LOUISIANA AGRICULTURAL FINANCE AUTHORITY BOARD
LAFA BOARD MINUTES

FRIDAY, JUNE 25, 2026, 10:00 A.M.
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY
VETERANS' MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM
5825 FLORIDA BLVD., FIRST FLOOR
BATON ROUGE, LA. 70806

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Commissioner Mike Strain, at 10:07 A.M.

II. ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

The roll was called by Christopher Lowery.

Members Present: Commissioner Mike Strain, Brayden Blanchard, Kent Brown, Jennifer Hill, Ronald Petree, Representative Chris Turner, and Bill Waguespack

Members Absent: Katie R. Sistrunk

Advisory Board Members Present (non-voting): Representative Rhonda Butler and David Bennett (LED)

Mr. Lowery stated there was a quorum.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

IV. APPROVAL OF MARCH 13, 2026, MINUTES

Mr. Petree moved to approve the minutes from the March 13, 2026, meeting.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Waguespack.

The motion passed unanimously.

V. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Wayne Tedesco presented LAFA's financial statements to the board. Mr. Tedesco and Mr. Cole addressed and clarified questions from the board.

Representative Turner moved to accept the financial statements as presented.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Waguespack.

The motion passed unanimously.

VI. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chairman Strain presented the Commissioner's report. He began by commenting on his travels around the state to those parishes that were affected by the most recent storm. He specifically met with farmers due to their loss of crops and damage and mentioned that the USDA Farm Service Agency will submit reports of damage for USDA disaster assistance.

He discussed future trips to North Africa and Great Britian for agricultural trade opportunities.

He thanked the legislature for continuing their investments in the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Foresty.

Chairman Strain addressed the questions and comments from the board.

VII. PRESENTATION BY FFA MEMBER TY DUHON

A speech was given to the Board about the Louisiana rice industry and South Louisiana Rail Facility Cooperative in Jefferson Davis Parish, Louisiana.

VIII. LED AGRIBUSINESS STRATEGIC INITIATIVE - JESSICA STEVERSON, LED

Jessica Steverson introduced herself to the board and discussed her role in agribusiness at the Louisiana Economic Development (LED). Chairman Strain thanked LED for their partnership with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. Grain Bin Project Update

Mr. Nicholas Cole provided an update on the LAFA Grain Bin construction project. He stated that Bluewing Civil Service was contracted for the project and recently held a pre-construction meeting. Mr. Cole provided updates on bin delivery and site preparations. He estimated that both bins will be installed and operational by late September 2026.

B. South Louisiana Rice Facility (SLRF) Warehouse and Bagging Project Update

Mr. Alex Guillory, Project Engineer, and Mr. Mark Pousson, SLRF Manager, provided an update on the publicly bid warehouse and bagging project. Mr. Guillory reported that the site is suitable for construction and that materials have been purchased and delivered to the property.

The project is expected to be completed according to the established timeline. Mr. Pousson reported that the overhead equipment has been ordered and is pending delivery, while the electrical portion of the project has been installed.

C. Lacassine Industrial Park Paving Project Update

Mr. Nicholas Cole and Mr. Alex Guillory provided an update on the Lacassine Industrial Park Paving Project. Mr. Cole reminded the Board that this project represents Phase II of the paving project. Mr. Guillory reported that the project is in the early design phase and that a property survey is being scheduled to support the geometric design.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review and Approval of Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Budgets

Chairman Strain introduced to the Board the new Director of Certified Louisiana, Allison Dumas.

1. LAFA
Mr. Cole presented the proposed FY27 LAFA general budget to the board. The board reviewed the LAFA budget. Mr. Cole addressed questions from the board.

2. Lacassine
Mr. Cole presented and explained the FY27 Lacassine budget to the board. The board reviewed the Lacassine budget and posed questions to Mr. Cole.

3. Certified LA
Ms. Allison Dumas presented and explained the FY27 Certified LA budget to the board. The board reviewed the Certified LA budget. Ms. Dumas addressed questions and comments from the board.

4. Indian Creek
Mr. Cole presented the FY27 Indian Creek budget to the board. The board reviewed the Indian Creek budget.

Chairman Strain moved to transfer FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS ($15,000.00) from the Lacassine budget revenue to the Certified Louisiana budget in order to increase the grants to the Independent Rice Producers group and to the Louisiana Rice Promotion Board to reflect the same level awarded in FY26.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Hill.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Petree moved, to accept the FY27 Budgets as presented in globo.

The motion was seconded by Rep. Turner.

The motion passed unanimously.

B. Allocation of FY27 Legislative Appropriations

Mr. Nicholas Cole stated that the Louisiana State Legislature appropriated approximately NINE MILLION DOLLARS ($9,000,000.00) to the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

- HB1 (20-941 LDAF Pass Through) where TWO MILLION DOLLARS ($2,000,000.00) will pass through to LAFA for two additional grain bins for the SLRF rice mill.

  Representative Turner moved to allocate TWO MILLION DOLLARS ($2,000,000.00) in pass through funds to LAFA from HB1 of the 2026 legislative session towards the rice terminal loading and storage project in the turning basin at the Port of Lake Charles.

  The motion was seconded by Mr. Waguespack.

  The motion passed unanimously.

  Mr. Petree recused himself from the discussion and vote.

- HB312 (Supplemental bill, LDAF) - FIVE MILLION DOLLARS ($5,000,000.00) to the Office of Management and Finance (OMF) “for rice marketing.”

  Representative Turner moved to accept the FIVE MILLION DOLLARS in ($5,000,000.00) rice marketing funds from LDAF via memorandum of understanding and allocate the funds to the rice terminal loading and storage project in the turning basin at the Port of Lake Charles.

  The motion was seconded by Ms. Hill.

  In the discussion, Mr. Cole explained the total project funding is for six total bins at the Port of Lake Charles.

  The motion passed unanimously.

  Mr. Petree recused himself from the discussion and vote.

- HB312 (Supplemental bill, 20-941 LDAF Pass Through) - ONE MILLION NINE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS ($1,950,000.00) pass through to LAFA "for 2 additional grain bins for the rice rail facility project."

  Representative Turner moved to allocate the $1.95MM in pass-through funds to LAFA from HB312 of the 2026 legislative session towards the previously approved board project to construct two new rice bins in Lacassine.

  The motion was seconded by Ms. Hill.

  The motion passed unanimously.

  Mr. Petree recused himself from the discussion and vote.

With the allocation of these funds, Representative Tuner moved to amend the previously approved project total for the construction of two new rice bins from $1.75MM to $1.95MM.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Hill.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Petree recused himself from the discussion and vote.

C. DOTD – One Resolution

Mr. Cole provided background and detailed information on the DOTD One resolution.

Mr. Petree moved to adopt the DOTD "One resolution" to designate Chairman Strain as the appropriate party to sign and execute all documents pertaining to DOTD programs on behalf of LAFA.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Hill.

The motion passed unanimously.

D. Woodworth Airport: DOTD Capital Improvement Project MSA

Mr. Cole provided background and detailed information on the Woodworth Airport DOTD Capital Improvement Project, which is conducted annually. He explained that, to apply for the program, LAFA must enter into a Master Services Agreement (MSA) with an engineering firm to serve as a consultant.

Mr. Brown moved to accept the recommendation of the committee to enter into an MSA with Pan American Engineers, LLC for the purposes of planning and designing projects at the Woodworth airport needed to apply for the DOTD capital improvement program.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Petree.

The motion passed unanimously.

E. Modification of Jefferson Davis Parish Lease

Mr. Cole provided background and detailed information regarding the modification of the Jefferson Davis Parish Lease due to its expiration. The Jefferson Davis Parish Police Jury exercised its right to renew the lease and sublease the property to SLRF. This modification will allow LAFA to enter into an agreement directly with SLRF. Mr. Cole addressed the questions and comments from the board.

Ms. Hill moved to accept the recommendation of the LAFA Director to authorize Chairman Strain as chairman to take the necessary steps to execute any documents that lead to the termination of the Lacassine lease with the Jefferson Davis Parish Police Jury and to negotiate new terms and execute any new leases with the South Louisiana Rail Facility for use of land at the rice mill, and use and operation of the new grain bins being constructed.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Waguespack.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Petree recused himself from the discussion and vote.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Strain called on Alex Guillory to discuss water pumps and drainage issues at the Lacassine Industrial Park.

Chairman Strain asked for Mr. Guillory and Bluewing to develop a scope of work and estimated cost to assess flooding and drainage issues at the Lacassine property for further discussions and consideration by the board. The board discussed and agreed to Bluewing developing the proposal.

Chairman Strain thanked the Board and everyone for all their hard work.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Petree made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Waguespack.

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:02 P.M.