

**MINUTES OF  
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-EAST  
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON JUNE 15, 2017**

PRESENT: Herbert I. Miller, Chair  
Clay Cosse', Committee Member

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The Operations Committee of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (SLFPA-E or Authority) met on June 15, 2017, in the Franklin Avenue Administrative Complex, Meeting Room 201, 6920 Franklin Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana. Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

**Opening Comments:** None.

**Adoption of Agenda:** The agenda was adopted by the Committee as presented.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the May 18, 2017 Operations Committee meeting were approved.

**Public Comments:**

Charlie Speed, Professional Corrosion Engineer and incoming Chairman of the Corrosion Society of New Orleans (NACE – National Association of Corrosion Engineers), advised that his primary reason for addressing the Committee is to bring the issue of corrosion to the awareness of the Authority and public. He explained that about five years ago he spoke to Robert Turner, SLFPA-E Director of Engineering and Operations, along with several other individuals, about the issue of corrosion. The concern about corrosion stems from the unpainted sheetpile used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). At that time there were people in Washington working on the corrosion issue; however, nothing was resolved. He stated that he found out through a newspaper article that some final projects are not properly being signed off. He noted that he had reports from five years ago that were never resolved and requested that the Authority assist him with reviving the discussion of this issue, adding that he has networks with local corrosion professionals, but did not have any networks with the USACE. In addition, he explained that he spoke to Mr. Turner and requested that the Authority provide a speaker at a NACE meeting on June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Derek Boese, Chief Administrative Officer, advised that he would follow up with Mr. Turner to ensure that the Authority has a representative at the meeting.

**New Business:**

**A. Mike Merritt, SLFPA-West, to address Committee regarding operational matters.**

Mike Merritt, SLFPA-West Commissioner, advised that he is term limited on the West Authority and that his last regular meeting would be on June 27<sup>th</sup>. He discussed the

history of cooperation between the East and West Flood Protection Authorities, which included joint meetings and public symposiums, levee inspections, introduction of seismic surveys of levees, working together on common problems and sharing technical expertise to make the ideals of the flood reform movement a reality. He explained that the New Orleans Geological Society (NOGS) and Louisiana Geological Survey (LGS) are sponsoring a symposium in July (Geological Facts of Life) and invited the Authorities to be listed as cosponsors. There is no cost or obligation to the Authorities. The symposium would provide an opportunity to partner and share information with the public about geological issues that affect the levees. He requested that the Authority consider this opportunity and request LGS to add its name as a cosponsor.

Mr. Merritt discussed the topic of earth science and sea level rise. He commented on the potential effects on sea level rise when the Antarctic Larsen ice shelf fractures in two or less years. As a result of this event, the old sea level rise predictions used to design current projects overestimated future freeboard. He explained that a cooperative program is underway to engage the public by hosting small work groups of taxpayers. The program is funded by a U.S. HUD grant, partnered by the Foundation for Louisiana Office and led by the Louisiana Office of Community Development. The study groups will discuss key questions, compile their responses and mark maps of their neighborhoods to show changing circumstances that affect flood protection. The program is an example of how new challenges can be met with good public policy and innovative outreach projects. The basic premise is that even if the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) can deliver everything in its 2017 Master Plan, there will be less land. Communities must begin to consider how they will adapt or relocate in the future in order to cope with this geological fact of life. Based on this project, grants will be given next December to fund pilot projects demonstrating local strategies for adapting. He urged representatives of the East Authority to attend the meetings. He commented that he was able to see firsthand how Flood Authority plans can be greatly improved by taking a broader view of local conditions. The Authority's advisory comments would also inform at the meetings producing the pilot projects.

Mr. Merritt discussed the role of hurricane hunter aircraft in obtaining the best and most up to date earth science information for forecasting and managing risks. He pointed out that the Authority can assist with this effort by providing new opportunities for storm hardened tidal gauges and weather stations by partnering with NOAA.

Mr. Merritt advised that, in his view as a geologist, fragility of soils and potential geo-hazards are two important determining factors in a flood fight. He discussed the Baton Rouge fault's effects on the topography along with other types of geo-hazards (e.g., weak clays); the use of best practice geology and geophysics studies when dealing with foundation soils and managing geo-hazard risks; and the CPRA Master Plan. A recurring error in the Master Plan is the omission of sufficient geological analysis and data. He pointed out that some project risks, such as the chance a levee could be shaken during a seismic event (resulting in foundation soil settling and causing an instant loss of freeboard) are not considered. He noted that seismic surveys, such as the ones the Authority ran in the past with Dr. Lorenzo, provide data to manage this risk.

Mr. Merritt commented that he moved back to Louisiana in 2004 and that Katrina was the first hurricane he experienced. Hurricane Katrina is the reason he suggests that the Authority obtain due diligence geology studies from licensed geologists so that it knows which foundations of the flood defenses are undermined or weaker so that they can be strengthened before they are tested.

Mr. Merritt reviewed some of the lessons he learned as a Commissioner:

1. Sometimes, large dynamic geologic processes are seen as an Earth attack, but large or small, dynamic geologic systems are always seeking a balance.
2. Human carelessness and disregard for geological facts of life are not an Earth attack (e.g., the flooding experienced due to Hurricane Katrina was the result of infrastructure failure and not a natural disaster).
3. When it comes to the geological facts of life for flood protection, the USACE has been under advised about the physical geology of the levee rights-of-way.
4. The State of Louisiana has made a model for the nation with great improvements in the governance of the impressive flood protection works provided by the nation. Louisiana has produced a prize system of flood control authorities and placed operations and maintenance in the hands of blue ribbon panels of experts.
5. A process can fail when it cannot be adapted to dynamic geological processes.
6. The importance of sharing “know how” with other stakeholders because it can make a difference (e.g., a Times Picayune guest editorial coauthored by Mr. Merritt and former Authority-East Commissioner George Losonsky).

Mr. Merritt summarized with the following comments:

- The USACE is severely under advised about geo-hazards beneath flood protection project sites and seems to exclusively focus on its process, especially on Quality Assurance and Quality Control protocols during construction. There has been little progress in applying world class, best practice, high tech geological and geophysical methods in the United States. Other countries around the world do best practice geology as a matter of homeland security.
- When the CPRA does not require best practice geology or do its own due diligence geophysical analysis, then the taxpayer’s last hope lies with the Commissioners who are mandated by law to be experts capable of making technical suggestions and policy. He thanked the Authority for long ago taking the progressive step of doing its own due diligence geology and seismic work to raise the bar and offered his assistance to the Authority.

**B. Discussion of the award of a contract in the amount of \$63,449.00 to Cycle Construction Company, LLC for the London Ave. Canal Levee Repair Project.**

Felton Suthon, Orleans Levee District (O.L.D.) Engineer, advised that there is an area on the east side of the London Avenue Canal adjacent to Parks and Parkways property that was built up about six to eight feet that does not properly drain. The area will be filled and seeded in order to drain water off the levee toe.

The Committee adopted a motion to recommend that the Board approve the award of the contract to Cycle Construction Company.

**C. Discussion of the award of a contract in the amount of \$76,020.00 to Fleming Construction Company, LLC for the Lakeshore Drive Repair Project.**

Mr. Suthon explained that a bicyclist was injured several weeks ago in an area of Lakeshore Drive about 400 feet west of Franklin Avenue. Bids were requested from three paving firms for the roadway repair and two firms responded: Fleming Construction Company - \$76,020 and Boh Brothers Construction Company - \$86,100. He anticipated that the repair project should start in the new few weeks and noted that TKTMJ is currently working on the Seawall Erosion Project in this area. He recommended that the contract be awarded to Fleming Construction Company.

The Committee adopted a motion to recommend that the Board approve the award of the contract to Fleming Construction Company.

**D. Discussion of the issuance of Task Order No. 13-01-01 in a not to exceed amount of \$49,730 for the Orleans Avenue Canal and London Avenue Canal portion of the Stability Analyses – Outfall Canals Project. Total not to exceed cost of the Stability Analyses – Outfall Canals Project is \$98,949 (\$49,219 for completed Task Order No. 09-02-04 for the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal and \$49,730 for Task Order No. 13-01-01).**

Mr. Suthon advised that the Authority is addressing erosion along the three outfall canals. The USACE requested that a stability analysis be done. The initial analysis included some of the worst areas along the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal. The analysis for the remainder of the canals will be accomplished under the proposed task order. The Authority can proceed with erosion mitigation once the analysis is completed.

The Committee adopted a motion to recommend that the Board approve the issuance of Task Order No. 13-01-01 to CH2M.

**E. Discussion of the selection of a firm for the development of a Web Based Permitting Software Management System, which will be funded through a Community Development Block Grant.**

Mr. Suthon advised that the Authority issued a Request for Proposals and six responses were received. The selection team developed a short list of three firms (GCR, Inc., JBM Tech and Vinfomatix), conducted interviews and recommended the selection of Vinfomatix. The Web Based Permitting Software Management System would allow archiving of permits and would be integrated into the GIS.

The Committee adopted a motion to recommend that the Board approve the selection of Vinfomatix to develop the Web Based Permitting Software Management System.

There was no further business; therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.