

**SOUTH TANGIPAHOA PARISH PORT COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026 9:00AM  
CITY HALL ANNEX BUILDING - 110 W. HICKORY ST., PONCHATOULA, LA**

The regular meeting was held on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at the City Hall Annex Building, located at 110 W. Hickory Street, Ponchatoula, LA. President Daryl Ferrara called the regular meeting to order at 9:07 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, Logan Davis

Commissioners Absent: Tim DePaula, Rhonda Sheridan, Brandon Schanzbach

President Ferrara welcomed the attendees to the meeting. Others in attendance included Patrick Dufresne, Executive Director, Robyn Pusey, Administrative Assistant, Lee Barends, ITL Accounting, Richard Meek, Action 17 News, Will Evans and Brandi Fontenot of GIS Engineering, LLC.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES**

It was moved by Vice President Roper and seconded by Commissioner Sims that the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission approve the regular meeting agenda for January 14, 2026, as presented. Motion passed. Yeas: 4 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 3 DePaula, Sheridan, Schanzbach

President Ferrara told the commissioners that the minutes from the December 10, 2025 meeting had been sent to them electronically by the administrative assistant. After a brief review, a motion was made by Vice President Roper and seconded by Commissioner Davis to adopt/approve the minutes from the regular meeting on December 10, 2025. Motion passed. Yeas: 4 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 3 DePaula, Sheridan, Schanzbach

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Port accountant Lee Barends reviewed the December 2025 financial reports with the commissioners and started with the income statement. She said the revenue for the month was \$138,749.42 and the expenses were \$62,357.72, leaving a net income of \$76,391.70. She said the report depicts the entire calendar year of income and expenses without year-end adjustments, which the CPA will review and provide the depreciations and liabilities. The revenue was over budget by \$47,726.60, and the total revenue for 2025 was \$1,667,676.87. President Ferrara and the commissioners were very pleased with the revenue numbers. Regarding the rental income, Vice President Roper asked Mr. Dufresne if he had spoken to anyone with Air Products recently and asked when their agreement would expire. Mr. Dufresne said he had not spoken to anyone and that the initial 4-year term would end in June this year,

and that there are two 1-year options for the initial term. Vice President Roper asked Mr. Dufresne to set up a meeting with Air Products to discuss their plans moving forward.

Next, Ms. Barends reviewed the balance sheet with the commissioners. A brief discussion about the CDs in the Edward Jones account was had and the statement was reviewed.

Vice President Roper said there should be some initial conversations with the insurance provider to get a general overview of what the insurance costs may be this year. Ms. Barends said you can get a “feel” for the numbers, but likely won’t have anything concrete until closer to renewal. President Ferrara asked Mr. Dufresne to contact Paula Sziber with Jackson Vaughn about attending the STPPC meeting next month. There were no additional questions.

A motion was made by Vice President Roper and seconded by Commissioner Sims to approve the financial reports from December 2025. Motion passed. Yeas: 4 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 3 DePaula, Sheridan, Schanzbach

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. Warehouse Buildings #2 & #3 – lease agreement and inspection update** **a) Spreadsheet review**

Mr. Dufresne reviewed the spreadsheet with the commissioners. He said Premier Chemicals had started their portion of the repair items and were trying to do many of the repairs themselves and said a contractor would be hired for repairs that can’t be done in house. Vice President Roper asked who decided on the list of repairs, and Mr. Dufresne said he did. Vice President Roper thought a lot of the corrosive issues are the responsibility of the tenant and not the port. Mr. Dufresne said a lot of the corrosion issues in building 2 were pre-existing, as it was an older building, and it had rained inside the building for a couple of years. He agreed that in building 3 the corrosion was due to the tenant’s operations. Vice President Roper questioned if a lot of the problems in building 2 were due to the tenant running into some of the columns with their forklifts. Mr. Dufresne said a couple of beams were bent in Hurricane Ida, but one had been repaired and the repair was highlighted on the spreadsheet. Vice President Roper asked if building 3 was where the tenant was mixing chemicals, and he said yes. He confirmed that both buildings have a new roof, and that Mr. Coudrain is in the process of contacting the companies who put the roof on the buildings for the warranty information.

Mr. Dufresne referred to the guests from GIS Engineering, LLC and said in terms of the port’s responsibilities he would like to incorporate the port’s portion of the repairs into the LA-DOTD projects, if possible, and this would allow GIS Engineering, LLC, to inspect everything (upon completion of the repairs). Vice President Roper said this would be discussed later in the meeting.

President Ferrara asked Mr. Dufresne if he and the port’s attorney had gone through the lease to determine who was responsible for each repair. Mr. Dufresne said not specifically, but going forward this will be incorporated into the final draft of the lease. Commissioner Sims asked if the tenant was in the meeting (when determining responsibility for the repairs) and Mr. Dufresne said yes. Vice President Roper said she had concerns about warehouse building 2 which is under the month-to-month lease. She said that how the tenant is operating in the building is not

being managed, and that they are doing a lot of work that causing wear and tear to the facility itself. Mr. Dufresne said a lot of the damage to warehouse building 2 was caused by previous operations and by Hurricane Ida. Vice President Roper said she would like to see an office at the port where the tenants can be managed directly. Commissioner Sims asked for a timeline for repairs by importance, specifically if it impacts the port's ability to rent the buildings, whether it's a liability or risk to the tenant or port, if impacts from another storm could cause significant structural damage to the building, and said it should be prioritized effectively. There were no additional questions or comments.

## **2. LA-DOTD Port Priority Program Application - Projects - update**

- a) Fire Suppression System/dry hydrant**
- b) Boat Shed**
- c) Resolution**

Mr. Dufresne reviewed the list of the LA-DOTD projects from the recently approved Port Priority Projects application that could be done this year with a general cost and timeline for the projects. The top 5 projects out of the 10 projects for review today included (in order) the barge dock repair, small vessel storage units and ramp expansion, sprinkler system for building 3, transloading area improvements for the east side of building 3 and the port entrance roadway culver replacement and asphalt paving. Mr. Dufresne said all items from the list predicated the need to contract an engineering service to engineer all projects. He introduced Will Evans and Brandi Fontenot from GIS Engineering, LLC, who were here today to present their engineering proposal for the 5 projects to the commission. (GIS Engineering, LLC created the port priority application for the STPPC.) Before hearing the proposal, Vice President Roper asked Mr. Dufresne why these projects were chosen as a priority. Mr. Dufresne said the projects were safety issues. She said the commission had asked for a list of the prioritized projects to review and discuss first, before discussing an engineering proposal. She said the commission asked for information on all 10 projects and wanted to know the vision for those projects, and asked what were the projects 6 through 10. Mr. Dufresne replied the rail bridge, the floodwall, storage pad, a track mobile to move railcars, and a drainage project. He said the total list had been presented months earlier, that the list reviewed today was chosen primarily because of the safety issues that had been previously discussed. The commissioners discussed further the project list presented today. Regarding the barge dock, Mr. Dufresne said the geo-technical report was completed and being reviewed by the project engineer, and that it may take 90 to 120 days to receive a final engineering design that can be put out to bid. Commissioner Sims asked if the barge dock repair had been approved for FEMA funding and whether all 10 projects had been approved for funding, to which Mr. Dufresne replied yes. Discussion continued regarding the payment allocation and costs. Brandi Fontenot explained to the commissioners how the funding was allocated, up to \$5,000,000.00 per port, per year. Vice President Roper asked whether \$250,000.00 for engineering was reimbursed at 90% or if it was the port's cost, and Mr. Dufresne confirmed it would be the port's cost, but also this amount also included costs from a different engineering company for the other barge dock projects. Vice President Roper wanted to know how much of the engineering costs were being reimbursed by FEMA, and Mr. Dufresne said \$135,000.00.

Vice President Roper said before moving forward she wanted an itemized breakdown for the barge dock that would determine what is FEMA, what is Capital outlay, what is port priority, where the engineering costs are coming from, who is responsible for them and what the reimbursement is. She would like the projects individually itemized as to what the engineering

costs would be, to be sure of what the commission is approving, the priority on the approvals, how much the reimbursement is and what the bottom line out of pocket costs are going to be. Commissioner Davis asked if the reimbursement would be a lump sum or per project. Ms. Fontenot said from a port priority standpoint, it is cost reimbursable. Vice President Roper said the barge dock was the "massive" project from the list and understands that as invoices are submitted for reimbursement the port would be federally reimbursed up to \$5,000,000.00, that once that amount is reached the port is capped for the year. She asked Ms. Fontenot which projects can be done quickly and sent in for reimbursement to get them "off the books". Ms. Fontenot said of the 5 projects, that projects 3, 4 and 5 were grouped together because they felt it made the most sense from an advertising, bidding and construction standpoint, and for submitting all the required paperwork to the port priority program at once. She said that this made the most sense from an efficiency standpoint and made more economical sense to group these projects together, that the bid for all three projects would only have to be advertised one time and hopefully get one contractor for the three projects. Mr. Will Evans said this is only a recommendation. Discussion was had regarding the bid process. Ms. Fontenot said once the port is approved for funding it's put on a reimbursement list and the placement order will not change, unless one of the ports above Port Manchac reaches their cap and falls off the list. She said Port Manchac will probably not be funded this fiscal year, but possibly next year or the year after that. She said she would try to confirm this with Molly Bourgoyne, Port Priority Director of LA-DOTD. Mr. Evans said Port Manchac is not competing for funds with other ports and further explained how the reimbursement process occurs. Vice President Roper wanted to know which projects would be considered priority, and what would Mr. Evans consider to be the number one priority. Mr Evans said it would be up to the commission to determine the priority of the projects but said safety is first and also, whatever keeps the port out of a lease violation. Discussion continued among the commissioners over the project priorities and what would be most important, what are the risks and the costs. Vice President Roper said she was not comfortable spending \$2,500,000.00 and waiting for reimbursement, not knowing if Air Products would return to the port. Commissioner Sims felt this was the biggest risk and said if Air Products doesn't return it would deprioritize the barge dock repair operation. Mr. Evans said it would be a good idea to find out the intentions of Air Products.

Mr. Evans said they can itemize the proposal, but regardless, it would be up to the commission to make the decision on the projects, and the proposal is always in flux. Discussion continued. Commissioner Sims asked the port's accountant to provide a cash graph/timeline to give a better idea of where the money has been over the last 5 years, with a projection if Air Products doesn't renew their lease, and if we don't get reimbursed in the next 2 years, how would the port be financially. Ms. Barends confirmed the report should show the past activity and project the future with and without Air Products. Commissioner Davis said if Air Products doesn't renew and it takes 2 - 3 years to be reimbursed for the 5 projects, the out-of-pocket expense would be approximately \$600,000.00, and that the STPPC could survive this. Mr. Evans said another thing to contend with is they are seeing a 15 - 20 percent increase in construction costs and do not know what the construction costs would be 4 years from now. Commissioner Sims said in the conversation with Air Products it would be good to find out their intentions, and Vice President Roper said to Mr. Dufresne to notify her and President Ferrara of the meeting with Air Products. Mr. Evans said the current multi modal commissioner and Molly Bourgoyne with the LA-DOTD want to see Port Manchac thrive. Mr. Evans said they will do their best to provide the information the commission needs to make an informed decision about the projects. Vice President Roper said once information is received from GIS Engineering, Ms. Barends and Mr. Dufresne she would be more comfortable deciding on the projects. She asked Ms. Fontenot to

put the scope of work and fee proposal in a priority order, based on safety, tenant, etc. Commissioner Sims asked if there would be any risks to disrupting Air Products operations with the barge dock repairs. Mr. Dufresne said there are 2 docks and they could use the other dock. The repairs shouldn't limit them. There were no additional questions. Mr. Evans said he could be available every month or whenever the commission needs him.

### **3. Barge dock repair project – update**

Mr. Dufresne said he covered the barge dock update earlier in the meeting. There were no questions.

### **4. 5-Year Master Plan – update**

Mr. Dufresne said there was a 5-year master plan proposal from the combined group of Dr. James Richardson and the Blanco Center for a total of \$47,000.00. After reviewing the proposal, Vice President Roper asked if there was a need for Dr. Richardson, and what would be the added benefit for the increased cost. Mr. Dufresne said that Dr. Richardson had done the original master plan, but it would be at the discretion of the commission to decide on the proposal. Vice President Roper said that adding Dr. Richardson's fee to the original proposal didn't make sense to her. She said her preference for the Blanco Center is their urban planning initiative and things they've done with other ports, based on the proposal from the last meeting. She wants to know how the port can benefit the parish in enhancing economic development for this area.

She said she has worked with the Blanco Center, and due to her personal relationship with them she planned to abstain from voting so there wouldn't be a quorum to approve this today. She said she felt there was no need to add Dr. Richardson to the proposal just for his historical knowledge, as we already have his report that can be utilized. Commissioner Sims said he thought the commission asked Mr. Dufresne to provide a combined proposal with Dr. Richardson's historical perspective to get an updated prospective from him, along with the Blanco Center report. He agreed there would be additional costs for the combined proposal. He would also like to see an economic impact study to be included in the Blanco Center report.

The commissioners agreed to defer this item until the next STPPC meeting to make a decision on the proposal.

Commissioner Sims said he would send a note to Mr. Dufresne asking for a clearer scope of work and what Dr. Richardson's involvement would be and wants an updated review of the last 5-year report based on new information. He said he would like to see an economic impact study done with specific data that would be incorporated into the 5-year plan. He said it would help to validate and justify some of the capital investments being made, and that to have this kind of economic impact piece tied into the infrastructure costs and investments could be good validation for the port as we expand to the airport and expand to this multi-module type of approach on how to attract new tenants.

Vice President Roper gave examples of what she would like to see happen within the plan beyond the 40 acres at the port. She said when looking at a 5-year plan she would like to see in terms of how many jobs would be added to the overall impact to the parish and how much

economic development could occur. She said she doesn't have an issue with Dr. Richardson or the cost for the master plan, the issue would be putting him on the project and keeping the same project.

## **5. Invoice Payment Approval**

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

1. Cashe Coudrain & Bass

Services rendered through December 31, 2025

Inv# 132606 Matter # 4623-0014

Lease with Bayou Diesel

Amt.\$ 205.00

Inv# 132607 Matter # 4623-1

General

Amt.\$ 780.00

Inv# 132608 Matter # 4623-13

Wilco Marsh Buggies

Amt.\$ 210.00

Total Amt. Due\$ 1,195.00

2. GeoEngineers, Inc.

Professional services from Oct 11 to November 21, 2025

Inv# 0211808

Task 0100 - Engineering and Reporting

Amt.\$ 4,570.25

Task 0200 – Site Visit

Amt.\$ 294.25

Task 0300 – Field Exploration

Amt.\$ 13,644.00

Task 0400 – Laboratory Testing

Amt.\$ 1,701.50

Total Amt. Due\$ 20,210.00

Professional services from November 22 to December 12, 2025

Inv# 0212483

Task 0100 – Engineering and Reporting

Amt.\$ 4,675.50

Task 0300 – Field Exploration

Amt\$ 392.25

Total Amt. Due\$ 5,067.75

Vice President Roper asked if these invoices were related to the barge dock. Mr. Dufresne said yes, and explained that the project engineer hired GeoEngineers, Inc. to do soil testing and is standard operating procedure. This is additional engineering and not eligible for reimbursement. To date invoicing from the project engineer is \$215,000.00, and his price may go up due to construction costs the longer it takes to start the project.

3. Ports Association of Louisiana

PAL Corporate Membership Dues

January 2026 to December 2026

Total Amt. Due\$ 6,000.00

The PAL dues have increased this year by \$4,000.00. Discussion was had if the increase is worth paying. Mr. Dufresne said he attended the PAL meeting last year and there was some discussion during the meeting about the increase. Vice President Roper said Mr. Dufresne needs to attend all meetings and report information to the commission.

4. Michelli Weighing & Measurement

Inv# INVHAR3152	Truck scale printer replacement	
Repair Labor		Amt.\$ 1,882.50
Thermal Printer		Amt.\$ 2,129.62
Shipping		Amt.\$ 182.49

Total Amt. Due\$ 4,199.61

Discussion was had regarding when the printer broke, and the need for the urgent repair.

After briefly discussing the invoices, a motion was made by Commissioner Sims and seconded by Commissioner Davis to approve the invoices presented for payment today from Cashe Coudrain & Bass, GeoEngineers, Inc., Ports Association of Louisiana and Michelli Weighing & Measurement. Motion passed. Yeas: 4 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 3 DePaula, Sheridan, Schanzbach

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Election of Officers for Term 2026**

President Ferrara announced the election of officers for the 2026 term. The current officers are President Daryl Ferrara, Vice Present Tina Roper, Treasurer Timothy DePaula and Secretary Rhonda Sheridan. Commissioner Sims made a motion to keep the officers as currently allocated. This was seconded by Commissioner Davis. Motion passed. Yeas: 4 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 3 DePaula, Sheridan, Schanzbach

### **2. Audit Engagement for FY 2025**

#### **a) Resolution**

Mr. Dufresne said he had received an engagement letter from the port's auditor of record. He said the price would be \$6,825.00 for the fiscal year 2025 and that the fee had increased by \$325.00. Commissioner Sims introduced the resolution:

At a regular meeting of the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission held on Wednesday, January 14, 2026, the following resolution was introduced and adopted, to wit:

Moved by Commissioner Roper, seconded by Commissioner Sims that the Commission approve acceptance of the proposed Audit Engagement Proposal agreement, not to exceed the amount of \$6,825.00 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, 2025 for the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission.

Motion passed. Yeas: 4 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 3 DePaula, Sheridan, Schanzbach

#### **LITIGATION UPDATE:**

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

**Docket# 20240004367**

**a) Executive Session**

The port's attorney, Andre Coudrain, was not in attendance at the meeting today and the commissioners decided not to go into executive session.

#### **REMARKS**

The executive director said he was contacted by the Office of Facility and Planning Control regarding the cooperative endeavor agreement for the Capital Outlay program. Mr. Dufresne had been approved to sign the CEA agreement, but it had been agreed by the commission to hold signing the agreement until an answer was received about the waiver of the 25% match. However, they cannot give a determination about the waiver until they receive the signed agreement. It was agreed that Mr. Dufresne would sign the agreement and return to the Office of Facility and Planning Control.

A motion was made by Vice President Roper and seconded by Commissioner Sims to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion passed. Yeas: 4 Ferrara, Roper, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 3 DePaula, Sheridan, Schanzbach

The meeting adjourned at 10:38 AM.

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Rhonda Sheridan, Secretary STPPC

Daryl Ferrara, President STPPC