

**Minutes of the Port Isabel-San Benito Navigation District
March 21, 2024
Regular Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Port Isabel-San Benito Navigation and Canal Commission was held on Thursday March 21, 2024, at 4:00 P.M., at the Port Isabel-San Benito Navigation District (PISBND) Office, located at 250 Industrial Drive, Port Isabel, Texas 78578.

Commissioners Present were:

Victor Barrera, Commissioner Chairman,
Joe Martinez, Commissioner Secretary,
Jose L Morales, Commissioner,

Others in Attendance were:

Steve Bearden, Port Director/General Manager,
Ana V. Lopez, Office Manager,
Deborah A. Morales, San Benito City Commissioner,

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Victor Barrera at 4:00 P.M.

Item #3 on the Agenda Public Comments had no one from the public desiring to speak.

The Minutes for the Regular and Certified Meeting conducted on February 13, 2024, were presented, and discussed the following motion was made:

A motion was made by Mr. Morales and seconded by Mr. Barrera to approve the above meeting minutes with the change of adding to Mrs. Marales, name initial A. and title of San Benito City Commissioner. Motion carried unanimously.

The Commissioner then discussed the Laguna Madre Water District potential lease of property on the northwest corner of the Turning Basin for a water intake system for a desalinization plant. The planned intake system including pumps would be no wider than the High Dock (Dock 6) and not create and burden on vessels docking at the Dock 6. Main question is salt and possible contaminating the water in the area. The Port Director is to meet with the water district manager to look at a lease agreement and how it might be structured with a maximum of 50 years and a ten (10) year start period with four (4) ten (10) year renewals. Land lease would be zero rent but a fee for the water would be charged. The Port Director will get back to the Commissioners at the April meeting with information and possibly invite the water district manager to the May meeting to begin finalizing an agreement. There being no additional discussion, nor need for an Executive Session item #9 was not considered, the following action was taken:

A motion was made by Mr. Morales and seconded by Mr. Martinez to table any action on this subject until further information is obtained. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Morales discussed the meeting he had with the state Senator LaMantia about the port bypass road and other issues. The Senator is interested in coming to a meeting along with the local state representative to further discuss the issue. Also, the Port Director is to contact the Garcia family realtor for this property and see if it would be possible to purchase a right-of-way through the property before they sell it to the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

A motion was made by Mr. Martinez and seconded by Mr. Barrera to acknowledge the report from Commissioner Morales. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Martinez gave a report on the shrimp industry issues and the severely depressed price for shrimp due to over abundant import supplies. Mr. Martinez will continue working with other Ports across the Gulf area to resolve the issues.

A motion was made by Mr. Morales and seconded by Mr. Barrera to acknowledge the report from Commissioner Martinez. Motion carried unanimously.

The next agenda item was a request by Mr. Bearden to keep the present temporary person through June 2024. Mr. Bearden told the Commissioner that there are many jobs that need additional personnel to complete over the next several months. After discussion of the request the following action was taken.

A motion was made by Mr. Morales and seconded by Mr. Martinez to approve the temporary person working through June 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bearden then informed the Commissioners that the Kenon property across from the shrimp basin may be up for sale again at the end of April. He stated that a MARAD grant of \$5,000,000 could be applied for with no match to purchase the property and do all the environmental and engineering required for the application of a new grant to rehabilitate the property for Port use, make it shovel ready as far as engineering is concerned. Then once purchased and the engineering is complete for the conversion of the property, a new MARAD grant would be applied for to pay for the conversion of the property into the port needs. Mr. Bearden stated that the cost to prepare the grant application including engineering cost would be \$46,000. The estimated time to prepare the grant application is 30 plus days and the grant would need to be submitted to MARAD by May 10, 2024. Therefore, spending the funds of \$46,000 is not a guarantee that the property will be for sale at the end of April and no guarantee that the grant would be approved. Commissioner Morales was concerned that we do not have a commitment for the sale to PISBND and was therefore opposed to spending the funds at this time and would prefer to wait th extra 10 days until the

property was available and a commitment to sale was obtained. After additional discussion, the Commissioners then took the following action:

A motion was made by Mr. Martinez and seconded by Mr. Barrera to approve spending \$46,000 for the grant application. Mr. Morales remained opposed and voted No. Motion carried.

Mr. Bearden informed the Commissioners that employee Jesus Rodriquez qualified for conversion of the present term life insurance policy to whole life and one year's premium is 194.60 for a \$10,000 policy. The Commissioner took the following action:

A motion was made by Mr. Morales and seconded by Mr. Barrera to approve conversion of the Rodriguez term life policy to a whole life policy and pay the first-year premium. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bearden informed the Commissioners of the completion of the dredge project and all goals had been met and verified by the US Army Corps of Engineers survey after completion of the dredging. The cost was reduced to the original amount of \$407,025 and will be paid in the next several days. There being no further discussion the following action was taken.

A motion was made by Mr. Martinez and seconded by Mr. Morales to acknowledge the report. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bearden next informed the Commissioners of the progress regarding the completion of Port Road. Mr. Barrera made some comments on issues he wanted addressed and Mr. Bearden had informed the engineer to place them on the punch list for the contractor. Once the punch list is complete and the TX DoT engineers have inspected the completed road project and approved final payments will be made to all remaining parties. Mr. Barrera also wanted to have additional reflector signage on both sides of the drains and Mr. Bearden will order the necessary parts and install with Port personnel. There being no further discussion the following action was taken.

A motion was made by Mr. Martinez and seconded by Mr. Morales to acknowledge the report. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bearden informed the Commissioners that Texas Pack had exercised its option to renew the Lease Agreement for an additional five (5) years on the five (5) acre tract. He also informed the Commissioners about the PILOT 2000 Port Road Lease Agreement expiring at the end of May and that he is working with PILOT to bring a proposed Lease Agreement to the April meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Martinez and seconded by Mr. Morales to acknowledge the report. Motion carried unanimously.

In the Monthly Director's report Mr. Bearden reported that General Pipe had completely caught up on their rent and late fees. He gave a short update on the road work in the Port and went over several upcoming jobs to do. Ana Lopez reviewed the scholarship program, and the Port Isabel applications were near complete. San Benito had not sent any in at this time. Next, he reviewed the April meeting date and time, and it is tentatively scheduled for Thursday April 18, 2024, at 4:30PM.

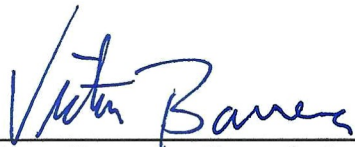
A motion was made by Mr. Morales and seconded by Mr. Martinez to acknowledge the Director's Report. Motion carried unanimously.

The previous month's bills were reviewed by the Commissioners. After questions and comments about some items, the following motion was made:

A motion was made by Mr. Morales and seconded by Mr. Martinez to approve the payment of the bills, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the Commissioners, the following motion was made:

A motion was made by Mr. Morales and seconded by Mr. Martinez to adjourn the meeting at 6:29 P.M. Motion carried unanimously.



Victor Barrera, Commissioner Chairman



Joe Martinez, Commissioner Secretary



Jose L. Morales, Commissioner