

House Committee on Appropriations

Minutes of Meeting
2019 Regular Session
April 15, 2019

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Cameron Henry, Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. in Room 5, in the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The secretary called the roll.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Cameron Henry, Chairman
Representative Franklin J. Foil, Vice Chairman
Representative Mark Abraham
Representative Beryl A. Amedée
Representative Tony Bacala
Representative Lawrence A. "Larry" Bagley
Representative John A. Berthelot
Representative Robert E. Billiot
Representative Gary M. Carter, Jr.
Representative Charles R. Chaney
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Julie Emerson
Representative Reid Falconer
Representative Lance Harris
Representative Walt Leger, III
Representative Jack G. McFarland
Representative Blake Miguez
Representative Dustin Miller
Representative Scott M. Simon
Representative Patricia Haynes Smith
Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative James K. Armes, III
Representative Valarie Hodges

Representative Steve E. Pylant
Representative Jerome Richard

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ms. Alexis Normand, Attorney
Ms. Jane Schoen, Secretary
Ms. Adrienne Wood, Attorney

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Ms. Faye Talbot, Sergeant at Arms
Ms. Vivian Hurst, Sergeant at Arms

III. DISCUSSION

House Bill No. 105 by Representative Henry

The following agencies contained in House Bill No. 105 were presented and discussed:

Department of Transportation and Development

Mr. Daniel Waguespack, Budget Analyst, House Fiscal Division (HFD), 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7477, presented an overview and discussed the FY 19-20 budget for the department.

Mr. Waguespack and Dr. Shawn Wilson, Secretary, Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), 1201 Capitol Access Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 379-1200, discussed the department's fees and self-generated revenue with Representatives Edmonds and McFarland.

Dr. Wilson discussed the funding source for the installation of cable barriers in relation to the expansion of Louisiana Interstate 49, traffic accident trends, certain projects completed by DOTD employees versus private contractors with Representatives Amedée and Bagley. Dr. Wilson also discussed the funding for the department's salaries and related benefits with Representatives Amedée and Edmonds and discussed the incorporation of toll bridges in Louisiana with Representative Edmonds.

Dr. Wilson updated Representative Miller regarding repairs to Louisiana Highway 190. Dr. Wilson also discussed the cost of road maintenance with Representative Abraham.

Dr. Wilson discussed the department's excess budget authority and a breakdown of funding for operations within the department with Representative Henry.

Department of Natural Resources

Mr. Chris Henry, HFD, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 1394, presented an overview and discussed the department's FY19-20 budget.

Representative Miguez in the chair.

Secretary Thomas Harris, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), P.O. Box 94396, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 342-2710, addressed the committee regarding the department's FY19-20 budget.

Secretary Harris and Mr. Henry discussed the department's progress with identifying and plugging the state's orphan wells with Representative Abraham. Secretary Harris also discussed the department's vacant positions and staff diversity with Representative Smith.

Secretary Harris discussed state oil lease payment collections, and the secretary and Mr. Donald Price, Special Counsel, DNR, 312 North Third Street, #1219, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 223-1422, discussed the cost associated with the state's coastal lawsuits and provided an update on the lawsuit between the department and Terrebonne Parish with Representative Miguez.

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Mr. Chris Keaton, Deputy Director, HFD, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-8569, presented an overview and discussed the department's FY19-20 budget.

Secretary Jack Montoucet, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (DWF), 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 765-2800, discussed the department's improvements and efficiencies with Representative Zeringue.

Mr. Bryan McClinton, Undersecretary, DWF, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 765-2800, discussed the department's fees and self-generated revenue sources with Representative Zeringue.

Secretary Montoucet discussed the effect of oil production on the department's Conservation Fund with Representative Miguez. The secretary also discussed the Keep Louisiana Beautiful Program with Representative Berthelot.

Secretary Montoucet discussed the department's efforts to improve employee diversity with Representative Smith.

The meeting recessed at 11:59 a.m. and reconvened at 1:13 p.m.

Representative Henry in the chair.

Department of Public Safety and Corrections**Corrections Services**

Ms. Jamie Tairov, Budget Analyst, HFD, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-0474, presented an overview and discussed the FY19-20 budget for the department.

Secretary Jimmy LeBlanc, Department of Public Safety and Corrections, 504 Mayflower Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 342-6740, provided and discussed a handout, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Mr. Thomas Bickham, Undersecretary, Department of Public Safety and Corrections, 504 Mayflower Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 342-6740, discussed the savings related to justice reinvestment initiatives, and Secretary LeBlanc discussed the department's re-entry programs with Representatives Carter, Edmonds, and Miller.

Secretary LeBlanc discussed contraband seizures within state and local prisons, the number of prison assaults, recidivism tracking, and prescription drug costs with Representative Amedée. The secretary and Mr. Bickham also discussed housing of Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW) inmates as a result of the 2016 flood with Representative Amedée.

Mr. Bickham discussed the return on investment from justice reinvestment programs with Representative Abraham. The secretary also discussed the status of a study conducted on work release programs with Representative Abraham.

Mr. Bickham discussed the cooperative endeavor agreement between the state and a private prison provider with Representatives Carter and Miller.

Ms. Stacye Falgout, Director of Nursing, Department of Public Safety and Corrections, 504 Mayflower Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 342-1395, Mr. Bickham, and Secretary LeBlanc discussed the utilization of secure care prison services at the Ochsner LSU Health Shreveport hospital in Monroe with Representative Chaney.

Secretary LeBlanc and Mr. Bickham discussed the cost to house inmates at Winn Correctional Center with Representative McFarland and discussed employee salary rates and employee turnover rates with Representative Edmonds.

Ms. Natalie LaBorde, Executive Counsel, Department of Public Safety and Corrections, 504 Mayflower Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 654-6718, discussed the review process for community service provider grant recipients with Representative Edmonds.

Secretary LeBlanc and Mr. Bickham discussed recidivism rates and discharge pay to release offenders with Representative Smith.

Ms. LaBorde discussed the Criminal Justice Reform Task Force, and Ms. Falgout discussed medical parole opportunities with Representative Smith.

Local Housing of State Offenders

Mr. Michael Ranatza, Executive Director, Louisiana Sheriff's Association, 1175 Nicholson Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, provided and discussed a handout, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records. Mr. Ranatza discussed the amenities of a Union Parish prison with Representative Smith.

Public Safety Services

Ms. Tairov presented an overview and discussed the department's FY19-20 budget.

Colonel Kevin Reeves, Superintendent, Louisiana State Police, 7919 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 925-6119, addressed the committee regarding the FY19-20 budget.

Chief Butch Browning, State Fire Marshal, 8181 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 806-0803, discussed the need to replace the agency's command center with Representative Miller and discussed the agency's statutory dedications with Representatives Henry and Miller.

Representative Foil in the chair.

Youth Services

Ms. Tairov presented an overview and discussed the department's FY19-20 budget.

Dr. James Bueche, Deputy Secretary, Office of Juvenile Justice, 7919 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 287-7000, provided and discussed a handout, Exhibit C, which is included in the committee records.

Dr. Bueche discussed the operations of the Bridge City Center for Youth and the Swanson Center for Youth with Representatives Edmonds and Smith.

Dr. Bueche discussed the agency's use of justice reinvestment funding with Representative Miller.

Dr. Bueche and Mr. Geary Williams, Undersecretary, Office of Juvenile Justice, 7919 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 287-7914, discussed the cost to operate the Acadiana Center for Youth with Representatives Henry and Edmonds.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Smith offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 21 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Henry, Foil, Abraham, Amedée, Bacala, Bagley, Berthelot, Billiot, Gary Carter, Chaney, Edmonds, Emerson, Falconer, Lance Harris, Leger, McFarland, Miguez, Dustin Miller, Simon, Smith, and Zeringue voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Cameron Henry
House Committee on Appropriations