

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday, November 8th, 2023

Time: Noon (12:00 PM)

**Beauregard Parish Police Jury Meeting Room
201 West 2nd Street, DeRidder, Louisiana**

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

Chair
Jacob Dillehay

2. Welcome and Introductions

The chair welcomed all members attending in person and virtually. Those attending in person introduced themselves:

- Dianna Nichols – Beauregard Parish Police Jury
 - Carl Thompson – Vernon Parish Policy Jury
 - Jim Freeland – Sabine Parish Police Jury
 - Mike Hollier – Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission/Louisiana Watershed Initiative Region 4
 - Jacob Dillehay – Allen Parish Police Jury
 - Yasic Naumenko – Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission
 - Terry Magnon – City of Lake Charles
 - Robby Maxwell – Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
 - Andre’ Boudreaux - Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission/Louisiana Watershed Initiative Region 4
- Those attending virtually:
- Jamie Gaines - Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission/Louisiana Watershed Initiative Region 4
 - Melissa Becker – Rapides Area Planning Commission
 - Michael Bernard - Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission/Louisiana Watershed Initiative Region 4

Chair

3. Advancing Strategies For Seven Spokes of Wheel Purposes

Mr. Hollier began by explaining that this meeting is a working session. He explained the state’s transfer of funds from the future Round 3 projects and has increased the expected Round 2 funding amount by approximately \$100 million. He expressed that he is hopeful of meeting with the state within the next two weeks to review the specifics of each project. He noted the Louisiana Watershed Initiative Region 4 Coalition Policy Council (CPC) meeting sometime this month. Mr. Andre Boudreaux confirmed that the meeting is scheduled for the last week of November 2023. Mr. Hollier went on to add that there will most likely be a new administration with the newly elected Governor that controls the state watershed council. He stated that there have already been new consultants hired by the state. The state requested one-on-one meetings with each of the regional watershed coordinators and the meeting for Region 4

Mike Hollier

is tomorrow, November 9th. Mr. Hollier said that he hopes to receive detailed information on the eligible projects for this round. Still, he said he expects the meeting to be relatively brief since the state has multiple regions to brief. Mr. Hollier went on that Region 4 is pushing the Seven Spokes of the Wheel program to the state. He detailed the program as a comprehensive process for projects from concept to final use including funding, grant writing, operational aspects, etc. He stated that he believes the demand and need for fresh water in the region in the state has quadrupled in the last decade. He mentioned the recent statewide forest fires that have affected Louisiana. Mr. Hollier commented on how the Toledo Bend Reservoir is being used as a source of water for fighting forest fires and the dire conditions potentially facing that reservoir. Mr. Hollier continued that obtaining data on property owners in the watershed region, particularly insurance coverage data has been difficult to model. The intention of modeling these metrics is to determine the most impactful solutions for uninsured or low-to-moderate (LMI) income homeowners. Mr. Robby Maxwell asked if Mr. Hollier or the Regional Planning Commission's GIS Department had utilized or communicated with the data modeling department at Louisiana Watershed Initiative. Mr. Hollier confirmed that the region has been in contact with and uses the statewide modeling tool. Mr. Hollier emphasized that the additionally requested modeling would be helpful for a more detailed overview of a proposed project area. He emphasized that further modeling with help with identifying low-to-moderate (LMI) income areas will help assist in meeting the required LMI thresholds. Mr. Hollier noted how many projects submitted for Round 1 and Round 2 were great projects that achieved the goal of preventing or mitigating flooding but did not meet the low-to-moderate income requirements. The Chair suggested outreach to community members in the way of a form that allows them to identify any problem areas that may have been overlooked during the process. He stated that the form could include the resident's thoughts on retention ponds or the proposed areas of projects. This would allow Region 4 to focus efforts more on engaging the public. Mr. Hollier stated that he believes that's a great idea but that the results would need to be unofficial since they are not certified. Mr. Maxwell followed up by suggesting the region contact the Houston, Texas area floodplain management association. He stated that the Houston area has done a lot of work with constructing and maintaining large reservoir systems. They may be able to provide further guidance and recommendations for the committee members. The Chair asked the committee to move to item number 4 on the meeting agenda.

4. Building the Watershed Region 4 Toolbox

Mike Hollier

Mr. Hollier noted that the state is progressing on establishing a 'toolbox' that can be used by watershed regions to address several different issues. These results include nature-based solutions (NBS) that have been tested to ensure viability and practicality in the state. Mr. Hollier went on to add that LWI Region 4 will add a technology-focused component to the toolbox. He noted that tools like artificial intelligence and machine learning will become more frequently used. He also emphasized the importance of considering low-to-moderate income levels when applying for grants and how more detailed and thorough

technologies could assist in identifying these communities. Additionally, Nature-Based Solutions are an important consideration. Mr. Hollier asked the Committee if they had any additional recommendations or thoughts on the solutions or toolbox. Hearing none, the Chair moved to the next agenda item.

5. General Comments/Recommendations

Chair

The chair asked the committee if there were any further comments or recommendations from the public or committee members. Hearing no further comments, the Chair moved to adjourn the meeting.

6. Adjournment

Chair

There be no additional agenda items to discuss, the Chair called for a MOTION to adjourn the meeting.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Robby Maxwell to adjourn the meeting. The MOTION was seconded by Mr. Jim Freeland. The Chair called for a vote on the MOTION. The MOTION was passed unanimously.

Jacob Dillehay, Committee Chairman

ATTEST:

Michael Hollier, Executive Director/Watershed Coordinator

Andre' Boudreaux, Watershed Coordinator I