

REGION 6 STEERING COMMITTEE

MEETING #21 MINUTES

Date: May 24, 2023 **Time:** 10:00-12:00pm

Location: Parish Courthouse, 300 Houmas St, Donaldsonville LA 70346

Call to Order – 10:10

I. Welcome:

- Mart Black welcomed everyone to the twenty-first meeting of the Watershed Region 6 Steering Committee. Pat Gordon stated the purpose of the meeting with an overview of the meeting agenda
- Roll Call:
Present Committee Members (9/17)- David Weil, Justin Clement, John Clark, Michelle Gonzales, Darla Duet (for Megan Dufrene), Earl Matherne, Dov Block (for Tara Lambeth), Mart Black Konner Smart for (Kevin Durbin)
Absent: Andrew Barron, Scott Saunier, Theo Sanders, Mark Ward, Kasey Courville, Tim Matte
Other: Marril McKarry (Zoom), Pat Gordon, Jonathan Eastwood, Kathleen Lunn,
- **Review and Adoption**

II. Meeting Minutes

- Pat Gordon went over the minutes from last meeting of April 27, 2022
- A motion to accept the minutes was made by Earl Matherne and seconded by David Weil with the condition to change TAT to THAT. Minutes were accepted by unanimous vote.

III. Water Resources – Michael Baker International

- Eric Erikson from Michael Baker International introduced himself as a modeling representative for the region, along with Justin West from their team and Billy Williamson from DOTD. They highlighted the collaboration between teams and the program's focus on successful completion. Billy Williamson provided an overview of the modeling program, emphasizing goals such as assessing risks, evaluating projects, and conducting feasibility and impact studies. The program aims to develop calibrated and validated baseline models at a HUC 8 scale, covering entire watersheds. Consultants are currently working on model setup, calibration, and validation using historic storms. The program also focuses on a model storage and maintenance plan and has issued RFQs to attract highly qualified regional modeling consultants. The baseline models will be used for project evaluation and planning, representing existing conditions accurately. Ongoing work includes the development of design storm approaches, consequence modeling, and transition zone methodology. Mapping of modeling outputs is also being considered.

IV. Legislative Status from State

- Pat Gordon began discussion about Senate Bill 42, which aims to create watershed coalitions and will be codified into the state statute. The bill made it through the Senate Transportation Committee with a vote of 35-0 with co-sponsors. Senate Bill 42 was scheduled to be heard on the House floor for the final reading at 1:00 PM that day.

V. Sub-Committee Update

- Pat Gordon provided updates on the participation in the Louisiana Floodplain Managers Association and the Association of State Floodplain Managers conferences. They emphasized the importance of water quality in watershed initiatives and encouraged members to attend future conferences. The governance structure was also discussed, noting that it would remain unchanged with representatives from each parish. They clarified that there would be no imposition of taxes or regulatory functions by the coalition unless requested by the communities. Pat also mentioned the upcoming passage of Senate Bill 42 and suggested reviewing it before the next meeting.

VI. Status of Round One Projects

- Tim Forstall provided updates on the status of round one projects.
- Lafourche emergency backup pump stations have been delivered; reviewing final requests for proposals (RFPs)
- Ascension drainage pump is waiting new construction date from the grantee; received authorization to bid
- Maringouin—completing plans, specs, and ERR; estimated construction November 6, 2023.
- East Baton Rouge Bayou Duplantier Floodplain Acquisition—negotiating with land owners for easements.
- He also mentioned DSP project updates:
- Lafourche Parish new pump station—RFQ recently completed, Allsouth Engineer selected.
- Assumption Parish Cancienne Canal—in CEA phase as of May 17.
- Upper Terrebonne Basin Drainage—RFQ recently completed, GIS Engineering selected; entering CEA phase
- St. James Parish Wide Drainage Improvements-- in CEA phase as of May 17.
- the negotiation of landowner easements and the completion of plans and specifications for drainage improvements. Tim further discussed the progress of drainage projects and mentioned the selection of engineers and their transition to the CA (Construction Administration) phase. However, it was noted that none of the round one projects had started construction yet.

VII. Status of Round Two Projects and Application Dates/Summary of Technical Assistance Interviews

- Pat Gordon explained that 12 pre-applications for round two projects out of 25 total submitted were received from Region 6. A technical workshop was held, including virtual meetings, to provide guidance to applicants. Region 6 is aiming to submit around 20 projects for pre-application. Additionally, some applications may not be eligible for round two funding but still provide opportunities for the state to seek alternative funding sources. The deadline for round

two applications is May 31st, and participants were encouraged to submit their projects. Assistance from Tim was available for guidance on the application process.

VIII. Public Comments

- One person asked about who the representative from Assumption Parish was.
- Another member of the public, Gale Gomez, representative of Pierre Part Belle River Community Advocacy Group, inquired about a priority system used for projects.

IX. Next meeting location is undecided. In-person meeting has been scheduled.

X. Adjourn

- Motion by John Clark, seconded by Earl Matherne to adjourn. Unanimously approved.