

**RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION
FOR THE PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE**
Regular Meeting – 5:00 p.m.
BREC Administration Building
6201 Florida Boulevard
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Commission Minutes
April 24, 2025

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) was held at BREC's Administrative Offices on April 24, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Vice Chairwoman Clarice Gordon. Commissioner Dwayne Rogers offered the invocation. Commissioner Rossie Washington, Jr. led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was taken and a quorum of Commissioners was present, including Clarice Gordon, Vice Chair; Kenneth Pointer, Treasurer; Mike Polito; Dwayne Rogers; Nathan Rust; Lon Vicknair; and Rossie Washington, Jr., were present. Commissioners Donna Collins Lewis and Collis Temple III were absent. Staff members present were Corey K. Wilson, Superintendent; Reed Richard, Assistant Superintendent of System Planning; Aneatra Boykin, Chief Administrative Officer; Andrea Roberts, Chief Operating Officer; Don Johnson, Chief Financial Officer; Chad Brewer, Jim Fleshman, Angela Harms, Darlene Jarvis, RaHarold Lawson, Mike Raby, Ryan Reed, and Ebony Allen. Murphy Foster, legal counsel; Dr. Murrelle Harrison, Executive Director of the Gardere Initiative; and Carl Stages, Executive Director of BREC Foundation, were also in attendance. The rest of the audience consisted of other BREC staff, sign language interpreters, media, and the public.

Public Comment

The Vice Chair announced that public comment would be allowed prior to a vote being taken on any agenda action item and explained the process to be observed.

Adoption of Minutes

Vice Chair Gordon read the following resolution:

Resolved, that the reading of the minutes of the Recreation and Park Commission Meeting of March 27, 2025, be dispensed with, and that they be approved as written.

Motion to approve by Mr. Pointer

Second by Mr. Rust

Unanimously approved

Consent Calendar

Resolved, that the Commission approve the routine Personnel Transactions from March 12, 2025, to April 10, 2025.

Motion by Mr. Pointer

Second by Mr. Washington

Unanimously approved

Presentations

Superintendent Wilson recognized Dr. Murrelle Harrison, Executive Director of The Gardere Initiative. Dr. Harrison was joined by Cindy Sonbuchner, Operations Manager of The Gardere Initiative, to share their coalition's mission: "to address substance abuse and other social ills in the Gardere area". Dr. Harrison highlighted the start of their partnership with BREC in 2018 and how it has contributed to making Hartley/Vey Park at Gardere Lane the "hub of [their]

community,” playing a role in reducing crime in the area. She also introduced two youth volunteers and program participants who shared the impact The Gardere Initiative has had on their lives and the broader community. Superintendent Wilson thanked Dr. Harrison and The Gardere Initiative for their continued commitment to Hartley/Vey Park and presented Dr. Harrison with the Partnership Presentation award in recognition of their contributions in support of BREC’s mission.

The Commission viewed a brief video highlighting various upcoming events throughout the parish during the month of April.

Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

Superintendent Wilson requested that the item under Administrative Matters be deferred to May to allow additional time for BREC and the Mayor of Baker to finalize discussions regarding the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement. Mr. Washington made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Pointer.

Under Communications, Superintendent Wilson reviewed the March 2025 Activity Report, noting continued growth at BREC’s Zoo, with this March being one of its most successful periods in recent years. He also highlighted Oak Villa as the top-performing facility, reporting a 92% increase in attendance compared to last year.

He then shared a visual summary of his meetings and engagements throughout March with various organizations and public officials as part of his ongoing efforts to engage with community leaders across the parish.

Superintendent Wilson also announced that former employee Ms. Chris Marchiafava recently welcomed a new grandchild and extended his congratulations and well wishes to her and her family.

Mr. Rust asked for a point of order to note that while a motion and second were made to defer the Administrative Matters item, a formal vote had not occurred. Vice Chair Gordon asked if there were any objections from the Commission; there were none. The motion to defer the item until May was approved by unanimous consent.

Standing Committee Reports

Vice Chair Gordon recognized Mr. Pointer to deliver the Finance report. Mr. Pointer introduced to Don Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, to present the action items.

Mr. Johnson presented the Budget Status Report and read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission accept the unaudited monthly Budget Status Report for the month ending and fiscal year-to-date period ending March 31, 2025, as presented.

Mr. Polito asked Mr. Johnson to clarify the projected tax surplus for 2024. Mr. Johnson explained that BREC’s projected tax revenue is based on estimates provided by the tax assessor each June or July for the following year. He noted that while an updated estimate could be requested in October or November, the budget is typically based solely on the original estimate. As a result, actual revenue may exceed projections due to late payments or penalties on collected taxes.

Mr. Polito followed up by asking if BREC currently has more money than projected for 2024 and, if so, where the surplus is allocated, particularly in relation to the reserve fund. Mr. Johnson responded that the 2024 fund balance is approximately \$94 million, of which \$23 million

is in cash. He noted that he is open to further discussion on the reserve and also mentioned that the 2023 audit is nearing completion.

Mr. Polito requested a workshop to further discuss financial matters. Superintendent Wilson agreed to coordinate a time for that meeting.

Motion to approve the Budget Status Report by Mr. Rust
Second by Mr. Washington
Approved by unanimous consent

Under Contracts and Bids, Mr. Johnson reviewed the first item and read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission approve Change Order No. 2 to the existing contract with Brown Industrial Construction, LLC. for the Sandy Creek Bridge Replacement for \$66,173.31 and 34 additional days for additional soil remediation, soil lab testing, and additional contract days for the testing, and weather days. The original contract amount was \$229,500; the new contract amount through Change Order No. 2 is \$334,952.53.

Motion by Mr. Washington
Second by Mr. Vicknair
Unanimously approved

Mr. Johnson reviewed the next item and read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission award Sealed Bid No. 1847 – Annual Contract for Swimming Pool Chemicals for Delivery to BREC Sites, Items 11, 12, and 13 to Commercial Products, Inc. DBA Poolsure, the lowest responsive bidder, and Items #1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 to Delta H2O, LLC at prices stated on the Bid Tabulation. There are no awards for Items #2 and #5. The estimated total contract amount is \$50,000 annually. The contract period will be for 12 months starting on April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026, with the option to renew for two additional 12-month terms, at the same prices, terms, and conditions, not to exceed 36 months.

Motion by Mr. Rust
Second by Mr. Pointer
Unanimously approved

The Vice Chair noted that the Human Resources Advisory Committee action item for the routine transactions was on the Consent Calendar.

Vice Chair Gordon recognized Mr. Rust to deliver the Planning and Park Resources report. Mr. Rust introduced Reed Richard, Assistant Superintendent of System Planning, to present two action items.

Mr. Richard presented the first action item and read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission approve the name of the newly acquired park at the corner of Erie Street and Plank Road, Erie Street Park, in alignment with the name of the street and in accordance with BREC's Naming and Endowment Policy.

Motion by Mr. Rogers
Second by Mr. Rust
Unanimously approved

Mr. Richard reviewed the next item and read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission approve the updates to the 2020 East Baton Rouge Parish Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, as presented.

Motion by Mr. Polito
Second by Mr. Rust
Unanimously approved

The Selection of Professionals Committee did not meet.

Reports of Special Committees

None

Special Orders

Vice Chair Gordon, then took up the appointments to standing advisory committees as follows:

Clarice Gordon
Leigh Bonfanti

Human Resources

Lon Vicknair
Ryan Cross
Wade Evans
Mike Murray
Brett Murray
Randy Albarez
Amy Daughdrill

Communications & Information Systems
Finance
Golf
Human Resources
Planning & Park Resources
Zoo

Motion to approve the committee appointments by Mr. Pointer
Second by Mr. Rust
Approved by unanimous consent

Unfinished Business and General Orders

None

New Business

The Vice Chair opened the floor to whichever Commissioner wanted to take up Item A under New Business. Vice Chair Gordon moved forward with reading the following resolution when no member from the board showed interest in reading.

Resolved, That the Special Rule of Order entitled *Votes Required for Adoption* which provided the following language: "Unless specifically stated elsewhere in this document, the bylaws, or the standing rules, any action item placed before the commission for approval must receive a minimum of five votes to be adopted, be deleted in its entirety, effective immediately.

Motion to approve by Mr. Polito
Second by Mr. Rust

Discussion:

Mr. Pointer expressed concerns regarding how business could continue without requiring a majority vote [five of the nine Commission members]. He stated he did not see the need for the proposed change.

Mr. Polito explained that the intent was to allow business to proceed with a majority vote of those present, stating that the idea was that usually boards work off members present, quorum, majority [vote].

Mr. Washington disagreed, citing his experience on other boards, including the Planning Commission, where decisions require a majority of the full board. He expressed concern that under the proposed change, a small number of members could make decisions for the entire board, potentially without broad representation. He reminded the Commission that the current rule was adopted unanimously to ensure responsible decision-making as a taxing authority.

Vice Chair Gordon recognized Murphy Foster, legal counsel, for clarification. Mr. Foster stated that the current special rule is an exception to Robert's Rules of Order. He explained that while it is not unlawful, it conflicts with typical procedure, which allows decisions by a majority of those present once a quorum is established. He noted that maintaining the special rule would significantly limit the board's ability to take action.

Mr. Washington stated that he did not fully understand Mr. Foster's explanation.

Mr. Rust shared that during his time on the school board, which also uses Robert's Rules, a minimum of five votes was still required to approve actions, which sometimes made conducting business challenging. He also expressed concern that removing the rule could allow a small number of members to pass items without broader participation. He suggested tabling or deferring the motion for further discussion.

Mr. Polito indicated he was willing to table the motion.

Vice Chair Gordon again recognized Mr. Foster, who advised that a substitute motion could be made to defer the item, requiring a second and a vote. If the substitute motion failed, the board would return to the original motion; if it passed, a final vote on the substitute motion would occur.

Mr. Rogers asked for clarification and confirmed with Mr. Foster that removing the rule would align with state statute requiring only a simple majority for approval. Mr. Rogers noted that it may cause difficulties in conducting business due to lack of attendance and supported removal of the rule.

Mr. Washington responded by reminding Mr. Rogers that he had previously voted in favor of adopting the rule. Mr. Rogers stated he did not recall voting on the change and noted that it may have been early in his term.

Mr. Washington made a substitute motion to defer the item for 30 days.
Second by Mr. Pointer.

The Vice Chair asked if there was any discussion. With no discussion and one objection she called for a roll call vote with the following results:

Yeas: 6	Ms. Gordon, Mr. Pointer, Mr. Polito, Mr. Rust, Mr. Vicknair, Mr. Washington
Nays: 1	Mr. Rogers
Abstained: 0	
Absent: 2	Ms. Lewis, Mr. Temple

The Vice Chair called for a roll call vote on final passage of the substitute motion with the following results:

Yeas: 7	Ms. Gordon, Mr. Pointer, Mr. Polito, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Rust, Mr. Vicknair, Mr. Washington
Nays: 0	

Abstained: 0

Absent: 2 Ms. Lewis, Mr. Temple

Vice Chair Gordon continued under New Business reading the following resolution under Item B:

Resolved, That Standing Rules of BREC, section titled *Appointment and Employment of the Superintendent*, subsection *Tenure*, located on page 3, be deleted in its entirety. The Tenure section provides for the following language: The employment of the superintendent may be terminated at any time for any reason by affirmative vote of 2/3 majority of the commissioners. The superintendent shall, however, be entitled to notice as stipulated in the superintendent's employment contract except when immediate termination is in the best interest of the commission or agency.

Motion to approve by Mr. Polito

Second by Mr. Rust

Discussion:

Mr. Washington expressed concern regarding the deletion of the Tenure provision stating that the magnitude of terminating the Superintendent should require more than the simple majority vote and it would be appropriate to remain as written.

The Vice Chair stated that since there were objections, she would hold a roll call vote. The results are as follows:

Yeas: 5 Ms. Gordon, Mr. Polito, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Rust, Mr. Vicknair

Nays: 2 Mr. Pointer, Mr. Washington

Abstained: 0

Absent: 2 Ms. Lewis, Mr. Temple

The Vice Chair read Item C as follows:

Resolved, that the BREC Commission will not renew the employment contract for the Superintendent of BREC where the Superintendent has given notice to the Commission of his intent not to seek renewal of his employment contract.

Motion to approve by Mr. Polito

Second by Mr. Rogers

Approved unanimously

Item D under New Business was read by Vice Chair Gordon as follows:

Resolved, that the final date of "full-time" employment for Superintendent Corey Wilson shall be May 31, 2025. Any transition-related services will be addressed separately by commission action and contract amendment.

Motion to approve by Mr. Polito

Second by Mr. Rogers

Discussion:

Superintendent Wilson explained that the amendment to the resolution, specifically the removal of "full-time," was intended to avoid jeopardizing benefits he currently receives.

Mr. Foster confirmed that the amendment was appropriate to protect benefits.

Mr. Rust suggested revising the language to state, *"The final date of employment as Superintendent for Corey Wilson shall be May 31, 2025,"* to avoid the appearance of termination from BREC entirely.

Mr. Foster agreed with Mr. Rust's recommendation, stating it more accurately reflects the intended action.

Mr. Pointer questioned the rationale behind amending the Superintendent's contract early, creating a new undefined role for Mr. Wilson, and hiring an interim superintendent at a comparable salary rather than allowing Mr. Wilson to complete his full term.

During discussion, Mr. Rust explained that some board members wished to bring in new leadership while still valuing Mr. Wilson's institutional knowledge during the transition.

Mr. Pointer reiterated concerns, questioning the decision to pay Mr. Wilson to advise a replacement if he was not deemed suitable to continue leading. Mr. Washington echoed similar concerns.

Following discussion, Mr. Polito withdrew his motion to approve Item D and Mr. Rogers withdrew his second. There being no further motion to approve Item D, no action was taken on the item.

Mr. Polito made a motion to approve the following revised resolution under Item E.
Resolved, That the Commission chair or vice-chair to execute the amendment, as attached, to the existing employment contract with the Superintendent, Corey Wilson.

Motion to approve by Mr. Polito

Second by Mr. Vicknair

Motion passes with a majority vote with Mr. Washington abstaining due to not having had the opportunity to review the contract amendment.

The Vice Chair continues to Item F as follows:

Resolved, That an interim superintendent be appointed by the commission on or before June 1, 2025, to serve until the appointment of a permanent superintendent.

Motion by Mr. Rust

Second by Mr. Rogers

Approved unanimously

The Vice Chair read Item G as follows:

Resolved, That, pursuant to a written request of five commission members and Article V, Section A.2 of the BREC bylaws, the Commission will hold recurring special meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 5:00 p.m., from May through December 2025, to support communication, oversight, and deliberation during the leadership transition, including candidate interviews for the Superintendent position and engagement with a search firm.

Motion by Mr. Polito

Second by Mr. Rogers

Mr. Rust offered a substitute motion to change the meetings from every second Thursday of the month to every second Tuesday of the month.

Second by Mr. Vicknair

Discussion:

Mr. Washington expressed that he did not support the extra meetings, stating that many of these functions should be handled by the search committee, making the additional meetings unnecessary.

Mr. Pointer agreed, adding that he believed oversight and interviews were to be handled by the committee, not through additional meetings.

Mr. Polito explained that the additional meetings would ensure clear communication throughout the leadership transition period.

Mr. Rogers and Mr. Rust also spoke in favor of scheduling the additional meetings.

Following discussion, a roll call vote was taken on the substitute motion, with the following results:

Yeas: 5	Ms. Gordon, Mr. Polito, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Rust, Mr. Vicknair
Nays: 2	Mr. Pointer, Mr. Washington
Abstained: 0	
Absent: 2	Ms. Lewis, Mr. Temple

The Vice Chair called for a roll call vote on final passage of the substitute motion with the following results:

Yeas: 5	Ms. Gordon, Mr. Polito, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Rust, Mr. Vicknair
Nays: 2	Mr. Pointer, Mr. Washington
Abstained: 0	
Absent: 2	Ms. Lewis, Mr. Temple

The Vice Chair continued under New Business, reading Item H as follows:

Resolved, That BREC staff be directed to prepare and publish, in accordance with applicable laws and public employment guidelines, a public advertisement for the superintendent position with the initial posting to be published no later than May 1, 2025.

Motion by Mr. Rogers

Second by Mr. Rust

Approved by unanimous consent

The Vice Chair continued to Item I as follows:

Resolved, That BREC staff be directed to prepare and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an executive search firm to assist in the recruitment and evaluation of candidates for the superintendent position, no later than May 1, 2025.

Motion by Mr. Polito

Second by Mr. Rust

Approved unanimously

The Vice Chair read Item J as follows:

Resolved, That the Commission approve the establishment of a search committee to conduct a national search for the new superintendent. The committee will review the job description and make recommendations of any necessary changes to the Commission for approval, develop a timeline, make regular reports of their progress at scheduled Commission meetings, and work with a qualified consultant firm to provide the Commission a list of highly qualified candidates to interview.

Motion by Mr. Washington

Second by Mr. Pointer

Mr. Rust made a substitute motion to defer Item J to the next meeting.

Second by Mr. Polito

Unanimously approved

The Vice Chair called for a roll call vote on final passage of the substitute motion with the following results:

Yeas: 7 Ms. Gordon, Mr. Pointer, Mr. Polito, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Rust, Mr. Vicknair, Mr. Washington

Nays: 0

Abstained: 0

Absent: 2 Ms. Lewis, Mr. Temple

Vice Chair read the last item under New Business Item K as follows:

Resolved, That the Commission approve conducting a national search and selection of a new superintendent for the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge.

Motion by Mr. Polito

Second by Mr. Rogers

Approved by unanimous consent

Adjournment

Vice Chair Gordon requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Polito made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Rust seconded, and Vice Chair Gordon adjourned the meeting at 7:01 p.m. without objection.

Corey K. Wilson, Superintendent
and Ex-Officio Secretary

Clairice Gordon, Vice Chair

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