

## **House Committee on Appropriations**

Minutes of Meeting  
2020 First Extraordinary Session  
June 2, 2020

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue, chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. in Room 5, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The committee administrative assistant called the roll.

### **II. ROLL CALL**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue, chairman  
Representative Tony Bacala  
Representative Barbara W. Carpenter  
Representative R. Dewith Carrier  
Representative Gary M. Carter, Jr., vice chairman  
Representative Raymond J. Crews  
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel  
Representative Mary DuBuisson  
Representative Rick Edmonds  
Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman  
Representative John R. Illg, Jr.  
Representative Frederick Douglass Jones  
Representative Timothy P. Kerner  
Representative Rodney Lyons  
Representative C. Denise Marcelle  
Representative Jack G. McFarland  
Representative Blake Miguez  
Representative Dustin Miller  
Representative Troy D. Romero  
Representative Francis C. Thompson  
Representative Christopher Turner  
Representative William "Bill" Wheat, Jr.

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Representative Roy Daryl Adams  
Representative Lance Harris

Representative Tanner D. Magee

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Katie Andress, committee administrative assistant  
Stephanie Little, attorney  
Amanda Trapp, legislative analyst

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:**

Myrtis Jarrell, sergeant at arms  
Blaine Sylvester, sergeant at arms  
Faye Talbot , sergeant at arms

**III. DISCUSSION**

Representative Zeringue discussed the upcoming budget hearings schedule for House Bill No. 1.

Mr. Patrick Goldsmith, director, House Fiscal Division (HFD), 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-2440, presented the overview of the state's budget.

Mr. Goldsmith discussed increases in Louisiana Department of Health's (LDH) budget and increases to certain state agency's budget authority due to the COVID-19 pandemic with Representative Carter.

Mr. Goldsmith and Mr. Chas Nichols, budget analyst, HFD, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-2444, discussed Medicaid's Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) enhancements and revenue projections with Representatives Bacala and Edmonds.

Mr. Goldsmith discussed other tax relief bills filed during the 1<sup>st</sup> extraordinary session with Representative Thompson.

Mr. Goldsmith also discussed the Lottery Proceeds Fund swap with Representative Marcelle, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding for Higher Education with Representative DuBuisson, and fund swaps within the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) with Representative Carpenter.

**Division of Administration**

Commissioner Jay Dardenne, Division of Administration (DOA), 1201 North Third Street, Suite 7-100, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7000, addressed the committee regarding certain amendments to the state's budget and discussed updates for the use of CARES Act and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds with Representatives Bacala and Edmonds.

The commissioner also discussed CARES Act funding for local governmental entities with Representatives Bacala, Edmonds, Marcelle, McFarland, and Romero.

Commissioner Dardenne discussed LDH's new hospital reimbursement model with Representatives Edmonds, McFarland, and Thompson. The commissioner also discussed funding for the state's public defenders with Representative McFarland.

### **House Bill No. 1 by Representative Zeringue**

The following agencies contained in House Bill No. 1 were presented and discussed:

#### **Youth Services**

Mr. Edward "Dusty" Bickham, deputy secretary, Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ), 7919 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 289-7914, provided updates on the Acadiana Center for Youth to Representative Deshotel and discussed staffing and security issues within the facility and the average age of juvenile offenders with Representative Miller.

Mr. Bickham and Mr. Geary Williams, undersecretary, OJJ, 7919 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 289-7914, discussed the agency's plan for potential budget reductions in the FY 20-21 budget with Representative Zeringue.

Mr. Bickham discussed implementing faith-based programs in the Swanson Center for Youth with Representative Jones and provided a status update on the new youth center project in Monroe, LA to Representative Zeringue.

Mr. Bickham discussed the demographics of the state's incarcerated youth and the types of care provided with Representatives Carpenter and Crews. Mr. Bickham also discussed staffing issues at the Bridge City Center for Youth with Representative Lyons.

Mr. Bickham and Mr. Williams discussed retention issues and turnover rates for juvenile justice specialists with Representatives Zeringue, Marcelle, and Miller.

Mr. Bickham discussed plans for the Picard Recreational and Educational Center with Representative Deshotel and plans for the Jetson Center for Youth with Representative Carpenter.

#### **Corrections Services**

Secretary Jimmy LeBlanc, Department of Corrections (DOC), 504 Mayflower Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 312-6633, addressed the committee regarding the agency's efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the state's prisons and the department's efforts for criminal justice reform.

Secretary LeBlanc discussed reverse isolation practices and the impact of COVID-19 in the prison system with Representative Marcelle. The secretary also discussed the C. Paul Phelps Correctional Center with Representative Carrier.

Secretary LeBlanc discussed the Families of the Incarcerated Program and criminal justice reinvestment with Representatives Crews, DuBuisson, and Marcelle.

Mr. Thomas Bickham, undersecretary, DOC, 504 Mayflower Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 312-6633, and Secretary LeBlanc discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the state's reentry programs with Representative Lyons.

Mr. Bickham discussed the amount of carryforward funds in the Justice Reinvestment Fund, the department's need for supplemental funds, and the department's use of CARES Acts funds with Representative Zeringue. Mr. Bickham and Secretary LeBlanc discussed the department's overtime costs and employee salary rates with Representatives Zeringue and Turner.

### **Public Safety Services**

Colonel Kevin W. Reeves, superintendent, Louisiana State Police (LSP), 7919 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (318) 680-7225, addressed the committee regarding the impact of potential budget reductions and the services provided by the Public Safety Services.

Col. Reeves discussed the agency's efforts to recruit minorities for law enforcement leadership positions and law enforcement officer demographics with Representative Marcelle.

Lt. Colonel Jason Starnes, LSP, 7919 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 925-6032, and Col. Reeves discussed the cost for body cameras for troopers and video storage fees with Representative Lyons.

Col. Reeves and Lt. Col. Starnes discussed the plan to reopen certain Office of Motor Vehicle (OMV) offices with Representative Deshotel.

Col. Reeves discussed the cost of mandated services provided by LSP and background checks for certain licenses and permits with Representative McFarland, and Lt. Col. Starnes discussed the impact of potential budget reductions due to COVID-19 on the department with Representatives Zeringue and McFarland.

Col. Reeves and Lt. Col. Starnes discussed LSP recruitment efforts and certain OMV services with Representative Illg.

**Louisiana Workforce Commission**

Ms. Ava Dejoie, secretary, Louisiana Workforce Commission, 1001 North 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, (225) 342-3001, addressed the committee regarding the commission's efforts to process and distribute unemployment insurance benefits due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Dejoie discussed call center issues with unemployment claims adjudication with Representatives Illg, Kerner, and Romero.

**Department of Children and Family Services**

Secretary Marketa Garner Walters, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), 627 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-6930, addressed the committee regarding the department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the department's budgetary needs. The secretary also provided a handout, Exhibit A, which will be included in the committee records.

Secretary Walters discussed Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in relation to the state's poverty levels with Representative Carter.

Dr. Eric Horent, undersecretary, DCFS, 627 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-6930, and Secretary Walters discussed CARES Act funding for the SNAP program and other programs within the department with Representative Edmonds.

Secretary Walters also discussed funding for certain authorized Table of Organization (T.O.) positions with Representative Edmonds.

Secretary Walters and Dr. Horent also discussed the cost of the department's integrated technology system with Representative Crews. The secretary also discussed child abuse statistics with Representative Crews.

Ms. Terri Ricks, deputy secretary, DCFS, 627 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-6930, discussed Temporary Assistance for Needy Families reimbursement rates from non-custodial parents of Medicaid recipients with Representative Bacala.

**IV. BUSINESS**

COMMITTEE ROOM 6 TO BE USED FOR OVERFLOW

**V. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Representative Zeringue announced that the budget bills would be heard on Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup>.

Persons who do not feel comfortable giving testimony in person at this time may submit a prepared statement in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee:

A. Any interested person or any committee member may file with the committee a prepared statement concerning a specific instrument or matter under consideration by the committee or concerning any matter within the committee's scope of authority, and the committee records shall reflect receipt of such statement and the date and time thereof.

B. Any person who files a prepared statement which contains data or statistical information shall include in such prepared statement sufficient information to identify the source of the data or statistical information. For the purposes of this Paragraph, the term "source" shall mean a publication, website, person, or other source from which the data or statistical information contained in the prepared statement was obtained by the person or persons who prepared the statement.

NOTE: Only statements mailed to [andressk@legis.la.gov](mailto:andressk@legis.la.gov) and received prior to Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, at 6:00 p.m., will be included in the record for this committee meeting. All persons desiring to participate in the meeting shall utilize appropriate protective health measures and observe the recommended and appropriate social distancing.

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Representative Edmonds offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 22 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carpenter, Carrier, Gary Carter, Crews, Deshotel, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Freeman, Illg, Jones, Kerner, Lyons, Marcelle, McFarland, Miguez, Dustin Miller, Romero, Thompson, Turner, and Wheat voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Jerome "Zee" Zeringue  
House Committee on Appropriations