MINUTES OF MEETING

TECHE-VERMILION FRESH WATER DISTRICT

September 24, 2024

 The Board of Commissioners met on the above date at the Teche-Vermilion Fresh Water District office located at 315 South College Rd, Suite 110, Lafayette, LA 70503 at 10:00 a.m. Member’s present were: Mr. Edward Sonnier, Mr. Tommy Thibodeaux, Mr. Keith Hensgens, and Mr. Donald Segura. Member Absent: Mr. Samuel Grimmett. In addition, present were: Mr. Donald Sagrera, Ms. Wendy Dupuis, Mr. Larry Carmer, Dr. Whitney Broussard, Mr. Alex Lopresto, Mr. Philip Parker, Mr. Corey Hulin, Mr. Sean Reed, Mrs. Jody White, Mr. Dee Stanley, Ms. Amanada Blanchard, and Mr. Cecil Knott.

 At this time the Public meeting, the Chairman called for any public comment regarding the Agenda. There was no comment.

 We would like to observe a moment of silence for Operator Wendell Davis who passed away on September 11, 2024.

 Upon motion by Mr. Thibodeaux and seconded by Mr. Segura, the minutes of the previous meeting of August 27, 2024 were accepted and approved. Motion unanimously carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Thibodeaux, and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board approved Partial Payment No. 7 from Southern Constructors, LLC in amount of $48,504.84 for the Loreauville Canal Navigable Control Structure Maintenance Project. Motion unanimously carried.

 Upon motion by Mr. Thibodeaux and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board approved paying $33,625.00 to clear the fallen trees along the Loreauville Canal for the Loreauville Canal Navigable Control Structure Maintenance Project. Motion unanimously carried.

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Upon motion by Mr. Thibodeaux and seconded by Mr. Segura, the Board approved Change Order No. 1 from Professional Application Services, Inc. in the amount of $167,323.00 for Masonry Restoration, waterproofing and remedial work at the Pump Station. Motion unanimously carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Segura and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board approved Partial Payment No. 4 from Professional Application Services, Inc. in the amount of $35,068.15(52% complete) for Masonry Restoration, waterproofing and remedial work at the Pump Station. Motion unanimously carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Segura and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board moved to approve payment on the Masonry Restoration, waterproofing, and remedial work at the Pump Station to The Seller’s Group for Architect Observation of Construction in the amount of $1,234.53. Motion unanimously carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Segura and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board moved to approve payment on the Masonry Restoration, waterproofing, and remedial work at the Pump Station to The Seller’s Group for Design Services thru the Bidding Phase (75% Base Fees) in the amount of $14,481.81. Motion unanimously carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Thibodeaux and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board approved Change Order No. 1 from Professional Application Services, Inc. in the amount of $122,220.00 for Cleaning and Painting of site elements at the Pump Station. Motion unanimously carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Segura and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board approved Partial Payment No. 4 from Professional Application Services, Inc. in the amount of $89,554.50(52% complete) for Cleaning and Painting of site elements at the Pump Station. Motion unanimously carried

Upon motion by Mr. Segura and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board moved to approve payment on the Cleaning and Painting of site elements at the Pump Station to The Seller’s Group for Architect Observation of Construction in the amount of $3,015.94. Motion unanimously carried.

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Upon motion by Mr. Segura and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board moved to approve payment on the Cleaning and Painting of site elements at the Pump Station to The Seller’s Group for Design Services thru the bidding phase in the amount of $10,706.47(75% Base Fees). Motion unanimously carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Hensgens and seconded by Mr. Segura, the Board moved to approve the recommendation by Schneider Electric to cap conduit which no longer carried functional wire on Electrical upgrade at the Pump Station. Motion unanimously carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Hensgens and seconded by Mr. Segura, the Board approved E.P Breaux to separate the power supply wiring from control wiring for each of the five auxiliary gear box oil pumps for a cost of $10,444.99. Motion unanimously carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Hensgens and seconded by Mr. Segura, the Board approve E.P. Breaux for replacement of one trash rake starter, contact blocks on the switches on the local control point and wiring as required to modify to local control only and to demobilize the automatic function of the Rake Controls in the amount of $7,000.00. Motion unanimously carried.

Mr. Sean Reed with the Acadiana Planning Commission presented an update on the Gauge Project stating not much has changed.

Upon motion by Mr. Thibodeaux and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board approved to move its C.D. from Raymond James Financial to Ameriprise Financial. Motion unanimously carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Segura and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the financial statements for the period ending August 31, 2024 have been approved and accepted. Motion unanimously carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Thibodeaux and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board moved to approve payment of all bills for September 2024. Motion unanimously carried.

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Upon motion by Mr. Thibodeaux and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board adopted Operational Plan to prepare for predicted tropical weather systems. (See Attached) Motion unanimously carried.

Upon motion by Mr. Segura and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board approved the Districts preparation plan for Francine. Motion unanimously carried.

 Upon motion by Mr. Thibodeaux and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, the Board approved Dr. Habib to update his models to include water elevation data collected during Hurricane Francine. Motion unanimously carried.

The District pumped 8,048,400,000 gallons for twenty-six days in August 2024.

The Directors Report is attached.

 Upon motion by Mr. Segura and seconded by Mr. Hensgens, no further business was brought forth, therefore, the meeting adjourned.

TECHE VERMILION FRESH WATER DISTRICT

OPERATIONAL PLAN TO PREPARE FOR

PREDICTED TROPICAL WEATHER SYSTEMS

The District has an operational plan prepared for predicted tropical weather systems. The plan is administered by the District’s executive director and staff. The District accepts input from individuals and communicates with federal, state, and local entities in anticipation of a storm threat. The plan consists of extensive monitoring of flows, water elevations, water quality and weather forecast. Depending on predictions and existing conditions, the District may temporarily reduce or stop pumping (if the pumps are running) and operate structures (Ruth Canal and Loreauville Control Structure) to reduce flow to the Vermilion River and to allow drainage of Bayou Teche into Lake Fausse Pointe.

 The District communicates with the Corps of Engineers on a regular basis. The Corps of Engineers operates its drainage structures in the watershed and regulates the level of water in Bayou Courtableau through the operation of these structures.

 If a tropical system is predicted for the watershed area, and pumps are running, pumps are stopped until the tropical system is no longer a threat or until the water level in Bayou Courtableau is reduced to the 15.63 ft minimum threshold at the Courtableau drainage structure. Timing of this exercise is to achieve the reduced threshold just before the event arrives. The Corps of Engineers water control manual for the Teche Vermilion watershed states that rates of fall in stages should not exceed one foot per 24-hour period therefore pumping (although reduced) may be necessary to prevent water levels from falling too fast. If the water level reaches 15.63 ft and the system is still a threat the District will need to run one or more pumps to maintain the 15.63 ft threshold until the event arrives.

 The District can close the Ruth Canal structure to further regulate water in the Vermilion River and open the Loreauville Control Structure to further regulate water levels in Bayou Teche. The District informs other partners, the Corps of Engineers, local and state entities in the watershed when normal operations are changed due to weather conditions.

 Temporarily lowering water level in Bayou Courtableau to an elevation of no less than 15.63 ft at the drainage structure in preparation for predicted weather systems will reduce flow rates in Bayou Teche and the Vermilion River. Normal flow and operation need to be restored promptly following the event if sufficient rainfall is not received. This operational plan has proven to be effective in dealing with prior predicted storm events. The District has made Parish, State and Federal leaders, and the Corps of Engineers aware of its Operational Plan. The plan has also been modeled by the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Flood Center. All comments regarding the plan have been positive.

Director’s Report for the September 2024 meeting

1. Preparations for Hurricane Francine:
2. There was a forecast for possible heavy tropical rainfall for several days prior the formation of Francine, so pumping had been reduced and water elevations in the nontidal portions of the watershed were reduced beginning on August 30. Pumps were stopped completely on September 4. Light rainfall was received on September 5 and heavy rain on September 6 (2.25”) at the pumpstation. The Corps began operating the Bayou Courtableau Drainage Structure on September 7 and dropped the elevation to 15.41’ by September 12 in preparation for Hurricane Francine. Once the storm passed, the corps began reducing the opening of the drainage structure to restore normal water elevation in Bayou Courtableau. On September 14, normal elevation was reached. The Corps completely closed the structure on September 17, and we began pumping to supplement flow on September 18.
3. The Ruth Canal structure was operated to reduce flow from Bayou Teche to the Vermilion River starting on September 5 and was completely closed on September 8. The structure was reopened on September 12.
4. The Loreauville Canal Structure was opened on September 5 to allow passage of water from Bayou Teche and was closed on September 16 when the water elevation of the Bayou Teche side of the structure receded to 2.57’.
5. Our staff remained at home on standby on the day that Francine made landfall and were back on duty September 12.
6. Discussion and Approval of the preparation plan. Mention Dr. Habib updating our Model with data from Francine.
7. Removal of trees from Ruth Canal has started. The contractor reported that they are currently reopening the land passageways on each side of the canal so that trees can be removed. They are also picking up any trash that they come across and putting it in thrash bags to be removed from the area and properly disposed of.
8. I attended a meeting that the Acadiana Watershed District held with State Representative Jacob Landry concerning long term sustainability of the gauges that were installed by the state through the Louisiana Watershed Initiative in our area. There are a few of these gauges that we monitor each day. As of now, Representative Landry is going to try to get state funding to sustain these gauges. These are different to the ones that we have agreed to sustain through the Regional Gauge Project.
9. Water quality report for September 2024:

Water quality monitoring for September 2024 was conducted on the 17th and 18th. Monitoring was delayed one week due to the threat from hurricane Francine. Prior to Hurricane Francine, the Corps elected to lower water levels in the upper, nontidal portions of our watershed. Following the passage of Francine, Corps drainage structures were closed and nontidal water levels were restored by stormwater runoff from rains that we received earlier in the month. Pumping to supplement flow was started on September 18 and the amount of pumping has been increasing to date.

 Dissolved Oxygen levels were near the previous 7-year average for September. Dissolved Oxygen levels decreased in downstream segments for both Bayou Teche and the Vermilion River and increased near the lower extremes where there was tidal exchange with the bays.

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The highest Dissolved Oxygen level was for the Atchafalaya River sample. The lowest Dissolved Oxygen levels for the Vermilion were for the segment from Milton to Palmetto Park and for the Teche from Belle Place through New Iberia. Despite there being reports of dead fish due to low Dissolved Oxygen from other waterbodies, there were no reports or observations of dead fish for Bayou Teche or the Vermilion River.

Water Temperature was below the previous 7-year average for September. Water temperature ranged from the upper seventies to low eighty degrees Fahrenheit. There was a slight increase in water temperature from upstream to downstream.

Salinity as indicated by Conductivity was below the previous 7-year average especially for lower segments of the Vermilion River where it is often a concern. Recent rainfall runoff is the reason for the lower salinity. The conductivity readings from gauges located at Lake Fearman and Cypremort Point indicate that high salinity water is still present in Vermilion Bay.

 Water clarity as indicated by Secchi Disk readings was near to slightly more turbid in the upstream portions of the watershed and less turbid in the downstream portions of the watershed than the previous 7-year average for September.

 Results of lab analysis for Fecal Coliform found that all Vermilion River related samples were within the threshold for Primary Contact. For Bayou Teche, all samples except for New Iberia and Hwy 3195 were within the Primary Contact threshold but those two samples were within the Secondary Contact Threshold.

1. The inspection of all features of our project was conducted by La. CPRA engineers on September 17. Engineers were Jody White, Phillip Parker and Ivy Thibodeaux. The report will be presented to the Corps by CPRA at our annual meeting on October 18. Any discussion about the event could be had at this time.
2. We will be participating along with several other agencies in the BVPA “State of the River” event from 5:00 to 7:30 PM this Thursday at Vermilionville. We will have a table and will display our promotion materials, water sample results, maps etc. Attendees will visit tables of the different agencies and learn about the efforts of each agency towards improving conditions in the watershed.
3. We have (in your packets) the agenda for the Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association annual meeting that will be held in New Orleans. Please let us know if you would like to register to attend.
4. We pumped 26 days in August and so far, 9 days in September for a total of 69 days for the year.