SOUTH TANGIPAHOA PARISH PORT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2026 9:00AM
CITY HALL ANNEX BUILDING - 110 W. HICKORY ST., PONCHATOULA, LA

The regular meeting was held on Wednesday, July 8, 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 9:05 A.M.

The invocation was given by administrative assistant, Robyn Pusey, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Commissioner Logan Davis.

Commissioners present: Daryl Ferrara, Tina Roper, Tim DePaula. William Sims, Logan Davis

Commissioners absent: Rhonda Sheridan, Brandon Schanzbach

President Ferrara welcomed those in attendance and extended birthday wishes to Commissioner Sims who had a birthday on Tuesday. Others in attendance included Patrick Dufresne, STPPC Executive Director; Robyn Pusey, Administrative Assistant; Andre Coudrain, Cashe Coudrain and Bass; Brandi Fontenot, GIS Engineering, LLC; Jason Wilson, Tangipahoa Economic Development Foundation; Richard Meek, Action 17 News.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

It was moved by Vice President Roper and seconded by Treasurer DePaula that the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission approve the regular meeting agenda for July 8, 2026, as presented. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 2 Sheridan, Schanzbach

President Ferrara told the commissioners that the meeting minutes from June 10, 2026 had been sent to them electronically by the administrative assistant and she confirmed 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 June 10, 2026. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 2 Sheridan, Schanzbach

TREASURER'S REPORT

President Ferrara said that port accountant Lee Barends notified the administrative assistant that she would be out of town and unable to attend this meeting. He said the financial reports for June would be reviewed during the next STPPC meeting in August. There were no questions.

OLD BUSINESS

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

Port director Patrick Dufresne reported that the maintenance program for Warehouse Building #3 slowly continues and may take a few months to complete, as the tenant is doing the maintenance repairs in house. Vice President Roper asked Mr. Dufresne about the spreadsheet and whether he was able to get a clear definition of the responsibilities for the tenant and for the port. Mr. Coudrain said there isn't a lock-down identification of who is responsible for what items, other than the tenant has a list of the items to be completed. He said the tenant questioned a few items that they believe weren't their responsibility but did the repairs anyway. Mr. Coudrain said the lease doesn't identify who is responsible for which repairs. Vice President Roper said while she appreciated the tenant is working on the warehouse repairs, she had concerns that the tenant did not have certified persons to make the repairs. She wanted to ensure that things are being repaired to code. Treasurer DePaula said he thought it depended on the repair, that there are some repairs that do not require certified personnel. Vice President Roper asked Mr. Dufresne whether he was working to identify the port's maintenance responsibilities for the warehouse buildings and prepare a list for the commissioners to review. Mr. Dufresne said he was obtaining contractor quotes for Warehouse Building #2 and would include any additional items in Warehouse Building #3 that are not being repaired by the tenant. He expected to have the information available by the next STPPC meeting. Vice President Roper requested that Mr. Dufresne provide the commissioners with a plan of action regarding the port's responsibilities. Mr. Coudrain stated that the tenant has been willing to complete some repairs identified as the port's responsibility but may not agree to continue doing so in the future.

<u>2. LA-DOTD Port Priority Program Application - Projects - update</u>

Mr. Dufresne introduced Brandi Fontenot of GIS Engineering. Ms. Fontenot reported that the GIS drafting team is preparing project sheets and plans and will meet next week with Mr. Dufresne and David Ratliff of Premier Chemicals to review the site improvements and confirm that the plans align with Premier's operations. She stated that surveying is complete and the team is ready to begin preliminary design work and expects substantial progress will be made within the next few weeks. Vice President Roper asked which projects are funded. Mr. Dufresne said that the port will be eligible for reimbursement in 2028, the earliest year reimbursement may be received, at 90% of costs up to the first $5,000,000.00. Ms. Fontenot stated that the port priority projects include replacement of the entrance culvert, asphalt paving in front of both warehouses, site drainage improvements, and containment improvements for Premier's operations in Warehouse #3.   She noted that the fire suppression and the three-slip boathouse projects will likely be handled under separate contracts. It was confirmed that the port must first incur the costs before seeking reimbursement from the LA-DOTD. Ms. Fontenot also stated that YKH Consulting is preparing a study and recommendation regarding the type of fire suppression system required for code compliance. She added that the port's current insurance carrier is not offering a cost reduction for the fire suppression system at this time, although that may change in the future. There were no questions.

<u>3. Barge dock repair project – update</u>

Mr. Dufresne reported that engineering research on the barge dock is ongoing. He noted that the invoice payment approval list for today includes the final invoice partially funded by FEMA, with one additional outstanding invoice to be reviewed at the next meeting. Treasurer DePaula asked if Mr. Dufresne knew the total estimated cost of the barge dock repair, and after a brief discussion it was determined that the general estimate could range from $3 million to $4 million. There were no further comments or questions regarding the barge dock repair project.

<u>4.   5-Year Master Plan – update</u>

Mr. Dufresne contacted the economist group to discuss their attendance at the September STPPC meeting. He said they would be able to attend if the STPPC chooses to hold the public hearing on the same day instead of some kind of email response. Commissioner Sims asked if the public hearing was to get feedback for the 5-Year Master Plan, and Mr. Dufresne responded yes. A brief discussion was had regarding the public hearing. Vice President Roper suggested possibly asking the TEDF or the Ponchatoula Chamber to host a hearing to get public feedback. Commissioner Sims thought these avenues would be easier than having the public hearing at the City Hall Annex. There were no more comments.

5. Official Journal RFP
a) Resolution

Mr. Dufresne reported that the STPPC received two responses to its Official Journal RFP. He stated the proposals were essentially the same, however The Tangi Times offered more publication options than the Hammond Daily Star, which publishes one day per week. Vice President Roper requested that next year's RFP include circulation information. Mr. Dufresne recommended accepting the proposal submitted by The Tangi Times. Commissioner Sims introduced the resolution:

Moved by Commissioner DePaula, seconded by Commissioner Roper, that the South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission accepted the proposal submitted by The Tangi Times, dated May 1, 2026, to serve as its Official Journal for the period beginning August 1, 2026 and ending July 31, 2027 and is hereby designated and authorized to represent the contractual rates as stated in the proposal, meeting all state law requirements, LA R.S.43:142, with regards to port related business/public notices.

Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 2 Sheridan, Schanzbach

6. Invoice Payment Approval

The following invoices for payment were presented today for approval by Treasurer DePaula:

Cashe Coudrain & Bass
Services rendered through June 30, 2026

Inv# 133897 Matter # 4623-1 Amt. $ 680.00
STPPC General

Inv# 133900 Matter # 4623-4 Amt. $ 40.00
Lease with Bayou Diesel/Premier Chemicals
(Building 3)
Inv# 133896 Matter # 4623-0014 Amt. $ 260.00
Lease with bayou Diesel – Building's 2 & 3

Inv# 133898 Matter # 4623-10
STPPC agreement w/Restore the Earth Foundation/Eco Restore Amt. $ 280.00

Inv# 133899 Matter # 4623-13 Amt. $ 2,205.00
STPPC vs. Wilco Marsh Buggies

Total Amt. $ 3,465.00

A motion was made by Treasurer DePaula, seconded by Vice President Roper to approve the invoices presented for payment today from Cashe Coudrain and Bass. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 2 Sheridan, Schanzbach

Ragland Aderman & Associates

Inv# 492023021.26.1 Amt. $ 57,420.00
Professional Engineering Services Nov 1, 2025 to Feb 28, 2026
Structural engineering services for confirmation of Barge Dock 2
Corps of Engineers permit & prep of construction drawings for
dock repairs and improvements

A discussion was held among the commissioners regarding the engineering invoice. Treasurer DePaula said in his experience engineering charges for construction on green space is typically 10%, and this invoice is under 10%. He said while this invoice may seem like a lot, it is part and parcel of what the going rate is currently. Mr. Dufresne confirmed that the port was reimbursed with approximately 50 percent of the funds for the current invoice. Treasurer DePaula asked Mr. Dufresne if he knew when the engineering drawings would be done and what the engineers' total costs might be. Mr. Dufresne said the engineer is working on several contractor quotes and his costs will depend on what the final project cost will be. Vice President Roper would like more detail from the engineer as to the anticipated date of when things will be done.

A motion was made by Treasurer DePaula, seconded by Vice President Roper to approve the invoice presented for payment today from Ragland, Aderman and Associates. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 2 Sheridan, Schanzbach

Before going to new business, Mr. Dufresne said regarding FEMA, he is in the process of extending the current project term with them from July 31, 2026, to the end of the year. A brief discussion was held regarding the need for the extension and the lengthy process to obtain the extension. President Ferrara asked Ms. Fontenot about timelines for the projects. She said there should be plans for the site improvements in 2 – 3 months, and at that time they should be ready to advertise and take it out for bids. She would have to check with YKH Consulting regarding the fire suppression system on their timeline. Ms. Fontenot said in her next update to Mr. Dufresne she will provide a schedule of where they plan to be over the next 6 – 8 months.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Executive Order JML-24-122 Rules on Leave for unclassified service**

Vice President Roper said about 2 – 3 years ago she started looking at the STPPC employee handbook for the port and had concerns with things that are not in the handbook. She said looking at the rules on leave, based on this executive order, there should be something specific in the STPPC handbook regarding carrying over leave, how many hours can be transferred and the payout at the end of employment. She briefly reviewed the executive order with the commissioners and said she believes that some of this language should be added to the employee handbook. She thinks the port should consider contracting someone who manages HR to look at what is missing and what is needed in the handbook for compliance.

A discussion began regarding the handbook and the executive order, and whether the STPPC employees are unclassified, to which Mr. Dufresne confirmed, yes, STPPC employees are considered unclassified. Vice President Roper said someone needs to verify with LASERS what the determination is, and get it entered into the handbook. Mr. Dufresne said we are non-state employees and believes some of this executive order does not apply to the port employees. The commissioners discussed LASERS, employee leave requirements, related obligations, and the employee manual. President Ferrara asked Mr. Dufresne who he thought would be responsible for any payout when he retires. Mr. Dufresne stated that LASERS would be responsible and said that he confirmed this with LASERS multiple times. He and Vice President Roper also discussed the number of leave hours that may be carried over. Vice President Roper had concerns that an employee at retirement with a large number of leave hours could change their mind about LASERS and potentially make the port responsible for a large payout. She noted that the handbook does not address this issue and should include specific language. Mr. Coudrain stated that the STPPC is a port authority under the executive order, although not every provision may apply, and said the matter should be reviewed. He added that while an employee manual is not an employment contract, employees should clearly understand the rules of employment. Mr. Coudrain offered to assist with determining the applicability of the executive order but recommended that someone else review the manual. Vice President Roper said she preferred hiring someone to streamline the handbook and align it with applicable laws. President Ferrara noted that the discussion of Executive Order JML-24-122 also covered the next agenda item, "Employee handbook manual update."

2. Employee handbook manual update

Vice President Roper asked Commissioner Sims if he might be able to recommend someone to look at the handbook. He mentioned the possibility of checking other port employee handbooks to look at their language and their references that abide by state law, and update as necessary if changes happen. He said he would be happy to help with this and refer to somebody else if needed. There were no more comments or questions.

3. Bayou Signs – lease update

Mr. Dufresne said since the last meeting he had been contacted by the port's current billboard sign tenant, Bayou Signs, who is selling their company to another sign company (Lamar Advertising Company). As a result, he was presented with a consent to assignment document for the ports review. Mr. Coudrain said there is a signed lease between the port and Bayou Signs, however the lease states Bayou Signs cannot assign this lease without the commission's consent. He suggested the port would want a new document stating that the new tenant must affirmatively and specifically agree to be bound by the terms of this lease.
Mr. Coudrain said if the commission agrees to consent to the assignment (of the lease) in a form acceptable to the commission, this will allow him to work on the language of the consent to be signed.

Vice President Roper moved, seconded by Treasurer DePaula, to approve the assignment of the Bayou Signs outdoor lease to Lamar Advertising Company in a form approved by port attorney Andre Coudrain.

Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 2 Sheridan, Schanzbach

<u>LITIGATION UPDATE</u>

South Tangipahoa Parish Port Commission vs Wilco Marsh Buggies, Inc.
Docket# 20240004367
a) Executive Session

Mr. Coudrain told the commissioners that the port director's deposition has been scheduled, and said the case is still in the discovery phase, and with a new defendant. He said there were no meaningful changes to require executive session. There were no questions.

REMARKS

Mr. Dufresne said the next STPPC meeting is August 12th and asked the commissioners if there were any issues with the date, and there were none. Ms. Fontenot confirmed that she will attend the next meeting. President Ferrara asked the administrative assistant to put any update from Mr. Coudrain regarding the Bayou Signs lease on the agenda, as well as the employee handbook update.

President Ferrara asked for a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. Treasurer DePaula made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Vice President Roper. Motion passed. Yeas: 5 Ferrara, Roper, DePaula, Sims, Davis Nays: 0 Absent: 2 Sheridan, Schanzbach

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 AM.

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Rhonda Sheridan, Secretary STPPC Daryl Ferrara, President STPPC