

**THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2021**

---

**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS, HELD IN THE FIRST FLOOR AUDITORIUM AT ITS OFFICES LOCATED AT 1350 PORT OF NEW ORLEANS PLACE, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN LANGENSTEIN, AT 1:58 P.M.**

---

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** William H. Langenstein, III, Chairman  
Charles H. Ponstein, Vice-Chairman  
Jack C. Jensen, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer  
Tara C. Hernandez, Member  
Darryl D. Berger, Member  
Joseph F. Toomy, Member

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Walter J. Leger, Jr., Member

**STAFF:** B. Christian, President and Chief Executive Officer  
M. Ganon, Vice President, Public Affairs  
R. Wendel, Chief Financial Officer  
A. Evett, Vice President, Chief Engineer  
J. Escudier, Executive Counsel  
B. Landry, Vice President, Commercial  
T. Rives, Vice President, Commercial  
R. Aragon Dolese, Director, Marketing and Communications  
C. Coats, Director, Real Estate  
E. Pansano, Director, Internal Audit  
M. Verderame, Director, Records  
C. Gilmore, Director, Engineering  
M. Sulser, Manager, Engineering  
A. Coates, Commercial  
C. Alfonso, Manager, Community Engagement  
J. Ragusa, Manager, Communications  
P. Beard, Real Estate  
C. Falgoust, Procurement  
A. Taylor, Procurement  
J. Woodward, Sustainable Development  
M. Cloos, Geographic Information Systems  
D. Collins, Environmental  
A. Madere, Manager, Records  
M. Singley, Board Secretariat  
Chief R. Hecker, Harbor Police Department

**GUESTS:** M. Stolzman, NOPB  
C. Kocur, NOPB

J. Oldham, NOPB  
A. Ferrand-Rodgers, NOPB  
T. Bryant, NOPB  
S. Swaczyk

## **I. Roll Call & Determination of Quorum**

Following a roll call of Board members, Chairman Langenstein confirmed a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:58 p.m.

## **II. Approval of Meeting Minutes for May 2021**

Chairman Langenstein called for a motion to approve the public meeting minutes for May 2021, as previously circulated.

Commissioner Berger moved to accept the minutes and Commissioner Ponstein seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **III. Public Comment**

Chairman Langenstein called for general public comment, but there were none.

## **IV. Action Items:**

### **A. Acceptance of the Consolidated Financial Statements for May 2021.**

Mr. Wendel presented the consolidated financial statements for May 2021, a copy of which is made a part of these minutes.

Mr. Rives provided an overview of the Board's cargo volumes, reporting that May was the strongest month for exports since October 2019. Imports should also increase in the near future with the onset of a new Asia service. Mr. Rives noted an overall decrease in ship omissions and an 83% increase in breakbulk volume since April. He mentioned that the impact of the ongoing tariffs negotiations in Europe is still unknown, but added that the cancellation of the Terminal Modernization Fees by New Orleans Terminal, LLC will assist in keeping the Board competitive in the market. River cruise activity has continued to increase with nineteen (19) vessels sailing in May, and ocean-going cruises are still expected to resume in the early fall.

Commissioner Ponstein inquired about the ongoing impacts of ship omissions and Mr. Rives responded that new onsets of COVID in South China have affected incoming traffic from Asia, consequently also delaying European vessels.

Commissioner Toomy asked if any of the current river cruises were a result of new business. Ms. Christian responded that, with the exception of the *American Queen*, the current vessels were in service before the pandemic.

Commissioner Ponstein inquired about parking arrangements for the river cruise passengers. Ms. Christian responded that the river cruise lines generally provide their passengers with bus transportation from the hotels.

Mr. Wendel presented May and fiscal year-to-date figures for gross revenues, labor costs, operating costs, and operating revenue for the Board, as well as, on a consolidated basis, for the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Commission (“NOPB”). He reported that May’s revenues for both the Board and NOPB were steadily remaining over budget. The Board’s terminal operating revenue was \$227,000 over the projections of the revised budget for the month of May. Cruise operations remained below expectations as ocean carriers did not resume sailing. However, other revenues helped offset this deficit, resulting in a monthly excess of \$27,000 over total revenue and \$1.2 million over the year-to-date revised budget. Labor expenses continue to be controlled, and total \$500,000 below budget. The total operating income for the month was \$955,000 over budget and almost \$4.2 million over the year-to-date projections. NOPB’s operating revenues continue to exceed projections while expenses remain controlled, resulting in a total operating income \$418,000 over budget for the month, and \$1.7 million over the year-to-date revised budget. On a consolidated basis, operating income totals \$1.3 million over projections for the month and \$5.9 million over the year-to-date revised budget.

Commissioner Jensen inquired about cost sharing between the Board and NOPB. Mr. Wendel responded that the Board invoices NOPB \$2 million annually in exchange for administrative services.

Commissioner Jensen moved to accept the consolidated financial statements and Commissioner Ponstein seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**B. Consider Approval of a Resolution Adopting the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans’ *Consolidated Financial and Operating Plan for Fiscal Year 2022.***

Mr. Wendel presented and recommended a resolution adopting the Board’s *Financial and Operating Plan for Fiscal Year 2022* (“FY 2022 Budget”), a copy of which is made a part of these minutes. He highlighted the major categories of fiscal year budget assumptions for both the Board, and on a consolidated basis with NOPB, including revenues, expenses, capital equipment, and the Capital Improvement Program.

Mr. Wendel noted that the cruise revenue projections for FY 2022 are conservatively budgeted. Commissioner Jensen inquired as to which ocean-going cruise lines have expressed interest in resuming sailings from New Orleans. Mr. Wendel confirmed that all ocean carriers that were previously sailing from New Orleans pre-pandemic, have expressed a strong interest in resuming activity as soon as possible.

As reflected in the FY 2022 Budget, payroll, maintenance and dredging costs will account for the majority of the Board’s expenses. The Board’s \$3.3 million capital equipment budget will provide necessary upgrades for IT and cyber security, crane equipment, and new security systems for the Harbor Police. The \$80.7 million Capital Investment Program

will provide for various improvements and new construction, including the Louisiana International Terminal Project. NOPB's capital equipment budget will also focus on cyber security, as well as roadway maintenance and storage expansion.

Mr. Wendel stated that the Board efficiently manages its consolidated cash and investments and will strive to maintain over \$75 million in unrestricted reserves for FY 2022.

Commissioner Toomy and Chairman Langenstein asked for precisions on the scope and timeline of the cyber security improvements. Mr. Wendel responded that efforts to preserve the integrity of the Board's technology infrastructure are ongoing, including constant maintenance and upgrades of both software and hardware. Noting the significant system upgrades undertaken by the Board five (5) years ago, Ms. Christian added that ongoing investments are essential to keep the Board's technology infrastructure timely and secure.

Commissioner Berger moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Jensen seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**C. Consider Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the President and Chief Executive Officer to Enter into Contracts and/or Change Orders Above Designated Authorization Limits, in an Amount Not to Exceed \$3,000,000 as Necessary for Dredging Services Beyond Board In-House Dredging Capabilities for Fiscal Year 2022.**

Mr. Guidry presented and recommended approval of the resolution. He noted that this is an annual action item to authorize the President and Chief Executive Officer to execute as-needed dredging contracts in the event of dredging situations exceeding in-house capabilities. As stipulated in this resolution, prior to executing a contract, the President and Chief Executive Officer will receive approval from the Board Chairman, and will subsequently notify the full Board of any contracts within 48 hours of execution. While the annual cost for these services is contingent upon seasonal dredging needs, the not-to-exceed threshold for this authority is \$3 million for fiscal year 2022. Funding for these services is allocated in the Board's Capital Reserve Budget.

Chairman Langenstein asked if the annual cost for as-needed dredging has ever exceeded the amount of \$3 million. Mr. Guidry responded that in fiscal year 2018, the Board expended \$3,789,278 in contract dredging services.

Commissioner Ponstein moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Hernandez seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**D. Consider Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the President and Chief Executive Officer to Execute a Consent and Estoppel Agreement with The First, a National Banking Association, for Property Located at 6001, 6101, and 6201 France Road, New Orleans, LA.**

Ms. Coats presented and recommended approval of the resolution. In accordance with the Board's lease terms, Lake Pontchartrain Properties, LLC ("LPP") is required to obtain the Board's consent prior to executing a mortgage on their leased premises. LPP has secured long term financing of \$7,525,000, and is requesting the Board's consent to execute a Consent and Estoppel Agreement with The First, a National Banking Association. This financing will ensure the replacement of the initial equity funding and secure a separate loan for site expansion.

Chairman Langenstein asked if LPP would be required to expand their funds before starting site improvement and Ms. Coats confirmed that is one of the loan requirements.

Mr. Ponstein inquired about the occupancy rates for the RV park located on the premises. Ms. Coats responded that several improvements have been completed on the site to increase revenue, and the proposed expansion will add an additional 100 RV spaces. Commissioner Hernandez added that the RV market is currently very favorable.

Commissioner Jensen moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Berger seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**E. Consider Approval of a Resolution Declaring *The New Orleans Advocate* as the Official Journal of the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans for Fiscal Year 2022.**

Mr. Escudier presented and recommended approval of the resolution. As an independent political subdivision of the state of Louisiana, the Board is required under La. R.S. 43:171 *et seq.* to declare an official journal each fiscal year. The Board publishes various public notices, including minutes of Board meetings, procurement notifications, financial statements as required for publication by the Legislative Auditor, and other miscellaneous legal notices, in its official journal.

Mr. Escudier stated that *The New Orleans Advocate* is currently the only newspaper within the Board's jurisdiction that qualifies as an official journal. The designation will be effective July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

Commissioner Berger moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Toomy seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**F. Consider Approval of a Resolution Adopting the *Port of New Orleans and New Orleans Public Belt Railroad 2021 Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan*.**

Ms. Ganon presented and recommended approval of the resolution. She stated that this resolution amends the Board's *Hazard Mitigation Plan Update* ("2020 HMP Update") and effectively integrates NOPB as a partner agency. An HMP is designed to help agencies mitigate the risks and consequences of potential hazards affecting their properties, assets and people and is updated every five (5) years to qualify for Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") disaster response and funding for hazard prevention

projects through the National Flood Insurance Program. The Board originally adopted an HMP in 2010, which was subsequently updated and amended in 2015 and most recently in October 2020. The Board has received provisional approvals from FEMA and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security Emergency Preparedness ("GOHSEP") for the *Port of New Orleans and New Orleans Public Belt Railroad 2021 Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan* ("*Multijurisdictional HMP*"), which will align the Board's hazard mitigation strategies with NOPB.

Commissioner Jensen moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Ponstein seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**G. Consider Approval of a Resolution Recognizing the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans.**

Ms. Aragon Dolese presented and recommended approval of the resolution. She stated that July 9, 2021 will mark the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans as a state entity. The Louisiana Legislature created the Board in 1896 to administer public wharves and regulate trade and traffic on the Mississippi River in the parishes of Jefferson, Orleans, and St. Bernard. This resolution celebrates the past and future contributions of the Port of New Orleans to the local economy, as well as the dedication of the maritime workforce. The Board will celebrate the milestone with a year-long anniversary campaign, including various engagement events, sister resolutions by other state and parish entities, social media and marketing efforts.

Commissioner Toomy praised the staff involved in the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary programming, and recommended that the Commissioners be provided with the historical study written by Christopher Ruane, during his internship at the Board in the summer of 2016. He added that Mr. Ruane is the great-grandson of W.A. Kernaghan, Chairman of the Dock Board in 1911, and that a picture of one of the original Board of Commissioners' meetings was included in the study.

Commissioner Toomy moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Berger seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**V. Report by the President and Chief Executive Officer**

Ms. Christian reported that the Board's Clean TRIP Program received a *2020 Clean Fleet Leader Award for Best Community Partnership* from the Southeast Louisiana Clean Fuels Partnership. Through the Clean TRIP, the Board administers grant funding to help the local trucking industry replace old engines with newer and cleaner engines, hence reducing pollutant emissions. She praised the Sustainable Development staff, including Ms. Emily Federer and Ms. Darlene Collins, for their hard work and commitment in making Clean TRIP such a success.

Ms. Christian welcomed the Board's third weekly direct-Asia cargo container service, marked by the inaugural sailing of the M/V *ONE Modern*, which called at the Port of New

Orleans on June 21. She thanked the Commercial Team and all staff involved in successfully securing this new service.

Ms. Christian announced that the Board's new "Community Connections" satellite office has opened in Violet, Louisiana. In addition to providing onsite access to staff from the Communications and Commercial Teams, this office will also host outreach meetings aimed at promoting communication with the Violet community.

Ms. Christian congratulated Mr. Stanley Goodwin, who was recently promoted to the rank of Sergeant of Harbor Police Department. Sgt. Goodwin is a 14-year veteran of the Harbor Police, and Ms. Christian thanked him for his service and dedication.

Lastly, Ms. Christian announced the imminent retirement of Mr. Bobby Landry, the Board's Chief Commercial Officer. She thanked him for his 31 years of dedication and vital contributions to the Board's mission.

## **VI. Commissioners' Comments**

Chairman Langenstein opened the floor for any Commissioners' comments. Commissioners Ponstein, Hernandez, and Berger echoed Ms. Christian's sentiments in congratulating Mr. Landry on his well-earned retirement, and welcomed Mr. Todd Rives in succeeding Mr. Landry as Chief Commercial Officer.

Chairman Langenstein marked the successful resumption of in-person public Board meetings. In celebrating the milestone of a return to normalcy, Chairman Langenstein cited the opportunity to honor Ms. Hernandez and Mr. Berger for their outstanding leadership during the challenges of the pandemic. He emphasized their essential roles in making the Louisiana International Terminal Project a reality and presented each with a commemorative plaque honoring their respective terms as Board Chairs.

Ms. Hernandez and Mr. Berger both expressed their mutual appreciation and gratitude for the dedication of staff and Commissioners during their respective leadership terms.

## **VII. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Langenstein called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Berger so moved and Commissioner Ponstein seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY** and Chairman Langenstein adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.