

**THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2024**

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**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE PORT OF  
NEW ORLEANS, HELD IN THE FIRST FLOOR AUDITORIUM AT ITS OFFICE  
LOCATED AT 1350 PORT OF NEW ORLEANS PLACE, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA,  
WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN MICHAEL A. THOMAS AT 1:40 P.M.**

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**MEMBERS**

Michael A. Thomas, Chairman

**PRESENT:**

James J. Carter, Jr., Vice-Chairman

Sharonda R. Williams, Secretary-Treasurer

Walter J. Leger, Jr., Member

Jeanne E. Ferrer, Member

Darryl D. Berger, Member

Todd P. Murphy, Member

**STAFF:**

R. Wendel, Acting President & Chief Executive Officer

S. Porteous, Chief of Staff

J. Escudier, Executive Counsel

A. Evett, Chief of Infrastructure

C. Gilmore, Director Engineering

A. Coates, Head of Business Development

Chief M. Montroll, Harbor Police Department

Lt. C. Clark, Jr., Harbor Police Department

G. Brown, Chief of People & Culture

K. Barnes, Manager Human Resources

S. Granger, Director, Human Resources

K. Gilmore, Director, Real Estate

C. Rollins, Director, Financial Reporting & Forecasting

J. Gommel, Manager Berthing

M. Sulser, Manager, Engineering

A. Romanov, Manager, Engineering

A. Perkins, Human Resources

A. Lopez-Salazar, Manager, Commercial

A. Dawson, Director Emergency Management

N. Dietzen, Staff Attorney

J. Guidry, Director, Maintenance

A. Villarubia, Manager, Commercial

M. Naquin, Manager, Real Estate

S. Schexnayder, Director, Marketing & Communications

K. Curth, Press Secretary

K. Mills, Manager, Communications & Community Engagement

A. Randolph, Manager, Communications & Community Engagement

M. Singley, Board Secretariat

J. Fields, Marketing & Communications Officer

**GUESTS:**

T. Bryant, NOPB  
C. Kocur, NOPB  
N. Gonzalez, Community Member  
M. Jones, NOSHIP  
B. Perez, Holy Cross Neighborhood Association  
F. McCormack, Waterways Journal  
V. Embers, NOSHIP  
G. Kissecc, NOSHIP  
J. Powell, NOAA  
J. Reno-Sweeney, DSS  
E. Holder  
B. Smith, Pivotal  
D. Autry, NOSHIP  
W. Edwards, Holy Cross Neighborhood Association  
J. Lefonte, Stantec  
J. Teitelbaum, SVP NOLA  
R. Klau, Royal  
C. Cruse, Loyola SDS  
S. Syed, Verite News  
T. Dallal-Harris, HCNA  
E. Tesfaye, WWNO/WRKF  
V. Lee-Claghorn, Biz New Orleans  
DK, NOSHIP  
S. Grean, NOSHIP  
E. Holder  
Aidan, NOSHIP  
H. Murad, PYM  
J. Wittenbrink, Holy Cross Neighborhood Association  
M. Jones  
J. Toomy, Commissioner Emeritus  
B. Branch

**I. Roll Call & Determination of Quorum**

Following a roll call of Board members, Chairman Thomas confirmed a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

**II. Public Comment**

Chairman Thomas called for public comment and Ms. Singley announced that one (1) individual had requested to make public comments on matters listed in the meeting agenda and thirteen (13) on matters of a general nature.

Prior to inviting the speakers to the podium, Ms. Singley read the Board's public comment parameters.

Mr. Jeffrey Wittenbrink expressed his support to agenda item E.

Jeffrey Wittenbrink, Bette Perez, William Edwards, and Tamalyn Dallal-Harris, expressed their opposition to the lease agreement with Sunrise Foods International, the establishment of an organic grain terminal at the Alabo Street wharf and the rehabilitation of the rail lines along Alabo Street.

Serena Sojic-Borne, Mary Helen Jones, Stephanie Crean, Jack Reno Sweeney, Gina Kissek, Elizabeth Holder, DK, Hakim Murad, Aidan, Joshua Teitelbaum, and Carson Cruse, expressed their opposition to the war in Gaza, the Innovation Embassy and any business partnership or military shipment with the Port of Ashdod or Israel. They also advocated for the repeal of executive order JBE 2018-15 and LA RS:39:1602.1.

### **III. Report by the President and Chief Executive Officer**

Mr. Wendel provided an overview of the September 2024 volumes and productivity statistics as well as a summary of the month's main events.

### **IV. Approval of the Meeting Minutes for September 2024**

Chairman Thomas called for a motion to approve the public meeting minutes for September 2024, as previously circulated. Commissioner Carter moved to accept the minutes and Commissioner Leger seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **V. Action Items:**

#### **A. Acceptance of the Consolidated Financial Statements for September 2024**

Ms. Rollins presented the consolidated financial statements for the month of September, a copy of which is made a part of these minutes.. Commissioner Murphy moved to approve the consolidated financial statements and Commissioner Ferrer seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### **B. Consider Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the President and Chief Executive Officer to Enter into Respective One-Year Contracts with United Healthcare and Guardian Life Insurance to Provide Health, Dental and Vision Insurance and to Provide Long-Term Disability, Accidental Death and Dismemberment and Life Insurance Coverage for Budgeted, Active Employees.**

Ms. Brown presented and recommended approval of the resolution. Commissioner Carter moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Ferrer seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

#### **C. Consider Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the President and Chief Executive Officer to Enter into a Contract with Johnson Controls, Inc. for Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Mechanical and Building Automation**

**Services (BAS) for a Period of One Year with Two One-Year Renewal Options, in an Amount Not to Exceed \$1,219,640 for the Full Contract Term.**

Mr. Larkins presented and recommended approval of the resolution. Commissioner Carter moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Ferrer seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

- D. Consider Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the President and Chief Executive Officer to Enter into a Contract with Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. for the Design of Terminal Access Roads and E. Judge Perez Drive Interchange for the Louisiana International Terminal (LIT) Project for a Period of Two Years with Two One Year Renewal Options, in an Amount Not to Exceed \$2,000,000 for the Full Contract Term.**

Mr. Gilmore presented and recommended approval of the resolution. Commissioner Leger moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Williams seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

- E. Consider Approval of a Resolution Awarding a Contract to Sealevel Construction, Inc. in the Amount of \$1,558,580 for the St. Maurice Timber Wharf Demolition Project.**

Mr. Gilmore presented and recommended approval of the resolution. Commissioner Leger moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Ferrer seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**VI. Closed Executive Session to Discuss the Following Matter:**

- **Professional Qualifications of Beth Ann Branch (*conducted in accordance with La. R.S. 42:17(A)(1)*).**

Chairman Thomas read the agenda items aloud and called for a motion to enter into a closed executive session, convened in accordance with La R.S. 42:17(A)(1) to discuss the above matter.

Commissioner Leger moved to enter into a closed executive session and Commissioner Williams seconded. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY** and the Board entered into closed session at 2:31 p.m.

Following the conclusion of the discussion, Chairman Thomas called for a motion to end the closed executive session and return to the open meeting. Commissioner Leger moved to end the closed executive session and Commissioner Williams seconded. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY** and the closed executive session concluded at 3:22 p.m.

❖ **Consider Approval of a Motion to Amend the Agenda**

Chairman Thomas called for a motion to amend the agenda and recommend the approval of an additional resolution. Commissioner Leger moved to amend the agenda and Commissioner Murphy seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Consider Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the Board Chairman to Enter into an Employment Contract with Beth Ann Branch to Serve as the Board's President and Chief Executive Officer, Effective on the 1st Day of December, 2024.**

Chairman Thomas presented and called for consideration of the resolution. He opened the floor for public comment but there were none.

Commissioner Carter moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Leger seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**VII. Chairman and Commissioners' Comments**

Commissioners Berger, Leger, Carter and Chairman Thomas welcomed Ms. Branch and expressed their gratitude to Mr. Wendel for ensuring a smooth transition during the interim period. They also thanked former Chairman Toomy for leading the Board throughout the national search process.

**VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Thomas called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Leger so moved and Commissioner Berger seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY** and Chairman Thomas adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m.