

**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
January 22, 2026

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 January 22, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Mike Polito. Commissioner Murelle Harrison offered the invocation and Commissioner Carl Stages led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was taken and a quorum of Commissioners was present, including Mike Polito, Chair; Wade Evans, Vice-Chair; Carl Stages, Treasurer; Dr. Murelle Harrison, and Dustin Yates. Commissioner Collis Temple III arrived at 5:07 P.M. Commissioners Lon Vicknair, David McDavid, and Marshall Ortego were absent. Staff members present were Janet Simmons, Interim Superintendent; Aneatra Boykin, Chief Administrative Officer; Maurice Velasquez, Interim Chief Operating Officer; Johanna Landreneau, Interim Chief Human Resources Officer; Corey Luttrell, Rhonda Williams, Tia Edwards, Jim Fleshman, Angela Harms, Steven Knight, RaHarold Lawson, Robyn Lott, and Brendan Nestor. Jim Raines, legal counsel, was also in attendance. The rest of the audience consisted of other BREC staff, media, and the public.

Public Comment

Chairman Polito 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

Resolved, That the reading of the minutes of the Regular Recreation and Park Commission Meeting of December 17, 2025, be dispensed with, and that they be approved as written.

Motion by Mr. Yates

Second by Mr. Evans

There being no discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 5

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Polito reminded the Commission that all discussions and votes must be conducted on the record; to ensure clarity and transparency, to please refrain from side conversations; and when speaking, to kindly ensure that the microphone is on and speak directly into it so that remarks are properly captured.

Consent Calendar

Under the Consent Calendar, Chairman Polito read the following resolution:

Resolved, that the Commission approve the Routine Personnel Transactions from December 4, 2025 through January 5, 2026.

Commissioner Stages offered a substitute motion:
Resolved, that the Commission accept the Routine Personnel Transactions from December 4, 2025 through January 5, 2026.
Second by Mr. Evans

Commissioner Stages asked Aneatra Boykin to provide clarity on the wording change.

Ms. Boykin explained that since Routine Personnel Transactions have already occurred prior to the meeting, there is no need for the Commission to approve something that has already happened, and there will be a language change going forward.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 5

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Presentations

The BREC video showcasing upcoming activities for the month of February was played.

Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

Chairman Polito recognized Interim Superintendent Janet Simmons to present the Superintendent's Report.

Interim Superintendent Simmons commended the Communications Department for their hard work, especially on the BREC Video. She also gave kudos to the team members working in the parks providing services to the community.

Interim Superintendent Simmons presented the December 2025 attendance report and provided updates on community engagement meetings, volunteer impact, and Rapid Response.

Ms. Simmons introduced Nathan Tircuit, the new Interim Athletic Director, who will set up the Athletic Council. She informed the commissioners that she would be contacting them to set up a meeting regarding their respective area representatives on the Athletic Council.

Ms. Simmons emphasized that BREC would publicize the incentive of a five hundred dollar (\$500.00) state tax credit for volunteering.

Ms. Simmons recognized Finance Director Rhonda Williams and her team for the almost complete 2024 Audit. Chairman Polito and Commissioner Evans offered congratulations and support.

Ms. Simmons reviewed the top project's progress and completion timeline. They included workforce reduction, management training, departmental restructuring, and future retirement planning. Ms. Simmons noted that approximately 10% of BREC's workforce is being eliminated. She presented the obsolete land update timeline and also provided the timeline for recreational transition plans.

Ms. Simmons also recognized Information Systems Director Steven Knight, who discussed park safety and security updates, including the new in-house security operations center, an interdepartmental collaborative effort.

Commissioner Stages asked for further clarification about what happens when a notification is received. Mr. Knight provided additional information. Commissioner Stages asked Ms. Boykin if 24-hour a day monitoring would increase BREC's liability. Ms. Boykin noted that if we receive notice there may be some liability but that the monitoring should be more of a positive. Commissioner Stages asked if there are signs posted that notify the public that they are being recorded. Mr. Knight stated that there were already signs in the park with that notification.

Ms. Simmons concluded her report by reiterating the February events happening at BREC, including the opening of Liberty Lagoon on Memorial Day weekend and the hiring of lifeguards. She noted that the Commissioners had been provided with the IYP3 Strategic Plan update and the project portfolio.

Commissioner Stages stated that he would have liked to have more information and/or dialogue regarding the workforce reduction or any other major undertaking by BREC in order to answer any questions offered by the public.

Chairman Polito praised the BREC staff on behalf of the Parish for their diligence in performing the difficult task of reducing the workforce and continuing the work in making BREC the excellent organization he knows it can be.

Standing Committee Reports

Human Resources

Chairman Polito read Item i. under New Business:

Resolved, that the Commission approve the revisions to the Attendance and Attendance Point System Policy for Non-Exempt Employees.

Human Resources Director Corey Luttrell explained that this item was deferred in the Human Resources Committee meeting held on January 21, 2026.

Chairman Polito read Item ii. under New Business:

Resolved, that the Commission approve the following revisions the Chapter 5, Section 12 – Pay Plan Merit Increase, to read as follows: An employee who has a current service rating of 'Needs Improvement' shall not be eligible for any increase under the provisions of the rule.

Motion to approve by Mr. Evans

Second by Mr. Yates

There being no discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Polito read Item iii. under New Business:

Resolved, that the Commission approve revisions to Chapter 6 – Service Ratings to provide the following: 1) four ratings: Excellent, Good, Needs Improvement, and Unsatisfactory; 2) Section 9, "Effect of Satisfactory Rating" shall be deleted; 3) Supervisors who fail to complete timely performance reviews will be subject to disciplinary action.

Motion to approve by Mr. Evans

Second by Mr. Temple

There being no discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Polito read Item iv. under New Business:

Resolved, that the Commission approved the proposed Progressive Discipline Policy.

Motion by Mr. Yates.

Second by Dr. Harrison.

Dr. Harrison discussed the vote of the Human Resources Committee and appreciated the depth of involvement of the Committee members. She explained that the resolution was approved in Committee with the stipulation that BREC will contact the Louisiana Civil Service Commission to ascertain the reason why the State removed its Progressive Discipline Policy. Chairman Polito asked if we should modify the motion. Ms. Boykin stated that we did not have to modify the motion, and that it was just noted that we would contact Civil Service to obtain the information. Commissioner Evans and Ms. Boykin reiterated that BREC is not under the auspices of Civil Service.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Polito read Item v. under New Business:

Resolved, that the Commission approve the position of Barn Manager at pay grade 0007 with a Minimum Pay of \$40,801.07, Midpoint of \$53,041.25, and Maximum Pay of \$65,281.63.

Mr. Luttrell stated that he would like to amend the resolution to change the word "position" to "classification", explaining that there will be an allocated position to that role.

Commissioner Evans motioned to approve the amended motion as follows:

Resolved, that the Commission approve the classification of Barn Manager at pay grade 0007 with a Minimum Pay of \$40,801.07, Midpoint of \$53,041.25, and Maximum Pay of \$65,281.63.

Second by Mr. Yates.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Polito read Item vi. under New Business:

Resolved, that the Commission approve the position of Assistant Barn Manager at pay grade 0005 with a Minimum Pay of \$34,980.19, Midpoint of \$45,474.42, and Maximum Pay of \$55,968.43.

Motion to approve with amended language by Mr. Evans:

Resolved, that the Commission approve the classification of Assistant Barn Manager at pay grade 0005 with a Minimum Pay of \$34,980.19, Midpoint of \$45,474.42, and Maximum Pay of \$55,968.43.

Second by Mr. Temple

Commissioner Stages asked for information regarding the plan for Farr Park. Ms. Simmons stated that the information would be presented at the February Commission meeting.

Chairman Polito stated that he had a fundamental problem with a minimum, midpoint, and maximum salary range, and that BREC should do what it takes to hire the best; based on experience and qualifications, it gives the appearance that we do not trust the people doing the hiring to evaluate who they are hiring and give them a proper salary. He stated that he understands that we operate with a budget based on public funds but remarked that it is something that we should think about and discuss at some point in the future.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Selection of Professionals

Chairman Polito read the following resolution under Selection of Professionals:

Resolved, That the Commission approve the award of RFP 240 for Security Guard Services at BREC's Baton Rouge Zoo to Lofton Security Service, Inc. for nightly unarmed security services for an annual amount not to exceed \$126,437.00 for an initial period of twenty-four (24) months with the option to renew for three additional twelve-month periods at the same terms and conditions upon mutual agreement by all parties.

Motion by Mr. Temple

Second by Mr. Evans

Commissioner Evans stated that it has been confirmed that there are benchmarks in place to hold the security company accountable.

Commissioner Stages asked if there was an increase in the price of this contract in comparison with the previous contract and if it was listed in the budget. Zoo Director Jim Fleshman confirmed that there was an increase in price and that it was included in the budget.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Polito recognized Golf Director Mike Raby for his award as PGA Professional of the Year. Mr. Raby acknowledged that he could not have done it without the support of the Commission and his staff.

Reports of Special Committees

None

Special Orders

The Chair stated the next order of business is the election of officers. Chairman Polito noted that the Commission's committee appointee's terms end in March, and that commissioners should think about who they would like to appoint.

Commissioner Polito opened the nominations for Chair.

Commissioner Evans nominated Mr. Polito to serve as Chair.

There being no other nominations, Commissioner Temple motioned to close the nominations for Commission Chair.

Second by Mr. Yates.

Mr. Polito was elected Chairman by acclamation.

Chairman Polito opened the nominations for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Stages nominated Mr. Evans to serve as Commission Chair.

There being no other nominations, Commissioner Temple motioned to close the nominations for Vice Chair.

Second by Mr. Stages.

Mr. Evans was elected Vice Chair by acclamation.

Commissioner Polito opened the nominations for Treasurer.

Commissioner Yates nominated Mr. Stages to serve as Treasurer.

Second by Mr. Evans.

There being no other nominations, Commissioner Evans motioned to close the nominations for Treasurer.

Second by Mr. Yates.

Mr. Stages was elected Treasurer by acclamation.

Unfinished Business and General Orders

Chairman Polito read the following resolution:

Resolved, that the Commission approve the amended bylaws, as presented.

Motion to approve by Mr. Temple

Second by Mr. Evans.

There being no discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

New Business

None

Adjournment

Chairman Polito called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Yates made a motion adjourn, Commissioner Evans seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:54 p.m. without objection.

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

Mike Polito, Chairman