



Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission  
(SWLA-RPC)  
Louisiana Planning District 5

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, May 29, 2024**

**I. Call to Order –** Mayor Marcus Renfrow, Chair

**II. Roll Call –** Mike Hollier, Director

Mayor Henry Guinn – Responded present  
Mayor Marcus Renfrow – Responded present  
Mayor Nic Hunter – Responded present  
Mayor Hal McMillin – Responded present  
Mayor Neal Watkins – Responded present  
Mayor Mike Danahay – No response  
Katie Armentor – Responded present  
Mary Kaye Eason – No response  
Creed Romano – No response  
Jacob Dillehay – Responded present  
Mayor Gene Paul – No response  
Kim Rainwater – No response  
Kim Monte – Responded present  
Mayor Misty Roberts - No response  
Lisa Adams – Responded present

Mr. Hollier reported that a QUORUM has been reached.

**III. Reading and Adoption of Minutes -** Mayor Nic Hunter, Secretary

**A. Draft Minutes of Meeting held on April 25, 2024**

Action requested.

Minutes for the meeting held on April 25, 2024, are filed separately.

MOTION to adopt the minutes of April 25, 2024, was made by Mayor Nic Hunter and seconded by Mayor Hal McMillin. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

**IV. Financial Reports –** Mayor Hal McMillin, Treasurer

**A. April 2024 Financial Report**

Action requested.

MOTION to accept the April 2024 financials was made by Mayor Hal McMillin and seconded by Mayor Nic Hunter. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

The April Financial report was made a part of these minutes.

**B. Resolution No. 2272 Approving, Adopting and Authorizing Administrative Memorandum No. 9**

Information Only. Action Requested.

Mike Hollier was the speaker for this Resolution. This is self-explanatory. This is the normal annual review of where we are, what we are doing, and how we are doing it. Submit to you for discussion and hopeful adoption the budget for the coming year, which starts January 1<sup>st</sup>. There are not a lot of changes, but we are requesting \$30,000 to initiate our Housing Program. This has been sitting on the table for a long time. The board voted to initiate this two or three years ago. We simply do not have any grant funds to facilitate this effort. We have had some meetings on it. Potentially we are looking at two sources that might help us get this off the ground. The Housing Program is about trades training. It's about finding alternative affordable housing. There are some very interesting opportunities here. I would like your consideration. This budget is not to be voted on today. However, we do have to vote on it before July 1<sup>st</sup>.

I am also asking for \$10,000 to be able to have the opportunity to work on the initiatives that are being launched. We are launching the Traffic Management Center, and a Proposal Feasibility Study. There is a major contract for a Transportation Study for Chenault. I just want to tell you on a secondary note, we are proposing \$50,000 be set aside for our reserves. At current the reserves are at approximately \$80,000 and we need to get them significantly up. At the end of the current year, we should end this year at \$120,000. I will highlight to you is \$10,000, to investigate convincing the state to employ one or maybe two Main Street Coordinators for the region. With these coordinators, everyone would not need to investigate hiring their own coordinators. This is for the Downtown development. In Calcasieu, there are six downtowns. In the region we have quite a few others working on downtown development as well. It is more efficient to have one or two coordinators in the district office, than to have coordinators in every downtown area.

We need to revisit the rules of policy and procedure on the number of employees, what their job classification is, and what they are doing. We employ several part-time employees, primarily retired. These employees help us a lot with their knowledge, experience and expertise.

The other point you must consider is that there are two representatives on our board, and they have not attended any meeting in three years. That is the Mayor of DeRidder and the Mayor of Oakdale. They do not participate in the business of this agency. Mike Hollier said he feels they need to be removed from the board. This

would reduce the board down to eleven members, but it would make it more practical and pragmatic in the day-to-day operations if we work with those who are interested in working with us.

I did leave open a cost-of-living increase for the staff. For those of you who are going through this process with your staff and could provide us with some insight, it would be appreciated. The thought has been in the 3-4% range, but the amount has been left open at this time.

One other thing that needs to be mentioned is the Watershed Initiative. We are fully engaged with the parishes in this effort. We are working on a series of reservoirs. The Coalition Policy Council is moving toward establishing volunteer groups around each of the dozen or more reservoirs to assist and facilitate us in what we are trying to achieve for them.

The other major point that needs to be made is that the MPO is getting ready to launch a major initiative that is going to heavily engage citizens in major arterial corridors. In the beginning, seven of the major corridors will be identified with public meetings. This will lead to the development of plans in those corridors. This will affect the MPO only. Other than that, there is a Rail plan that is getting ready to come forward to the board. There will also be a Bike and Pedestrian Trail plan.

At the last meeting, you were presented with the list of grants being applied for. There is anticipation that in the next six months or so, we will receive budgets for more of the awarded grants.

There was an extensive discussion on how to remove someone from the board. There was a question on doing it at this meeting or waiting for the June meeting.

- V. Resolution No. 2273 Approving and Authorizing the Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission (SWLA-RPC) and the Lake Charles Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Executive Director, Michael Hollier signature to execute a Planning Grant Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development for State Project No. H.97251.1. - Mike Hollier**  
Action requested pending MPO approval.

Mike Hollier stated that this is an annual planning grant that is awarded to the MPO, in the amount of \$500,000 a year. All four of the contracts listed are MPO. We just have not received the contract number for the last two. These are standard operating contracts between the MPO, the planning district, and DOTD.

A motion was made by Mayor Nic Hunter and seconded by Mayor Hal McMillin. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

- VI. Resolution No. 2274 Approving and Authorizing the Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission (SWLA-RPC) and the Lake Charles Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Executive Director, Michael Hollier signature to execute a**

**Planning Grant Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development for State Project No. H.014741. -** Mike Hollier  
Action requested pending MPO approval.

Mike Hollier stated that this is an annual planning grant that is awarded to the MPO, in the amount of \$500,000 a year. All four of the contracts listed are MPO. We just have not received the contract number for the last two. These are standard operating contracts between the MPO, the planning district, and DOTD.

A motion was made by Mayor Nic Hunter and seconded by Mayor Hal McMillin. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

- VII. Resolution No. 2275 Approving and Authorizing the Southwest - Mike Hollier Louisiana Regional Planning Commission (SWLA-RPC) and the Lake Charles Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Executive Director, Michael Hollier signature to execute a Planning Grant Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development for State Project No.**  
Action requested pending MPO approval.

Mike Hollier stated that this is an annual planning grant that is awarded to the MPO, in the amount of \$500,000 a year. All four of the contracts listed are MPO. We just have not received the contract number for the last two. These are standard operating contracts between the MPO, the planning district, and DOTD.

A motion was made by Mayor Nic Hunter and seconded by Mayor Hal McMillin. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

- VIII. Resolution No. 2276 Approving and Authorizing the Southwest - Mike Hollier Louisiana Regional Planning Commission (SWLA-RPC) and the Lake Charles Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Executive Director, Michael Hollier signature to execute a Planning Grant Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development for State Project No.**  
Action requested pending MPO approval.

Mike Hollier stated that this is an annual planning grant that is awarded to the MPO, in the amount of \$500,000 a year. All four of the contracts listed are MPO. We just have not received the contract number for the last two. These are standard operating contracts between the MPO, the planning district, and DOTD.

A motion was made by Mayor Nic Hunter and seconded by Mayor Hal McMillin. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

- IX. Local Match for Grant Funds: What are the options? - Mike Hollier**  
Discussion. For information only.

Mike Hollier stated that we have three or four of our member governments that have begun to set aside funds so that if we can secure a grant, they can act on it quickly. There is no central entity that can respond quickly to budget amendments and make commitments to grant funds.

Rural Development funds are a possibility. There are other options out there.

- X. MPO Transportation Management Center Options – Mike Hollier**  
Multipurpose. Multiple Jurisdictions. Multiple Funding Sources. Discussion. Information only. Information only. - Mike Hollier

This highlights another issue that we must deal with as a regional agency. When approaching infrastructure challenges, we end up with a multijurisdictional fragmentation. The default is that each entity in which the infrastructure is being built will maintain that piece of the infrastructure. There are several instruments, “vehicles,” in this area that hold potential. One such instrument is the Calcasieu Parish Public Trust Authority. They are a small operation. They were created for housing primarily. They have no staff. They have limited funds. They can be a powerhouse, when given the resources to do things.

The Transportation Management Center for the MPO is a good example. There is a common need to manage the transportation network. This is common in most urban areas. However, it does not exist here. The issue is not whether it can be built, but who will manage it. There is specific legislation needed for the region. There is an opportunity to address some of these things.

- XI. District Economic Technology Enterprise (ETE) Centers**  
Multipurpose. Multiple Jurisdictions. Multiple Funding Sources. Discussion. Information only. Information Only. - Mike Hollier

Mike Hollier stated that for the growth of the region, we need to level the odds. This is just as beneficial for the small businesses in downtown Lake Charles as it is in downtown DeRidder. The Technology Enterprise Centers are designed to have this affect. These centers are not incubation centers, but to assist the small businesses in the region, to be able to compete on a national or international basis. The ETE gives them the affordability, the platforms, and the assistance they need to market their products and services.

If asked how many ETE centers would be suitable in Southwest Louisiana, the answer would be ten. Several are needed in Lake Charles itself, but others are needed throughout the throughout the other jurisdictions.

Where does the money come from? We can assist in getting grants.

- X. June Meeting Date and Time – Chair**

The June meeting will be held on June 26, 2024, at noon. A motion was made by Mayor Nic Hunter and seconded by Mayor Hal McMillin.

**XI. Public Comment –**

Chair

Mike Hollier introduced Mayor Neal Watkins, the Mayor of Iowa.

**XII. Adjournment –**

Chair

A MOTION to adjourn the meeting was made by Mayor Nic Hunter and seconded by Mayor Hal McMillin. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.



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Mayor Marcus Renfrow  
Chair

ATTEST: Michael Hollier  
Michael Hollier  
Executive Director