

**MINUTES OF THE  
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY–EAST  
BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

The regular monthly Board Meeting of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (Authority or FPA) was held on February 20, 2025, 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. Carubba called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and led the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Settoon called the roll and a quorum was present:

**PRESENT:**

Roy M. Carubba, P.E., President  
Thomas G. Fierke, Vice President  
Deborah M. Settoon, P.E., Secretary  
William A. Settoon, Jr., Treasurer  
Roy M. Arrigo  
Clay A. Cosse (left meeting at 12:39 p.m.)  
K. Randall Noel  
Derek N. Rabb

**ABSENT:**

Richard G. Duplantier, Jr.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA:**

Mr. Noel advised that he submitted a resolution that was not on the agenda; therefore, he had a problem adopting the agenda without the resolution. He asked for a commitment from President Carubba that the resolution would be added to the agenda. Mr. Carubba responded that he would address the resolution in his opening comments and that he intended to add a portion of the resolution to the agenda.

Mr. Carubba asked for a motion to adopt the agenda in its present form. Mr. Cosse pointed out that Mr. Noel submitted his resolution for the agenda in a timely manner and that it was wrongfully removed by the Superintendent of Police Joshua Rondeno and Mr. Carubba. Ms. Settoon, Board Secretary, stated that the Bylaws provide that any Commissioner can submit an item and that the Secretary shall assure it is placed on the agenda. Mr. Noel's resolution was removed without her knowledge; therefore, she asked that the Board correct this wrongful act. Mr. Noel reiterated that he could not vote to adopt the agenda unless Mr. Carubba committed to including the resolution on the agenda as written. Mr. Carubba replied that he would be happy to place the resolution in the form that it was submitted back on the agenda.

Mr. Noel offered a motion to amend the agenda to include the following motion: "Motion to appoint an Interim Regional Director and designate Appointing Authority, to establish a committee to oversee a national search for a new Regional Director and provide a recommendation to the Board, and to direct the Interim Regional Director to attend all meetings concerning flood protection and FPA administrative matters." The motion was seconded by Mr. Fierke. Mr. Carubba called for public comment on the amendment. There was no public comment. The agenda as amended was unanimously adopted.

**RESOLUTION NO. 02-20-25-01 - APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 16, 2025**

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On the motion of Mr. Arrigo,  
Seconded by Mr. Fierke, 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 January 16, 2025.

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

YEAS: Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Carubba, Mr. Cosse, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Noel, Mr. Rabb,  
Ms. Settoon and Mr. Settoon

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Duplantier

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**1. Police/Administrative Investigations in anticipation of litigation.**

A motion was offered by Mr. Rabb and seconded by Ms. Settoon for the Board to convene in Executive Session to discuss the item listed on the agenda. Mr. Cosse asked who was being investigated. Kirk Ordoyne, Executive Counsel, replied that with anticipation of litigation, the Board did not have to name the party at that time. He stated that the agenda item was sufficient for the Board to go into Executive Session. A majority of the Board voted to convene in Executive Session. The vote was as follows: Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Carubba, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Noel, Mr. Rabb, Ms. Settoon and Mr. Settoon yea and Mr. Cosse nay. The Board convened in Executive Session.

The Board reconvened in regular session and the meeting was called back to order.

**OPENING COMMENTS BY PRESIDENT AND COMMISSIONERS:**

Mr. Carubba thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He acknowledged the efforts of the men in Departments 311 (Floodwall Maintenance) and 313 (Levee Maintenance), who are the frontline of defense when a storm comes. He said that during his short tenure as a Board member and as President, he spent time with these men, mostly in morning and afternoon roll calls, and had gotten to know them. The Governor charged

him as President with three mandates, the first being to make sure no one floods due to storm surge. The FPA is making bold strides to ensure that mission is accomplished.

Mr. Carubba stated that he would like to lead the effort on the search for a Regional Director. He advised that he wanted to separate the discussion of the Interim Regional Director from the permanent position when Mr. Noel's resolution was discussed.

Mr. Carubba advised that the Governor's second mandate concerned the Levee District Police Departments, which, in his opinion, Superintendent Rondeno has locked down. The third mandate was good governance. Several recent actions added instant value to the FPA. In October 2024 the former East Jefferson Levee District Administration Building was slated for demolition and the land sold. As a professional, practicing engineer, he took it upon himself to look at the building and asked that a roofer and mold expert look at the building. The building does not need to be demolished. For a nominal amount of money, the building can be returned to a condition that would allow the property to be sold at a significantly higher price. Some irregularities in the FPA led to the decision to demolish the building for the wrong reasons.

Mr. Carubba explained that the crew in Department 313 not only maintains grass but are also certified levee inspectors who look for irregularities that can weaken a levee and increase the risk of flooding. The FPA owns a significant amount of grass cutting equipment but was outsourcing grass cutting. Over \$300,000 was spent in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 to outsource grass maintenance when the men in Department 313 were capable of doing this work and inspecting the levee. Grass maintenance will no longer be outsourced saving the FPA \$300,000+.

Mr. Carubba added that relative to good governance, the FPA has and will continue to separate people from the agency who are not operating in its best interest.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

**PRESENTATIONS:** None.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Finance Committee:** Mr. Settoon reported that the Finance Committee met on February 13. Denise Williams, Regional Finance Director, reviewed the proposed FY 2026 Budget.

**Operations Committee:** Mr. Fierke advised that the Operations Committee did not meet due to a lack of a quorum and noted that this issue needed to be remedied.

**Legal Committee:** Mr. Rabb advised that the Legal Committee did not meet because there were no major agenda items.

**Special Issues Committee:** Ms. Settoon advised that the Special Issues Committee met prior to the Board meeting. A report was received that the Attorney General (AG)

opinion on the proposed Visitor's Center was drafted and needed to go through two levels of approval. The facility's floor print was estimated at 45 for operations and maintenance and 55 percent for visitors' activities. The Committee also discussed the Strategic Resource Plan, the Action Item List and reviewed job descriptions for three vacant positions (Regional Director, Administrative Assistant to the Board and Special Assistant to the Board).

### **DIRECTORS' REPORTS:**

Joshua Rondeno, Superintendent of Police and current Appointing Authority for the agency, stated that about two weeks ago the Human Resources (HR) Department identified opportunities within the Civil Service system to better compensate Maintenance employees in their current positions and create opportunities for internal advancement. Paperwork for at least 30 of a total of 97 employees has been processed. HR also spearheaded a relationship with Delgado Community College to provide teachers two nights a week to teach employees hydraulics, electrical and HVAC. In addition, HR has a relationship John Deere which sends trainers to the FPA to conduct excavator, manlift, forklift and skidsteer training. HR spearheaded these efforts in a collaborative endeavor with him as the Appointing Authority. He awarded a letter of commendation to the HR Department for their exceptional efforts.

Superintendent Rondeno stated that the FPA must engage these processes within its financial footprint. In addition to the initiative put in place to better facilitate the success of Maintenance workers, Denise Williams, Regional Finance Director, immediately stepped up to take over risk management in its entirety including insurance and issuance of Request for Qualifications (RFQs). He awarded a letter of commendation to Ms. Williams for her exceptional performance and for setting an exemplary standard.

Superintendent Rondeno stated that at least ten times over the past several weeks, Maintenance personnel responded immediately to mitigate floodwall graffiti and encampments that came up overnight throughout the Mississippi River Levee system and the downtown area. Some Maintenance employees' pay had been based on a schedule as far back as 2017, which is not a suitable livable wage today. Partnerships and collaborations facilitated the quick transition to advance Maintenance employees. He awarded a letter of commendation to the Floodwall and Levee Maintenance Teams for their extraordinary efforts during the Super Bowl.

Chris Humphreys, Director of Engineering, provided an update on several major FPA projects:

- London Canal North-West Erosion Mitigation – Project was recently completed.
- Lake Borgne Sheet Pile Rehabilitation – The contractor is excavating about three feet below the soil surface and blasting, repainting and performing required corrosion repairs to the sheet pile. The surface is above natural grade and contoured to drain water away from the sheet pile. The project is ahead of schedule and within budget.

- East Jefferson Foreshore Protection – The repair project is funded under Public Law (PL) 84-99 (Emergency Response to Natural Disasters). The design of the repair is nearing completion by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The foreshore protection continues to erode. The worst areas are located in Reach One (west end of the East Jefferson Lakefront Levee). The FPA is currently working on the borrow source and LERRDS (Lands, Easements, Rights-of-Ways, Relocations and Disposals) for construction.

Mr. Humphreys reported that the Mississippi River was rising and nearing flood stage (11-foot Carrollton Gage). If the river reaches flood stage, the FPA will begin bi-weekly inspections in conjunction with the USACE. The FPA is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), in conjunction with the USACE and Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), and assessing inventories and equipment for the upcoming hurricane season.

Mr. Humphreys advised that the FPA is working with the USACE on the PCCP (Permanent Canal Closures and Pumps) pump repairs. The USACE is rehabilitating pumps at all three PCCP pump stations.

Darren Austin, Director of Operations, provided a report on the Operations Department, which consists of Complex Structures (Department 317) and PCCP (Department 400). Seven of the 17 PCCP pumps are repaired to date. The Joint Venture (JV) and USACE disassembled the seven pumps, repainted pieces that were returned, and replaced internal components with stainless steel components. The USACE's original goal was to repair eight pumps this season and the remainder after December 1. The JV presented an ambitious revised plan to repair all remaining pumps. Four pumps were completely repaired in 2024. To date three pumps have been fully repaired and tested. A series of four-hour tests are conducted with no water in the pumps and a wet test is conducted for at least one hour. Bearing temperatures must stabilize no higher than a degree in a five-minute span during the wet test. The JV and USACE did an assessment of the pumps and each hurricane season is entered knowing their status. The PCCP pumps can match the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) pumping capacity.

Mr. Settoon asked about cathodic protection for the pumps. Mr. Austin advised that new cathodic protection is being installed as part of the pump rehabilitation. Initially, there was no cathodic protection in the pumps. A determination was made that there should have been a cathodic protection system and steps are being taken to put it in place. The cathodic protection is not complete, but it is in the design going forward.

Mr. Carubba asked Mr. Austin if he was satisfied with the JV's work efforts relative to quality control and was there the comfort level needed as an agency to ensure that the useful life of the pumps is not diminished. Mr. Austin responded that the work was not far enough along either in time or completion to adequately say one way or the other. The work at this time involves getting parts and pieces back into the pumps which should allow the FPA to have the expected useful life.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **Federal Legislative Update by Mercury Public Affairs, LLC.**

David Vitter with Mercury, LLC, advised that the contract with Mercury Public Affairs expired on December 31, 2024. The proposal was to expand the contract scope of work to include State issues and to increase the monthly retainer. Mercury is currently retained by the FPA-West with a scope of work that includes Federal and State issues.

Senator Vitter and Lynnel Ruckert with Bold Strategies provided an overview of Mercury Public Affairs, its past work and recommendations for 2025.

Ms. Ruckert explained that Senator Vitter had a distinguished career in Washington, DC, serving on the Corps/flood control committee his whole Senate career. He authored and passed several Water Resource Development (WRDA) bills and personally worked on all post-Katrina issues. Ms. Ruckert was Chief of Staff for Congressman Scalise for eight years in Washington, DC. Senator Vitter has many key staffers who are still in Washington and serve in Louisiana delegation offices and leadership offices. The Speaker's Chief of Staff and Senator Kennedy's Chief of Staff are both Senator Vitter alumni. As Congressman Scalise' Chief of Staff Ms. Ruckert worked closely with all Louisiana and Committee offices. White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles was previously Mercury's Co-Chair of their Florida practice, Senator Vitter's partner Bryan Lanza is very well connected to the Trump Administration, and Fabrizio & Ward, pollsters for the Trump Campaign, are affiliated with Mercury.

Senator Vitter reviewed Mercury's past work for the FPA:

- Passed the 200-year protection study for the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS ), which is the first step in a continuing process. A positive cost-benefit ratio is expected to lead to the construction of 200-year protection.
- Passed subsequent WRDA language to try to accelerate the 200-year protection study.
- Led ongoing outreach to the Louisiana delegation on required PCCP pump repairs, which helped solidify a robust USACE and JV repair plan. Keeping the Federal delegation informed is important in the event of a disagreement with the USACE about what is needed or if additional funding is required.
- Led letter from the Louisiana federal delegation to the USACE asking for action on 200-year flood protection.
- Regular trips to Washington, DC, to meet with the Louisiana delegation and key administrators of Congressional staff and officials.
- Organized numerous USACE meetings, primarily with the New Orleans District and, when necessary, in Washington, DC, about all of the above issues.
- Organized senior staff tours of key FPA facilities to build understanding of the HSDRRS and relationships.

- Mercury, along with a federal grant specialist, was successful in pursuing federal grants when this work was included in their contract.

Ms. Ruckert advised that recommendations for 2025 include acceleration of the 200-year protection study as a top priority, continuation of consistent meetings in Washington, DC, with the USACE, and staff visits to FPA facilities and sites. An example of a meeting set up with the USACE concerned the East Jefferson Foreshore Protection and the sturgeon issue.

Senator Vitter addressed the expansion of the scope of work:

- Monitor all State legislative proposals, advise the FPA and react as necessary.
- Provide input to the Governor's Office on its proposals, for example, regarding the Nominating Committee and nomination process.
- Set up meetings between the Governor's Office and Chief Rondeno, as the current top staffer, to build channels of communication.
- Organize State delegation staff tours of FPA key facilities/assets.

Mr. Noel asked, was the FPA prohibited from lobbying the State Legislature. Senator Vitter responded that the prohibition regarding lobbying is for agencies of State government. The FPA under the Louisiana Constitution and in every other way is a political subdivision of the State; therefore, the prohibition against lobbying does not apply to the FPA. He advised that Ms. Ruckert will not participate in anything involving the Governor's office because her husband is the Governor's Chief of Staff. Senator Vitter will take the lead and handle anything involving the Governor's Office. Ms. Ruckert will participate fully and work with Senator Vitter on State Legislative work.

Ms. Ruckert advised that Mercury provides updates through quarterly reports and appears before the Board as needed. She suggested that Mercury hold monthly virtual meetings with the Board President and Chief Rondeno. Mercury will also add brief descriptions on each monthly invoice.

Mr. Fierke commended Senator Vitter and his team for their work for the FPA. He asked that "local" be included in the scope because the SWBNO pays half of the costs of the PCCP pump stations. Senator Vitter responded that he was not familiar with the FPA's issues with the SWBNO, but assuming it was not a large additional project, it could be included in the scope. Mr. Fierke also asked that Mercury schedule lobbying trips and identify Commissioners who are willing to participate in the trips. Senator Vitter replied that Mercury will suggest dates that will work with the Congressional calendar for the next lobbying trip. The decision regarding which Commissioners participate in the trips is left to the Board.

Mr. Noel recommended that the FPA participate in the Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association's (MVFCA) trips to Washington, DC. Senator Vitter explained that the MVFCA has a national agenda and sends a large representation to Washington, DC. It is important for the FPA to use its chips to focus on its key issues and not get lost in the shuffle of a much larger agenda.

**RESOLUTION NO. 02-20-25-02 - CONSULTING SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH MERCURY PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LLC**

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Senator Vitter noted that discussions included a one-year renewal with the provision that either side at any time can terminate the contract with 30 days' notice. Mr. Carubba concurred with Senator Vitter.

A motion was offered by Mr. Carubba and seconded by Mr. Fierke to amend the resolution to provide a cost of \$17,000 per month commencing March 1, 2025, and to expand the scope of the work to include local, State and Federal, as well as, grant work. Mercury will be paid at the prior contract rate for its work in January and February 2025.

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

**WHEREAS**, by Resolution No. 02-17-22-03, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (FPA) authorized a Consulting Services Agreement with Mercury Public Affairs, LLC (Mercury) to provide consulting services at the Federal level to seek and secure funding for coastal and hurricane risk reduction projects for the period March 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, by Resolution No. 11-16-23-03, the FPA approved an amendment to the aforementioned agreement to extend its term from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024; 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**, due to these environmental and geological threats, the importance of implementing 200-year flood protection is imperative; and

**WHEREAS**, strategic consulting and management services are needed in the areas of federal governmental relations strategy, including congressional and administration lobbying, and to work on issues related to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' flood protection plan for Southeast Louisiana; and

**WHEREAS**, the FPA wishes to expand the scope of the aforementioned Agreement to include State, local and grant work; and

**WHEREAS**, reports shall be provided by Mercury Public Affairs, LLC, at a minimum on a quarterly basis.

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East approves an amendment to the Consulting Services Agreement with Mercury Public Affairs, LLC, dated March 1, 2022, to extend the term of the agreement for a one-year period commencing January 1, 2025, and ending December 31, 2025.



**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that commencing March 1, 2025, the scope of services for the aforementioned Consulting Services Agreement is expanded to include Federal, State, local and grant work, at a cost of \$17,000 per month.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the FPA authorizes payment to Mercury Public Affairs, LLC, for services rendered in January and February 2025 under the Consulting Services Agreement at a cost of \$13,500 per month.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the FPA authorizes the President or Director of Engineering to execute the aforementioned amendment to the Consulting Services Agreement with Mercury Public Affairs, LLC, and any and all other documents necessary to carry out the above.

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

YEAS: Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Carubba, Mr. Cosse, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Noel, Mr. Rabb, Ms. Settoon and Mr. Settoon

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Duplantier

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 02-20-25-03 – ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE BOARD**

Superintendent Rondeno explained that the Administrative Assistant to the Board holds a classified Civil Service position. The Bylaws provide that the Board is responsible for movement within that position. He asked that the Board delegate someone so that the proper Civil Service steps are followed and the process is not delayed.

Mr. Noel recommended that Ms. Settoon, as Board Secretary, and Mr. Fierke, as the prior Board Secretary, be designated to seek a replacement for the position. Superintendent Rondeno pointed out that the Appointing Authority must direct the process on the Civil Service side. Mr. Noel clarified that the Appointing Authority would work with Ms. Settoon and Mr. Fierke.

Mr. Noel offered a motion to designate Ms. Settoon and Mr. Fierke to work with the Appointing Authority to develop a new job description for the Administrative Assistant to the Board, conduct interviews with candidates and select an individual to fill the vacancy. The motion was seconded by Mr. Arrigo.

Mr. Fierke pointed out that a plan is needed if the position is not filled by April 1 when the vacancy occurs. Kirk Ordoyne, Executive Counsel, advised that the FPA's Paralegal is a backup for the position.

On the motion of Mr. Noel,

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

**WHEREAS**, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (FPA) is the governing authority over the East Jefferson, Lake Borgne Basin and Orleans Levee Districts; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board's Bylaws, Article VI Employees, 1. Administrative Assistant to the Board, provide that the Board may hire an Administrative Assistant to assist the Board in the execution of its duties; and

**WHEREAS**, the position of Administrative Assistant to the Board will become vacant on April 1, 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, the current job description for the Administrative Assistant to the Board is over 10 years old.

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East designates Deborah M. Settoon, P.E., the current Board Secretary, and Thomas Fierke, the prior Board Secretary, to work with the Appointing Authority to develop a new job description for the position of Administrative Assistant to the Board, review applications, conduct interviews with qualified candidates, and select an individual to fill said vacancy,

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

YEAS: Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Carubba, Mr. Cosse, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Noel, Mr. Rabb, Ms. Settoon and Mr. Settoon

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Duplantier

**RESOLUTION NO. 02-20-25-04 - TO APPROVE AN INTERIM REGIONAL DIRECTOR, DESIGNATE APPOINTING AUTHORITY, AND ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE A NATIONAL SEARCH FOR A REGIONAL DIRECTOR AND PROVIDE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD**

Mr. Noel pointed out that hurricane season (June 1) is less than four months away. He stressed the importance of having an individual full time in the position of Regional Director who can run the Authority and is appropriately prepared for hurricane season. Chris Humphreys, Director of Engineering, has been with the FPA for over six years and was considered for Regional Director the last time the position was vacant. Mr. Humphreys, who is retiring on June 1, can step in as Interim Regional Director while the proposed committee finds someone to permanently fill the position. He added that it is important for Mr. Humphreys to have Appointing Authority and that he was already an authorized check signatory. As Interim Regional Director, Mr. Humphreys will attend meetings with the USACE, CPRA and other entities

Mr. Noel explained that he appreciated President Carubba's hard work; however, he is a volunteer with another occupation and cannot be the Regional Director. It takes someone with boots on the ground full time to oversee the organization. Mr. Humphreys knows the flood protection system, participated in hurricane tabletop exercises, and has been a marvelous Director of Engineering. The proposed committee consists of Ms. Settoon, Mr. Rabb, Mr. Duplantier and Mr. Fierke. Ms. Settoon has been working on the job description for Regional Director. Ms. Settoon and Mr. Rabb worked on unclassified employee evaluations last year and did a great job. Mr. Duplantier is a practicing attorney. Mr. Fierke is an attorney and an engineer. The Committee, in conjunction with the President, can work together to put out a resume

request with qualifications. He encouraged the Committee to submit the resume request to all Board members for their input before it goes out. Resumes will be reviewed for compliance with State law and FPA requirements. Candidates will be interviewed and a recommendation provided to the Board.

Mr. Noel further explained that the proposed resolution also provides that the Superintendent of Police will be the Appointing Authority for the East Jefferson and Orleans Levee District Police Departments. Therefore, the Superintendent of Police can carry out the Governor's request to beef up the Levee District Police Departments and assist the New Orleans Police Department.

Mr. Carubba stated that he appreciated Mr. Noel's comments. He stated that he did not know Mr. Humphreys in the capacity of Director of Engineering but had known him a long time. He agreed that Mr. Humphreys is a very competent engineer and probably knows the flood protection system backwards and forwards. He disagreed that an Interim Regional Director was needed from the standpoint of disrupting the progress made on the Civil Service side. He stated that Superintendent Rondeno had done incredible things as the Appointing Authority in a very short amount of time while restaffing the Levee District Police Departments.

Mr. Carubba questioned whether Mr. Humphreys was an expert in Civil Service matters and stated that it was not appropriate or useful to stop the momentum of the efforts to help Maintenance employees improve themselves. The most important thing about flood protection is the employees who operate and maintain the system. He asked, referring to the Maintenance Department, why were none of the Civil Service matters rectified prior to his coming on the Board when the FPA had a Regional Director. He stated that Superintendent Rondeno rectified these matters with impeccable integrity, adherence to the law and in a timely manner.

Mr. Carubba asked if the Board thought it was wise to have Mr. Humphreys as the Interim Regional Director, that Superintendent Rondeno remain the Appointing Authority for all Civil Service matters because, in his opinion, it protects the agency. He stated that just like Mr. Noel's opinion about having Mr. Humphreys with his white-collar expertise, it was no less important that the blue-collar portion of the agency receive the same consideration.

Ms. Settoon stated that it was not a question of white-collar and blue-collar. In December the Board discussed the need to hire a new Regional Director. No action was taken; therefore, the Board was behind in the process of hiring a new Regional Director. She pointed out that Mr. Humphreys was needed as the Interim Regional Director because the FPA needed a qualified, experienced person to conduct preparations for hurricane season. She added that giving the Superintendent of Police agencywide Appointing Authority was not necessary. Civil Service expertise is supposed to be the venue of the HR Department. Mr. Rabb agreed with Ms. Settoon and added that HR needs to ensure it has the necessary Civil Service expertise and supports the Appointing Authority.

Mr. Carubba again asked why Civil Service matters were not previously rectified and stated that the community was better protected against flooding than it was prior to November 1.

Mr. Rabb explained that the reason the Board, and he and Ms. Settoon in particular, got to the point that it did in the performance review for the former Regional Director was because of some of the things they were hearing. Had the Board known about these HR issues, he would have made sure these things were done. The reason for the performance review was it began to identify where the problems lay. When they started seeing the problems, they began addressing them. He agreed that Superintendent Rondeno had done a good job.

Mr. Carubba pointed out that two dozen positions were rectified three months before hurricane season with more positions to come. The men were more motivated and receive better pay. He disagreed with the argument that the Superintendent of Police should stick to police work and said that he did not understand why at this point the Appointing Authority needed to be changed.

Mr. Carubba commented that Superintendent Rondeno for no extra money chooses to work double duty just as he was doing being involved in the agency from 6 am to 10 pm and on weekends because of the way they communicate. He stated that they were addressing the Governor's three mandates impeccably well and did not want the process disrupted.

Mr. Carubba pointed out that Mr. Noel was President two years ago and that there was a Regional Director. Mr. Noel responded that as Mr. Rabb pointed out that there had not been any indication that there was an issue. Mr. Arrigo advised that the Legislative Auditor conducted an audit to investigate some issues. Mr. Carruba stated that he and Superintendent Rondeno quickly discovered the issues. Ms. Settoon explained that the Legislative Audit in 2022 pointed out that the FPA had compliance issues, grievances that were not handled properly, and discrimination.

Superintendent Rondeno stated that twice in the past three weeks he brought up engineers' pay to Civil Service. The FPA is currently in the process of increasing the pay for all classified engineers within the confines and rules of Civil Service. The engineers are direct reports to the Director of Engineering and are the most critical elements of the behind the table aspects of the FPA.

Mr. Cosse stated that President Carubba and Superintendent Rondeno are new to the Board. The Board knows Mr. Humphreys' capabilities, as well as those of Ryan Foster, Engineering Manager, and Darren Austin, Director of Operations. Mr. Cosse seconded Mr. Noel's motion and supported the resolution. He pointed out that Superintendent Rondeno did not qualify for Regional Director and that the FPA has operated flawlessly during storm events. The Board is just finding out about the pay discrepancies and is unanimous about addressing these deficiencies.

Mr. Carubba stated that engineering-wise he agreed with Mr. Cosse, but prior to November 1 Maintenance employees had been forgotten. After November 1, when he made Superintendent Rondeno the Appointing Authority, he took it upon himself to rectify the inequities in Departments 311 and 313. He added that everything that has been done since November 1 could have been done by the Board and its leadership before he and Superintendent Rondeno came to the FPA. He stated that he had no problem with Mr. Humphreys being the Interim Regional Director but asked that Superintendent Rondeno remain the Appointing Authority for the agency. He added that he did not think the Board needed a Regional Director, but, as President, he was willing to support a search to fill the position.

Mr. Arrigo commented that the discussion was moot because everyone agreed about the need to hire a Regional Director. He stated that the Bylaws provide that the President decides who has Appointing Authority.

Mr. Ordoyne quoted Article IV, Section 3 (f) of the Bylaws relative to Duties of the President, "To act as Appointing Authority of all employees of the Authority, subject to the provisions of Article VI, Section 5 below." He advised that Civil Service rules provide that Boards and Commissions are the Appointing Authority. This is supported by an Attorney General opinion.

Mr. Settoon and Mr. Fierke voiced their support of the original motion.

Mr. Noel stated that it was important that the Authority have one point of contact. The Regional Director should have Appointing Authority over the Authority and the Superintendent of Police should have Appointing Authority over the police. An extensive Legislative Audit was performed at a Senator's request. The FPA's reaction to the report was to create what was suggested in the audit. He pointed out that Mr. Rabb and Ms. Settoon were addressing the issues through the performance evaluation.

Mr. Carubba stated that the Appointing Authority rests with the President. Mr. Noel pointed out that the Bylaws under Article IV, Section 3, paragraph 2, provide that any decision, action or policy made by the President can be modified or annulled by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the Board.

Mr. Carubba offered a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Arrigo, to amend the resolution to establish a committee to conduct a national search for a Regional Director and to remove the provision giving Appointing Authority to an Interim Regional Director.

Mr. Fierke stated that the levee board historically came under attack, especially after Hurricane Katrina. The FPA has made huge strides in its public reputation. People are concerned that the levee board is now being led by a policeman (Superintendent of Police). Going into hurricane season the FPA needs to have a Regional Director who is not in uniform and carrying a gun. He pointed out that the FPA must serve the public and not just employees.

A roll call vote was conducted on the motion to amend the resolution. The amendment failed with Mr. Arrigo and Mr. Carubba voting yea and Mr. Cosse, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Noel, Mr. Rabb, Ms. Settoon and Mr. Settoon voting nay.

A roll call vote was conducted on the original resolution. The resolution was adopted with Mr. Cosse, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Noel, Mr. Rabb, Ms. Settoon and Mr. Settoon voting yea and Mr. Arrigo and Mr. Carubba voting nay.

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

**WHEREAS**, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (FPA) is the governing authority for the Orleans Levee District (O.L.D.), East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD) and Lake Borgne Basin Levee District (LBBLD); and

**WHEREAS**, the Regional Director of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (FPA) resigned effective January 3, 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, as of this date an Interim Regional Director has not been named, nor has any action taken place to permanently fill the position of Regional Director; and

**WHEREAS**, the former Regional Director served as Appointing Authority for all positions of the Flood Protection Authority and levee districts under its jurisdiction, with the exception of Orleans and East Jefferson Levee District Police Personnel; and

**WHEREAS**, the former Regional Director also served as a designated authorized agent and signatory for all Capital One Bank operating and payroll accounts for the FPA, EJLD, O.L.D. and LBBLD, and all Louisiana Asset Management Pool, Inc. (LAMP) account transactions for the FPA and said levee districts; and

**WHEREAS**, at the December 12, 2024, Board meeting, the Board discussed the need for hiring a new Regional Director using a national search and having the Regional Director onboarded and functioning before hurricane season begins June 1, 2025.

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East authorizes the following:

1. Chris Humphreys, Director of Engineering, shall serve as the Interim Regional Director, Appointing Authority for all FPA, O.L.D., EJLD and LBBLD employees, except Levee District Police Personnel, and agent/signatory for All Capital One Bank operation and payroll accounts for the FPA, EJLD, O.L.D. and LBBLD, and all Louisiana Asset Management Pool, Inc. (LAMP) account transactions for the FPA and levee districts;
2. Joshua Rondeno, Superintendent of Police, shall serve as the Appointing Authority for all O.L.D. and EJLD Police personnel;
3. A Committee is hereby established, consisting of Deborah Mabile Settoon, P.E., Chair, Derek N. Rabb, Richard G. Duplantier, Jr., and Thomas G. Fierke, to initiate/oversee a national search for a Regional Director. The Committee will

review applications and make a recommendation to the Board for the selection of a permanent Regional Director;

4. The Interim Regional Director shall represent the Flood Protection Authority-East at all meetings concerning flood protection and administrative matters of the FPA, including, but not limited to, meetings with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association, Association of Levee Boards of Louisiana, I-STORM, and Civil Service.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the FPA Interim Regional Director is authorized to sign any and all documents necessary to carry out the above.

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

YEAS: Mr. Cosse, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Noel, Mr. Rabb, Ms. Settoon and Mr. Settoon

NAYS: Mr. Arrigo and Mr. Carubba

ABSENT: Mr. Duplantier

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 02-20-25-05 - UPDATING DESIGNATED SIGNATORIES FOR BANKING AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

Mr. Fierke asked about the purpose of the resolution. Mr. Carubba responded that the purpose was to add the Superintendent of Police as a signatory and that there was no other change to the prior resolution.

Ms. Settoon asked about the ratification of checks executed by, or bank transactions approved by, the Appointing Authority on or after November 1, 2024, through February 20, 2025.

Denise Williams, Regional Finance Director, explained that in the absence of three employees who were listed as signatories, the FPA needed other signatories. The Risk Manager was listed in the prior resolution but was removed because the duties of Risk Management were given to her as the Regional Finance Director. November 1, 2024, was used because it was the first day that the FPA was without a Regional Director. She said that originally Mr. Humphreys had a retirement date that was much sooner, so he was removed as a signatory in early February. She pointed out that the Superintendent of Police did not sign any checks before January 16. She stated that he is typically in the office every day and that two signatures are needed for checks in the amount of \$5,000 or more.

Ms. Settoon asked was the Superintendent of Police currently a signatory. Ms. Williams replied, yes; however, she was advised by the Administrative Assistant to the Board that the resolution needed to be revised to include his job title.

Mr. Noel pointed out that the Bylaws provide that the Board approve the signatories. The Superintendent of Police was signing checks before the Board approved his position as a signatory. The proposed resolution allows the checks that were signed to

be in accordance with the Bylaws. The Finance Committee received and reviewed a copy of the checks, which were found to be appropriate and proper.

Mr. Settoon pointed out that the signatures are for EFTs (electronic fund transfers) and checks. Ms. Williams explained that in the case of EFTs, the signatories are shown the documentation for the electronic payments. Approval is received before the electronic payments are processed. Signatories listed in the prior resolution were the President, Treasurer, Regional Director, Director of Engineering and Risk Manager.

Mr. Settoon advised that this item came before the Finance Committee at its February 13 meeting. The Committee took no action on the item. He added that he had never signed any checks or authorized any EFTs.

Ms. Settoon asked about the Superintendent of Police signing checks prior to authorization by the Board and about the letter provided to the Bank. Mr. Carruba explained that he gave the Superintendent of Police Appointing Authority and check signing privileges. He did this because he did not want anyone to sign checks who signed contracts for work done at the FPA since it is a conflict. Therefore, he put it on the side of Civil Service and the President to keep everything clean. He stated that it had all been vetted and done by the book. This is an administrative action that needs to be done.

Mr. Cosse pointed out that Mr. Carrubba stated at the January 16, 2025, Board meeting that he did not appoint Joshua Rondeno as the Interim Regional Director.

Ms. Settoon asked to see a list of checks that were being ratified. Ms. Williams advised that the Finance Committee was provided a copy of the checks and list of electronic payments. Mr. Noel reiterated that the checks were found to be appropriate. Ms. Settoon asked Mr. Settoon was he okay with this issue. Mr. Settoon stated that he would reserve comment.

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

**WHEREAS**, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (FPA) by prior resolution authorized the establishment of accounts at Capital One Bank for the business and operation of the FPA, East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD), Lake Borgne Basin Levee District (LBBLD) and Orleans Levee District (O.L.D.); and

**WHEREAS**, the Board by Resolution No. 04-15-21-04 updated the designated authorized agents and/or signatories for all Capital One Bank operating and payroll accounts for the FPA, EJLD, O.L.D. and LBBLD, and all Louisiana Asset Management Pool, Inc. (LAMP) account transactions for the FPA and said levee districts; and

**WHEREAS**, the FPA wishes to update the designated agents and/or signatory authorizations provided in Resolution No. 04-15-21-04.



**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that effective November 1, 2024, the designated agents and/or signatories for all Capital One Bank operating and payroll accounts for the FPA, EJLD, LBBLD, and all LAMP account transactions for the FPA, EJLD, O.L.D. and LBBLD, are as follows:

President of the Board  
Treasurer of the Board  
Regional Director  
Director of Engineering  
Superintendent of Police

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Board hereby ratifies any checks executed by, or bank transactions approved by, the Appointing Authority on or after November 1, 2024, through February 20, 2025.

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

YEAS: Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Carubba, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Noel and Mr. Rabb

NAYS: Mr. Cosse and Ms. Settoon

ABSENT: Mr. Duplantier

ABSTAINED: Mr. Settoon

**RESOLUTION NO. 02-20-25-06 - APPROVAL OF FPA FLEET MOTOR VEHICLE USE POLICY**

Mr. Fierke advised that all of his proposed changes were incorporated into the Fleet Motor Vehicle Use Policy. The final Policy was not reviewed by the Operations Committee because the Committee had not met in the past two months.

On the motion of Mr. Fierke,

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

**WHEREAS**, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (FPA) is the governing authority over the East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD), Lake Borgne Basin Levee District (LBBLD) and Orleans Levee District (OLD); and

**WHEREAS**, the FPA Fleet Motor Vehicle Use Policy was developed to ensure that all operators of FPA/levee district vehicles drive said vehicles in a safe and lawful manner.

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority–East approves the FPA Fleet Motor Vehicle Use Policy, effective February 20, 2025.

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

YEAS: Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Carubba, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Noel, Mr. Rabb, Ms. Settoon  
and Mr. Settoon

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Duplantier and Mr. Cosse

**RESOLUTION NO. 02-20-25-07 - APPROVAL OF A CHANGE ORDER TO THE CONTRACT WITH VANTAGE CONTRACTORS, LLC, FOR THE LONDON AVENUE CANAL – NORTH-WEST EROSION MITIGATION PROJECT**

Ryan Foster, Engineering Manager, explained that the proposed change order was for a quantity overage in one of the bid items at the completion of the London Avenue Canal-North-West Erosion Mitigation Project. Staff reviewed contract quantities and backup. Engineering recommended that the proposed change order be approved.

Mr. Carubba advised that he met with Mr. Foster and reviewed the documentation and concurred with his assessment. The quantity overage is within the bounds of the contract and unit pricing.

Mr. Foster clarified that the mitigation project was located between the PCCP pump station and Lakeshore Drive. The erosion was caused by wave action from the lake and operation of the PCCP pumps. The erosion mitigation project on the east side of the canal was completed several years ago.

On the motion of Mr. Carubba,  
Seconded by Mr. Rabb, the following resolution was offered:

**WHEREAS**, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority–East (FPA) authorized the award of a contract in the amount of \$1,099,000.00 to Vantage Contractors, LLC, for the London Avenue Canal – North-West Erosion Mitigation Project (Project No. O2150186); and

**WHEREAS**, a change order is needed in the amount of \$198,000.00 due to the overage of quantities as a result of unforeseen additional erosion encountered during construction; and

**WHEREAS**, funding for the aforementioned change order is included in Budget Item 20.

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East approves a change order in the amount of \$198,000.00 to the contract with Vantage Contractors, LLC, for the London Avenue Canal – North-West Erosion Mitigation Project.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the FPA President or Director of Engineering is authorized to sign the aforementioned Change Order to the Contract with Vantage Contractors, LLC, and any and all documents necessary to carry out the above.

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

YEAS: Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Carubba, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Noel, Mr. Rabb, Ms. Settoon  
and Mr. Settoon

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Duplantier and Mr. Cosse

**RESOLUTION NO. 02-20-25-08 - APPROVAL OF TASK ORDER WITH LHJ FOR SURVEYING HSDRRS, NON-FEDERAL LEVEE AND MRL EARTHEN EMBANKMENTS**

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Mr. Foster explained that the FPA is required by the State to conduct surveys of the HSDRRS, non-federal levees and Mississippi River Levees (MRL) every three years. The last surveys were conducted by Linfield, Hunter and Junius in 2022. The proposed task order with Linfield, Hunter and Junius is for surveying 90 miles of earthen levee embankments. The data will be provided to the USACE and CPRA. If the surveys/data meet USACE requirements, it will be uploaded to the National Levee Database. The data from the surveys will be used to detect settlement and help determine the location of the next levee lifts.

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

**WHEREAS**, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (FPA) must survey Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) levees, Non-Federal levees and Mississippi River Levee (MRL) earthen embankments every three years; and

**WHEREAS**, the FPA currently has Indefinite Delivery-Indefinite Quantity (ID-IQ) Contract No. 34-02 with Linfield, Hunter and Junius, Inc. (LHJ), for surveying services; and

**WHEREAS**, LHJ provided a proposal dated February 14, 2025, to survey the HSDRRS, Non-Federal levees and MRL earthen embankments in Orleans, Jefferson and St. Bernard Parishes as delineated in said proposal for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$178,115.00; and

**WHEREAS**, funding for said services is provided in FY25 Authority Line Item 11.

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East approves the issuance of a Task Order to Linfield, Hunter and Junius, Inc., to survey HSDRRS levee, Non-federal levee and MRL earthen embankments in Orleans, Jefferson and St. Bernard Parishes as delineated in their proposal dated February 14, 2025, for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$178,115.00, and authorizes the President or Director of Engineering to execute said Task Order and any and all other documents necessary to accomplish the above.

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

YEAS: Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Carubba, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Noel, Mr. Rabb, Ms. Settoon  
and Mr. Settoon

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Duplantier and Mr. Cosse

**RESOLUTION NO. 02-20-25-09 - APPROVAL OF TASK ORDER WITH BRYANT HAMMETT & ASSOCIATES, LLC FOR SURVEYING HSDRRS, NON-FEDERAL AND MRL FLOODWALLS**

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Mr. Foster advised that the State's requirement to conduct surveys every three years also applies to floodwalls. The last floodwall surveys were conducted by Bryant Hammett and Associates in 2022. The proposed task order with Bryant Hammett and Associates is for surveying 36 miles of floodwalls.

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

**WHEREAS**, the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (FPA) must survey Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS), Non-Federal and Mississippi River Levee (MRL) floodwalls every three years; and

**WHEREAS**, the FPA currently has Indefinite Delivery-Indefinite Quantity (ID-IQ) Contract No. 34-04 with Bryant Hammett and Associates, LLC (Bryant Hammett), for surveying services; and

**WHEREAS**, Bryant Hammett provided a revised proposal dated February 14, 2025, to survey the HSDRRS, Non-Federal and MRL floodwalls in Orleans, Jefferson and St. Bernard Parishes as delineated in said proposal for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$125,920; and

**WHEREAS**, funding for said services is provided in FY25 Authority Line Item 11.

**BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East approves the issuance of a Task Order to Bryant Hammett and Associates, LLC, to survey HSDRRS, Non-federal and MRL floodwalls in Orleans, Jefferson and St. Bernard Parishes as delineated in their revised proposal dated February 14, 2025, for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$125,920, and authorizes the President or Director of Engineering to execute said Task Order and any and all other documents necessary to accomplish the above.

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

YEAS: Mr. Arrigo, Mr. Carubba, Mr. Fierke, Mr. Noel, Mr. Rabb, Ms. Settoon  
and Mr. Settoon

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mr. Duplantier and Mr. Cosse

**ACTION ITEM LIST:**

There was no discussion on the Action Item List.

There was no further business; therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 12:43 p.m.