



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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, April 25, 2024**

- I. **Call to Order –** Mayor Marcus Renfrow, Chair
- II. **Roll Call –** Mike Hollier, Director

Mayor Henry Guinn – No response  
Mayor Mike Danahay – No response  
Mayor Neal Watkins – Responded present.  
Mayor Marcus Renfrow – Responded present.  
Mayor Nic Hunter – Responded present.  
Mayor Hal McMillin – 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 February 22, 2024**

Action requested.

Minutes for the meeting held on February 22, 2024, are filed separately, but are identified as Attachment A in the packet.

MOTION to adopt the minutes of February 22, 2024, was made by Mayor Mike Danahay and seconded by Ms. Katie Armentor. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

B. **Draft Minutes of Meeting held on March 28, 2024**

Action requested.

Minutes for the meeting held on March 28, 2024, are filed separately, but identified as Attachment B in the packet.

MOTION to adopt the minutes of March 28, 2024, was made by Mayor Nic Hunter and seconded by Mayor Mike Danahay. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

**IV. Financial Reports –**

Mayor Hal McMillin, Treasurer

**A. March 2024 Financial Report**

Action requested.

Ms. Jamie Gaines reported that due to a dual payroll program the district finances appear to be in the negative when in fact, the month of March ended with a \$16,045.73 profit, and outstanding receivables of \$280,189.74.

MOTION to accept the March 2024 financials was made by Mayor Mike Danahay and seconded by Mayor Henry Guinn. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

The March Financial report is Attachment C and made a part of these minutes.

**B. Resolution No. 2272 Approving and Authorizing the Establishment of a Certificate of Deposit for Reserves.**

Action Requested.

Ms. Jamie Gaines requested authorization to purchase a \$50,000 Certificate of Deposit prior to the end of the fiscal year, which is June 30, 2024.

MOTION to Approve and Authorize the establishment of a \$50,000 Certificate of Deposit prior to June 30, 2024, was made by Mayor Nic Hunter, and seconded by Mayor Henry Guinn. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

Resolution No. 2272 is Attachment D and made a part of these minutes.

**V. Regional Downtown Development Main Street Coordinator – Mike Hollier**  
Information only. No action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier stated that the commission is trying to get state agencies to consolidate staff support for specific programs or projects that require certification. He referenced the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism Main Street Program, which would normally require a Main Street Coordinator for each entity. Mr. Hollier reported on a conversation he had with the state coordinator on the possibility of a pilot program with the planning district to certify a Main Street Coordinator for Southwest Louisiana. The state coordinator agreed to a pilot program. Mr. Hollier is in the process of finding a funding source for a district Main Street Certified Coordinator and will provide more information in 30 to 40 days.

**VI. Marion ‘Butch’ Fox Southwest Louisiana Rail Plan – Jamie Gaines**  
Logo Selection. Action requested.

Ms. Gaines explained naming the Marion “Butch” Fox Southwest Louisiana Regional Rail Study & Plan after the late planning district board member and advocate of advancing rail in Southwest Louisiana. As such, the staff has two logo recommendations for board consideration. One option featured the state of Louisiana with a rail leading to Southwest Louisiana and the other featured a locomotive with the state of Louisiana woven into the engine’s grill.

A MOTION was made by Mayor Mike Danahay and seconded by Mayor Nic Hunter to approve the option featuring a locomotive with the state of Louisiana as the logo design for the Marion “Butch” Fox Southwest Louisiana Regional Rail Study & Plan. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

**VII. Regional Housing Database Development Presentation – Michael Bernard**  
Information only. No action requested.

Mr. Michael Bernard presented an update on the development of the Regional Housing Database, which includes nine independent data sources and more than twenty different data sets. The bulk of the work has been focused on Lake Charles and Calcasieu Parish, specifically throughout the Metropolitan Planning Area. The data received has been extremely good with a high level of coordination and diligence within the area. The data sets that we are receiving have been based on utility or emergency uses.

Staff consolidated data they already had then collected public and even some private data. “This data builds the framework for everything else that we can accomplish or are able to parse from the data sets themselves. At this point, we are in the error checking phase. As we bring in more and more data sets, we are checking for accuracy, after which the data must be incorporated accurately. We were able to reach out to Vijay Kunada’s team which is working on the Traffic Analysis Zones for Calcasieu Parish. We are basically helping him by error checking his data set, which will result in the best quality data set for the region moving forward. It will in turn help us with the determinacy of our housing data and how to better organize it. We will have better modeling in the future, which is the goal of this process. With a more accurate data model, we will be able to predict future road construction.”

**VIII. Regional Housing Initiative Status – Mike Hollier**  
Information only. No action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier reported on the regional housing initiative that was adopted several years ago. While there is no funding for the program, the RPC has talked to trade associations and school board superintendents about training. There are also board members who were formerly contractors helping to advise on this initiative.

The Louisiana House, a single-site model home on the LSU campus, is updated continuously with the latest in resilient materials and technology. The director approached Mr. Hollier about a \$150 million National Science Foundation grant that she is applying for and asked if he would be willing to serve on an advisory committee. The grant would accelerate the Louisiana House capacity and assist with other houses across the state. As an advisory committee member, the Regional Planning Commission would

receive a portion of that effort if awarded. Mr. Hollier agreed to serve on the committee.

**IX. Louisiana watershed Initiative Update – Mike Hollier**  
Information only. No action requested.

Mr. Mike Hollier reported that the district took over administering the Region IV Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI) about a year and a half ago, which was previously handled by a consultant out of Baton Rouge. Under the consultant, two Region 4 projects were approved in Round 1 of funding, which totaled approximately \$1 million. Subsequently the Sixth Avenue Drainage Outfall project and the Ridge Terrace Subdivision Retention Pond were funded in Round 2. LWI has offered access to approximately \$5 million that was left on the table in Round 1 for the region if it is used for a previously funded project. No projects approved in Round 1 required that amount of money, but the Sixth Avenue Drainage project, in the City of Lake Charles, may require a retention pond. If it does not require the entire \$5 million, Mr. Hollier will check with Calcasieu Parish about funds for the Greenwich Terrace project. Region 4 is in the process of recovering some of the money that was left on the table in Round 1.

The next step is a comprehensive plan. The TAC (Technical Advisory Committee) is looking at aquifers and focusing on our deliverables to participating member governments.

**X. Community Development Manager – Mike Hollier**  
Introduction.

Mr. Mike Hollier reported that the Regional Planning Commission has filled the last managerial position. Jonathan Dean has joined the Regional Planning Commission as Community Development Manager for Planning and Economic Development. Mr. Dean highlighted his career as a former mayor and economic developer with Cleco.

**XI. Grant Applications Status – Jamie Gaines**  
Information only. No action requested.

Ms. Jamie Gaines prepared a list of grants the staff is working on or has completed, which was included in the board packet and is attached to the minutes. Ms. Gaines added that the team takes pride in their work, which include an Economic Development Administration grant to bring public fiber into the City of Jennings, three Delta Regional Authority applications for planning grants, and a Thriving Communities application, among others. Unfortunately, while the district received the Affordable Connectivity Grant through the Federal Communications Commission, the program ran out of funding, so the contract was terminated.

Mayor Nic Hunter expressed his thanks for the district's help on an Economic Development Administration grant application for the Flight School at SOWELA Technical Community College.

**XII. Resolution No. 2271 Approving and Authorizing an Agreement between the SWLA\_RPC and the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) to Assist in Public and Stakeholder Engagement for the Development of the Comprehensive Actions to Reduce Emissions (CARE) Plan.**

Action requested.

Ms. Jamie Gaines stated that the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) has asked the Regional Planning Commission to become a subcontractor on an award that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions while providing benefits such as improved air quality, workforce development and access to quality jobs.

Mayor Nic Hunter made a MOTION to adopt Resolution No. 2271 approving and authorizing an agreement between the SWLA\_RPC and the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) to assist in public and stakeholder engagement for the development of the Comprehensive Actions to Reduce Emissions (CARE) Plan. Ms. Kim Montie seconded the motion. Hearing no objection, the MOTION carried.

Resolution No. 2271 with agreement is Attachment E and made a part of these minutes.

**XIII. Membership Needs Discussion – Mike Hollier**

Mr. Mike Hollier asked board members to reach out if they have any needs or issues t they would like to address, in the meeting or privately following.

**XIV. June Meeting Date and Time – Chair**

The board opted to move meetings to Wednesdays to accommodate Mayor Hal McMillin's request. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>.

**XV. Public Comment – Chair**

No public comments were received or heard.

**XVI. Adjournment – Chair**

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

  
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Mayor Marcus Renfrow  
Chair

ATTEST:   
Michael Hollier  
Executive Director