

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH COMMUNICATIONS DISTRICT

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Meeting Minutes

October 22, 2024 – 2:00 p.m. CDT

East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office
8900 Jimmy Wedell Drive, Building B
Baton Rouge, LA 70807



The East Baton Rouge Parish Communications District Board of Commissioners met at the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office on the 22nd day of October 2024 for a duly noticed regular public meeting.

The public meeting was called to order by Chairman Gautreaux.

Commissioner Kimble gave the Invocation.

Commissioner Designate Guidry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chairman called roll:

Present: Chairman Sid Gautreaux, Commissioner Designate Becnel (by Commissioner Darnell Waites), Commissioner Designate Stephen Branscum (by Commissioner Wade Evans), Commissioner Designate Amber Guidry (by Commissioner David McDavid), Commissioner Michael Kimble, Commissioner Myron Daniels, and Commissioner Michael Denicola

The Chairman found that a quorum existed.

Others Present Included The Following:

Director Jim Verlander, Legal Counsel Henry Olinde, Scott Lazarone CPA, Brenda Welch (EBRPCD), Ricky Klug (EBRSO) and Todd Campbell (EBRPCD)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Daniels moved to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2024 meeting. Commissioner Denicola seconded that motion. The motion unanimously passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Financial Report

The financial report was presented by Scott Lazarone, CPA.

The presented financials are through August 31, 2024.

Cash was \$11.8 million and Accounts receivable of \$557,000. Total fund balance was \$13.1 million, but approximately \$2.7 million of this amount is restricted for pending capital projects.

The budget watermark was 67%. Service revenue of \$5.2 million are slightly ahead of this watermark. Interest earnings of \$350,000 are almost double the watermark due to high interest rates. Expenses are below the watermark. Salary expense is lagging due to unfilled positions. Supply expense is low because furniture has not yet been purchased. Contractual expenses are behind projection, but should catch up to projections by year's end. The overall change in fund balance as of August 31, 2024 was a positive \$570,000. Mr. Lazarone cautioned that the district will probably not end the year with this surplus.

Commissioner Kimble moved to approve the financial report. Commissioner Designate Branscum seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

North Tower Project

Todd Campbell reported on this item.

The Tower team conducted a site visit with the supplier approximately a month ago, and the parties held an in-person meeting at the BUCC a week ago. Permitting is in progress. Due to flood plain restriction the "doghouse" will have to be raised 5-6 feet. The project appears to be proceeding on time, and is expected to be finished sometime in the January 2026 timeframe.

NEW BUSINESS

2025 Budget Draft Discussion

Mr. Lazarone presented the draft proposed amendments to the 2024 budget and the draft 2025 proposed budget.

The proposed 2024 budget amendments include the following revenue adjustments: +\$400,000 in service charge revenue; +\$200,000 interest earnings. Total 2024 budget revenues would be increased by \$600,000 to a total of \$8,350,000. The revenues for the proposed 2025 budget are the same as this adjusted number.

Proposed adjustments to the 2024 budget expenditures result in a net decrease in expenditures of \$300,000 for a total expenditure number of \$7.3 million. Because vacant positions are expected to be filled and other planned expenditures will be made, proposed expenditures for 2025 are \$8.2 million.

Proposed adjustments to 2024 Capital Projects expenditures are decreased by \$585,000 representing committed amounts that have not yet been spent. These amounts will be rolled over into the proposed 2025 budget. The proposed capital outlay budget for 2025 is \$1.9 million (the originally adopted 2024 capital outlay budget was \$2.2 million).

Mr. Lazarone advised that both he and Director Verlander are available for questions about the proposals. He also advised that the proposals will have to be finalized within two weeks so that proper budget advertisements can be run.

Commissioner Daniels raised the issue of the district's expectation of RMS payments from BRPD. Commissioner Daniels advised that BRPD advised the district a year ago that it will not be using the district's RMS and should not be expected to pay the full amount that the district expects it to pay. He asked whether the BRPD reimbursement is included in the proposed 2025 budget. Mr. Lazarone advised that it was included.

Commissioner Daniels reiterated that the district had been on notice for a year that the BRPD did not intend to continue with district RMS and does not intend to pay for what it is not using. Mr. Lazarone advised that he is unsure as to how that would be affected by the district's RMS contract and referred the issue to Mr. Olinde.

Commissioner Daniels advised that he believed that not only has the district been on notice of this, but he also believes that the district's RMS contract with 365Labs expires in March 2025. Mr. Olinde advised that if the district's RMS contract is expiring in March 2025 then it may be theoretically possible to eliminate the expense associated with BRPD when a new contract with 365Labs is negotiated. Mr. Olinde asked whether BRPD is using RMS at all because he will need to know this when renegotiating the district's contract. Commissioner Designate Guidry stated that BRPD is not primarily

using the district's RMS, but is still utilizing some of it. Commissioner Daniels advised that BRPD is not putting anything into the system at this time, and is not using the full suite of the RMS system. Commissioner Designate Guidry asked about contracts for reimbursement of the district. Mr. Olinde advised that the only contract is with the EBRSO. Commissioner Daniels advised that there are current resolutions in place for this.

Chairman Gautreaux stated that he believes BRPD should pay for RMS if BRPD is using any part of it. Commissioner Daniels stated that he disagrees and that he does not believe it is fair that BRPD should not pay for the parts that is not using. Chairman Gautreaux pointed out that BRPD continues to get other agency data out of the district's RMS system, but that other agencies are not able to get data out of BRPD's RMS system which would help the other agencies in the parish. His opinion is that BRPD should be completely cut out if the system if it will not provide data to other agencies. Commissioner Daniels advised that BRPD should get the same treatment as other agencies like city court and the DA's office. He also stated that BRPD should only be required to pay, and is willing to pay, for the parts of the system that it actually uses.

Commissioner Designate Guidry stated that the district should not be responsible for any bridges or interfaces with the BRPD system. She advised that the problem is that now BRPD is restricting the rights of others to view their data. This is contrary to working together.

Commissioner Daniels stated that BRPD is cooperative and will provide any information to other agencies that is requested. Chairman Gautreaux pointed out that the inability to immediately access the BRPD data, instead of waiting for a response the next day, provides benefits that will now be lost.

Mr. Lazarone explained that this all may hinge on whether the vendor will reduce the price if BRPD only uses a part of the system. Mr. Verlander advised that he had checked with the vendor and it will not reduce the price it charges for BRPD just because BRPD only uses a part of the system.

Mr. Lazarone pointed out that this will have to wait for contract negotiations and also that the vote on the 2025 budget is not today but will be at the next meeting.

Recent Developments

Jim Verlander reported that there were none.

Administrative Matters

Director Verlander reported on the operations of the District. The district and its team is beginning to "hit full stride." The only vacant position now is the records clerk. All operations, especially CAD, seem to be progressing smoothly. Now that the district has

the necessary manpower to deploy new equipment, new equipment for Harding is being ordered. Training classes are being held at the BUCC on a regular basis. As soon as 911 issues are resolved, the BUCC can be completely used as intended.

Commissioner Denicola asked about a text to 911 outage that occurred and whether the public gets notified when this happens. Director Verlander advised that when text to 911 is not working, the texting party gets a “bounce back” message advising that the text system is not working and that the user needs to call 911. Director Verlander also pointed out that, as of now at least, the majority of texts that have been received are tests.

Legal Updates

None.

Adjournment

Commissioner Kimble moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Denicola seconded that motion. The motion unanimously passed.