



LWI Region 4

Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, DeSoto, Jefferson Davis, Rapides, Sabine and Vernon Parishes and Coshatta Tribe.

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT NOON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2022
Beauregard Parish Police Jury Office
DeRidder, Louisiana**

MEETING MINUTES

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair
Alberto Galan

Chair called meeting to order and requested the Watershed Coordinator to Call Roll.

Mike Hollier called the Roll:

- Allen Parish – Responded Present
- Beauregard Parish – Responded Present
- Calcasieu Parish – Responded Present
- Cameron Parish – Responded Present
- DeSoto Parish – No Response
- Jefferson Davis Parish – Responded Present
- Rapides Parish – Responded Present
- Sabine Parish – No Response
- Vernon Parish - No Response
- Coshatta Tribe – No Response

The Watershed Coordinator reported six of the eleven Steering Committee members were present for a Quorum.

Chair welcomed Steering Committee members, staff and others attending and requested introductions:

- Jennifer Cobian with Calcasieu Parish Administration.
- Alex Guillory with BlueWing Civil Consultants
- Claire Hebert Marceaux with Alliance Transportation
- Alberto Galan (Calcasieu Parish representative)
- Jacob Dillehay (Allen Parish representative)
- John Marceaux (Jefferson Davis Parish representative)
- Bryan McReynolds (Beauregard Parish representative)
- Matt Johns (Rapides Parish representative)
- Kara Bonsall (Cameron Parish representative)
- Mike Hollier, Watershed Coordinator
- Jamie Gaines (SWLA-RPC Special Projects)
- Michael Bernard (SWLA-RPC Technology Manager)
- Justin HaBetz (SWLA-RPC Technology Analyst)
- Emily Stine, State Rural Revitalization

2. Region 4 Watershed Coordinator Report

Mike Hollier

Chair called on Mike Hollier for the Watershed Coordinator Report.

Mr. Hollier commented on three recommendations made by the Steering Committee over the past year:

- i. Funding of Region 4 Watershed Projects and Programs should not be solely dependent on grants. Sustainable revenue streams must be identified and activated.
- ii. Development of a Watershed Plan and implementation strategies are a priority for the Region 4.
- iii. Need for a multijurisdictional entity with governmental authority is a Primary recommendation.

Mr. Hollier observed representation on the Steering Committee experienced turnover requiring frequent meeting explanations on purpose and status of the Region 4. He expressed need of stable, consistent, and expanded representative members. The Committee, he noted, was comprised of a variety of individuals including elected officials, consultants, administrators, staff, and lay representatives. He urged the Steering Committee members to consider new draft Bylaws that would reorganize the Steering Committee into separate policy and technical committees. Mr. Hollier also suggested the Steering Committee should focus on purpose and direction of the Watershed Region 4 in what he called “Seven Spokes of the Wheel”. He reported he had submitted “The Spokes” to several Steering Committee members individually and then sought comments from the state Louisiana Watershed Initiative staff who were concerned “The Spokes” might divert away from the primary objectives and goals of the state. Mr. Hollier noted they were comfortable and did not object to the “Seven Spokes of the Wheel” as currently stated.

Mr. Hollier continued his report by emphasizing need for a unified plan for the Region 4 Watershed and engaging all nine parishes, and municipalities, ports, and special districts. An integrated and unified plan he said should be the highest priority objective to advance the “Seven Spokes of the Wheel” and better compete for funding opportunities on local, state and federal levels.

Mr. Hollier stated a proposal for Region 4 included what is referred to as a “Series Reservoirs” project that would treat fresh water as a commodity and not as an excessive over-abundant waste product to be delivered as quickly as possible to the Gulf of Mexico. “Series Reservoirs” reverses centuries of treatment for fresh water in Western Louisiana. Freshwater would be considered an asset to be managed and for revenue generating purposes.

Mr. Hollier concluded with two additional items: 1) The Louisiana Watershed Initiative had contracted with a consultant to prepare a white paper on potential revenue generating possibilities for each Watershed Region to consider in developing consistent and steady revenue to support operations and infrastructure investments. He stated he had reviewed pages of recommendations made to financially support the Watershed Region and had culled the list down to two pages. Mr. Hollier stated he had added a few additional possibilities for consideration. And 2) He stressed need to organize and focus on important goals and objectives (purposes) of the Region which should be the Modus Operandi of the organization.

3. Steering Committee Bylaws: Amendments (Transition to Coalition Policy Committee)

Chris Woolley

Action requested.

Chair called on Chris Woolley to report on the Bylaw Amendments.

Mr. Hollier noted Mr. Woolley was unable to attend the meeting and he and Ms. Jamie Gaines would walk through amendments and address any questions members might have.

Mr. Hollier highlighted expanded representation to include two municipalities in rotating schedules, ports in rotating schedules and the Sabine River Authority. The Bylaws as proposed transition the current Steering Committee into a “Coalition Policy Committee and a Technical Advisory Group”. Parish Coalition Policy Committee representatives are separated into a Primary and Secondary representative with only one vote between them centered on the Primary Representative.

MOTION was made by Matt Johns (Rapides Parish) to approve and adopt the submitted new draft Bylaws for Region 4 with an Amendment to delete the Secretary and Treasurer officer positions. MOTION was Seconded by Bryan McReynolds (Beauregard Parish) subject to a list of items and/or amendments he wanted to consider. Chair opened Discussion on the MOTION. Matt Johns modified his MOTION to retain officers of Secretary/Treasurer combined into one position and that his modification be considered as Amendment No. 1 to adoption of the draft Bylaws. Bryan McReynolds accepted modification of the MOTION as made and proposed deleting reference to Caddo Parish in the document and identify the Coalition Policy Committee as the Coalition Policy Council as Amendment No. 2 to the draft Bylaws. Bryan McReynolds proposed Amendment No. 3 to the draft Bylaws document changing the name of the Technical Advisory Group to the Technical Advisory Committee. Bryan McReynolds proposed Amendment No. 4 providing the Vice Chair of the Coalition Policy Council be the standing Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee. Bryan McReynolds proposed Amendment No. 5 clarifying and changing Section VII A on page 4 to read “. . . Committee shall be acted upon or authorized unless by a majority vote of quorum members present in formal meeting and open to the public.” Bryan McReynolds proposed Amendment No. 6 qualifying votes by either the Primary or the Secondary parish representative members.

Chair called for Questions. Matt Johns accepted and confirmed Amendments No. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 to the original MOTION as presented. Chair called for a MOTION to accept amendments as stated and submitted to the draft Bylaws. MOTION was made by Jacob Dillehay (Allen Parish) to accept amendments No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 to original submitted draft Bylaws. MOTION was seconded by Kara Bonsall (Cameron Parish).

Chair called for a MOTION to adopt submitted draft Bylaws as amended. MOTION was made by Kara Bonsall (Cameron Parish) to adopt submitted draft Bylaws as amended. MOTION was seconded by Bryan McReynolds (Beauregard Parish). Chair called for Questions on the MOTION. Hearing none, Chair called for a vote on the MOTION. The MOTION was passed unanimously.

Watershed Coordinator Mike Hollier and Special Projects Manager Jamie Gaines stated they would research and follow up on Primary and Secondary voting capacity of parish representatives.

The Bylaws of the Watershed Region 4 Steering Committee/Coalition Policy Council are Attachment A and made a part of these Minutes.

4. Seven Spokes of the Wheel: Purpose and Direction

Mike Hollier

Action requested.

Chair called on Mike Hollier to report on the Seven Spokes of the Wheel: Purpose and Direction.

Mr. Hollier explained that he had recommended to several Steering Committee members a need to expand focus and direction of Watershed Region 4 and at the same time integrate multiple functions support common goals. He noted the LWI has several objectives using mutually beneficial strategies to achieve those objectives. Mr. Hollier reiterated “Spokes of the Wheel” pick up the LWI objectives and feather additional purposes.

He elaborated on the seven purposes which he noted had grown to eleven spokes, but reference is still made to seven spokes. Mr. Hollier reported the spokes offer additional opportunities to cross reference and provide multiple revenue streams for identified spokes. He recommended the Steering Committee validate the strategy and formally approve the Seven Spokes of the Wheel to focus on common needs and objectives noted.

Several Steering Committee members expressed support for the Seven Spokes of the Wheel to provide purpose and direction for Region 4 and meeting needs.

MOTION was made by Matt Johns to approve and adopt the Seven Spokes of Wheel as a focus and direction for meeting the needs of Watershed Region 4. MOTION was seconded by Jacob Dillehay. Chair called for questions on the MOTION. Hearing none, Chair called for a vote on the MOTION. The MOTION was passed unanimously.

Draft “Seven Spokes of the Wheel” are Attachment B and made a part of these Minutes.

5. Regional Series Reservoirs: Fresh Water Commodity and Management

Mike Hollier

Chair called on Mike Hollier to report on the Regional Series Reservoirs: Fresh Water Commodity and Management

Mr. Hollier stated an opportunity to apply for a \$1 million disaster grant surfaced in July and there were only two and a half weeks to prepare and submit a proposal for consideration from the Region 4 Watershed. Staff concluded the original idea and recommendation for a unified infrastructure network that could address multiple needs and objectives was a direction with strong justification and qualification. A network of regional reservoirs interconnected with water pipelines and high-powered new pumps would help mitigate impact on repeat flooding structures and low to moderate income areas in an integrated system. With the proposed “Series Reservoirs Network” freshwater could be stored, moved north, south, east, and west, and applied to aquifer recharge and coastal restoration or simply sold as a commodity of need.

He reported no matching funds would be needed. The LWI would cover match. The Steering Committee Chair and Regional Planning District Chair both approved the application preparation and submittal. The application was submitted prior to deadline and he hoped an answer could be received by July 2023. Mr. Hollier stated that a request for approval by the Steering Committee would have been hopeful but the application was already submitted. He asked if any Steering Committee members might have any objection and to advise him at this time.

Steering Committee members expressed support and approval for the Series Reservoirs Network proposal. No formal action was taken or thought necessary after the fact.

6. Round 2 Application Projects: Identification and Preparation of Projects

Michelle Mestayer

Discussion and recommendations.

Chair called on Michelle Mestayer to report on the identification and Preparation Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI) Round 2 Application Projects.

Mike Hollier stated that Michelle Mestayer was unable to attend the meeting and he would be speaking on this agenda item.

Mr. Hollier reported that meetings with LWI and other Watershed Coordinators weighed heavily on “Low to Moderate Income” demographics and geography to score high rankings statewide for Round 2 Project applications. He emphasized his recommendation for the proposed “Series Reservoirs Network” as a unified and comprehensive project to meet LWI objectives and priorities in Region 4. Mr. Hollier explained there was a significant amount of data, analysis, and science to put together high scoring and competitive projects for Round 2 considering LMI factors.

Steering Committee members and others attending the meeting discussed limitations of LMI designations in the LWI application process but also in other federal funded programs. Individual consensus was expressed that congressional representatives be contacted to determine how congress might be able to modify LMI priority considerations. Mr. Hollier stated he did not believe there would be enough time to affect federal changes in a very short timeline. He concluded the staff would work and try to satisfy objectives of the program as stated. No action was requested.

7. Technical Advisory Group (TAG): Membership recommendations to CPC.

Mike Hollier

Discussion and recommendations.

Chair called on Watershed Coordinator Mike Hollier to report on the Technical Advisory Group and recommendations for membership.

Mr. Hollier noted that under amended new Bylaws the Coalition Policy Council (CPC) would approve membership on the Watershed Region 4 Technical Advisory Committee. He requested Steering Committee members submit recommendations for consideration at the next meeting. Mr. Hollier suggested science professionals in water hydrologic and hydraulic studies and engineering at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and McNeese State University be considered. He asked interested individuals to submit their interest to him at the earliest convenience. No action was requested.

8. Round 1 Funding Balance: Consideration of optional applications

Mike Hollier

Action requested.

Chair called on Watershed Coordinator Mike Hollier to report on Round 1 Funding.

Mr. Hollier reported the Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI) had agreed to hold and award the balance of Round 1 Funding in the amount of \$5.7 million for Region 4 monies that had not been utilized. He referenced the Seven Spokes of the Wheel and the Series Reservoir Network proposal as a unified project approach to cover all nine parishes in Region 4 and the Low to Moderate Income (LMI) emphasis factor for qualifying project applications. Mr. Hollier requested from the LWI if the Watershed Region 4 Administrator (IMCAL/SWLA – RPC) could apply for the balance funding. He stated response from state was the Planning District could do so. Authorization was needed by the Planning District Board which was scheduled to meet on December 8th. Mr. Hollier highlighted the fact that “all hands-on deck” would be needed with field support from each parish.

Chair noted concurrence of the Steering Committee for proposed “Series Reservoir

Network” through a unified comprehensive plan and pending action for application approval by the SWLA-Regional Planning Commission Board that no further action was needed. Steering Committee members agreed and no further action was taken. Watershed Coordinator was directed to proceed with approval from Planning District Board and submit application for balance of Watershed Region 4 Round 1 Funds allocated.

9. West Louisiana Public Coordination District (PCD): Proposed Regional Entity
Discussion and Recommendations. No action requested.

Mike Hollier

Chair called on Watershed Coordinator Mike Hollier to report on the West Louisiana Public Coordination District.

Mr. Hollier restated one of the Watershed Region 4 Steering Committee’s original requests to the Governor that a multi-jurisdictional governmental entity was needed to implement the projects and programs identified for the Watershed. The Governor did not recommend to the Legislature the request. Mr. Hollier noted the Steering Committee recognition that coordinated programs and projects over a nine-parish area would be extremely difficult to implement without a governmental authority to cross political jurisdictional lines.

Mr. Hollier explained he had discussed the original recommendation recently with several members and parish stakeholders. Consensus was that need for a multijurisdictional entity were critical and efforts should be made to accomplish same. Mr. Hollier proposed the “West Louisiana Public Coordination District” (PCD). He reiterated the proposal was in concept and he had no point of reference. He would draft a proposal for Steering Committee/Coalition Policy Council consideration at the next meeting. He concluded the CPC could decide what to do at that time.

Mr. Hollier was requested to provide members with a draft copy of a Public Coordination District document proposal at the earliest opportunity.

10. Public Comment

Chair

Chair asked if there were any members of the public who wished to speak or offer comments.

Matt Johns (Rapides Parish) stated he thought the Steering Committee meeting was very productive. He was hopeful the direction and momentum noted in the meeting could be continued.

Clair Hebert Marceaux (Alliance Transportation) stated she thought the Steering Committee meeting was very focused on the issues identified and she was encouraged the Region 4 Watershed was moving in the right direction.

Hearing no further comment the Chair closed the Public Comment agenda item.

11. First Quarterly Meeting of Coalition Policy Committee (Council): Date, Time & Location

Chair

Watershed Coordinator Mike Hollier expressed his appreciation to Mr. Bryan McReynolds and the Beauregard Parish Police Jury for providing meeting facilities and support and

to the SWLA-RPC staff particularly Major Project Manager Jamie Gaines, GIS and Technology Manager Michael Bernard and Technology Analyst Justin HaBetz.

Suggestion was made to hold the next meeting before the end of January 2023. Location would be determined later. Noon would be the preferred time.

12. Adjournment

Chair

There being no additional agenda items to discuss the Chair entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION was made by Ms. Kara Bonsall (Cameron Parish) to adjourn the meeting. MOTION was seconded by Mr. Bryan McReynolds (Beauregard Parish). Chair called for a vote on the MOTION. MOTION was passed unanimously.

Alberto Galan, Chair

ATTEST:

Michael Hollier, Watershed Coordinator