

MINUTES OF
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-EAST
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MAY 7, 2008

PRESENT: Louis Wittie, Chair - SLFPAE
Timothy Doody, SLFPAE
Larry McKee, SLFPAE
Jerry Colletti, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
Larry Ardoin, LA DOTD
Robert Turner, SLFPAE Regional Director
Stevan Spencer, O.L.D. Executive Director
Fran Campbell, EJLD Executive Director
Jason McCrossen, LBBLD Executive Director

The Operations Committee met on May 7, 2008 in the Second Floor Hall of the Lake Vista Community Center, 6500 Spanish Fort Blvd., New Orleans, LA. Chairman Wittie called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m.

Opening Comments: HB 712 relative to the Bohemia Spillway was recommitted to the House Appropriations Committee and has not yet been scheduled for hearing by that committee. Information has been provided to the Governor's attorneys on HB 712. A copy of the status of the legislative bills being tracked was provided.

Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was amended to include the discussion of the levee districts' Emergency Operations Manuals. The agenda was approved as amended.

Public Comments: None.

Discussion of Vehicle Policy.

Current vehicle policies of the levee districts for police officers include the following:

- Orleans Levee District (O.L.D.) Police Officers charged \$125 per month regardless of place of residence.
- East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD) Police Officers charged \$75 per month in parish and \$125 per month out of parish.
- O.L.D. and EJLD Police Officers are allowed to use vehicles for personal police details; LBBLD Police Officer is not allowed use of vehicle for personal police details.

It was pointed out that prior to Hurricane Katrina O.L.D. police officers were not charged for vehicle use; however, in 2005 O.L.D. employees paid zero for individual and \$93 for family health coverage and now pay \$70 for individual and \$300 per month for family coverage.

The Committee discussed employee retention issues and marketplace competition. It was noted that the levee districts' police officers are Post Certified, however, they are not allowed to receive State Supplemental Pay. For example, an EJLD Police Officer annually earns more than \$5,000 less than other officers in the parish. There are responsibilities that go along with a police officer having a take home vehicle (e.g., radios must be on and officers

must respond as required, and the public must be protected at all times). In addition, there is the public benefit of having greater police visibility.

Currently, staff take home vehicle usage is as follows:

- O.L.D. – two (Executive Director and Chief Engineer) – assessed \$3.00 per day as income and taxed at year's end. The O.L.D. has several field operations supervisors who are on 24 hour call and are required to respond to emergencies, but do not currently have take home vehicles.
- LBBLD – three (Executive Director, Drainage Pumping Stations Supervisor and Drainage Canals Levee Supervisor). The current two supervisors live within a mile of the levee district, but are required to take vehicles home and are required to respond to rain events and other emergencies. Take home vehicles afford these supervisors the ability to pick up work crews and go directly to work sites. It was pointed out that should the supervisors be charged for this vehicle usage, the levee district could not require them to take vehicles home, which would result in delays in response to emergencies.
- EJLD – one (Executive Director) -- charged \$75 per month.

The Committee discussed the economics of a take home vehicle charge vs. impediments to public safety through the possible loss of experienced employees and delayed response to emergencies due to an employee's inability to reach a site using a personal vehicle during flooding or other emergency situations or having to go to the levee districts to obtain a vehicle before responding to the site of an emergency.

Mr. Wittie requested that the Regional Director, Robert Turner, meet with the levee districts' executive directors and try to bring a proposal to the Committee for its next meeting.

Discussion of LBBLD purchase of Non-Ground Bearing Detachable Neck Lowboy Trailer.

Mr. Turner explained about a year ago the LBBLD purchased a long reach excavator and has been using the parish government trailer, which is not rated to carry that particular equipment, to move it. An agreement was reached between St. Bernard Parish and the LBBLD wherein the LBBLD will purchase a trailer and the Parish will purchase a tractor rig for moving such equipment. Specifications were prepared for the trailer and bids advertised for receipt by May 28th. Funding for the trailer is included in the LBBLD budget.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board that it allow the LBBLD Executive Director to evaluate bids and award the purchase to the lowest responsive bidder.

Discussion of Levee Districts' Emergency Operations Manuals.

Stevan Spencer, O.L.D. Executive Director, explained levee districts are required by statute to update their Emergency Operations Manuals and obtain Board approval every two years. The O.L.D. updates its manual annually to assure correct contact, gate closure and other information is included. Copies of the O.L.D.'s manual was sent to Commissioners for review this week via hand delivery or Fed-Ex. Finalized, approved manuals should be sent to various agencies and officials by June 1st (start of hurricane season).

A copy of the LBBLD manual will be e-mailed later today and copies of the EJLD manual were distributed at the meeting. A cover letter to Board members will be provided by each levee district noting revisions. Finalized manuals will be placed on the SLFPAE web site.

Mr. Colletti commented these manuals have been a valuable tool and are relied upon by the USACE. Col. Lee has indicated gate closures and the times of those closures will be tracked during both flood and hurricane events to insure each levee district has a closed system.

Notification procedures for the State's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) were discussed, along with other notification procedures.

The Committee discussed the status of the Bonnet Carre Spillway. Sixty gates remain open as of yesterday and each day the USACE's hydraulics people monitor river flow and adjust the number of open gates accordingly. The USACE holds daily flood fight teleconferences where information and updates are provided and approximately 30 individuals participate, including representatives of the O.L.D., LBBLD and Coast Guard.

Levee District Reports:

Levee District Reports (copies appended to minutes) were reviewed by each respective Executive Director, with additional observations or discussions, as follows:

East Jefferson Levee District:

- Responses to the RFQ for engineering services for the design of the rock replacement for shoreline protection are due on May 12th.
- The issue of maintenance of the Bonnabel breakwater and frontal protection at the pump stations was discussed.
- A representative of the USACE described the repairs made to one of the West Return Floodwall joints and reported tests that were performed and recommendations made on the repair of the other joints. Mr. Turner pointed out, although there is some leakage in the joints, there are no instability issues or danger to the floodwall.

Orleans Levee District:

- O.L.D. Executive Director, Stevan Spencer, and SLFAPE Regional Director, Robert Turner, met with representatives of the USACE's Real Estate section and DOTD to discuss obtaining property for the GIWW closure structure footprint and access roads.
- LPV-101 (Orleans Marina Floodwall) – The I-wall will be replaced with a T-wall and owners will be responsible for utility relocations at their cost. At LPV-105 (New Orleans Lakefront Airport Floodwall) hundreds of utilities will require relocation for the Airport, South Shore Harbor and Sen. Ted Hickey Bridge by owners, mainly the O.L.D. Non-Flood Assets Division, at their cost.
- Mr. Turner noted that it takes almost the entire quarterly cycle to complete the full inspection of the O.L.D.'s protection system. Cross training for inspections was discussed. Mr. Turner explained report forms are basically uniform and that he would ultimately like to circulate the levee districts' inspectors so they can learn about each other's area. He noted only the LBBLD has pump stations that must be inspected.
- Soon the USACE will provide the new engineering alternative reports which will include varying cost shares and other issues for various areas of the New Orleans East Lakefront.

Lake Borgne Basin Levee District:

- LPV-142 (IHNC to Paris Road Levee Raising) – Mr. Turner explained the section of levee where sandy material was discovered was overtopped during Hurricane Katrina but not damaged. However, when the USACE was doing work in this area, it discovered the old levee had two or three stretches with a significant amount of sand in the levee itself and the decision was made to remove the sand and replace it with suitable clay material.
- LPV-149 (Caernarvon Floodwall) – It was noted that the realignment of the levee on the south side of the Caernarvon Canal is a possible alternative, which would place the last piece of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project in Plaquemines Parish, but under LBBLD jurisdiction.
- The on-going investigations regarding the possibility of incorporating the back levee into the federal system and the Congressional authority that would be required for this inclusion were discussed. The existing alignment will be designed to 100 year protection and consideration would be given at a later date to using the interior levee for greater than 100 year protection.
- Jason McCrossen, LBBLD Executive Director, reported approximately two weeks ago he, Chris Gilmore and geotechnical representatives with the USACE, Billy Marchal and a representative of Levees.org, traveled to the area between the Bayou Bienvenue and Bayou Dupre structures (LPV-145) in an attempt to locate the specific area where a former construction company employee reported seeing inappropriate materials being placed. The former employee also along and was requested to point out the specific areas where the reported material was placed; however, he was unable to do so. Mr. Doody pointed out that the soil borings and data on that stretch of levee protection was reviewed by Mr. Turner and Mr. Spencer and turned over to the DOTD, In addition, a third party geotechnical firm will be used to review the soil borings. Mr. Turner added, the USACE will do a completely new investigation, including new borings, data and testing reports, on the entire levee system in that area for the new work to be done.

Jerry Colletti commended the levee districts for their cooperation and work during the high river level. He reminded everyone that flood fighting on the Mississippi River continues and does not end with the start of hurricane season. Historically, failures occur in the August-September time frame after water levels lower and the weight of materials accreted on the banks settle. Mr. Turner reminded everyone that although there was tremendously high water that “this is the flood that didn’t happen” because the levee system was in place and the people who maintain and monitor it performed very well.

Mr. Colletti informed the Committee that the levee districts and DOTD have been invited to participate in the USACE New Orleans District’s hurricane exercise on May 13th. The Mississippi Valley Division will conduct a hurricane exercise on May 14th.

Mr. Doody advised the regular monthly Board meeting will be held at 1:00 p.m. on May 15th. The USACE has been requested to give a presentation at the Board meeting on the state of the protection system before the start of the hurricane season on June 1st.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.