

**MINUTES OF THE  
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY–EAST  
BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2023**

The regular monthly Board Meeting of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (Authority or FPA) was held on October 19, 2023, in the Franklin Avenue Administrative Complex, Meeting Room 201, 6920 Franklin Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana, after due legal notice of the meeting was sent to each Board member and the news media and posted.

Mr. Cosse called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m. and led in the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Fierke called the roll and a quorum was present:

**PRESENT:**

Clay A. Cosse, President  
Roy M. Arrigo, Vice President  
Thomas G. Fierke, Secretary  
William A. Settoon, Jr., Treasurer  
Richard G. Duplantier, Jr.  
Herbert I. Miller  
K. Randall Noel  
Deborah M. Settoon

**ABSENT:**

Derek N. Rabb

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA:**

A motion was offered by Mr. Fierke, seconded by Mr. Miller and unanimously adopted, to adopt the agenda.

**RESOLUTION NO. 10-19-23-01 - APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 21, 2023**

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On the motion of Mr. Fierke,  
Seconded by Mr. Duplantier, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East approves the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on September 21, 2023.

The foregoing was submitted to a vote; the vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Duplantier, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Miller, Mr. Noel, Ms. Settoon and Mr. Settoon

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Rabb

## **SAFETY MINUTE:**

In order to provide sufficient time for the presentations, there was no Safety Minute.

## **OPENING COMMENTS BY PRESIDENT AND COMMISSIONERS:**

Mr. Cosse thanked Mr. Noel for his calming and effective leadership during his tenure as President of the Board. He presented a plaque to Mr. Noel with the following inscription, "In recognition and grateful appreciation for your dedicated leadership and service as the President of the Board of Commissioners of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East from July 1, 2022 to July 20, 2023."

Mr. Cosse reported that he, Ms. Settoon and former Senator Vitter met with Colonel Cullen Jones, Commander and District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) New Orleans District (NOD), and Mark Wingate, Deputy District Engineer for Project Management, USACE NOD. The subject of the meeting was funding for the 100-year and 200-year levels of hurricane flood protection. As a result of the meeting, a resolution was placed on the Board agenda to formalize the FPA's request and to support the USACE in moving this matter through Congress.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None

## **PRESENTATIONS:**

### **1. Presentation on Cybersecurity by Special Agent Joshua Morrow from the FBI New Orleans Cyber Crime Division Field Office.**

Kelli Chandler, Regional Director, introduced Special Agent Joshua Morrow with the FBI New Orleans Cyber Crime Division Field Office. Due to its importance, a presentation is provided each year on cybersecurity and the Information Technology (IT) team keeps a continuing focus on this subject.

Mr. Morrow proceeded with the presentation on cybersecurity and potential threats:

- **Statistics** - The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), issues a report annually. In 2022 reported losses due to cybercrime totaled \$10.3 billion; however, the FBI estimated that only 20 to 25 percent of all incidents were reported. Incident numbers did not significantly change over the past several years; however, the amounts that cyber actors are demanding are becoming astronomical. Incidents are anticipated to increase over the next year.
- **Business Account Compromise (BEC)** – A cyber actor can breach and monitor a victim's email account to gather information. He/she can then send an email to request that money be sent to an account that he/she controls. Once the money is out of the victim's system, there is a limited amount of time (about 72 hours) to

retrieve the money by working through a bank or IC3. In 2022 BEC incidents totaled 21,832 with losses of \$2.7 billion. In Louisiana, there were 158 BEC victims with losses totaling \$18.5 million.

Businesses are encouraged to educate employees about cybersecurity, which includes instruction on how to spot false emails and having a plan in place to verify intended recipients, bank account numbers and email addresses. Use of a two-factor authentication was recommended for accounts, as well as account specific passwords and regularly changing passwords. All compromises should be reported to the FPA's IT Department. The victim of a compromise should immediately change all his/her passwords.

- **Ransomware** – In 2022 losses from reported ransomware attacks totaled \$34 million. Incidents and losses are anticipated to increase in 2023 due to increasing attacks on governmental entities and businesses.

Recommendations include backing up sensitive data offline so that it cannot be encrypted by a cyber actor and securing cybersecurity insurance information so that a cyber actor cannot access it. In lieu of encrypting sensitive data, a cyber actor can use sensitive data to extort money from a victim by threatening to make the data public.

- **Nation-state Actors or Advanced Persistent Threats (APT)** – This involves nation or nation-sponsored threats to infrastructure. The threats are very sophisticated and advanced.
- **Zero Day Vulnerability** – This is a vulnerability that is unknown until “zero day” (the day it becomes known to everyone). Ransomware or nation-state actors seek out and exploit vulnerabilities before anyone knows how to fix them and patches are developed. Potential victims are encouraged to review online connections with vendors and possible network/router vulnerabilities. Ensuring that patches are up-to-date will help mitigate this risk.
- **Industrial Control Systems and SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition)** – These systems are used to control critical infrastructure and should be segregated from other data to reduce potential compromises by nation-state actors.
- **Reporting** – Incidents should be reported to IC3.gov. Complaints submitted on the IC3 website are assigned by an analyst to members of the FBI's recovery asset team. The recovery asset team works with financial institutions to try to retrieve money. Recovery time is limited to about 72 hours; therefore, bank accounts should be monitored for compromises on a regular basis. Bitcoin and other crypto currencies are difficult to trace and recover. The FBI works well with State Police and other Federal partners in this area. The FBI requests that the ransom in a ransomware attack not be paid because it is not known how the money will be used; however, this is a business decision. The FBI will work with victims to try to decrypt data in ransomware attacks. Information shared with the FBI can be used going forward to help other victims.

- **Resources** - IC3.gov has a significant amount of information relative to cybercrime. CISA.gov (U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) has significant technical information. FCC.gov (U.S. Federal Communications Commission) provides education on potential threats.

Ms. Chandler noted that the FPA has cybersecurity insurance coverage. Roman Dody, IT Director, advised that FPA email accounts have two-factor authentication and explained how it is set up. Relative to online payments to vendors, Ms. Chandler explained that a form is sent to a vendor who is required to return the completed form to the FPA along with a cancelled check. A Finance staff member calls the vendor to verify the information and a second staff member enters the information into the accounting system. Two different individuals approve payments before the information is transferred to the bank.

The Board thanked Mr. Morrow for his very informative presentation.

## **2. Presentation on participation in I-STORM activities by FPA Complex Structures group members.**

Ms. Chandler advised that the FPA has been expanding its role in I-STORM (the International Network for Storm Surge Barriers). The FPA partnered with groups from the Netherlands and England to observe the annual closing of the Maeslant Barrier. Members of the FPA's Complex Structures crew were matched with their counterparts for shadowing during the barrier's closing. FPA team members were able to compare the procedures used for closing the Maeslant Barrier with their own procedures.

Ms. Chandler introduced the members of the Complex Structures group who traveled to the Netherlands to observe the closing of the Maeslant Barrier: Elbert Williams, III, Facility Maintenance Manager, Lyle Johnson, Sr., Maintenance Foreman, and Audrianna Bluthgen, Maintenance Repairer 2.

Mr. Williams thanked the Board, Ms. Chandler, Chris Humphreys, Director of Engineering, and Darren Austin, Operations Director, for allowing the members of the Complex Structures team to travel to the Netherlands in September and participate in the full closure of the Maeslant Barrier. Excluding storm surge events, the Maeslant Barrier is closed only once a year (the test closure procedure). The FPA team first visited the Visitors Center at the Maeslant Barrier. Mr. Williams pointed out that FPA staff deal with hurricanes, while the Netherlands group deal with storm surge.

Referring to the previous presentation to the Board, Mr. Williams stressed that cybersecurity is a must for the FPA's Complex Structures. He noted that the IT Department was updating the FPA's camera system and placing a server at the IHNC Surge Barrier.

Mr. Johnson explained that the FPA team was allowed to observe the preparation and inspection that took place prior to the operation of the gate. FPA team members went both inside the sector gate to view operations and on top the 800-ft. long, 80-ft. high

gate. Observation of the gate closure provided a tremendous learning experience for the FPA team. Team members from the FPA and the Netherlands exchanged information and learned both the positive and negative aspects of their particular procedures. He explained that when the gate is closed, about a 3-foot gap remains open to prevent a potential suction incident. A four hour warning is issued prior to the preparation to prevent anyone from going into the area.

Ms. Bluthgen addressed the automated system (called the “Boss”), which is used by the Maeslant Barrier team and runs off a computer built in the 1990s. A pager system is used when needed to contact personnel to immediately report to work. Personnel are not contacted until a predetermined shut off level (about 3 meters) is reached. The system literally tells personnel what to do, which basically eliminates human error.

Ms. Bluthgen explained that the FPA team also learned about the I-STORM initiative called “the Next-gen” (Next Generation Program). The Next-gen was formed for the purpose of growing I-STORM and will allow I-STORM to continue educational and peer review components for many years to come. The Next-gen group includes anyone who is involved in some type of flood protection system.

Mr. Williams further explained that the preparation work to close the Maeslant Barrier takes about a day; however, the actual closure of the gate takes about an hour. Once the gate is closed, it must be filled with water and sunk onto the seal. Due to the size of the waterway (the Rhine River), the gate is never completely sealed because the head pressure would build and cause a problem when the gate is reopened. The closure of the Maeslant Barrier gate is similar to the closure of the IHNC Barge Gate, which must be swung into place, filled with water and sunk onto the seal. The FPA uses divers to ensure that the Barge Gate will not be dropped onto any debris or obstacle in the channel. Mr. Williams advised that the FPA team literally worked 24-straight hours and observed every aspect of the procedure. FPA team members will conduct a review of everything they witnessed, both the pluses and minuses.

Mr. Miller commented that he, his wife and a friend who is a civil engineer and architect participated in a private tour of the Maeslant Barrier in April. He urged anyone who is able to visit the area to participate in one of the public tours of the Maeslant Barrier. He noted that I-STORM is an amazing organization and that he was glad the Complex Structures group members were able to observe the Maeslant Barrier closure.

Ms. Settoon pointed out that worldwide there are very few storm surge barriers. She said that she was thrilled that the FPA team members were able to participate in this learning opportunity and can share the knowledge that they gained.

Mr. Williams added that the experience allowed the members of the Complex Structures group to realize that there are things that they can do better. It also allowed the Complex Structures group to acknowledge the areas where they are doing a great job.

Mr. Miller noted that a number of years ago an I-STORM team visited New Orleans and peer reviewed all of the FPA's complex structures. The last I-STORM team visit to New Orleans was in May, 2023.

### **REPORT BY REGIONAL DIRECTOR:**

Ms. Chandler provided the Regional Director's report:

- **Mississippi River and Saltwater Wedge** – The river level was at 2.8 and was projected to drop and remain flat and steady for the remainder of the forecast. The saltwater wedge had retreated; however, it was still forecasted to hit Belle Chasse on October 27 and potentially St. Bernard in November. The Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) and Jefferson Parish were making preparations although impacts to their intakes were not anticipated. SWBNO and Jefferson Parish plan to lay pipelines to pump fresh water from about 10 miles upriver. The FPA is assisting with this process, particularly with the crossings along the batture. St. Bernard is preparing to barge fresh water.
- **Tropics Update** – The New Orleans area has not had a direct hit by a hurricane for two successive years (2022 and 2023). The Gulf is projected to remain relatively quiet for the remainder of the hurricane season.
- **Franklin Warehouse Buildout** – The south end of the warehouse was basically completed. The buildout provides additional office, storage and meeting spaces, along with additional bathrooms, for the Maintenance and Complex Structures groups. The FPA is planning an open house after the project is completed.
- **Franklin Facility Water Pressure** - The Franklin Facility recently experienced a loss of water pressure several times. The loss of water pressure was not experienced in the surrounding area. Sufficient water pressure is particularly important during a storm event. FPA staff is seeking ways to have a redundancy to ensure sufficient water pressure.
- **Lakeshore Drive Drainage Improvement Project** – The project is located between Shelter 1 and Orleans Avenue. The contract with Cycle Construction is almost completed. The cost of the project was approximately \$800,000 and included cleaning out or replacing drains so that the area can drain more effectively.

Mr. Noel inquired about the FPA's liability relative to the pipeline crossings. Ms. Chandler replied that the FPA would not have any liability. Kirk Ordoyne, Executive Counsel, commented that he was not aware of the project. Mr. Humphreys explained that Jefferson Parish planned to lay a 12-inch flexible pipe primarily on the land surface. The FPA was in the process of permitting the project on the east bank. However, since the saltwater wedge retreated and was not at that time projected to reach the intakes, Jefferson Parish decided not to lay the pipe. Jefferson Parish will do the planning for the pipeline in the event it is needed later. Additional provisions were being placed in the permit to address liability.

Mr. Settoon suggested that the FPA investigate drilling a well to resolve the Franklin Facility water pressure issue. Ms. Chandler advised that drilling a well was a solution being considered by the FPA.

Mr. Cosse inquired about the status of the ventilation fans in the Franklin Facility warehouse. Mr. Humphreys responded that FPA Maintenance staff was meeting today to move forward with a contractor.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Finance Committee:** The Finance Committee met prior to the Board meeting. Josh Faubert, CPA, CITP, with Ericksen Krentel provided a presentation to the Committee on the results of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 financial audit. The Finance Committee recommended that the Board defer the item on the Board agenda concerning the Memorandum of Understanding between the FPA and Lakefront Management Authority. The Committee recommended that the Board approve the auction of surplus items.

**Operations Committee:** The Committee did not meet in the month of October; therefore, there was no report.

**Legal Committee:** The Committee did not meet in the month of October; therefore, there was no report.

**Coastal and Technical Committee:** The Committee did not meet in the month of October; therefore, there was no report.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Motion to approve the updated and revised Memorandum of Understanding between the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (FPA), on behalf of the Orleans Levee District, and the Lakefront Management Authority (formerly the Non-Flood Protection Asset Management Authority) for the Management of the Non-Flood Assets of the Orleans Levee District.**

Mr. Arrigo offered a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Miller, to defer Agenda Item XII.A.1 concerning the MOU between the FPA and the Lakefront Management Authority until next month. The motion was adopted with Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Cosse, Mr. Miller, Mr. Noel and Ms. Settoon voting yea, Mr. Fierke abstaining, and Mr. Duplantier, Mr. Settoon and Mr. Rabb absent.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 10-19-23-02 - AUCTION OF SURPLUS ITEMS**

On the motion of Mr. Noel,  
Seconded by Mr. Fierke, the following resolution was offered:

**WHEREAS**, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (FPA), East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD), Orleans Levee District (O.L.D.) and Lake Borgne Basin Levee District (LBBLD) intend to sell certain items by auction that have been determined to be surplus; and

**WHEREAS**, a notarized affidavit shall be executed by the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (FPA) Regional Director on behalf of the FPA, EJLD, O.L.D. and LBBLD listing the items to be sold by auction, an estimated value of each item and certifying that the items listed are surplus.

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East authorizes the sale of surplus items by the FPA, EJLD, O.L.D. and LBBLD by an auction and authorizes the FPA Regional Director, or in his/her absence the Director of Engineering, to execute any and all documents necessary to accomplish the above.

The foregoing was submitted to a vote; the vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Duplantier, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Miller, Mr. Noel, Ms. Settoon and Mr. Settoon

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Rabb

**RESOLUTION NO. 10-19-23-03 - UPGRADE OF HURRICANE AND STORM DAMAGE RISK REDUCTION SYSTEM TO 200-YEAR PROTECTION**

On the motion of Ms. Settoon,

Seconded by Mr. Fierke, the following resolution was offered:

**WHEREAS**, in September, 1965, Hurricane Betsy made landfall in Louisiana as a powerful Category 4 hurricane causing widespread destruction across the region; and

**WHEREAS**, the Flood Control Act of 1965, enacted by Congress on October 27, 1965, authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to design and construct hurricane flood protection in the New Orleans region [Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity, Louisiana Hurricane Protection Project (LP&VHPP)] through the construction of levees, floodwalls and flood control structures; and

**WHEREAS**, on August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina, which generated a 30-foot storm surge from the Gulf of Mexico, made landfall causing widespread catastrophic damage and the loss of more than 1,500 lives; and

**WHEREAS**, approximately 80 percent of New Orleans was flooded to depths that exceeded 15-feet in many areas due to failures in the LP&VHPP; and

**WHEREAS**, the USACE immediately established Task Force Guardian to repair and restore the LP&VHPP to pre-Katrina conditions. Hurricane Rita, on the heels of Katrina, worsened the situation and delayed the start of work; however, the system was restored to pre-Katrina conditions prior to the 2006 hurricane season; and



**WHEREAS**, the USACE was subsequently authorized by Congress to design and construct the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS), a \$14.6 billion project crossing five parishes (Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, St. Charles and Plaquemines), to provide defense against a 100-year storm event (a storm that has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year); and

**WHEREAS**, the greater New Orleans region faces increasing environmental and geological threats, such as sea level rise, subsidence, and increasing sea surface temperatures, in addition to natural cycles such as El Nino and La Nina, which result in stronger, rapidly intensifying hurricanes; and

**WHEREAS**, recognizing the urgency and vital importance of upgrading the HSDRRS to provide defense against a 200-year storm event, Congress included language in Public Law 117-263, the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act (NADD) for Fiscal Year 2023, under Section 8203, Expedited Modifications of Existing Feasibility Studies, as follows:

“The Secretary shall expedite the completion of the following feasibility studies, as modified by this section, and if the Secretary determines that a project that is the subject of the feasibility study is justified in the completed report, may proceed directly to preconstruction planning, engineering, and design of the project:

“(2) LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN AND VICINITY, LOUISIANA.—The study for flood risk management and hurricane and storm damage risk reduction, Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity, Louisiana, authorized by section 204 of the Flood Control Act of 1965 (79 Stat. 1077), is modified to authorize the Secretary to investigate increasing the scope of the project to provide protection against a 200-year storm event.”

**WHEREAS**, the Biden administration very recently took extraordinary action to ensure that state in-kind credit was recognized in order for enhancements to the system to move forward absolutely as expeditiously as possible to continue to establish 100-year protection, and the 200-year study should receive the same sense of priority and urgency;

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East, on behalf of the citizens of Southeast Louisiana protected by the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System, urges the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to include the congressional authorized study to upgrade the system to 200-year protection in its next work plan and to complete said study as expeditiously as possible.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East, on behalf of the citizens of Southeast Louisiana protected by the HSDRRS, urges the Louisiana congressional delegation and the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) to aggressively pursue procurement of a minimum \$500,000 federal appropriation for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to start the study to upgrade the system to 200-year protection and to express their staunch support for USACE’s expeditious completion of said study.

The foregoing was submitted to a vote; the vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS: Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Duplantier, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Miller, Mr. Noel, Ms. Settoon and  
Mr. Settoon

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Rabb

The next regular monthly meeting of the Board will be held on November 16, 2023.

There was no further business; therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.