

WEST ST. MARY PARISH PORT, HARBOR AND TERMINAL DISTRICT

MEETING MINUTES

May 2, 2023

6:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Greg Paul, President of the Port Commission. Mr. Paul led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Lanceslin gave the Invocation. A roll call resulted in the following:

Present:

Absent:

Joel Authement

Sam Jones

Greg Paul

Joseph Phillips

Donna Lanceslin

Wilson Terry

Joseph Tabb

Murphy Pontiff

Also present at the meeting were Mr. Jason Akers with Foley Judell Bonding Attorneys, Mr. Bill Bourgeois, Attorney, Mr. Andrew Allain, Mr. Reid Miller of Miller Engineers, Mr. Eric Duplantis, Port Attorney, Mr. John Trahan, Mr. David Allain, Executive Director and Ms. Rebecca Pellerin, Office Manager of the Port Commission.

A motion was made by Mr. Tabb to dispense with the reading of the April 4, 2023 meeting minutes and to accept them as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Terry. Mr. Paul asked if there was any discussion or opposition – there was none. The motion carried unanimously.

There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Mr. Terry to adopt a Resolution of Respect for Mr. Willie Peters, Port Commission member who passed away recently. The motion was seconded by Mr. Phillips. Mr. Paul asked if there was any discussion or opposition – there was none. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Allain reported on the Sugar Warehouse project and informed the Commission that a bid opening will be held on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. in the conference room of the Port Commission office. The sealed bids will be opened and taken under advisement allowing Miller Engineers to review the bids.

Mr. Allain reported that he has been communicating with Mr. Jason Akers regarding funding for the Sugar Warehouse project as it is anticipated that the cost of the project to be approximately \$12 million. Mr. Allain explained that the reimbursement mechanism for the \$6.5 million from LA DOTD Port Priority for the project may not be in a timely manner and that it could be 24 months to receive reimbursement. He also stated that in addition to Port Priority funds, the project will be funded by Capital Outlay monies and will require requests for reimbursement. Mr. Allain introduced Mr. Jason Akers with Foley Judell. Mr. Akers told the Commission that he and Mr. Allain had begun communicating a few years ago regarding the additional funding for the project and that a resolution was adopted to grant preliminary approval for his firm to move forward with the financing for the project. Approval was granted by the State Bond Commission to allow the Port to borrow up to \$6.5 million for the project. He explained that approval was given for Grant Anticipation which is designed to allow the Port to access funds as needed up to a maximum amount. Mr. Akers said that they would negotiate with a few banks to determine who would offer the best interest rate and terms for the loan. He further explained that his firm's fee would be paid out of bond proceeds. Mr. Allain asked Mr. Miller about the timeline once the bids are opened and the Commission awards the project. Mr. Miller explained that approval would have to be given by both Port Priority and Capital Outlay before a construction contract could be signed. It was decided once the bids were opened and if a good bid is received, it would be determined if a special meeting would be scheduled or if the Commission would wait until the regular monthly meeting in June.

Mr. Allain reported that negotiations continue with SBA for a lease renewal for port property where their communications tower is located and that a 90 day extension was given to resolve a few issues with the proposed lease. Mr. Allain and Mr. Duplantis have had ongoing communications with representatives of SBA for over a year.

Mr. Duplantis told the Commission that he has been experiencing some medical problems and that he is not certain how available he is going to be in the coming months. After some thought, it was determined that it might be prudent to retain Bourgeois Law, LLC to be able to step in and perform any legal work that is needed in the event that he is not available. A motion was made by Mr. Tabb to retain Mr. Bill Bourgeois of Bourgeois Law, LLC as Special Counsel to perform legal services for the Port Commission on an as-needed basis. The motion was seconded by Mr. Terry. Mr. Paul asked if there was any discussion or opposition – there was none. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Allain reported that the Port Commission restrooms are in need of repair and that he is continuing discussions with a contractor to make the necessary repairs. He will report back to the Commission with plans and a cost for the repairs.

Due to the declining health of Mr. Allain, Mr. Paul suggested that the Commission look into the possibility of hiring someone to assist him with various tasks. Mr. Tabb suggested that the Port find someone with some government knowledge to assist and work with Mr. Allain to learn about the ongoing activities of the Port Commission. Discussion followed. Mr. Allain told the

Commission that his plans are to retire at the end of the year. Mr. Paul said that he was contacted by an individual who is interested in helping the Port. He also suggested that if the Commissioners know of anyone else who is interested in being considered, that they contact either the port office or a board member. The Executive Committee will meet with the interested individuals.

Mr. Duplantis reminded the Commissioners that online Ethics training and Preventing Sexual Harassment is due to be completed by the end of the year.

Mr. Miller reported that bids will be opened for the Sugar Warehouse project on May 11<sup>th</sup> and that nine bidders have requested plans.

There being no further business to be discussed, a motion was made by Mr. Tabb to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Terry. Mr. Paul asked if there was any discussion or opposition – there was none. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Murphy Pontiff, Secretary