

Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of the Bayou Vermilion District  
Held by ZOOM at Vermilionville, 300 Fisher Road Lafayette Louisiana  
4:30 pm, August 26, 2020 Rescheduled September 2, 2020

**Call to Order** was given by President Michot. The meeting was called at 4:30 pm. The BVD meeting is on ZOOM because of COVID-19. Adhering to Governor's Proclamation, following mandate and guidance.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call:** Given by the Secretary: Commissioners Thomas Michot, Calvin Leger, David Eaton, Holden Hoggatt, and Jason Sullivan were on Zoom. Commissioners Don McConnell and Kristie Cornell were absent. There was a quorum.

Commissioner Catherine Comeaux joined the meeting at 4:32.

**Approval of Minutes: MOTION:** (C. Comeaux/C. Leger) Motion to accept the minutes, as written, from July 22, 2020 regular meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**Introduction of Guest(s):** Guest: None Staff: CEO Cheramie, Chris Benoit, Anne Mahoney, Maegan Smith, Charissa Helluin, Millicent Norbert, Marcus Bergeron, Brady McKellar, and Kim Fournet.

**Public Comment(s):** There were no public comments

**President's Report:**

A. New Members, appointments, terms

President Michot announced that Catherine Comeaux's last meeting would be September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Markaylen Wiltz has been appointed to this position. He will join the board in October.

Commissioner Jennifer Farr joined the meeting at 4:35.

There are three commissioners recently appointed to the board filling unexpired terms.

B. Board Member Orientation

Staff, under Maegan Smith, has been working on an orientation package for new board members. Commissioner Comeaux stressed the need for an in-person orientation of the grounds, river, and staff. CEO Cheramie introduced the attending staff and a small job description of each. Then gave a brief review and explanation of how BVD works, what departments make up BVD and their responsibilities. BVD is supported by millage, bonds, grants, and revenues. The Vermilionville Living History Museum Foundation is a 501c3 that grants, and donations go through for BVD.

C. Security Statement

Any security details that could compromise the safety of the facilities and collections should not be shared or discussed outside of the institution.

D. By Laws Update

The executive committee and staff are working on updating the by-laws. Staff has formed a Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) Committee. A meeting is scheduled next week with attorney Gary McGoffin to discuss the changes.

#### E. I-49 Connector

CEO presented documents to help the board understand where the I-49 Connector project. This project is in the planning stage with no money dedicated to it. One issue for BVD is the use of pylons. These pylons could potentially break through the layer of clay separating drinking water from bayou water. BVD's mission is to keep water, our ecology and environment clean and safe.

#### F. Native Lands Acknowledgement

President Michot attended the Vermilionville Living History Museum Foundation (VLHMF) meeting August 10<sup>th</sup> and there was discussion on who originally owned the land where BVD is located and how to acknowledge them. Maegan and Anne are working on a draft to address this.

#### G. VLHMF Liaison Rotation and August meeting report

As earlier mention, President Michot attended the VLHMF meeting and would like there to be a rotation of the BVD board members attend the VLHMF meetings. They meet on the second Monday of every other month. Their next meeting will be October 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### H. Committee Assignments

BVD has six committees, with the possibility of combining some to make fewer committees. Chair and committee members will be assigned between now and the October. Please let President Michot know your requests.

### **CEO Report**

#### A. North Landing Boat Launch Silting

The North Landing launch has silted over because of the I-10 construction. The construction lasted 3 years. Bayou Ops keeps it clean under normal circumstances, but they could not do it while it was closed. AMPOL has submitted a plan to divert the current into the center of the channel, pushing the silt away from the inside curve of the bayou. It will cost \$8,925.00. BVD has to remove and haul away the silt before any corrective action can take place. This will cost several thousand dollars. Commissioners asked to look for other companies that could do this and compare cost. They wanted to know, how long and if a warranty was part of the plan, or any continued maintenance. CEO Cheramie will look into this. CEO explained to the new commissioners that BVD has other parks and properties. There are North Landing, Southside Park, Rotary Point, property in Arnaudville, BVD maintains the boat/canoe launch at Bever Park and BVD.

#### B. LWI Region 5

After the flood of 2016, the Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI) was formed, Lafayette Parish is in Region 5. The state is divided into 8 regions. Acadiana Planning Commission represents the 12 different parishes in Acadiana on the LWI Region 5. Region 5 will receive \$5 million of the \$60 million (Federal monies available through HUD) ear-marked for all eight regions in the state.

#### C. Surrey Street Arboretum

The Lafayette Airport Commission owns the Surrey Street Arboretum. Several years ago, BVD took over the maintenance of the arboretum. Issues (unsavory characters, and illegal activities) have made it difficult for BVD to continue this agreement. BVD gave notice and

is no longer involved in the arboretum. If these issues can be eliminated, BVD may consider taking on the management agreement again.

#### D. I-49 Connector

This topic was discussed during the President's report.

#### E. LCVC and LEDA Economic Outlook

Since March, Lafayette has lost 47,994 room/nights in the hotel/motel sector. Lafayette has also lost \$55,801,550, in cancellations in conventions and sporting events in this same time frame. New home construction is up but commercial real estate is in a slump. The price of a barrel of oil, at \$40, is especially concerning to Lafayette's economic outlook.

#### F. Thursdays at Vermilionville

Vermilionville started opening Thursday evenings August 6<sup>th</sup>, with the date night/staycation idea. This is scheduled to continue through September. It is going well.

#### G. Watershed Lab and Exhibit

The lab construction is moving slowly but moving. The steel is in and poles are going up. The material for the fire hydrant, water and sewer lines have been delivered. The light poles are installed. The completion date is scheduled for March 30, 2021.

#### H. Restoration Tax Abatements

This has been deferred to the September 15<sup>th</sup> council meeting.

#### I. 2020 Millages

Lafayette Parish property values have gone down. BVD can raise the Ad Valorem millage rate from 0.75 to 0.8, in order to collect the same amount of money as previously collected. BVD also has a Debt Service Millage, which is .17. This could be reduced to .12, thus the property owners would not be paying more tax. This change has to be voted on by the September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

#### J. Acadiana Nature Station

CEO Cheramie has been talking with Hollis Conway about taking over the Acadiana Nature Station (ANS). The annual cost to operate the ANS is between \$60,000 and \$80,000. At this time BVD is not able to take on that much debt.

Commissioner Jennifer Farr left the meeting at 6:02 pm.

### **Committee Reports**

**Marketing/Public Relations:** The committee did not meet.

**Finance/Capital/Budget:** The committee did not meet. The financial analysis comparison for the month ending July 2020 and July 2019 and the financials were emailed to the commissioners. CEO Cheramie made note of July's revenues and expenses.

**Operations/Bayou/Maintenance:** The committee did not meet.

**Environmental:** The committee did meet and discussed many of the issues previously discussed. Commissioner Comeaux explained to the new members that BVD's Water Quality Department received a grant from DEQ to do septic tank inspections. Health and Hospitals are responsible for enforcing any corrective action needed by homeowners for faulty septic tanks. The grant from DEQ covers staff salaries to do the inspections and

paperwork. Emile Ancelet is in the process of hiring new employees to work on the inspections.

**Programming/Education/Grants:** The committee did not meet.

**Curatorial/Acquisitions:** The committee did not meet. Anne Mahoney informed the board that with the accreditation of Vermilionville, it is necessary to keep these standards going forward with specific tasks. Ms. Mahoney read the security statement to the board and made the new commissioners aware of the board members handbook and necessary pages to be signed.

**New Business:**

A. Resolution to allow CEO to complete and submit the LA Compliance Questionnaire

**Resolution 2020-01:** CEO Cheramie explained the reason for the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire. It is required by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor for its annual audit, stating that BVD is following the laws that govern BVD. It is then the duty of the auditor to verify that BVD is complying.

**MOTION:** (C. Comeaux/C. Leger) to accept the resolution. A vote was called for by the president: (6) yeas: T. Michot, C. Comeaux, C. Leger, H. Hoggatt, D. Eaton, J. Sullivan (0) nays, (2) absent: K. Cornell, Don McConnell, J. Farr (0) recused. This resolution is declared adopted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of September 2020.

**Adjournment: MOTION:** (C. Comeaux/C. Leger) Motion to adjourn. All were in favor. Motion carried.

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Thomas Michot, President

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Jennifer Farr, Secretary