

**RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION  
FOR THE PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE**  
**Special Meeting – 5:00 p.m.**  
**BREC Administration Building**  
**6201 Florida Boulevard**  
**Baton Rouge, Louisiana**  
Commission Minutes  
August 14, 2025

**Call to Order**

A special meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) was held at BREC's Administrative Offices on August 14, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Commissioner Pointer, Commissioner Wade Evans offered the invocation and Commissioner Stages led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was taken and a quorum of Commissioners was present, including; Mike Polito; Carl Stages and Commissioner Yates. Commissioners Donna Collins Lewis, Clarice Gordon, Dwayne Rogers, Lon Vicknair, and Collis Temple, III, and David McDavid were absent. Staff members present were Janet Simmons, Interim Superintendent; Reed Richard, Assistant Superintendent of System Planning; Maurice Velasquez, Interim Chief Operating Officer; Johanna Landreneau, Interim Chief Human Resource Officer; Robyn Lott, Jim Fleshman, Angela Harms, RaHarold Lawson, Mike Raby, Steven Knight and Ebony Allen. Murphy Foster, legal counsel, was also in attendance. The rest of the audience consisted of other BREC staff, sign language interpreters, media, and the public.

**Public Comment**

Commissioner Pointer 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.

**Reports of Officers and Standing Committees**

Commissioner Pointer acknowledged, Interim Janet Simmons to present the Superintendent's Report.

Interim Simmons opened her report by stating that she has discovered that there are priorities that must be met: people first, animals second, and parks third. She informed the Commission that BREC is currently addressing a sovereign citizen threat. She explained that a former employee, who had previously been arrested in 2018 under the terrorism act and incarcerated, recently approached both a BREC employee and herself. An image of the individual was presented. Following guidance from Risk Management, security measures have been heightened, including the addition of Baton Rouge Police Department (BRPD) detail at the administrative building, the distribution of the suspect's image throughout the facility, and notification to District Attorney Hillar Moore.

Interim Simmons continued by reporting that several bullet casings have been found at Highland Park, and that numerous complaints have been received from nearby residents regarding nightly gunfire. She introduced Mr. David Burtwell, Chief Executive Officer of PSC Security Group, the firm contracted by BREC. Mr. Burtwell stated that the gunfire reported by residents includes automatic gunfire, which has been confirmed through video recordings. He further noted that live video monitoring is currently in place at Howell Park, Highland Park, and the Milton J. Womack Park Administration Building. He explained that PSC is conducting a full audit of the security camera systems and related technology.

Commissioner Evans inquired about the possibility of installing security mechanisms at

the controlled entryways of the Highland Park parking lots. Mr. Burtwell responded that BREC possesses a significant amount of software and technology that is not being fully utilized. He explained that PSC is in the process of auditing these resources to ensure that they are deployed to their fullest capacity in order to enhance security measures.

Commissioner Evans then asked about the cost of the mobile camera located at Howell Park. Mr. Burtwell stated that the cost is \$3,500 per month. He clarified that the mobile camera is part of a pilot program and that PSC is currently reviewing the data collected with the service provider.

Commissioner Pointer requested clarification regarding Mr. Burtwell's role and affiliation. Mr. Burtwell confirmed that he is the Chief Executive Officer of PSC Security Group, which is headquartered in Baton Rouge.

Interim Simmons reaffirmed that BREC is actively assessing and addressing security concerns across both the parks and the administrative building.

Interim Simmons continued with the second priority, animals, by addressing concerns that had recently been brought to her attention regarding conditions at Farr Park, where BREC's equestrian horses are kept. She explained that BREC owns forty-five horses and boards an additional twenty. She reported that the horse stalls had been found in unsanitary condition, that horses were losing weight, and that several had been admitted to the LSU Veterinary School, despite the facility's limited budget for veterinary services.

She noted, however, that steps are being taken to mitigate these issues. Ten temporary workers have been hired to clean the stalls, and she and Johanna Landreneau are working closely with Jim Fleshman, Director of the Baton Rouge Zoo, along with other equine professionals, to improve operations at Farr Park. Kleinpeter Veterinary Services has also been engaged to assess the horses, and at the next regular meeting, an amendment to the current contract will be introduced to increase funding for veterinary care.

Commissioner Evans asked how the horses are being utilized. Interim Simmons responded that they are involved in programming, including BREC's summer equestrian services, after-school training, and the LSU Equestrian Club, among other programs.

She made sure to highlight BREC's rapid response to this issue by recognizing the strong efforts of Park Operations in restoring the Farr Park facility. She highlighted the recent painting work, as well as repairs to potholes, as examples of progress already underway.

Interim Simmons concluded her report by providing a high-level overview of the upcoming Commissioner Retreat. She stated that the retreat will include discussions on the restructuring of the organizational chart, updates to the employee handbook, and a review of projects currently underway. She noted that these projects are being led by Maurice Velasquez and overseen by the newly hired Senior Project Manager. She further reported that a Call Center Manager has been hired to oversee the Rapid Response Call Center, which has been soft-launched and will officially go live to the public on September 8. She confirmed that the 2023 financial audit has been completed and will be presented at the August 28 Regular Commission Meeting, and that the 2024 financial audit is scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2025. She ended her report by stating that there are several outstanding invoices that date back to 2024. Adding that a previous vendor, Pool Source, has an outstanding invoice from April 2024 for \$17, 500.00 for Liberty Lagoon that went to collections.

Commissioner Evans inquired about the finance charges associated with outstanding invoices. Don Johnson explained that he had received the most recent invoice dated July 25, and clarified that BREC is making payment directly to the company rather than through the collections agency. He further stated that, as a government agency, BREC does not intend to pay finance charges. He reported that a check to Pool Source was issued on August 14, 2025, and once the payment has been processed, BREC will be brought current.

Under Standing Committees, Commissioner Pointer referred to Commissioner Polito to present the items under Selection of Professionals.

Commissioner Polito moved to defer Items 1a and 1b to the next Commission meeting. Commissioner Evans seconded the motion.

Commissioner Pointer opened the floor for discussion.

After no discussion, Commissioner Pointer asked "All those in favor say aye, those who opposed say nay" The results are as follows:

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

The motion to defer items 1a and 1b was approved unanimously.

**The deferred items were as follows:**

Item 1a: Resolved, That the Commission approve Amendment No. 8 to Contract No. 2020-112 with Sasaki Associates, the prime design professional for Phase 1 of the Greenwood Park and Baton Rouge Zoo Design and Construction project, for a not-to-exceed (NTE) amount of \$24,000 for reimbursable expenses and the reallocation of fees from Program Refinement & Concept Design to Schematic Design, Design Development, Construction Documentation and Administration. The current Zoo/Greenwood Park/Dumas Golf Course Contract is \$7,060,903, and the new total with Amendment No. 8 is \$7,084,903.

Item 1b: Resolved, That the Commission approve Amendment No. 1 to Contract No. 2023000337 with Patch Landscape Architecture LLC for additional design work for a new Anna T. Jordan Community Park Playground and Site Improvements due to increased construction budget and added technical requirements, not to exceed \$75,891 and additional services to provide stormwater management plan, \$5,500; hydraulics study, \$10,000; and preliminary USACE permitting for a new contract fee of \$154,841. Authorize the superintendent to execute appropriate documents.

Commissioner Polito continued to Item 1c under Selection of Professionals, stating that the committee recommends approval of the amended contract with Landreneau and Associates, LLC.

Commissioner Evans moved to approve the following resolution, with a second by Commissioner Polito:

Resolved, That the Commission hereby approves the amended contractor agreement with Landreneau and Associates, LLC, represented by Johanna Landreneau. Under this agreement, Johanna Landreneau shall serve in the capacity of Interim Chief Human Resources Officer. The term of the agreement shall commence on June 16, 2025, and shall remain in effect through December 15, 2025, unless earlier terminated. The total compensation shall not exceed Ninety-

Nine Thousand Dollars (\$99,000.00).

Commissioner Pointer opened the floor for discussion.

After no discussion, Commissioner Pointer asked "All those in favor say aye, those who opposed say nay" The results are as follows:

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Polito moved to defer Item 1d reading the following resolution under Selection of Professionals. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Yates:

Resolved, that the Commission approve the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) between BREC, the Baton Rouge Soccer Club (BRSC), and St. Joseph's Academy (SJA), where BREC will provide 6 acres of land at Independence Park for the construction of two turfed soccer fields with concession stands, bathrooms, locker rooms, and fencing. All lighting, locker rooms, and stands will be financed by SJA. Both fields will be available for use by the public 50% of the time.

After no discussion, Commissioner Pointer asked "All those in favor say aye, those who opposed say nay" The results are as follows:

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

The motion to defer items 1d under Selection of Professionals was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Polito then proceeded to Item 1e under Selection of Professionals and moved to approve the following resolution, with a second by Commissioner Evans:

Resolved, That the Commission approve an amendment to Contract No. 2025000148 with Austin Fire Systems, LLC, increasing the not-to-exceed amount from \$43,000.00 to \$75,000.00 for calendar year 2025. This increase is necessary following a comprehensive review of aging fire alarm monitoring and communication equipment at designated sites, which revealed the need for upgrades and replacements to ensure continued public occupancy and safe use. A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been drafted and will be issued pending management review to ensure compliance with the Louisiana Public Bid Law for any additional fire life safety services or materials required beyond this contract amendment.

Commissioner Pointer opened the floor for discussion.

After no discussion, Commissioner Pointer asked "All those in favor say aye, those who opposed say nay" The results are as follows:

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Unfinished Business and General Orders**

Under Unfinished Business and General Orders, Commissioner Pointer read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission select the highest-scoring executive search firm to assist with the recruitment and evaluation of candidates for the Superintendent position.

Commissioner Evans made a motion to defer the resolution until the next regular meeting

when more commissioners would be present. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stages.

After no discussion, Commissioner Pointer asked "All those in favor say aye, those who opposed say nay" The results are as follows:

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

The motion was unanimously approved.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Yates made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stages. Commissioner Pointer adjourned the meeting at 5:33 p.m. without objection.

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Janet C. Simmons, Interim Superintendent  
and Ex-Officio Secretary

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Kenneth Pointer, Treasurer