

Ms. Wendy Thibodeaux, Lafourche Parish Assessor, thanked the Board for having her here for the meeting today. She advised that the presentation is strictly informative, and she is not here to tell the Board what to do or how to run their District. She stated that the presentation was put together to make everyone aware of some events that happened in the last legislative session, and some possible events that could happen in the upcoming session.

Ms. Thibodeaux advised that any watercraft vessel that is here on January 1st she puts it on the tax roll, gives it a value, it generates a tax bill, and the boat owner pays that bill to the sheriff's office and he distributes the money. The boat owner is eligible to file an income tax credit at the state level for what they paid at the local level when he files his state income tax return. She advised that there were two bills filed in the last legislative session that could have greatly affected that process. The first was House Bill 805 by Rep. Adams which if passed would make the credit from refundable to non-refundable. This would have removed the incentive for the vessels to stay in Lafourche parish or Louisiana on January 1st.

The other was Senate Bill 177 by Senator Adley, which if it would have been successful it would have exempted the watercraft completely. If this would have been successful, it would have removed \$52 million dollars from the Lafourche Parish tax roll, or exempted 41% of the tax base.

In the year 2000, all of the taxing districts generated \$37.8 million dollars. In 2014, all of the taxing districts generated \$123.6 million dollars. That is a 237% increase in fourteen years. Her office has added \$683 million dollars of taxable property in the last fourteen years, which is a good thing because Lafourche is growing. The other side is that Lafourche parish has the third highest millage rate in the coastal parishes. Ms. Thibodeaux explained that the reason for the high millage rate is taxing districts are choosing to roll their millages forward instead of keeping the adjusted millage rates. The idea is as you have a higher taxable value your millage rate should go down.

Ms. Thibodeaux advised that 2016 is a reassessment year. In 2016, she has to take the 2015 tax roll and has to revalue it so she will take the 2015 tax roll and will bring it up to 2016 market value which will increase the value. She will also add anything new to the tax roll in 2016, which means anything that wasn't here in 2015 but is here on January 1st in 2016 is added to the tax roll. It is at this point that the taxing districts have a choice to either roll their millage rates up, or we can keep them adjusted.

Ms. Thibodeaux is asking and strongly encouraging all the taxing districts that when they go to levy their millage rate to look at just what is needed to run their operation. She stated that if taxing districts do this it creates a trust between the taxing district and the taxpayer. It gives an incentive for more people to come in and make Lafourche their home. It also allows our businesses, our watercraft, and oil and gas to reinvest its money back into their companies to keep them alive.

Ms. Thibodeaux stated that she has been told with certainty that the bill for exempting watercraft will be filed again this session. She stated that if water districts, fire departments, sheriff offices and school boards call and go up the legislators will listen a little bit harder.

Chairman Caffery thanked Ms. Thibodeaux for her presentation.

Mr. Malbrough advised that he put together a spreadsheet that summarizes all of the main capital projects that are going on now, the current status, and an estimated cost.

Mr. Dustin Rabalais, T. Baker Smith, reported that the Phase 2 dredging project is 450 days. We are at day 218. There are 232 days remaining. He reviewed the status on all of the disposal sites, and described where each site is located. He advised that Phase 2A quantity surveys are complete, and aerial photography is complete. They are working with the contractor to develop an efficient change order. He has been working with Providence on the revision to the existing permit.

Mr. Malbrough reported that Union Pacific is reviewing the design. They are expecting the regulatory permits to be sent off at the beginning of February. We don't anticipate any issues that would prevent us from having the bridge constructed before the end of December. We are still waiting on CPRA's relocation agreement that they have had since December.

Mr. Malbrough advised that he spoke to the contractor on the saltwater control structure, and they are planning on taking the barge from the existing location as early as the beginning of next week. They will take it, dry dock it, and assess it to see if any repairs are needed.

Moved by Vice-Chairman Gene Harrell, seconded by Commissioner Eli Miles, Jr. to approve the permit application for Helen Woodward, 6884 Hwy. 1, Belle Rose, LA to build a wall of gabion baskets to level off the property, and for erosion control. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Hugh Caffery asked Ben to step out of the meeting while the Board discusses his evaluation. Chairman Caffery stated that the Board has looked at the evaluation form that he sent out, and have gotten a lot of responses. He thanked the Board for their time to look at it. Chairman Caffery stated that he felt the same as the other Board members said in their responses that he has done a very good job.

Moved by Commissioner Greg Nolan, seconded by Commissioner Judge Jimmy Gaidry to give a 4% pay increase to Ben Malbrough effective 01/23/2016. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Malbrough returned to the meeting, and Chairman Caffery informed him that he has a 4% raise. Ben thanked the Board, and said he really appreciates it. Vice-Chairman Gene Harrell said we appreciate the work he has been doing.

Mr. Malbrough stated that we want to make sure that Bayou Lafourche is a quality water source that provides enough quantity to the fresh water treatment plants. Also, we want to get enough water down the bayou to prevent saltwater intrusion. We have to implement the remaining portions of the Reintroduction into Bayou Lafourche project.

Chairman Caffery commented that we need another summit now that Terrebonne parish is in the District and we now have twelve commissioners. We need to give the people of Terrebonne parish a voice and participate. We need to get moving on our projects so that when we have a summit there will some excitement about construction. We have breakout sessions to get ideas of the people. He was thinking about the end of summer or beginning of fall to have another summit.

Chairman Caffery advised that we are setting up the Friends of Bayou Lafourche Foundation, and we will hire a director for the foundation whose job will solely be to build relationships. Mr. Malbrough stated that everything has been blessed by the AG's office for the District to make contributions to the foundation to get it going. We are in the process of setting up a meeting with a CPA to help with the paperwork to be submitted to the IRS.

Mr. Malbrough reported that he will be meeting with All South next week to go over the Donaldsonville Drainage Improvements project. They should have final plans and specs soon on the project.

Mr. Malbrough stated that we plan to get the Statement of Interest and Qualifications on the weir removal Friday. The pumping capacity improvements are due in February. The sediment is 95% complete. The boat launch repair was going to be done by the sediment trap contractor but his cost was much higher than we anticipated. We are going to approach a couple of contractors to get prices. We won't have to publicly bid.

Mr. Malbrough advised that the Bayou Cleanup is March 12th. He stated that they met last week and will meet again in February. He will have an appreciation party like we had last year.

Chairman Hugh Caffery commented on the river level at the pump station, and Mr. Malbrough stated that it crested at Donaldsonville at 32 ft.

Chairman Hugh Caffery asked for any public comments, and Mr. Henry Templet stated that they are looking for volunteers for the Bayou Lafourche Cleanup.

Chairman Caffery stated that there will be no executive session tonight.

Moved by Commissioner Francis Richard, seconded by Commissioner Ray May and unanimously approved the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Hugh Caffery, Chairman

Greg Nolan, Secretary/Treasurer