

**MINUTES OF  
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-EAST  
SPECIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

**PRESENT:** Deborah M. Settoon, Chair  
Derek N. Rabb, Committee Member (arrived 9:19 a.m.)  
William A. Settoon, Jr., Committee Member  
Roy M. Carubba, President, Ex Officio Member

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The Special Issues Committee of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (Authority or FPA) met on February 20, 2025, in the Franklin Avenue Administrative Complex, Meeting Room 201, 6920 Franklin Avenue, New Orleans, La. Ms. Settoon called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

**Opening Comments:** None.

**Adoption of Agenda:** The agenda was adopted as presented.

**Approval of Minutes:** The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on November 21, 2024.

**Public Comments:** None.

**New Business:**

**1. Status of the proposed International Center for Storm Surge Barrier Research, Public Education and Satellite Maintenance Facility (Visitors' Center).**

Ms. Settoon advised that the Committee was charged with finding out if flood protection money can be spent on the Visitor's Center. In September 2024 Kirk Ordoyne, Executive Counsel, was asked to obtain an Attorney General (AG) opinion on this issue.

Mr. Ordoyne reported that an email on February 17 from the AG's Office advised that the Section Chief wrote the opinion and it had proceeded to the next of several levels for review. The legal opinion was anticipated to be received in two or three weeks. Several weeks ago, the AG's Office asked what percentage of the facility would be used for operations and maintenance. Mr. Ordoyne and the President discussed and outlined the square footage of the project (45 percent for operations and maintenance and 55 percent for common, tour and research areas). Percentages are preliminary and no detailed programming was performed.

Ms. Settoon commented that the former Director of Governmental Affairs suggested that the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge may be interested in sharing the facility and its cost.

## **2. FPA Strategic Resource Plan:**

Ms. Settoon advised that the Strategic Resource Plan (Plan) was started but was delayed pending the outcome of the Governor's revamp of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. The Regional Finance Director is actively working on the tactical plan budget. The FPA has sufficient funding for all proposed projects and expenses.

The Committee discussed the time period and scope for the Plan. In addition to the financial component, it includes Human Resources (HR) planning, which will be benchmarked against industry guidelines for similar organizations, and new technology needs and costs.

A suggestion was made that time period equals or exceeds the useful life of the Permanent Canal Closures and Pumps (PCCP) pump stations. Darren Austin, Director of Operations, advised that the useful life of the PCCP pumps is 35 years and started in 2018. The useful life of the pump station structures is about 100 years. The pumps must be dewatered and inspected every 10 years. Other major costs should be close to the end of the 35-year useful life. The Committee determined that the Plan should cover a 35 year period.

Ms. Settoon suggested that since there may eventually be a need for additional funding that a public opinion poll be conducted that includes: 1) the strength of the agency's acceptance, whether or not it is doing a good job, and views regarding taxes. The poll was delayed to a later date to determine if the cost can be reduced.

## **3. Implementation of the Action Item List:**

Mr. Settoon advised that the Action Item List was implemented

## **4. Discussion of Job Descriptions for Regional Director, Special Assistant to the Board and Administrative Assistant to the Board.**

### **Regional Director Job Description:**

Ms. Settoon advised that R.S. 38:330.1-13 states that the Board may employ a Regional Director to serve at the pleasure of the Board. R.S. 38:330.1-13 lists the following requirements:

- 1) Reside in Southeast Louisiana;
- 2) Have a bachelor's degree, at a minimum, in the area of business, engineering, geology, hydrology, natural sciences, environmental sciences, renewable resources or similar academic field; and
- 3) Have a minimum of ten years' senior executive experience in business, engineering or hydrology, or in the performance of public works functions, related to flood and drainage control, flood plain management, water resources, soil conversation, land survey and mapping, disaster relief, or any related functions.

Ms. Settoon explained that the initial job description was four pages in length and was streamlined. Requirements can be more restrictive, but not less restrictive, than State law. The job description includes:

**Requirements:**

- A bachelor's degree from an ABET (Accreditation Board of Engineering Technology) accredited engineering program in civil engineering or mechanical engineering; and
- A professional engineering (PE) certification from the Louisiana Professional Engineering and Land Surveying Board with any complaints being fully resolved.
- Ten years of senior management experience in design, construction, operation and maintenance of public works functions related to flood and drainage controls, water resources or related functions (private or public).
- Direct management responsibility for projects costing at least \$5 million or substantial academic expertise and practical research focused on engineering topics.
- Five years' experience in management of technical personnel and other support disciplines, business, legal, safety and human resources.
- Once hired, live in a permanent residence in Southeast Louisiana, preferably Orleans, Jefferson or St. Bernard Parishes.

**Responsibilities:**

- Lead the flood protection efforts for the FPA's area of jurisdiction.
- Perform in accordance with the Board of Commissioners' annual goals and objectives.
- Monitor local and national stakeholder relations, as well as public relations, to provide assurance that flood protection is technically sound and fiscally responsible.
- Interface with the Board's professional staff, including Legal Counsel, Government Relations, Public Information Director, Internal Audit, Administrative Assistant and other support staff supervised by the Board.
- Provide all fiscal reports required by law and audits of the agency.
- Performance plans and evaluations for key personnel with review by the Board prior to action being taken.
- Preparation of an annual Strategic and Tactical Plan.
- Caused to be prepared a bi-annual (every two years) Strategic Plan (35 years).
- Inform the Board of all major developments in a prompt manner.
- Provide concise monthly reports to the Board.
- Coordinate all public interviews with the Board President.
- Annual anonymous 360-degree feedback using an external firm to measure effective leadership and ethical behavior and assess areas of improvement for the Regional Director and other direct reports. Results and corrective actions would be presented to the Board for review and direction.
- Model good ethics in all business matters.

The Committee discussed the PE certification requirement and the percentage of engineers who are not PEs. Mr. Rabb suggested that the word "preferred" be used in

lieu of “required” relative to PE certification, and “MBA preferred” be used to balance out the technical side.

Ms. Settoon summarized that the modifications requested by the Committee were to state MBA preferred and PE preferred, and to rework the explanation for the anonymous 360-degree feedback.

### **Director of Governmental Affairs:**

Ms. Settoon advised that the former Director of Governmental Affairs reported to the President and Executive Counsel. When she began to review the revised job description, Joshua Rondeno, Superintendent of Police and appointing authority, interjected that the job description, which was over two years old, had been updated, submitted to Civil Service and was ready to be advertised. The FPA is required to update job descriptions every two years. If the FPA had waited, it would have delayed the process a month since the Board meets monthly. Ms. Settoon noted that someone from the Board should lead the process and that it is under Special Issues.

Superintendent Rondeno stated that he consulted with Executive Counsel and was advised that the Director of Governmental Affairs was not one of the direct reports to the Board. The Bylaws provide for Board approval for hiring the Regional Director, Director of Engineering, Executive Counsel and Administrative Assistant. The FPA cannot pull or undo the update. The Committee can review the updated job description and decide whether or not it wants to make additions or advertise it as is. Kenyetta Sewell, Human Resource (HR) Director, explained that the updated job description had to be submitted to Civil Service in January to be on the Commission’s February 5 agenda. The Civil Service Commission approved it at the February 5 meeting as an unclassified position. A copy of the updated job description was provided to Committee members.

Ms. Settoon advised that the Committee will review the job description to determine if it is consistent with their expectations and further discuss the matter. She pointed out that the former Director of Governmental Affairs reported to the Executive Counsel because of a slight organizational malfunction.

Mr. Carubba explained that Superintendent Rondeno and Ms. Sewell (HR Department) to be expedient and follow the rules sent the updated position to Civil Service. At no point was a decision made to advertise, hire anyone or do anything else. It was a ministerial function to ensure the position description was updated when presented to the Board. Ms. Sewell advised that she planned to post the position after permission was received from the Board, receive applications and submit the applications to Executive Counsel since he was the supervisor on the organizational chart. Executive Counsel or the Board would determine who is on the interview panel, the candidates to be interviewed, and who will be hired.

### **Administrative Assistant to the Board:**

Ms. Settoon reviewed a very basic list of the Administrative Assistant’s duties:

- Special projects as directed by President and/or the Board.
- Knowledge of the Board's Bylaws, Policies, Revised Statutes regarding the FPA and Open Meetings Law, and other requirements.
- Drafting/maintaining annual Schedule of Board/Committee meetings (includes setting up meetings in St. Bernard and East Jefferson Parishes).
- Drafting resolutions.
- Drafting Board and Committee Agendas.
- Sending out and posting agendas.
- Drafting Board and Committee Minutes.
- Maintaining Board files.
- Maintaining information on appointment of Board members.
- Providing requested information to Board members.
- Informing Finance about per diem payments and reconciliation of payments.
- Update Division of Administration's Boards and Commissions website.
- Tracking mandatory CPRA training for Commissioners.

Ms. Settoon noted that the current Administrative Assistant prepared a 25+-page information and procedures manual concerning Board/Committee meetings, Commissioners, and requirements and duties. The job description was last updated in 2014. She deferred this matter to the next meeting so that the job description can be updated. Mr. Fierke asked to add that the position would serve as parliamentarian for the Board and ensure compliance with Robert's Rules of Order.

Mr. Settoon inquired about the FPA employee newsletter (In The Levee Loop), since the editor was the Administrative Assistant to the Board and the former Director of Governmental Affairs was the associate editor. Glenda Boudreaux, Administrative Assistant to the Board, advised that the Public Information Director was taking over both the FPA employees' newsletter and the FPA quarterly newsletter.

There was no further business; therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m.