

House Committee on Municipal, Parochial and Cultural Affairs

Minutes of Meeting
2019 Regular Session
May 8, 2019

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative John A. Berthelot, chairman of the House Committee on Municipal, Parochial and Cultural Affairs, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in Room 6, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative John A. Berthelot, chairman
Representative Robert E. Billiot
Representative Joseph Bouie, Jr.
Representative Paula P. Davis
Representative Mary DuBuisson
Representative Stephen C. Dwight
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Stephanie Hilferty
Representative Mike Huval, vice chairman
Representative Rodney Lyons
Representative C. Denise Marcelle
Representative Barbara M. Norton
Representative Stephen E. Pugh
Representative Patricia Haynes Smith
Representative Joseph A. Stagni
Representative Malinda B. White
Representative Mark Wright

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Cedric B. Glover
Representative Sam L. Jenkins, Jr.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tina Righteous, attorney
Valarie Banks, secretary
David Gauthier, legislative analyst
Lisa Lovello, legislative analyst
Bryan D. Vincent, director

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Tyler Broussard, clerk
Janet Anthony, sergeant at arms
Angela McKnight, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION

House Bill No. 381 by Representative Miguez

Representative Miguez presented House Bill No. 381, which provides relative to the board of commissioners of the Vermilion and Iberia Railroad Development District.

Representative Edmonds offered a motion to adopt amendments to House Bill No. 381 that would authorize board members to designate persons to attend board meetings in their absence. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, DuBuisson, Dwight, Edmonds, Huval, Lyons, Norton, Stagni, and Wright voted yea.

Representative Huval offered a motion to report House Bill No. 381 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 381 was reported with amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, DuBuisson, Dwight, Edmonds, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Stagni, and Wright voted yea.

House Bill No. 34 by Representative Wright

Representative Wright presented House Bill No. 34, which provides that the position of fire chief for the city of Covington is in the unclassified service.

Mayor Mike Cooper, city of Covington, no address given, spoke in support of House Bill No. 34 and submitted resolutions from the city, Exhibit A, in support of the legislation that are included in the committee records.

Fire Chief Gary Blocker, city of Covington, no address given, spoke in support of House Bill No. 34 and submitted a letter, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Edmonds offered a motion to report House Bill No. 34 favorably. No vote was taken.

Chad Roberson, Louisiana Fire Chiefs Association, P.O. Box 82531, Baton Rouge, LA 70884, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 34.

Chad Major, Professional Firefighters of Louisiana, no address given, (225) 572-8483, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 34.

Representative Stagni offered a substitute motion to involuntarily defer action on House Bill No. 34, to which Representative Wright objected. The secretary called the roll, and the motion failed to pass by a vote of 4 yeas, 10 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Billiot, Norton, Smith, and Stagni voted yea. Representatives Davis, DuBuisson, Dwight, Edmonds, Hilferty, Huval, Lyons, Pugh, White, and Wright voted nay. Representative Berthelot abstained.

The original motion by Representative Edmonds to report House Bill No. 34 favorably was considered, to which Representative Norton objected. The secretary called the roll, and House Bill No. 34 was reported favorably by a vote of 11 yeas and 4 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Davis, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Hilferty, Huval, Lyons, Pugh, White, and Wright voted yea. Representatives Dwight, Norton, Smith, and Stagni voted nay.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 590 by Representative Gaines

Representative Gaines presented House Bill No. 590, which provides relative to the River Parishes Convention, Tourist, and Visitors District.

Buddy Boe, River Parishes Tourist Commission, 671 Belle Terre Boulevard, LaPlace, LA 70069, (504) 487-2336, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 590.

Representative Norton offered a motion to report House Bill No. 590 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 590 was reported favorably by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Davis, DuBuisson, Dwight, Edmonds, Hilferty, Huval, Lyons, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, White, and Wright voted yea.

House Bill No. 150 by Representative Zeringue

Representative Zeringue presented House Bill No. 150, which provides relative to the position of police chief in the city of Houma.

Representative Edmonds offered a motion to report House Bill No. 150 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 150 was reported favorably by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Davis, DuBuisson, Dwight, Edmonds, Hilferty, Huval, Lyons, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, White, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 4 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 400 by Representative McMahan

Representative McMahan presented House Bill No. 400, which provides relative to employment lists and tests for positions in the municipal fire and police civil service.

Chad Major, Professional Firefighters, Shreveport, LA 71115, (225) 572-8483, spoke in support of House Bill No. 400.

Representative Pugh offered a motion to report House Bill No. 400 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 400 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Davis, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Hilferty, Huval, Lyons, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in support, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 531 by Representative Dustin Miller

Representative Dustin Miller presented House Bill No. 531, which provides relative to the powers granted to the chief of police for the city of Opelousas.

Chief Martin McLendon, Opelousas Police Department, 318 North Court Street, Opelousas, LA, (337) 948-2511, spoke in support of House Bill No. 531.

Representative Marcelle offered a motion to report House Bill No. 531 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 531 was reported favorably by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Davis, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 4 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 104 by Senator Erdey

Senator Erdey presented Senate Bill No. 104, which provides for an increase of commissioners to the board of Gravity Drainage District No. 5 of Livingston Parish.

Representative Stagni offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 104 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 104 was reported favorably by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, DuBuisson, Dwight, Hilferty, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, White, and Wright voted yea.

Senate Bill No. 11 by Senator Morrish

Senator Morrish presented Senate Bill No. 11, which authorizes an increase in the membership of the boards of commissioners of the consolidated gravity drainage districts of Calcasieu Parish.

Representative Norton offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 11 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 11 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Davis, Edmonds, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 12 by Senator Morrish

Senator Morrish presented Senate Bill No. 12, which provides for qualifications of the city of Jennings deputy chief of police.

Representative Pugh offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 12 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 12 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Davis, Edmonds, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 236 by Senator Morrish

Senator Morrish presented Senate Bill No. 236, which authorizes the governing authority of Consolidated School District Number 1 of Jefferson Davis Parish to hold an election to levy and collect a parcel fee.

Representative Pugh offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 236 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 236 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Davis, Edmonds, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, and Wright voted yea.

House Bill No. 323 by Representative James

Representative James presented House Bill No. 323, which creates a crime prevention district in the Monticello neighborhood in East Baton Rouge Parish.

Representative Norton offered a motion to report House Bill No. 323 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 323 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Davis, Edmonds, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, and Wright voted yea.

House Bill No. 438 by Representative James

Representative James presented House Bill No. 438, which provides relative to the classified police service in the city of Baton Rouge.

Representative Berthelot offered amendments to:

1. Require the appointing authority to appoint a person certified to him who is among the five, rather than ten, highest in departmental seniority.
2. Remove authorization granted to the board to establish a committee to conduct interviews of persons certified to the appointing authority.
3. Remove reference to present law provisions relative to persons appointed but unable to begin the working test period due to work-related illness, injury, or incapacity.

Representative Berthelot offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, White, and Wright voted yea.

LaMont Cole, Metro Council Baton Rouge, 222 St. Louis Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in support of House Bill No. 438.

Walter Griffin, Magnolia State Peace Officers Association and Baton Rouge Police Department, no address given, spoke in support of House Bill No. 438.

Chris Stewart, International Union of Police, 858 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70805, (225) 938-1104, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 438.

Representative Marcelle offered a motion to report House Bill No. 438 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 438 was reported with amendments by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Davis, DuBuisson, Dwight, Hilferty, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, White, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 6 in support, 8 in opposition, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 110 by Senator Peterson

On behalf of Senator Peterson, Representative Hilferty presented Senate Bill No. 110, which provides relative to the collection cost that the city of New Orleans can charge each tax recipient for reimbursement of expenses.

Norman White, city of New Orleans, no address given, (504) 658-1520, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 110.

Representative Hilferty offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 110 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 110 was reported favorably by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Davis, DuBuisson, Dwight, Hilferty, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, White, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 261 by Representative Hollis

Representative Hollis presented House Bill No. 261, which provides relative to local inspectors general and ethics review boards.

Rick Franco, Concerned Citizens of St. Tammany, no address given, Lacombe, LA, (985) 788-3862, spoke in support of House Bill No. 261.

Vice Chairman Huval in the chair.

Carl F. Ernst, Concerned Citizens of St. Tammany, 59350 West Hands Lane, Lacombe, LA, (504) 236-1719, spoke in support of House Bill No. 261.

St. Tammany Parish President Pat Brister, 21490 Koop Drive, Mandeville, LA 70471, (985) 898-2700, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 261.

Michael J. Power, Jefferson Parish administrator, 1221 Elmwood Park Boulevard, Suite 1002, Jefferson, LA 70121, (504) 736-6400, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 261.

Guy Cormier, Police Jury Association, 707 North 7th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 349-2855, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 261.

Representative Pugh offered a motion for the committee to undertake a study on the provisions of House Bill No. 261. No vote was taken.

Representative Pugh offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Bill No. 261. Without objection, action on House Bill No. 261 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 16 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Bouie, Davis, DuBuisson, Dwight, Edmonds, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, White, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 226 by Senator Barrow

On behalf of Senator Barrow, Representative Marcelle presented Senate Bill No. 226, which provides for tax exemptions for special districts created to finance capital improvements.

Darryl Gissel, on behalf of Mayor-President Sharon Broome, city-parish of East Baton Rouge, 666 North 6th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 389-3100, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 226.

Representative Stagni offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 226 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 226 was reported favorably by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Bouie, Davis, Dwight, Edmonds, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, White, and Wright voted yea.

House Bill No. 18 by Representative Robby Carter

On behalf of Representative Robby Carter, Representative Berthelot presented House Bill No. 18, which authorizes the governing authority of Amite City to name a fire station in honor of a living person. Representative Berthelot submitted a document package, Exhibit C, in support of House Bill No. 18, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Pugh offered a motion to report House Bill No. 18 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 18 was reported favorably by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Bouie, Davis, Dwight, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 116 by Representative Robby Carter

On behalf of Representative Robby Carter, Representative Berthelot presented House Bill No. 116, which provides relative to per diem received by the board of commissioners of Tangipahoa Communications District Number 1. Representative Berthelot submitted a document package, Exhibit C, in support of House Bill No. 116, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Lyons offered a motion to report House Bill No. 116 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 116 was reported favorably by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Bouie, Davis, Dwight, Huval, Lyons, Marcelle, Norton, Pugh, Smith, Stagni, and White voted yea.

House Bill No. 33 by Representative Jefferson

Representative Jefferson presented House Bill No. 33, which provides relative to the powers of the chief of police for the town of Homer.

Dr. Xanthe Seals, mayor of the town of Homer, 400 East Main Street, Homer, LA 71040, (318) 927-1312, spoke in support of House Bill No. 33.

Representative Norton offered a motion to report House Bill No. 33 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 33 was reported favorably by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Bouie, Davis, Dwight, Edmonds, Huval, Lyons, Norton, Pugh, Stagni, White, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Chairman Berthelot in the chair.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Berthelot announced the next meeting of the committee would be Thursday, May 16, 2019.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Pugh offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Berthelot, Billiot, Bouie, Davis, Dwight, Edmonds, Huval, Lyons, Norton, Pugh, Stagni, White, and Wright voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman John A. Berthelot
House Committee on Municipal, Parochial and Cultural Affairs

Date adopted: