by Vice President Roper and seconded by Commissioner Sims to adopt/approve the minutes from the regular meeting on August 14, 2025. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Sheridan, Schanzbach, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 1 DePaula

TREASURER'S REPORT

Port accountant Lee Barends reminded everyone that the financial reports had been sent out prior to the meeting. She asked if anyone had any questions or concerns, or if there was anything on the reports that needed clarification. There were no comments or questions. President Ferrara asked if there was anything obvious in the reports to review. Ms. Barends said she had 2 comments – first, on the balance sheet the year-end journal entries for 2024 had been posted and there was a bit of a difference in the assets and liabilities as the accountants adjusted the accrued information for salaries and retirement. Second, Ms. Barends asked if the

board wanted to approve moving the excess money over \$250,000.00 from the general account to the investment account. She said she didn't think there was anything large coming into accounts payable. After a brief discussion the commissioners decided they wanted to hear more about engineering costs (for the barge dock repair) before making a decision. President Ferrara said they would come back to this discussion after the update from Mr. Dufresne.

Ms. Barends said there was a little over \$800.00 in the supplies account and said the administrative assistant needed a new shredder. Vice President Roper said to get a "good shredder" instead of a trash can shredder.

President Ferrara mentioned that a certificate of deposit is coming due either this month or next. Ms. Barends said the CD is due in October and believes the account is set automatically to convert those investments when due. She said financial investor Shaun McArthur should move the CD's to the appropriate account. There were no other questions. President Ferrara said again he would "circle back" to this discussion after Mr. Dufresne's update.

Motion was made by Vice President Roper and seconded by Secretary Sheridan to approve the financial reports for August, 2025. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Sheridan, Schanzbach, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 1 DePaula

OLD BUSINESS

1. Warehouse Buildings #2 & #3 – lease agreement update, inspection service quotes

Port attorney Andre Coudrain said the latest communication from Andy Parker of Premier Chemicals said he was in discussion "with his people" and said he would get back to the commission as soon as possible. Mr. Coudrain said there are 2 warehouse buildings with separate leases at the port and is working to combine both buildings under one lease with a 15-year term at market rates. He said the insurance was an issue, that Premier Chemicals could not find affordable insurance, and neither could the port, and this is why the lease was priced at the higher rate of \$25,500.00. Vice President Roper asked if Mr. Coudrain had received the information she forwarded to him (from Beezie Landry and Daniel Laborde of the TEDF) and Mr. Coudrain confirmed that he did and would contact them with any questions after review. Discussion was had regarding the amount of the lease. Mr. Coudrain said, "This is negotiations; we'll see what they come back with."

Port director Patrick Dufresne said he had 3 quotes for the inspection of warehouse buildings 2 and 3. Mr. Coudrain said warehouse inspections at the port would be ok with a couple of days' notice to Premier Chemicals. President Ferrara asked Mr Dufresne to update the new commissioners about the maintenance of the buildings, and a brief discussion followed. Vice President Roper said we should keep semi-annual inspections of the buildings. Quotes for inspection of the warehouses were reviewed by the commissioners. Vice President Roper had concerns regarding exclusions on one of the quotes that would provide only a visual inspection. Discussion continued. Vice President Roper said she doesn't have any issues with Arcane, who provided the lowest bid, and would like to compare their report to the previous inspection report and then determine a possible inspection/maintenance schedule. Mr. Coudrain explained to Commissioner Davis the responsibility of maintenance by the tenant. Vice President Roper made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sims to approve the quote for inspection services for warehouse buildings 2 & 3 by Arcane Inspection Service, Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Sheridan, Schanzbach, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 1 DePaula

2. LA-DOTD Port Priority Program Application – update
a) Resolution

Mr. Dufresne said since the last STPPC meeting he had a meeting with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LA-DOTD) regarding the port priority program. He explained that once the PPP application is approved, the LA-DOTD will fund 90% of the project. He said there were a series of projects that were just approved in the amount of \$12,000,000.00, and that one of the projects was going to partially fund the repair of the barge dock. Project engineers, GIS Engineering, LLC were also at the meeting, and they discussed the timeline of the project moving forward. Also discussed was the drainage project in front of warehouse building #2. He said that previously the engineering fees for the small project were thought to be around \$4,000.00, but after review with the LA-DOTD the fees would be 3 to 4 times that, because of meetings and additional engineering design and paperwork. Mr. Dufresne said as a result, the STPPC may want to include this small project in a larger transloading project behind warehouse building #3 that will be done in the future. He said the project would be approximately \$30,000.00 that the STPPC would have to pay up front. He said the STPPC could get bids and complete the project or wait to get funded through the LA-DOTD, but that would take time. Discussion was had over best options for project completion. Vice President Roper would like to see additional quotes and review at the next STPPC meeting. President Ferrara asked for the review of the project quotes to be added to next month's meeting agenda.

3. Barge dock repair project – update
a) Resolution

Mr. Dufresne reminded the commissioners of the engineering agreement for the barge dock repair project. In addition, he said that anytime when doing a project below ground level the LA-DOTD will require geotechnical services. Also, Mr. Dufresne said the primary project engineer recommended engineers that worked on the original project in 1991. He said they advised for additional boring holes to be drilled to get a new soil sample, that the dock would be going from 33 wooden poles to 11 steel in the repair process. As a result, there is a resolution for Geo Technical Services estimate for \$38,500.00

A resolution was introduced by Commissioner Sims:

Moved by Commissioner Roper, seconded by Commissioner Sheridan that the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission authorize Patrick J. Dufresne, Executive Director, to enter into an agreement with GeoEngineers, Inc. to provide professional geotechnical engineering services for the Barge Dock Repair Project (option #3), fees not to exceed \$38,500.00.

Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Sheridan, Schanzbach, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 1 DePaula

Before moving to the next agenda item, President Ferrara asked to go back to the Edward Jones issue. A motion was made by Vice President Roper and seconded by Secretary Sheridan to move the excess funds over \$250,000.00 from the operating account to the Edward Jones account. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Sheridan, Schanzbach, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 1 DePaula

4. 5-Year Master Plan – discussion/update

Mr. Dufresne said he had forwarded two quotes for review to President Ferrara; one of the quotes was \$12,000.00 from Jim Richardson, who is one of the states leading economists (and worked on the last Master Plan), and another quote was for \$50,000.00. Vice President Roper asked for a copy of the last Master Plan for review. Commissioner Sims said he had a contact that might be able to provide an additional quote for the Master Plan. President Ferrara asked if the 5-year Master Plan could be extended to a 10- or 15-year plan. Vice President Roper said part of the plan should include the evaluation of property in the port district and not just the 40 acres at the port. She said historically there have been conversations with the Port of South Louisiana about the port district property which extends almost to Independence, LA (Wards 6, 7, 8) where they might possibly be able to store equipment during storms and use rail or other means of transportation back and forth for some of their tenants. Also, the Octavia Group has 100 acres of marshland at the port to be mitigated. Vice President Roper said there are 16 acres of land north of the port along the rail and is probably the only land that could be used for development, that the land east of that is essentially swamp. She said her vision would be some of those kinds of ideas that could happen with the port in a 10-year Master Plan that goes beyond the 40 acres at the port. Mr. Dufresne said this could be incorporated in the plan. Discussion among the group continued. President Ferrara asked Mr. Coudrain if he could explain what the port can and can't do. Mr. Coudrain said the scope of jurisdiction is not just the buildings on the lease and the docks at the port. He said there is a taxing district, but he would have to investigate more information about that. Vice President Roper said there is a signed MOU with the airport, that we have air as part of what we have access to. Discussion continued and included mitigation of the acreage at the port with the Octavia Group. President Ferrara said Commission Sims will work on getting a quote for the Master Plan and Mr. Dufresne said he will get additional quotes for review at the next meeting.

5. Invoice Payment Approval

The following invoices for payment were presented today for approval by Vice President Roper:

1. Cashe Coudrain & Bass
 Services rendered through August 31, 2025

Inv# 131760	Matter # 4623-13	Amt.\$ 1,268.00
Inv# 131761	Matter # 4623-1	Amt.\$ 40.00
Inv# 131762	Matter # 4623-4	Amt.\$ 60.00
		Total Amt.\$ 1,368.00

2. All Tech Specialty Services
 Inv# 11191 – Smart Video Intercom
 Materials and Labor

Amt.\$ 3,120.00

Vice President Roper told Ms. Barends that monthly fees for the gate would be \$28.00, per month and Ms. Barends said it will stay under monthly maintenance.

Vice President Roper made a motion, seconded by Secretary Sheridan to approve payment for the invoices submitted today for Cashe Coudrain & Bass in the amount of \$1,368.00 and All Tech Specialty Services in the amount of \$3,120.00. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Sheridan, Schanzbach, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 1 DePaula

6. Litigation – update

South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission vs Wilco Marsh Buggies, Inc.

Docket # 20240004367

a) Executive Session

Port attorney Andre Coudrain recommended going into executive session today for the litigation update and recommended moving this agenda item to the end of the agenda. After a brief discussion it was moved by Secretary Sheridan and seconded by Vice President Roper to move agenda item #6 Litigation – update, after “New Business” agenda item #2. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Sheridan, Schanzbach, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 1 DePaula

NEW BUSINESS

1. Restore the Earth Foundation, Inc. – tree planting operation a) Resolution

Mr. Dufresne said that since the last meeting, the non-profit group Restore the Earth Foundation, Inc. (aka ECO Restore, LLC) has asked to return to the port to continue their tree planting operations in the north pass area. If the commission approves this request, Mr Dufresne said he would have Mr. Coudrain re-up their contract to start October 1, 2025, ending April 30, 2026.

A resolution was introduced by Commissioner Sims:

At a regular meeting of the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission held on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, the following resolution was introduced and unanimously adopted; to wit:

Moved by Commissioner Roper, seconded by Commissioner Sims that the Commission authorize Patrick J. Dufresne, Executive Director, to enter into an agreement with Restore the Earth Foundation, Inc. (ECO Restore, LLC) to store and transload trees on two (2) acre parcels of lay-down storage area at the port terminal.

The port fee for the contractor agreement shall be \$2,000.00 per month for the leased property. The contractor agreement will be for a term of seven (7) months commencing on October 1, 2025, ending on April 30, 2026.

Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Sheridan, Schanzbach, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 1 DePaula

2. Preventative measures at Port Manchac - discussion

President Ferrara said that after the recent accident at Smitty's Supply in Roseland, La., he wanted to have a discussion regarding preventative measures to be in place should an accident occur at the port. Ponchatoula Fire Chief Stormy Joiner was invited to attend today's meeting but was unavailable. President Ferrara wanted to make sure the port has everything it needs in case of a spill and said booms were important to contain any spills. Mr Dufresne said there is an emergency response company that would come and put the booms out, and that Air Products had a company on site for this. Several concerns were discussed - whether we have someone to contact for an emergency, that it is the tenants responsibility to handle the emergency response, and should there be a specific discussion in the lease about this. Commissioner Sims said we should explore the possibility of hiring a company to manage this at the port. Vice President Roper asked about the possibility of getting a fire suppression system in warehouse building #3 and what the costs would be, and what the tenant plans to do in warehouse building #2. Mr. Dufresne said he would investigate getting information about a fire suppression system for warehouse building #3.

After reviewing new business, a motion was made by Secretary Sheridan and seconded by Vice President Roper to enter into executive session to discuss the litigation update regarding the

South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission vs Wilco Marsh Buggies, Inc. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Sheridan, Schanzbach, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 1 DePaula

After approximately 20 minutes it was moved by Secretary Sheridan and seconded by Vice President Roper to return to the regular meeting. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Sheridan, Schanzbach, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 1 DePaula. No action or votes were taken during the executive session.

REMARKS

Mr. Dufresne again congratulated the new board members and reminded them of the training requirements for sexual harassment and ethics both due at the end of this year, as well as the financial disclosure which is due by May 15, 2026.

A motion was made by Vice President Roper and seconded by Commissioner Sims to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion passed. Yeas: 6 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Sheridan, Schanzbach, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 1 DePaula

Mr. Dufresne thanked everyone for coming. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM.

Rhonda Sheridan, Secretary STPPC

Daryl Ferrara, President STPPC