

**MINUTES OF
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-EAST
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON AUGUST 20, 2020**

PRESENT: Mark L. Morgan, Chair
Herbert T. Weysham, III, Committee Member
Herbert I. Miller, President

The Operations Committee of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (Authority or FPA) met on August 20, 2020, in the Joseph Yenni Building, Second Floor Council Chambers, 1221 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Harahan (Jefferson), Louisiana. Mr. Morgan called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Opening Comments: None.

Adoption of Agenda: The Committee approved the agenda as presented.

Approval of Minutes: The Committee approved the minutes of the Operations Committee meeting held on July 16, 2020.

Public Comments: None.

New Business:

- A. Discussion of the proposed Amendment No. 2 to Task Order No. 30-04-01 with Evans-Graves Engineers, Inc. for the EJLD Landside Runoff Control Improvements Project to include Phase III.B - Prepare Final Plans and Specifications (Bid Packages) and Phase IV – Support During Bid Process at a total not to exceed cost of \$65,080, thereby increasing the total not to exceed amount of Task Order 30-04-01 to \$138,760.**
-

Chris Humphreys, Director of Engineering, explained that the proposed task order amendment will allow work to continue on the East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD) Landside Runoff Control Improvements Project, which extends along all five reaches of the East Jefferson Lakefront Levee. The task order is to resolve the issues being experienced, such as water flow into residents' backyards. Task Order No. 30-04-01 is broken into phases: Phase I - evaluation (modeling) and study, Phase II - development of conceptual plans, and Phases III and IV - preparation of final plans and specifications and bid assistance. Staff recommended approval of the proposed amendment.

The Committee will recommend that the Board approve Amendment No. 2 to Task Order 30-04-01.

B. Discussion of the proposed award of a contract to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder for the Orleans Marina Seepage Repair – Phase I Plug Existing 24” RCP Project (O.L.D. Project No. 05060094).

Mr. Humphreys advised that the low bids for Phases I and II were submitted by Kort's Construction Services, Inc. Hard Rock Construction, Inc., withdrew its bid for Phase I since it was not the low bidder for Phase II and the company had based the pricing for the two bids as a package.

Mr. Morgan recommended that one contract be executed for both Phases I and II and that a task order be issued under the contract for each phase of work.

The Committee will recommend that the Board approve the award of the contract for Phases I and II to Kort's Construction Services, Inc., with a single contract to be executed for the two phases.

C. Discussion of the proposed award of a contract to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder for the Orleans Marina Seepage Repair – Phase II Install New Existing 24” RCP Project (O.L.D. Project No. 05060096).

Action taken under Item B.

D. Discussion of the proposed issuance of a Task Order to Tetra Tech for the 40 Arpent Levee System Levee Certification – Levee Inspection and Completion of Levee Certification Report at a total not to exceed cost of \$149,106.

Mr. Humphreys explained that the proposed task order for Tetra Tech would allow the work needed to conclude the certification process for the 40 Arpent Levee System Levee. Currently, the 40 Arpent Levee is provisionally accredited by FEMA. The Shrimp and Soap Factories were considered part of the flood protection in the initial alignment; however, this situation did not meet FEMA requirements. Therefore, two small levee sections had to be constructed (Violet Canal North Realignment Project Phases I and II). The first section has been completed and the second section is almost complete; therefore, the certification process can continue. Since considerable time has elapsed since the certification process was interrupted in order to construct the two levee sections, some of the 40 Arpent Levee System will required re-inspection. In addition, certain the engineering manuals and FEMA requirements have changed during the interruption making some reevaluation necessary. Tetra Tech will then complete the Levee Certification Report and submit the report to FEMA. Engineering staff recommended approval of the proposed task order. The process is anticipated to take 22 weeks and is expected to conclude in January, 2021. It was noted that drones will be used for part of the levee inspection, which will provide some cost savings.

The Committee will recommend that the Board approve the issuance of the proposed task order to Tetra Tech.

E. Discussion of the proposed advertisement and issuance of Requests for Qualifications for professional Grant Writing and Grant Management Services for the purpose of entering into Indefinite Delivery-Indefinite Quantity Contracts for said services on an as needed basis.

Mr. Humphreys explained that the FEMA grant process was changed by Federal legislation and FEMA has introduced its new BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities) Program. The BRIC Program is funded with a dedicated percentage of the previous year's mitigation expenses. Therefore, the amount of available funding will be made known each year and the FPA can determine whether it would be advantageous to submit a grant application. The notice of funding opportunities was issued for Fiscal Year 2020 (the first year of the program) and \$500 million of funding is available. Since the FPA has a number of worthy projects, there is an opportunity for FEMA grant funding. The cost share is 25% local (FPA) and 75% grant funding. The cost for the grant writing services would be included in the grant. None of the FPA's current Indefinite Delivery-Indefinite Quantity Contracts include grant writing services.

The Committee will recommend that the Board approve the advertisement and issuance of the proposed Request for Qualifications for Grant Writing and Management Services.

F. Discussion of the proposed issuance of a task order to Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc. with a not to exceed amount of \$230,917.13 for the development and preparation of construction documents and providing bidding assistance for the replacement of the catenary trash screens at LBBLD Pump Stations 1 & 4.

Mr. Humphreys advised that Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc. (BKI) submitted a proposal to develop and prepare construction documents and provide bid assistance for the replacement of the catenary trash screens at LBBLD Pump Stations 1 and 4. The construction costs are estimated at \$4 million for the work at both pump stations. Engineering staff reviewed the proposal and recommended approval.

Derek Boese, Chief Administrative Officer, explained that because of the similarities it made sense to do the design for both pump stations at the same time. Pump Station 4 is a backup station. The FPA will proceed with the design for both pump stations; however, depending on the status of the transition of the pumping and drainage to St. Bernard Parish Government, the FPA would only proceed with the construction for Pump Station 1. Mr. Humphreys noted that the funding made available by the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) for pump station improvements would be used to cover the engineering and construction costs for the project.

Mr. Miller advised that the subject project is one of the recommended projects in the CPRA report. The FPA and CPRA entered into an agreement for use of the funding in order to ensure the timely completion of the pump station projects.

The Committee will recommend that the Board approve the issuance of the proposed task order to BKI.

G. Employee Services/Human Resources update.

Sandy West, HR Director, provided an update on the Employee Services (ES) /Human Resources Department (HR). The current ES team was formed in response to challenges faced by the previous team, such as a lack of or broken processes that impeded FPA business, an ineffective relationship with Civil Service, and lack of confidence in the HR Department. She thanked the Commissioners for taking the leadership in rebuilding the HR Department by contracting with Fazande Consulting, which built the foundation for the HR Department. She noted that the members of the ES team recently earned their professional HR certification.

Ms. West introduced the members of the ES team and explained their responsibilities. Shannon West and Madriana Montes, HR Analysts, support the business units by working closely with management and employees to provide daily HR guidance, improve work relationships, build morale and increase productivity and retention. Celeste Wertz, HR Specialist, supports HR programs and operations and ensures compliance by participating in the development of new and revised policies and procedures such as FMLA, Worker's Compensation and ADA. Susan Jenkins, Training and Development Specialist, manages training initiatives by identifying training needs for teams and individuals, and by teaching, revising, developing and evaluating a mix of standard and custom agency training programs.

Ms. West reviewed the following statistics for 2019:

- The number of positions filled increased by 52%.
- The average number of business days requires to fill positions decreased by 31%. The hiring process under Louisiana Civil Service was explained.
- The number of promotions increased by 118%.
- 94% of the employees hired in 2019 were still employed with the FPA after one year, indicating that most had passed their probationary period.
- The turnover rate for all non-temporary employees was 23.9%.
- The turnover rate for employees hired and involuntarily separated during 2019 was 6%.

Ms. West reviewed the following topics:

Actions taken by HR to reduce the time to fill positions, reduce turnover, increase retention and help the FPA become a better employer:

- Improved the FPA's reputation and relationship with Civil Service
 - Civil Service representatives toured the system
 - Established reoccurring touchpoints with the FPA's dedicated Civil Service team
- Revamped the recruiting and onboarding processes
- Reduced turnaround time for pre-employment screenings

- Used existing Civil Service rules to offer more competitive hiring rates and address current salary inequities
- Improved the interview process
- Hosted Interviewing Process Workshops for the Maintenance Department
- Participated in all job interviews and provide real-time feedback
- Established relationships with external workforce development organizations (i.e. Job 1, Goodwill Industries, UNO, and River Parishes Community College)
- HR recognizes that employees do not leave organizations, they leave supervisors. To this end, HR has begun ongoing Supervisor Training to help mid and upper-level managers throughout the Agency to learn about the best supervisory practices.

Training and Development Initiatives:

- HR developed a comprehensive training policy using input from the FPA leadership team
- Leveraged the new EAP provider for soft skills training for managers—84 employees have completed four courses
- Developed Proper Interviewing Process Workshops for Maintenance managers
- Established proper protocols and questions for specific positions
- Established annual PES training
- Hosted compliance training—Worker’s Comp, FMLA, Drug Screening, FLSA, Civil Service Disciplinary and Appeals
- Established certification programs—Drone, High Tide, Herbicide and OSHA
- Hosted Safety Focus Groups
- Computer skills, such as Excel, ADP and LaserFiche

Response to the Pandemic

- Reviewed and interpreted all guidance from State and Federal government
- Developed procedures to execute guidance including daily temperature and health checks, PPEs, and employee awareness
- Ongoing mitigation to stop the spread at the agency
- Eleven (11) positive cases with no cross exposures
- Partnered with Ochsner to offer COVID-19 testing for FPA employees
- Acquired a new vendor for onsite rapid COVID-19 testing during storm events
- Utilized Lifesize for meetings, interviews, establishing protocols, group study
- Utilized Everbridge for daily health check-ins

Looking Ahead:

- Develop recruiting goals
 - Identify positions to be filled

- Establish hiring timelines with managers
- Consolidate all FPA HR files
- Complete Phase 2 of Training Policy
- Partner with CPRA to proctor Levee Inspection Certifications
- Revise Employee Handbook
- Work with the IT team to implement a Learning Management System (LMS)

Mr. Morgan and Mr. Miller commended Ms. West for doing an outstanding job.

Mr. Miller asked, after the initial COVID-19 outbreak and several FPA employees tested positive, how many new cases did the FPA experience. Mr. Boese responded that the FPA experienced a total of 11 positive cases, nine of which were during the first week of May. The FPA is not aware of any employee-to-employee infection. Mr. Miller commented that the protective procedures put in place are working. Ms. West added that FPA employees have been complying with the procedures.

There was no further business; therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.