

**RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION
FOR THE PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE**
Regular Meeting – 5:00 p.m.
BREC Administration Building
6201 Florida Boulevard
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Commission Minutes
July 25, 2024

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) was held at BREC's Administrative Offices on July 25, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 5:08 p.m. by Chairman Kenneth Pointer. Commissioner Dwayne Rogers offered the invocation. Commissioner Rossie Washington, Jr. led the pledge of allegiance. Roll was taken and a quorum of Commissioners was present including Kenneth Pointer, Chair; Dwayne Rogers, Treasurer; Clarice Gordon; Trina Hall; Nathan Rust; and Rossie Washington, Jr. Commissioner Jason Hughes arrived at 5:12 p.m. Commissioners Donna Collins Lewis and Collis Temple, Jr. were absent. Staff members present were Corey K. Wilson, Superintendent; Reed Richard, Assistant Superintendent of System Planning; Brandon Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Recreation; Aneatra Boykin, Chief Administrative Officer; Andrea Roberts, Chief Operating Officer; Don Johnson, Chief Financial Officer; Chad Brewer; Jim Fleshman; Angela Harms; Darlene Jarvis; RaHarold Lawson; Mike Raby; and Chris Marchiafava. Murphy Foster, legal counsel, and BREC Foundation Executive Director Carl Stages were also in attendance. The rest of the audience consisted of other BREC staff and the public.

Public Comment

The Chair announced that public comment would be allowed prior to a vote being taken on any agenda action item and explained the process to be observed.

Adoption of Minutes

Resolved, That the reading of the minutes of the Recreation and Park Commission Meeting of June 27, 2024 be dispensed with, and that they be approved as written.

Motion to approve by Mr. Rogers

Second by Mr. Rust

Unanimously approved

Consent Calendar

Resolved, That the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge does hereby approve the Consent Calendar items.

Motion by Mr. Washington

Second by Ms. Gordon

Unanimously approved

The following item was approved as part of the Consent Calendar:

Acceptance of Recommendations from the Human Resources Advisory Committee

Resolved, That the Commission approve the Routine Personnel Transactions from June 12, 2024 to July 9, 2024.

Presentations

Chairman Pointer recognized Assistant Superintendent of System Planning Reed Richard to introduce Jill Dixon, with Agency Landscape and Planning, who gave a presentation on the

Imagine Your Parks 3 (IYP3) System Master Plan. She outlined how public input was gathered, the role BREC parks and facilities play in the community today, the needs and priorities in the park districts throughout the parish, a process for determining facilities for repurposing, and recommendations for moving forward.

Commissioner Washington asked about the how decision process used to decide which facilities would be closed would ensure that the decision making is equitable. Mr. Richard noted that there would be community meetings, listening sessions, and information gathering related to any decision being made. Commissioner Hall asked if the (capital) projects were listed in the previous IYP Strategic Plan. Mr. Richard stated that they were listed in the first IYP plan. Commissioner Rogers stated that there was no recreation center in the northeast portion of the parish and that the area is poised for future growth. Mr. Richard remarked that that area is designated for a recreation center. Mr. Richard told the Commission that they would receive a draft of the plan on August 2.

Mr. Richard gave a construction update.

The Commission viewed a brief video highlighting various upcoming events throughout the parish during the month of August.

The Chairman recognized Corhonda Corley, with Louisiana Families of Individuals with Disabilities, to speak about the construction update report. She expressed her concern about Howell Park not being completed yet and the community garden not being kept up. Ms. Corley listed some other parks in the northern part of the parish that have not been taken care of or updated. She also noted that BREC is not ADA compliant but was encouraged to know that the agency now has an ADA Coordinator on staff.

Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

The Chairman recognized Superintendent Wilson who stated there were no Administrative Matters. Under Communications, Superintendent Wilson reviewed the June 2024 attendance report. He told the Commission about a football camp held at Memorial Stadium by Baton Rouge native La'el Collins, an NFL football player, who grew up playing in BREC parks. Over 100 kids participated in the event. The Superintendent told the Commission about the volunteer appreciation event held at the Zoo. He also noted that there would be a ribbon cutting for the refurbished basketball court at Mills Avenue Park. The improvements to the court were funded by the Langston Galloway Foundation. Mr. Galloway will also be holding a free basketball clinic at the Sports Academy. Superintendent Wilson noted that there would be a ribbon cutting on August 1 at Kolby Park for the new playground.

Chairman Pointer recognized Treasurer Dwayne Rogers for the Finance Advisory Committee report. Mr. Rogers recognized Chief Financial Officer Don Johnson and then read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission accept the unaudited financial statements for the month ending and fiscal year-to-date period ending May 31, 2024, as presented.

Motion by Mr. Hughes

Second by Ms. Hall

Approved by unanimous consent

Mr. Rogers read the following resolution under Contracts and Bids:

Resolved, That the Commission approve awarding SB 1837 Scotlandville Parkway Pedestrian Bridge Improvements to the lowest responsive bidder, LA Contracting Enterprise, LLC,

for the base bid of \$455,938.00 and concurrently accept a deductive change order to reduce the project cost by \$21,300.00 for a total contact price of \$434,638.00.

Motion by Mr. Rust
Second by Mr. Hughes

The Chairman recognized Ms. Corley to speak on the item. Ms. Corley said she hoped that all the pedestrian bridges in Scotlandville would be repaired. She stated that she has contacted BREC multiple times on behalf of the elderly patrons who use the park for exercise. She noted that the bridges have been out since 2016. She stressed the need for equity and equality for all areas of the parish.

Chairman Pointer asked if there were any objections to the motion, hearing none the motion was approved.

The Chairman read the following resolution under Administrative Matters:
Resolved, That the Commission approve the Federal Grant Procurement Policy and Federal Funding Procurement Checklist for HUD Grantees, as presented.
Motion to approve by Ms. Hall
Second by Mr. Rogers
Unanimously approved.

Chairman Pointer recognized Ms. Hall for the Selection of Professionals Committee report. Ms. Hall read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission approve a contract with La Terre Engineering, LLC to provide the design, construction documents, bidding, and construction administration services for parking and driveway paving for three parks (Anna T. Jordan, Lovett, and Howell) for a fee of approximately \$65,837.50 based on the BREC fee curve and construction contract costs including change orders; and additional engineering services for approximately \$18,475.00 for Topographic Surveys and Geotechnical Services. Authorize superintendent to execute appropriate documents.
Motion by Mr. Hughes
Second by Mr. Washington
Approved by unanimous consent

Ms. Hall then read the following resolution:
Resolved, That the Commission approve a contract with Kusser FountainWorks for the design and fabrication of a new Fountain Equipment Package for the Kugel granite ball (fountain equipment includes pump, filters, collector tank and assembly, control panel, and custom sling for globe relocation) and oversight of installation, to be performed by BREC, for \$89,110. Authorize superintendent to execute appropriate documents.
Motion to approve by Ms. Gordon
Second by Mr. Washington
Unanimously approved

Ms. Hall then read the following resolution:
Resolved, That the Commission approve the use of State Contract #4400022627 with Weststaff Temporary Staffing Services (Employee Bridge Holding Company) to hire temporary staff as needed to fill vacant positions for various BREC departments at the contracted hourly rates for the period of one year from August 1, 2024 through July 31, 2025; not to exceed \$700,000.
Motion to approve by Mr. Washington
Second by Mr. Hughes
Approved by unanimous consent

The Chairman recognized Mr. Richard to respond to Ms. Corley's concerns regarding Scotlandville Parkway. He noted that the bridge mentioned earlier for the approval of a bid has not been out since 2016. Mr. Richard stated that two additional bridges were in design and would be addressed in the near future. Mr. Richard shared that there are two federal grants that will provide millions of dollars for improvements to Scotlandville Parkway. Mr. Richard offered to meet with Ms. Corley to discuss the upcoming projects in the park.

Reports of Special Committees

None.

Special Orders

None.

Unfinished Business and General Orders

Chairman Pointer stated that the next item on the agenda is an executive session pursuant to:

LSA-R.S. 42:17(A)(1), for the purpose of discussion of a personnel matter; and

LSA-R.S. 42:17(A)(2), for the purpose of discussing negotiations between BREC and its supporting organizations.

Mr. Rogers made a motion to approve going into executive session.

Mr. Washington seconded the motion.

Chairman Pointer recognized Ms. Corley to speak on this item. Ms. Corley stated that in accordance with the open meetings law the public is entitled to be given more information about the personnel matter being discussed in executive session. She stated that there should be more clarity and transparency. Ms. Corley asked that there be ADA accommodations for people who are English language learners.

There being no objections to the motion, the Commission retired to executive session at 6:17 p.m.

The Commission returned from executive session and Mr. Rust made a motion to reconvene, Mr. Hughes seconded, and the Chairman called the meeting back to order in open session at 7:06 p.m. without objection.

The Chairman stated that no decisions were made, and no votes were taken in executive session.

New Business

Chairman Pointer read the following for the next item:

Introduction of Resolution No. 1 to levy ad valorem taxes for 2024, as adjusted after reassessment, on all property subject to ad valorem taxation by the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge, for the operation and maintenance and capital improvements of said Commission; set a public hearing for August 22, 2024, during the regular meeting of the Commission held in the Board Room of the Commission (Room 1800) at BREC Administration Offices in Womack Park, 6201 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana scheduled for 5:15 p.m. or immediately following the public hearing for Resolution No. 2.

Motion to approve the introduction by Mr. Washington

Second by Mr. Hughes

The Chairman announced that there were three citizens who would like to speak on the item. He asked Deanna Johnson to come forward to speak. Pennie May Landry stepped to the podium to announce that she would like to speak. Chairman Pointer asked for Ms. Johnson a second time. Ms. Landry stated that Ms. Johnson had left the meeting. Chairman Pointer recognized Pennie May Landry. She spoke in support of holding a public hearing regarding the ad valorem taxes. Ms. Landry stated that BREC had deficits in 2022 and 2023. She noted the departments that listed deficits. Ms. Landry asked that the Commissioners to get the financials completed so that people will know what is going on with BREC. The Chairman called for Coleman Brown and Ms. Landry stated that he had also left the meeting.

Mr. Rogers asked if the Commission could discuss the item. Mr. Rogers asked if BREC had to pass a resolution every year to levy the taxes. Chris Marchiafava stated that BREC has to pass a resolution every year to levy the taxes. The taxes were already approved by the voters. Mr. Rogers asked for clarification on what millage is being levied at in Resolution 1. Ms. Marchiafava explained that Resolution 1 would levy the taxes at the 13.577 millage rate provided by the assessor after reassessment.

The Chairman restated that he had a motion to approve from Mr. Washington, a second by Mr. Hughes, and asked if there were any objections. Hearing none, the motion was approved without objection.

Chairman Pointer stated that next was the introduction of Resolution No. 2 to adopt the adjusted millage rates after reassessment and to roll forward the millage in 2024 back to the prior year's (2023) maximum approved millage rates, on all property subject to taxation by the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge for operation and maintenance and capital improvements; set a public hearing for August 22, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Commission (Room 1800) at BREC Administration Offices in Womack Park, 6201 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Motion to approve Ms. Gordon
Second by Mr. Hughes

Chairman Pointer called Pennie May Landry to speak. Ms. Landry said "ditto" what she said for the Resolution 1. The Chairman asked if anyone else would like to speak.

Chairman Pointer recognized Mr. Rogers. Mr. Rogers asked what the difference was between Resolution 1 and Resolution 2. Ms. Marchiafava explained that Resolution 1 levies 13.577 mills and Resolution 2 levies 14.463 mills. Mr. Rogers asked if it would increase the amount of taxes paid to BREC by the citizens of the parish. Superintendent Wilson noted that if the Commission approves Resolution 2 it allows them to roll forward. Ms. Hall asked what the rate was in 2023. Superintendent Wilson stated it was 14.463. Ms. Hall asked if the Commission rolls forward to 14.463 then it would be the same amount. The Chairman sought clarification and Superintendent Wilson stated that the Commission would need to approve the 13.577 mills to collect anything and rolling forward would collect 14.463 mills. Ms. Hall asked again about the rate in 2023 and the Superintendent stated that the rate has been 14.463 since BREC rolled forward in 2021. Ms. Hall noted that would be the same millage as 2023. Mr. Rogers stated that if the roll forward to 14.463 is adopted he will be paying more in taxes to BREC. Mr. Rogers stated that due to inflation and the economy he would not want to place an additional burden on the citizens of the parish and he could not support increasing their taxes.

The Chairman restated that he had a motion to approve from Ms. Gordon, a second by Mr. Hughes, and asked if there were any objections. The motion to introduce Resolution 2 was approved by a majority vote with Mr. Rogers objecting.

Adjournment

Mr. Washington made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Hughes seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m. without objection.

Corey K. Wilson, Superintendent
and Ex-Officio Secretary

Kenneth Pointer, Chairman