

# LOUISIANA ENGINEERING SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTION MEETING

April 12, 2024  
West Monroe, LA

1. The meeting of the Louisiana Engineering Society (LES) Board of Direction was held on Friday, April 12, 2024, in West Monroe, LA. A quorum was established, and the meeting was called to order by President Jim Ellingburg at 11:33 AM.

## Board Members Present

Jim Ellingburg, President  
Melanie Caillouet, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Gavin Gautreau, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Clinton Patrick, Secretary-Treasurer  
Tyler Comeaux, NSPE Representative  
Oliver Neal, Young Engineer Representative  
Chad Bacas, Past President  
Rachel Kenney, State Director  
Taylor Goldman, State Director  
Gregory Trahan, State Director  
Joey Krefft, Lafayette Chapter President  
Kalyn Partin, Lake Charles Chapter President  
Morgan McCallister, Monroe Chapter President  
John Jackson, New Orleans Chapter President  
Linsey Olivier, Shreveport Chapter President  
Jeffrey Pike, PEE Chair  
Jennifer Gemar, PEI Chair  
Alan Krouse, PEPP Chair  
Mary Claire Ruckert, Executive Director

## Board Members Absent

Kimberly McDaniel, State Director  
Kory Moss, Alexandria Chapter President  
TJ Stokes, Baton Rouge Chapter President  
Kevin DeZarn, Bayou Chapter President  
Stan Whitney, PEC Chair  
Ali Mustapha, PEG Chair

## Guests Present

No guests present

2. **The Invocation was given by Jeffrey Pike.**
3. **The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.**
4. **LES Vision & Mission Statement was read by Melanie Caillouet.**
5. **Acceptance of the Agenda –**  
**Kalyn Partin made the motion to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded by Oliver Neal. The motion passed unanimously.**
6. **Acceptance of February 2024 meeting minutes -**  
**A motion was made by Jeff Pike to accept the revised February 2024 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Gavin Gautreau. The motion passed unanimously.**

## 7. President's Report

This legislative session has been eventful due to bills that are currently in session, meaning it will be busy for LES. It is a consensus that LES is going fight when it makes the most sense, because the new administration currently views engineers as hard to work with and out to kill every bill. Therefore, LES will attempt to be strategic in fighting against bills that are more harmful to the profession.

## 8. Secretary/Treasurer's Report –

### a. Financial Reports as of 3/31/2024 –

#### 1. LES P&L Statement (see attached) – The LES Profit and Loss statement was reviewed and discussed. Some highlights are:

- a. Dues and voluntary dues are low.
- b. When looking at the budget for expenses for JESC, it looks like we are over budget. Those expenses include a deposit of \$4,500 for the Cajundome as well as increased food and beverage costs. It appears that in the JESC income category, we are approximately \$20,000 over budget, and in the JESC expense category, we are approximately \$20,000 over budget, therefore it does break even on the budget. The net profit was approximately \$65,000. The board needs to be aware for next year that the food and beverage costs will be higher again.
- c. A discussion took place about voluntary dues and how it affects our budget. At this time, we have approximately 2,100 members, and only 134 members paid legislative dues. We currently have \$11,000 budgeted for legislative support dues. So far this year, we have only brought in \$2,800. We need to investigate why members do not pay voluntary dues and see what we can do to change it. It is believed that companies are reimbursing members for their dues cost, but not for their voluntary dues. It was suggested that we increase dues by \$20 to cover legislative dues. This option was discussed. LES bylaws state that dues cannot increase over \$10 or 10% in any one year. The increase would have to be made over two years. Another option is to combine some of the voluntary dues into a package that can be purchased. A lengthy discussion took place about what the current \$110 dues go to. It is assumed that members believe that their annual dues of \$110 cover the things like legislative dues and educational programs because that is what LES does as an organization, so voluntary dues don't seem as necessary as they actually are. This brought on the conversation that members are still unaware of what all LES does. Discussions took place about how to get members to understand the importance of LES including option such as sending a video to our members, having lunch with the boards, and chapter presidents having a more personal interaction with their members. It was decided that if \$110 annually is not enough to cover the mission of LES, members would most likely pay more in dues rather than pay voluntary dues.
- d. A discussion took place about the previous board decision to donate an additional \$15,000 to LEF that the board voted on and approved in the February 2024 board meeting. It is a concern that if LES gives LEF this donation, the LES budget is going to show that LES was in the red for the 2023 – 2024 fiscal year. Though there is potential that LES is going to be in the red this year, the board decided to continue on with the voted on decision to give LEF a donation of \$15,000 with the mindfulness that LES did not actually have a bad year.

#### 2. LES Balance Sheet (see attached) – The LES Balance Sheet was reviewed and discussed. No questions were asked at this time.

**A motion was made by Melanie Caillouet to accept the P&L Statement and the Balance Sheet as of 3/31/2024. The motion was seconded by Jeff Pike. The motion passed unanimously.**

## 9. Executive Directors Report – (see attached report)

- a. Board Elections – The ballot for 2024 – 2025 LES Officers is currently open. This year, we have done the ballot through MembershipWorks to eliminate a previous problem of people voting more than once and sending the link to vote to nonvoting members. Chapters are encouraged to remind their members to vote.
- b. Legislative Update – We are having a very active legislative session this year. Bills of note include HB 396 (civil

exemption), HB 716 (universal licensure), SB 60 (universal licensure), and HB 959 (licenses and licensing boards). It seems that this year, everything is moving very quickly and we receive notice that bills are being heard at the last minute, so attending these hearings at the capital is important. Miles Williams, the chair of the Legislative Committee, called during the meeting and went into further explanation of LES's stance on these bills. An update was brought up that Thomas Presley is discussing an amendment to SB 60/HB 716 in reference to the definition of scope of practice. Patrick McMath's bill, HB 396, has been passed in the Senate and will move on to House Commerce likely within the next week. McMath is painting engineers in a bad light of being uncooperative. ACEC/L has come to the decision to not push as hard as we have been and become more strategic with what is pushed forward. The nature of this legislative session is changing daily. LES is continuing to work diligently to put a stop to any bills that have the potential to hurt the engineering profession. It is extremely important that engineers reach out to their legislators when call to action emails are sent and to try and show up at the capitol to support the engineering profession.

- c. **LES Staffing Update** – Mary Claire Ruckert is having a baby and will be out of the office October – December and will utilize the Remote Work Leave Policy that was voted on in the November board meeting. There will be no overlap between Alexa and Mary Claire's remote work time.

## 10. Old Business

## 11. New Business –

- a. **Report from Membership Committee** – The Membership Committee update was previously discussed with the financial items.
- b. **Handbook Edits for Board Discussion** – Melanie Caillouet has gone through the Articles of Incorporation in the LES Handbook and made potential edits for the board to vote on. Many things in the Articles of Incorporation are outdated and in need of revision. These edits will be sent out with the meeting minutes for board members to review and have a window of 30 days to comment on before sending them to the LES members. The NSPE Code of Ethics that is currently in our handbook is also being sent to board members for review to see if it should remain in the LES Handbook.
- c. **Board Meeting Structure** – Usually in the May board meetings, the new board of directors are inducted. It has been discussed that this is no longer the best practice since the next fiscal year budget is voted on during this meeting, and incoming board members that have never served on the LES board, do not have the knowledge to back up their vote. It has been proposed that the May/June board meeting would have both outgoing and incoming board members, giving the outgoing members the opportunity to guide the incoming president into what is to be expected from them in their new role. It is also proposed that LES can host a virtual training during the summer to explain what is needed from the new chapter presidents. A virtual training also gives the opportunity for chapter presidents to express what part of the organization they would like to be a part of. The first meeting of the “new board” would be the fall meeting that is usually held in September. Also, the summer meeting is no longer required to be in conjunction with the annual golf tournament as it has previously been held, giving us some flexibility for that meeting.
- d. **Alexandria Chapter Report** – Report was given – Currently has 99 members. The Alexandria Chapter hosted a meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup> with Jennifer Gemar giving a presentation on Design and Detail Considerations for Steel Fabrication and Construction. On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, the chapter hosted a meeting with Chris Harris giving a presentation on TIGG Pressure Vessel Systems. Both meetings had an average turnout of approximately 16 people. The next meeting will be held on May 7<sup>th</sup> and will have Cole Vanderlick from Louisiana 811 giving a presentation. The chapter will also finalize their new board members at the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Lastly, the Alexandria chapter is hosting a golf tournament on August 30, 2024, to raise funds for the chapter. (see attached report)
- e. **Baton Rouge Chapter Report** – Report was given - Currently has 571 members. The Baton Rouge Chapter hosted a meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup> with Mary Anne Wolf presenting on what types of engineering documentation could be discoverable in court. The remaining meetings for this year will be held on April 25<sup>th</sup>, where the chapter will host Billy Williamson and an ethics presentation by Chris Knotts on May 10<sup>th</sup>. The chapter will host the annual Wentz Memorial Golf Tournament on April 29<sup>th</sup>. Board member elections will be held at the end of April/beginning of

May. (see attached report)

- f. **Bayou Chapter Report** – Report was given - Currently has 77 members. The next chapter meeting will be held on Thursday, April 25.
  - g. **Lafayette Chapter Report** – Report was given – Currently has 381 members. The Lafayette chapter is hosting a joint crawfish boil with IEEE and ASCE on May 7<sup>th</sup>. A meeting is being planned for late May to host Chad Winchester with DOTD.
  - h. **Lake Charles Chapter Report** – Report was given – Currently has 119 members. The chapter held a meeting in March where they hosted Nick Pestello with Port of Lake Charles. The McNeese ASCE Student Chapter gave a presentation on their conference competition results for the chapter’s April meeting. May and June meetings are scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month, which may potentially change for future meetings after those due to venue availability. Constant Contact is no longer utilizing We Pay and is switching to Stripe, so the chapter has opened a Stripe account. This opened the discussion for chapters to use the LES State Stripe account. This would mean that chapters can send their registration details to the state office and the state office will set up the event through MembershipWorks. The state office would then send a check to the chapter at the end of the month for their registration income.
  - i. **Monroe Chapter Report** – Report was given – Currently has 110 members. The chapter held a meeting on March 14 hosting Bille Coleman with ICE and on April 11 with Morgan McCallister presenting on Management on the Fly. The next meeting is scheduled for May 9 and will host Brett Robinson to present on Louisiana Bid Law. The chapter will also host a sporting clay tournament on May 18. The chapter has seen a slight decline in membership overall, but has seen a slight increase in meeting participation. (see attached report)
  - j. **New Orleans Chapter Report** – Report was given – Currently has 532 members. The chapter held a meeting in March hosting individuals from Jefferson Parish who presented on saltwater intrusion and how it was handled. The next chapter meeting is scheduled for April 17 and will host Ghassan Korban who will present on SWBNO West Power Complex. In May there will be a joint meeting with IEEE. Last weekend, the first robotics competition was held and LES had a table set up and was able to talk to a lot of parents of students. The nominations committee met earlier this month to gather nominations for next year’s officers. Lastly, the chapter has been invited to UNO and Tulane’s Order of the Engineer ceremonies in May to give closing remarks. John Jackson will be attending the UNO ceremony and past president David Gereighty will be attending the Tulane ceremony.
  - k. **Shreveport Chapter Report** – Report was submitted after meeting – Currently has 130 members. The chapter hosted a joint meeting with ASCE in May in which Jeff Pike gave an ethics presentation, which was the biggest meeting of the year. They held a meeting in May that hosted Industrial Fabrics, who presented on their Concrete Canvas project. The chapter will be participating in Artbreak April 12 – 14 where they will have a booth for STEM activities. The last meeting of the year will be another joint meeting with ASCE held in May. (see attached report)
  - l. **PEC Report** – No report given.
  - m. **PEE Report** – We have received 5 candidates that are interested in the LAPELS PEE vacancy.
  - n. **PEG Report** – No report given.
  - o. **PEI Report** – No report given.
  - p. **PEPP Report** – PEPP is working on legislative call to actions along with the legislative committee. The PEPP nomination that LES previously put forward for the LAPELS vacancy, John Plaisance, was not accepted by the governor’s office so we are potentially going to have to submit new names.
12. **Announcements** -
- a. The next Board of Direction Meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2024, at the Carter Plantation in Springfield, LA in conjunction with the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual LA Transportation Partners Golf Tournament.

13. **Adjournment - A motion was made to adjourn by Melanie Caillouet. The motion was seconded by Gavin Gautreau. The motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 1:41 PM.**