

**MINUTES OF  
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-EAST  
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON APRIL 1, 2010**

PRESENT: Louis Wittie, Chair  
Timothy Doody, Committee Member  
Stephen Estopinal, Committee Member

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The Operations Committee met on April 1, 2010 in the Second Floor Hall of the Lake Vista Community Center, 6500 Spanish Fort Blvd., New Orleans, LA. Mr. Wittie called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

**Opening Comments:** Mr. Doody reported that he, John Barry, George Losonsky, Robert Turner and Fran Campbell traveled to Washington, D.C., to carry the message regarding some of the larger needs of the Authority and levee districts to the Congressional Delegation and others individuals. The presidents of Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany Parishes also traveled to Washington, D.C., in order to demonstrate a unified front. The needs discussed included responsibility for the operations and maintenance (O&M) of the IHNC surge barrier and navigation gates, storm proofing for St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parish pump stations, ring levees in St. Tammany Parish and a greater commitment from the Federal government for coastal restoration. The request for safe housing for Lake Borgne Basin Levee District (LBBLD) pump station operators was \$15 million. Plaquemines Parish requested \$45 million for frontal protection for its pump stations and safe rooms.

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

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the February 4, 2010 Operations Committee meeting were approved.

**Public Comments:**

Horace Lester stated that he is a civil engineer from Jackson, Mississippi, and that he was here today with David Coleman, a geotechnical engineer also from Jackson, Mississippi. He stated that they were retained by Contreras Dirt Enterprises, which has a mining agreement with Glen Diaz for mining earthen clay from a pit that is fully approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for the purpose of raising levees in St. Bernard Parish, particularly LPV 148. When it was discovered that the USACE was going to use T-walls instead of clay to raise the levees, Contreras Dirt Enterprises and Glen Diaz asked Messrs. Lester and Coleman whether they could come up with something using clay that would match the T-wall protection. Mr. Lester advised that there is a product made by Huesker which is used in other parts of the world that could be used in an area such as St. Bernard Parish where the ground is very soft. Mr. Lester stated that they concluded that the levees could have been built in St.

Bernard Parish, particularly LPV 148, out of earthen clay by using high strength geotextiles for reinforcement and that the construction would be within the existing rights-of-ways and cost less than building T-walls. Mr. Lester stated that his purpose for attending this meeting was to familiarize the Committee with the product. He stated that he was advised by Mr. Doody and Mr. Turner that their report was sent to the Authority's consultant for evaluation and that the consultant's report has not been completed. Mr. Lester stated that they did not have a realistic expectation that the USACE would change its opinion about what is planned for LPV 148; however, he said that Colonel Sinkler has told them that if the Authority would ask the USACE to consider the proposed methodology that the USACE will put it through its paces.

Mr. Lester provided copies to the Committee of the "Preliminary Design for Geotextile Reinforced Earthen Levee – St. Bernard Parish Hurricane Protection System LPV 148 Chalmette Loop Levee – Verrett to Caernarvon, St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana", dated December 10, 2009, prepared for Contreras Dirt Enterprises, LLC by Geotechnical Engineering Associated, LLC.

Mr. Lester described the high strength geotextile fabric that is proposed for use and stated that LPV 148 could be built in 15 months at a cost of \$255 million by using the proposed methodology. He asked that the Authority send a letter to the USACE requesting that they consider this methodology.

David Coleman explained that the goal in looking at the earthen levee concept was to raise the crest elevation to a height that would give the 2057-2060 level of flood protection (29-ft. elevation) without having to go outside of the existing right-of-way. The levee could not be raised with earthen materials without some type of reinforcement due to slope and settlement issues. Mr. Coleman explained the research performed on reinforcing materials and described the proposed methodology using a high strength polyvinyl alcohol geotextile material produced by Huesker for raising a levee. The design elevation for LPV 148 using this concept would be 32-ft. He stated that it would take approximately 30 years for settlement to bring the crest elevation to 29-ft. An additional raise of 1-1/2-ft. along the crest would be required to reach the 50 year design elevation. The cost to raise the levee an additional 1-1/2 feet is not included in the estimate of \$255 million. The proposed concept is to initially raise the levee to an elevation of 32-ft. with a 10-ft. wide crest, 4.1 side slopes and stability berms to within five feet of the right-of-way. Mr. Coleman stated that the design was peer reviewed by several different national authorities on levee designs and slope stability.

Mr. Doody advised that he was provided with this information at a meeting several weeks ago. The information was submitted to one of the Authority's ID-IQ consultants for evaluation. The Authority is awaiting a report from its consultant. He added that the Authority is interested in assuring that it has the best technical solutions available.

## **New Business:**

### **A. Discussion of operations and maintenance costs for completed 100 year protection system.**

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Mr. Wittie commented on the additional responsibilities and operations and maintenance costs that will be incurred when the 100 year protection system is completed. Mr. Doody noted that the Authority is working with the State to address the operations and maintenance costs for the system.

Mr. Estopinal pointed out the additional maintenance that will be required for the splash pads adjacent to the floodwalls. Mr. Turner advised that the Authority is addressing this issue with the USACE in connection with the design details for the T-walls.

Glen Diaz commented that the levee failure in St. Bernard Parish was caused by scouring from the wave action of Lake Borgne. He stated that at this time there is no protection to prevent scouring with the T-wall as designed by the USACE. He commented on the proposed concept to raise the levee using geotextile fabric.

Mr. Turner advised that the USACE's Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) is looking at these issues and doing numeric and physical modeling. A final decision will not be made by the USACE until a report is received from ERDC.

Mr. Wittie noted that a number of Orleans Levee District (O.L.D.) floodgates had been recently repaired. Gerry Gillen, O.L.D. Executive Director, advised that the repair of a second group of floodgates should be advertised soon.

Future repair work for LBBLD pump stations was discussed. Mr. Turner advised that a Request for Qualifications was advertised for the engineering consulting work required for the replacement of one of four pump station engines.

Fran Campbell, East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD) Executive Director, commented on future costs to maintain the lakefront levee rock berm, which is currently being designed by Burk-Kleinpeter.

The additional maintenance that will be required for increased levee right-of-ways and floodwalls and additional floodgates in the new system was discussed, as well as the maintenance of sour protection constructed under USACE Task Force Guardian.

### **B. Status of dredging contract for Violet Canal. (LBBLD)**

Peggy Sembera, LBBLD Administrative Assistant, advised that a notice of award of the contract for dredging the Violet Canal was issued on March 29<sup>th</sup>. The contract was awarded to RLH Investments in the amount \$139,297. The current contract is to dredge a portion of the canal. The entire canal will be dredged under a future project.

**Levee District Reports:**

**Lake Borgne Basin Levee District (LBBLD):** The LBBLD monthly status report, copy appended to minutes, was reviewed by Peggy Sembera.

**Orleans Levee District (O.L.D.):** The O.L.D. monthly status report, copy appended to minutes, was reviewed by Gerry Gillen.

**East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD):** The EJLD monthly status report, copy appended to minutes, was reviewed by Fran Campbell.

Jerry Colletti with the USACE advised that although the Mississippi River had risenw there has been no rain and the section of River Road discussed at a prior Committee meeting has been dry for the past two weeks.

There was no further business; therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.