

CENTRAL LOUISIANA REGIONAL PORT

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

April 23, 2025

The Central Louisiana Regional Port Board of Commissioners convened at 8:01 AM, April 23, 2025, at the Port Central Office, 600 River Port Road, Alexandria, Louisiana.

Present were: Mike Grant, Gil McKee, Brannin Leglue, John Scott, Basil Smith, Terry Spruill

Absent: Paul Coreil, Bo Douglas, Larry Turner

Also Present: Ben, Russo, CLRP Executive Director; Keith Hillman, MMLH; Luke Miller, MMLH; Stephanie Ryland, CLRP Executive Assistant

Roll called by Stephanie Ryland

Upon establishing a quorum, the meeting was called to order by Vice President Terry Spruill

Invocation was given by Commissioner Haywood Joiner

Pledge of Allegiance led by Vice-President Terry Spruill

Vice President Spruill offered a Public Comment Period Pursuant to LRS 42:14; there were none.

VI. Action Items:

- a. Agenda - Motion by Commissioner H. Joiner, seconded by Commissioner J. Scott, to approve the agenda as proposed; motion carried.
- b. Minutes - Motion by Commissioner B. Leglue, seconded by Commissioner J. Scott, to approve Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting held on March 26, 2025; motion carried.
- c. Financial - Motion by Commissioner B. Smith, seconded by Commissioner G. McKee to approve financial statements for March 2025; motion carried.
- d. Motion by Commissioner B. Smith, seconded by Commissioner J. Scott to approve the Personnel Committee's recommendations as presented; motion carried
- e. Motion by Commissioner M. Grant, seconded by Commissioner H. Joiner to approve the Town Talk as the port's official journal.
- f. Motion by Commissioner B. Leglue, seconded by Commissioner G. McKee to approve the Executive Director to execute a contract with Carol Fitch, PSGP Grant Administrator for management and administration services related to the Department of Homeland Security/FEMA Port Security Grant Program; motion carried.

Port Security Grants Specialist

- Carol is a specialist in port security grants through Homeland Security, which has worked with a number of ports over the years.
- The specialist will be paid on an hourly basis with an enabling document executed.
- The port security grant program can provide \$40,000 - \$100,000 annually for security upgrades and is federally funded.
 - Examples: camera replacement, security fencing, guard shacks.
- The specialist will help write and administer the grant.
 - This is particularly important with the potential expansion of another five acres for the military and a new entrance road.
 - The grant could help supplement security measures like license plate reading cameras.

VII. Comments:

a. Comments by Executive Director – Ben Russo

Ben Russo provided the following updates which reflect the continued progress and strategic efforts being made across multiple projects at the port:

Project Updates

- The Beaver Lake project is ongoing.
- Additional funding was received for the next phase of work, extending to June of next year for a "go or no go" decision on the site.

City of Alexandria Property

- The City of Alexandria's property for the district has been closed on.
- John Ryland and Meyer, Meyer, LaCroix & Hixson assisted with the project.
 - The port is still working on Distran's project and will go out for bid this summer.

45 Acres

- Six to twelve inches of clay dirt has been removed.
- The Department of Louisiana Economic Development and Louisiana Central have provided funds to replace the clay with select fill.
 - This will create a four-acre pad outside of the flood zone for potential development.

Military Barges

- Anchors have been installed.
 - Military barges began arriving Monday evening.
 - The port has about 30 barges.

Ports and Waterways Commission

- The port submitted its master plan for the military to the Ports and Waterways Commission.

Potential Increase in Military Activity

- The military is considering sending a division (three brigades) instead of one brigade next year, which would increase the number of barges to 120-150.
- The port is trying to figure out how to handle the potential increase.

Marine Highway Program

- Ben has a scheduled call today with the head of the Marad Marine Highway Program.
- Ben has been requested to be a panelist at the US Military's Service Transportation Deployment Conference at Norfolk in June to discuss the port's unique operations with TRANSCOM and FEMA personnel.

Appreciation and Gratitude

- Terry expressed gratitude to everyone on their efforts in acquiring the Alexandria property, highlighting it as a significant accomplishment.
- Keith with MMLH expressed gratitude for the opportunity to help and appreciate of Ben's aggressive approach.

- b. Comments by Legal Counsel – none
- c. Comments by Economic Development – none
- d. Comments from Elected Officials – none
- e. Comments by public – none
- f. Comments / Questions by Commissioners – none

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner G. McKee motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner J. Scott. This meeting of April 23, 2025, was adjourned by Vice President T. Spruill at 8:28 AM.

Terry Spruill, Vice President