

Capital Area Road and Bridge District Meeting Minutes

Time/Date: 2:00 p.m., June 26, 2023

Location: Senate Committee Room E, State Capitol

Members Present: Chairman, Mr. J. H. Campbell, Jr., Governor's Appointee
Mr. John Diez (representing President Clint Cointment) Ascension Parish
Parish President Riley Berthelot, West Baton Rouge Parish
Dr. Erik Kalivoda, (Secretary, DOTD)
Mr. Hank Grace (representing President Mitchell Ourso), Iberville Parish
Mr. Vince Latino (representing EBR Parish) non-voting by rule

Member Absent: Parish President Layton Ricks, Livingston Parish

❖ Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Minutes:

Minutes from the March 27, 2023 Meeting were approved, on motion made by Berthelot and seconded by Grace.

Next on the Agenda, was the update on the progress being made by DOTD and Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC., since the last meeting on the Bridge project, and its identified tasks and timelines:

- A. Introduction of Representative(s) of Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC.
- B. Comments from Representative(s) of Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC.
- C. Other Bridge Project updates from attending representatives of DOTD.
- D. Comparison of Timelines and Tasks to actual performance by Atlas.
- E. Report on amount of funds expended/disbursed by DOTD to Atlas.

Reports available at www.mrbsouth.com

Kara Moree (Atlas) Maria Reid provided an oral report and update on the project. Ms. Moree reviewed the project team, project objectives, and project workflow.

After the presentation by Ms. Moree, Mr. Campbell asked about the additional traffic data collection and Mrs. Moree indicated this additional data would be added to the overall traffic analysis.

There was a discussion about the provisions in the federal debt ceiling legislation that reduced permitting timelines and Mrs. Reid indicated that the federal legislation put the current guidelines into law. Sec. Kalivoda indicated that he expected to see rules issued on the matter.

Sec. Kalivoda inquired about pursuing an Environmental **Assessment (EA)** versus an Environmental **Impact Statement (EIS)**. Mrs. Moree indicated she felt a decision on an EA should occur in the next few weeks, but they did not feel there would be any significant impacts on any of the three potential locations. Mr. Grace then inquired about the type of findings that could lead to a finding of significant “environmental impacts”. Cultural resource identification would be the main finding that could be particularly problematic to moving forward with the three sites.

Mr. Grace then inquired about the start of the NEPA clock and was told it would likely start when the project team contacts the FHWA. Mr. Grace asked about the cost of Phase I that was recently completed and was told was between \$3-4 million.

Sec. Kalivoda then inquired about whether a notice of EA was necessary and was told it was not necessary. He was also told that it would take 6-9 months before the EA would start and a preferred alternative identified by the summer of 2024. Sec. Kalivoda also asked about any updated cost estimates for the project, and he was told there were no new cost estimates but there would be some additional cost estimate work done under NEPA.

Mr. Campbell then asked the attending Commissioners and/or their Designees about authorizing the preparation of an informational brochure or media plan and securing the services of a public relations firm to prepare such an informational plan. Mr. Berthelot and Mr. Grace each expressed concern about the public’s reaction to another study. Mr. Diez supported the concept of hiring a firm to assist the District in providing the public with pertinent factual details about the proposed bridge and its need. Dr. Kalivoda talked about some ways to narrow the scope of any document and properly develop a well-designed and formulated brochure of the type desired.

Dr. Kalivoda made a motion to authorize the Chairman to have prepared a scope document which would request timelines and costs to secure the services of a public relations firm within the next few weeks for the review and approval of the District. Such a scope document would recommend a Request for Proposal (RFP) from such firms to perform the desired services and produce the desired informational documents for public consumption and communication. Berthelot seconded the motion, which passed.

Mr. Campbell inquired about conducting a future CARB-D meeting in a neighboring parish, such as West Baton Rouge, Iberville, or Ascension Parish. Mr. Diaz indicated such a meeting could be

held in a Council Chamber in any Parish, where the type of electronic equipment is available such that the public can easily watch via streaming of the meeting remotely. Mr. Campbell invited the Commissioners and/or their Designees to send him any recommendations for potential sites.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chairman Campbell called for public comments.

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Campbell called for a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was offered by Mr. Berthelot.

Without objection, the meeting was deemed adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Secretary of CARB-D

Riley Berthelot, President of West Baton Rouge Parish

Attest:

J.H. Campbell, Jr., Chairman of CARB-D