

**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
September 24, 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 September 24, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Michael Polito. Commissioner Murelle Harrison offered the invocation, and Commissioner Lon Vicknair led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was taken and a quorum of Commissioners was present, including Michael Polito, Chair; Wade Evans, Vice-Chair; Carl Stages, Treasurer; Dr. Murelle Harrison; David McDavid; and Lon Vicknair. Commissioner Collis Temple III arrived at 5:05 p.m. Commissioners Marshall Ortego and Dustin Yates were absent. Staff members present were Dr. Brooks M. Williams, Superintendent; Aneatra Boykin, Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel; Steven Knight, Chief Information Officer; Katrina Coots-Ward; Dina Duplantis, Angela Harms; Jim Fleshman; Dr. RaHarold Lawson; Robyn Lott; Corey Luttrell; Michael Raby. Dr. Evante Topp, Executive Director of BREC Foundation, and Murphy Foster, legal counsel, were 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 Recreation and Park Commission Meeting of August 27, 2026 be dispensed with, and that they be approved as written.

Motion to approve by Mr. McDavid

Second by Mr. Vicknair

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

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0

The minutes were approved unanimously.

Consent Calendar

None

Presentations

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

Chairman Polito acknowledged Commissioner Collis Temple III, who arrived at 5:05 p.m.

Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

Chairman Polito recognized the Superintendent, Dr. Brooks Williams, who began his Superintendent's Update by introducing two new staff members, starting with Chief Financial Officer Bobby LaBorde, who comes to BREC with forty-one (41) years of experience in finance. Mr. LaBorde stated that he has been doing this work for a long time and has seen just about

everything, but he is ready to do some good work and get things going in the right direction.

Superintendent Williams also introduced Jeffrey Aaron, the Director of Safety and Emergency Management, who was not present. Mr. Aaron comes to BREC with twenty-five (25) years of law enforcement experience, covering large areas with limited resources. The Superintendent stated that he is excited to have Mr. Aaron join BREC and work with local law enforcement agencies. He said that Mr. Aaron was in Baton Rouge last week and had very good conversations with the Baton Rouge Police Department (BRPD). The Superintendent also stated that BREC has secured two spots in the real-time crime center to be able to watch and monitor parks at all times; BREC's 1,800 cameras are going to be fed into BRPD on a consistent basis to be watched so that situations can be responded to faster, saving BREC approximately \$1.4 million in improvements that were to be made at the Womack Administration Building. He stated that this helps build great relationships with neighboring agencies.

Superintendent Williams discussed the community engagement meetings he has attended this month, the monthly attendance report for August, the final public engagement meeting for City-Brooks Community Park, and the new NFL Flag Football league. He stated that registration for the league opened on September 17, 2026, and the recommended locations are:

Baker: Chamberlin Street Park, Jefferson Street Park, Greenwood Community Park
Baton Rouge: Memorial Stadium Park, Howell Community Park, Evangeline Street Park
Central: Jackson Street Park, Greenwell Springs Park, Lovett Road Park
St. George: Airline Community Park, Bayou Manchac Park, Highland Road Community Park
Zachary: 39th Street Park, Rita Street Park, Rollins Road Park

The Superintendent stated that he spoke at Rotary Club and had a good time getting to meet the people and sharing his vision for the future of BREC. He stated that BREC staff, rather than an outside consultant, are conducting ongoing park audits to establish a system for continuously evaluating park conditions and prioritizing the basics, including mowing grass, trimming trees, maintaining functional lighting, keeping restrooms clean, ensuring fields are playable and facilities are safe, and keeping venues open. He said that each night while teaching his son to drive, they go by parks and he sends text messages to Dr. RaHarold Lawson, Director of Park Operations, to let him know what needs to be done. The Superintendent stated that this process will continue along with formal assessments so that the community will be able to see on an interactive dashboard how BREC is doing and what will be done to improve. The community will be able to utilize the dashboard and hold BREC accountable for using tax dollars wisely. He stated that nine sites were visited in one afternoon and he presented a rudimentary report of the findings which will be placed on the website. He stated that BREC is currently at 38% excellence and emphasized that excellence will become part of BREC's motto as the organization strives to become an excellent system, recognizing that there is still significant room for growth. He presented examples of some of the park findings with before-and-after photos of the work done, saying that simple fixes can change perception. He stated that BREC is a \$115 million entity, and we need to: 1) act like it, and 2) present it to the public.

Superintendent Williams ended his report by giving an update on the City-Parish Employee Retirement System (CPERS), stating that two paths are currently being evaluated. Option A is to pay BREC's fair share of the unfunded liability and exit, while Option B is to negotiate a spinoff into a BREC-controlled plan. He stated that CPERS has not yet agreed to the negotiation, and that a meeting was scheduled for Friday, September 25, 2026 to discuss further options. Key legal questions being raised are: 1) Does the ordinance allow for a spinoff?; and 2)

Is an ordinance needed from the Metro Council? He stated that the next steps are to settle on one agreed upon valuation and get legal clarity on the key questions. He discussed the actuarial valuation and unfunded liability amounts, the issues pertaining to each, and BREC's reasons for re-evaluation.

Chairman Polito asked Superintendent Williams about the timeframe on CPERS. He stated that most of the information needed to bring recommendations to the Commission should be obtained in the meeting with CPERS on September 25, 2026.

Chairman Polito thanked Superintendent Williams and stated that the Commission appreciates the message of excellence.

Commissioner Stages reminded the audience that if anyone volunteers a minimum of thirty hours to BREC or any park system, they will receive a \$500 state tax credit. Ms. Aneatra Boykin, Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel, noted that this did not apply to Commissioners.

Standing Committee Reports

Chairman Polito recognized Commissioner Stages, who stated that the Finance Advisory Committee met on September 22, 2026 and recommended for approval some action items. Rhonda Williams, Director of Finance, presented the monthly budget reports for July and August.

Ms. Williams read Item i under Budget Status Reports:

Resolved, that the Commission approve the unaudited monthly Budget Status Report for the month ending and fiscal year-to-date ending July 31, 2026 as presented.

Motion to approve by Mr. Stages

Second by Mr. Temple

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

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Williams read Item ii under Budget Status Reports:

Resolved, that the Commission approve the unaudited monthly Budget Status Report for the month ending and fiscal year-to-date ending August 31, 2026 as presented.

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: 7

Nays: 0

Ms. Williams read Item i under Contracts and Bids:

Resolved, that the Commission approve awarding SB1868 – Annual Contract for Event Inflatables, Rides, & Entertainment to Greyson's Events and Entertainment, LLC for the rental of amusement rides and inflatable bounce houses, slides, and interactive entertainment for an annual not-to-exceed amount of \$125,000.00.

Motion to approve by Mr. Evans

Second by Mr. McDavid

Commissioner Evans stated that he thought that was a great price. Ms. Williams agreed, stating that the amount was for the entire agency.

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

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Evans moved to add an item to the agenda to discuss the meeting of the Golf Advisory Committee, seconded by Commissioner Temple. There being no discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0

The motion to add the item was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Evans stated that due to the City-Brooks Park issue, he presented a plan for consideration to the Golf Committee in an attempt to marry all sides together in hopes that everyone can be accommodated. The plan involves adjusting tee times to include programming that is not golf related. He stated that there are multiple golf courses around the country that do this, and he thinks it is a great idea if the Commission could consider it as well.

Commissioner Temple asked about the feedback received from the committee regarding the plan. Commissioner Evans stated that it was well-received, and he thinks the stakeholders should be brought to the table and have a discussion about it in order to “turn the temperature down”; accomplishing this would be a win for everyone.

Commissioner Stages inquired about a fiscal impact. Commissioner Evans stated that the impact would be explored; golf is not quite revenue-neutral, and the Golf committee would like it to be as much as possible. He stated that there were also discussions surrounding adjusting the senior age and cart fees across all courses in order to free up funding for use in other areas.

Chairman Polito asked if there would be any revenue offsetting some of the non-golf related programming. Commissioner Evans stated that there are lots of things that could be explored; the goal is to improve the quality of life for the citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish, and that needs to be done on every square foot of land owned by BREC.

Superintendent Williams stated that those are conversations already being held, and the Commission will be kept informed as those ideas are studied.

Reports of Special Committees

Chairman Polito recognized Angela Harms, Director of Planning and Engineering, who introduced Joshua Brooks, Principal Lead from Sasaki Associates, who presented the City-Brooks Community Park Master Plan + Lakes Vision via Zoom.

Commissioner Temple left the meeting at 5:49 p.m.

Ms. Harms thanked everyone for coming together and providing input on the plan. She also thanked Mr. Brooks and Sasaki for their efforts.

Ms. Harms read Item 1 under City-Brooks Community Park Master Plan + Lakes Vision Special Committee as follows:

Resolved, that the Commission acknowledges the City-Brooks Community Park Master Plan + Lakes Vision, prepared and as submitted by Sasaki. The deliverables of the contract

include a unified master plan and an implementation plan for City-Brooks Community Park, a conceptual design of Wampold Park, and a recommendation of a clear framework for the structuring and development of a long-term governance model focused on the University Lakes system for long-term sustainability. This resolution does not constitute adoption, approval, endorsement, implementation, or authorization of any recommendation, project, expenditure, construction activity, land-use change, governance structure, agreement, or other action contained or contemplated in the Master Plan.

Motion to approve by Mr. Evans

Second by Mr. Vicknair

Chairman Polito read a comment card submitted by Ms. Gigi Grimes in opposition to the resolution. He also read a letter submitted by Mr. Coleman Brown in opposition to the resolution.

Several members of the audience spoke in opposition to the resolution.

Commissioner Evans stated that the vote is only to accept that the Master Plan has been done; it is not to implement the plan or do anything except say that it is finished and BREC is moving forward. He said that he doesn't see a way to pay \$100 million to do this over the next twenty years and doesn't know how this plan fits in with the overall park agenda as it relates to the entire BREC operation. He said he does not believe every intention from every person is always nefarious; he believes that there are good people that want to do good things in Baton Rouge, and he is going to support the efforts of people who want to do good things in our city. He said that the idea of a conservancy is to give an opportunity to raise private dollars for that area. He looks at it as an 800-acre beautiful area that can be all-encompassing. He stated that he did not go to the meetings intentionally because he wanted to see the plan based on the input given at the meetings and he is grateful for the Commissioners that were involved. He stated that instead of calling it a conservancy, call it a non-profit that runs a park. He said that BREC is on the rebound of a very bad time, and this past year has been one of the most transformative in its history. He said that the new Superintendent has him very excited about what the future holds.

Commissioner Vicknair stated that he agreed with a couple of the speakers in that this is not an "all or nothing" plan. He said that there were some things in the presentation that we'd like to see implemented, and there were some things that people probably would not like to see. He thanked everyone for taking the time to make sure that their voices were heard and their voices will continue to be heard, but he thinks it is time to "put a bow" on this and move forward.

Commissioner McDavid asked if there was a way to extend the course and make it bigger. Michael Raby, Director of Golf, stated that there was not. Commissioner McDavid stated that he was not in favor of making any changes to the park or the golf course and believed that BREC should get out of the "lake business" and get back into the "recreation business."

Commissioner Stages asked if some of the recommendations could be enacted at any time with the adoption of the resolution. Ms. Boykin stated that that was correct.

Commissioner Stages moved to amend the resolution by adding the following language: "Be it further resolved, that for twelve months following adoption of this resolution, neither the Commission nor anyone acting on BREC's behalf, shall take action to advance or implement the Master Plan or any of its recommendations. Operations, maintenance, and independently authorized projects at City-Brooks Community Park, including projects authorized during that period, may proceed within their approved scope provided they are not undertaken to advance or implement the Master Plan. Expiration of the twelve month period shall not constitute approval or

authorization of any part of the Master Plan. Any subsequent action to advance or implement the Master Plan requires separate, affirmative Commission action.” The motion was seconded by Commissioner Harrison.

Commissioner Evans stated that knowing the finances as well as he does and the plans for implementation, he does not think it is necessary to adopt this resolution for a period of twelve months because it would limit the Superintendent and his team from implementing the parts of the plan that involve Brooks Park.

Commissioner Stages stated that his reason for proposing this is to allow the Superintendent and his team to continue looking at improvements to BREC; he thinks we should “get our own house in order” first and look at the changes needed to be made operationally for the entire system so that there is a level playing field. He said that this process may allow for some additional money that can be used to fund some projects. He said that it has already been discussed that there are one billion dollars of projects that have been promised, with only \$300 million to pay for them; before BREC takes on anything else, this plan needs to be paused and see what the best way is to move forward and implement things as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Commissioner Harrison inquired about the ability to implement portions of prior plans to renovate Brooks Park. Commissioner Stages stated that prior plans could move forward, but any parts of the Master Plan presented by Sasaki would be paused.

Commissioner Vicknair reminded everyone that the Sasaki presentation missed approximately eighty slides, and that he was sure that there were some maintenance upgrades or other things that would not be able to be implemented with the twelve-month pause; therefore, he was not in favor of adopting the amended resolution. He stated that anything done going forward would be determined on a case-by-case basis because it would meet the threshold of having to come to the Commission and would be judged on the merits of the presentation at that time. He concluded by saying that he would hate to miss out on any opportunities due to the twelve month pause.

Chairman Polito echoed Commissioner Vicknair’s comments and clarified for the Commission and the public that two months prior, it was decided that BREC staff would prioritize spending, and it was not the job of the Commission to handcuff staff. The Commission going forward will allow the staff to do their jobs and come to the Commission for policy and other strategic decisions. He stated that it would be absurd to handcuff staff for twelve months, and that he was against this and had all the faith in the staff to come to the commission with the prioritizations. He stated that he would vote accordingly.

Chairman Polito called for a roll call vote with the following results:

Yeas: 2 Stages, Harrison
Nays: 4 Polito, Vicknair, Evans, McDavid
The motion to amend the resolution failed.

Chairman Polito called for the vote on the original resolution with the following results:

Yeas: 6
Nays: 0
The motion was approved unanimously.

Special Orders

None

Unfinished Business and General Orders

None

New Business

Chairman Polito read Item A under New Business:

Resolved, that the Commission authorizes staff to enter into an "Account Application & Agreement Form" for the purpose of establishing one or more accounts for investment purposes in the Louisiana Asset Management Pool (hereinafter "LAMP"); the Superintendent under the advisement of the Chief Financial Officer, in his capacity as an authorized officer, is hereby authorized and empowered to invest and transfer, in his sole discretion, funds from any such account established in the LAMP for the benefit of BREC; to issue letters of instruction related to any such account or investments thereunder; and to take any and all other actions which he, in his discretion, deems necessary or appropriate in connection with the establishment of one or more accounts in the LAMP and the investment of funds thereunder. This authority granted to the Superintendent may be delegated at any time by the Superintendent to the Chief Financial Officer.

Motion to approve by Mr. Evans

Second by Mr. Stages

Chairman Polito recognized Bobby LaBorde, Chief Financial Officer, who outlined the benefits of investing through the LAMP Program.

Chairman Polito recognized an audience member who spoke in support of the resolution.

Commissioner Evans spoke in support of the LAMP Program.

Commissioner Stages stated that the Finance Advisory Committee unanimously voted to recommend approval.

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 B under New Business:

Resolved, that the City-Brooks Community Park Master Plan + Lakes Vision Special Committee established by the Commission for the purpose of advising and guiding the master planning effort for the Lakes and adjacent parks Master Plan (The Lakes System, Wampold Park, City-Brooks Community Park, and the Knock Knock Children's Museum Area), is hereby dissolved, effective immediately. The Commission has determined that the Committee is no longer necessary.

Motion to approve by Mr. Evans

Second by Mr. Vicknair

Chairman Polito recognized audience member Peter Davis, who spoke in favor of the resolution and asked if the plan to open the golf course up to non-golf activities was being considered for all courses in the parish.

Commissioner Evans gave his thoughts on improvements that could be made at other courses and stated that it takes everyone to come to the table and compromise.

Several audience members spoke in favor of the resolution and stated that they look forward to working with the new Superintendent.

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 C under New Business:

Resolved, that the Commission hereby approves the purchase from Sustainability Partners of lighting and light poles for the following sites: Anna T. Jordan Park, Antioch Park, Cedar Ridge Park, Howell Park, Kathy Park, Longfellow Park, and Oak Villa Park. The Commission further approves, as part of this purchase, the acquisition of synthetic turf, bleachers, masonry backstops, and dugouts at Oak Villa Park. The total negotiated purchase price for the items described in Sections 1 and 2 is \$3,750,000.00, payable to Sustainability Partners over a twelve (12) month period, against a stated property value of \$6,800,000.00. The Superintendent, or his designee, is hereby authorized to execute all documents and take all actions necessary to effectuate this purchase, subject to review as to form by BREC's legal counsel.

Motion to approve by Mr. Evans

Second by Mr. Vicknair

An audience member inquired about the legal issues surrounding the entity. Murphy Foster, legal counsel for the Commission, stated that the price of the items was negotiated down to avoid litigation, and that BREC would be clear upon payment. He also stated that he was not aware of the status of any of the litigants involved in the case.

Adjournment

Chairman Polito called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Harrison made a motion, Commissioner McDavid seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m. without objection.

Brooks M. Williams, Superintendent
and Ex-Officio Secretary

Michael Polito, Chairman

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