

## **House Committee on Appropriations**

Minutes of Meeting  
2022 Regular Session  
April 4, 2022

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

Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue, chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m. in Room 5, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

### **II. ROLL CALL**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Representative Jerome "Zee" Zeringue, chairman  
Representative Tony Bacala  
Representative R. Dewith Carrier  
Representative Raymond J. Crews  
Representative Mary DuBuisson  
Representative Rick Edmonds  
Representative Jason Hughes  
Representative John R. Illg, Jr.  
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, vice chairman  
Representative Christopher Turner  
Representative William "Bill" Wheat, Jr.

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Representative Barbara W. Carpenter  
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel  
Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman  
Representative Brett F. Geymann  
Representative Debbie Villio

#### **STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dazia Briscoe, committee administrative assistant  
Chas Nichols, budget analyst  
Ashari Robinson, budget analyst  
Jamie Tairov, budget analyst

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:**

Vivian Hurst, sergeant at arms  
Faye Talbot, sergeant at arms

**III. BUSINESS**

**Discussion of the FY 22-23 Budget for:**

**Judiciary**

Ms. Jamie Tairov, budget analyst, House Fiscal Division (HFD), 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-0474, presented an overview and discussed the FY 22-23 budget for the Judiciary Expenses.

Justice Will Crain, associate justice, Louisiana Supreme Court, 400 Royal Street, New Orleans, LA 70130, (504) 310-2605, presented opening comments to the committee. In his remarks, Justice Crain discussed the court system, operating expenses for district courts, the lack of technology infrastructure in some courts, and programs to reduce incarceration rates.

Justice Crain, Ms. Tairov, and Mr. Bryan Wolff, chief financial officer, Louisiana Supreme Court, 400 Royal Street, New Orleans, LA 70130, (504) 919-5683, discussed funding for the judiciary, the percentage of money from the State General Fund used for salary expenses and travel, the percentage of the budget for district courts that is not appropriated through the state, and self-generated revenue from the Louisiana Judicial College with Representative Zeringue.

*Representative Edmonds in the chair.*

Justice Crain discussed the challenges associated with transferring funds from the Supreme Court to district courts, the judicial financial reporting collected by the Supreme Court pursuant to Act 116 of the 2021 Regular Session, the use of CARES Act dollars to provide equal access to the courts, and The Bail Project with Representative Marcelle.

Justice Crain discussed the intent of the diversion process, the ramifications of diversion programs on the judicial budget, and the regulation of attorney commercial advertisement with Representative Crews.

Justice Crain discussed the Supreme Court's oversight over the district courts, district courts that received statutorily dedicated funds, and the disparity in caseloads throughout the district courts with Representative Bacala.

Justice Crain and Mr. Wolff discussed judiciary fund balance with Representative Marcelle.

Justice Crain discussed the effectiveness of the rules to regulate attorney advertisements with Representative Marcelle.

*Chairman Zeringue in the chair.*

Justice Crain discussed the increase in the judiciary budget, guidelines to utilize CARES Act funding, the correlation between the Office of Group Benefits rates and judges' salaries, funds appropriated in House Bill No. 437 of the 2022 Regular Session, investments into the juvenile justice system, and conservation efforts for tort reform with Representative McFarland.

### **Ancillary**

Mr. Chas Nichols, budget analyst, HFD, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-0474, presented an overview and discussed the FY 22-23 budget for the Ancillary Appropriations.

Ms. Desiree Honore Thomas, assistant commissioner, Division of Administration (DOA), 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7000, discussed foreseeable increases in premium rates from the Office of Risk Management.

Mr. Nichols continued to present the FY 22-23 budget for the Ancillary Appropriations.

### **Office of Technology Services**

Mr. Ashari Robinson, budget analyst, HFD, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-2412, presented an overview and discussed the FY 22-23 budget for the Office of Technology Services (OTS).

Mr. Richard Howze, state chief information officer, OTS, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 315-2150, presented opening comments to the committee. In his remarks, Mr. Howze discussed the purpose of OTS, the consolidation of information technology equipment, two new units within the department, progress with mission-critical management information systems in the executive department, House Concurrent Resolution 121 of the 2017 Regular Session, and critical infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Howze discussed the cost savings associated with providing technology to the state and the stabilization of technology services with Representative Zeringue.

Mr. Neal Underwood, information officer, OTS, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-7105, discussed the increase in expenditures, the capital expenditure (CapEx) budget, the disparities in rates charged to agencies, the federal Cost Allocation guideline, and the mandate for certain agencies to contract technology services from OTS with Representative Zeringue.

Mr. Underwood discussed the difference between INET, shared internet service for an entire agency, and IWAY, direct internet service for individual state offices, with Representative Crews.

Mr. Underwood discussed the department's effort to accommodate the visually impaired population and addressed cybersecurity with Representative DuBuisson.

Mr. Matthew Vince, project & portfolio management director, OTS, 1201 North Third Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-9663, discussed the department's role in the Louisiana Medicaid Eligibility Determination System (LaMEDS) contract between the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) and Deloitte with Representative Bacala.

Mr. Underwood and Mr. Vince discussed the overall budget and the increased cost of professional services with Representative Bacala.

Mr. Underwood discussed the cost savings associated with the changes in technology and recurring expenses with Representative Zeringue.

Representative Bacala requested more supporting documentation from OTS in order to amend the budget.

Mr. Vince discussed the department's role in developing request for proposals (RFP) and procurement for systems used by LDH with Representative Miller.

Mr. Underwood discussed the infrastructure required to maintain the software used by the Department of Revenue, which explained the percentage of the budget allocated to OTS with Representative Crews.

Mr. Underwood discussed how OTS compared to other southern states with Representative Thomspson.

Judge Scott Schlegel, Louisiana District Judges Association (LDJA), 200 Derbigny Street, Gretna, LA 70053, (504) 364-3876, discussed the technology needs for the courts.

Judge Schlegel discussed the court systems that lack technological infrastructure and the funds needed to fully fund technology modernization in the judicial system with Representative Illg.

Mr. Nichols continued to present the FY 22-23 budget for the Ancillary Appropriations for the Division of Administrative Law.

### **Executive Department- Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness**

Mr. Robinson presented an overview and discussed the FY 22-23 budget for the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP).

Mr. Casey Tingle, director, GOHSEP, 7667 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 485-7451, presented opening comments to the committee. In his remarks, Mr. Tingle discussed the agency's budget request as recovery and response activity increase due to federal authority, funding directed to local communities, and collaborative efforts with legislative staff, local governments, and federal agencies.

Mr. Tingle discussed Louisiana Wireless Information Network (LWIN) and proactive efforts to address housing in response to storms with Representative Zeringue.

Mr. Tingle and Ms. Christina Dayries, deputy director, 7667 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 525-7560, discussed the request in the executive budget for the reimbursement to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and funds owed due to previous disasters with Representative Zeringue.

Mr. Tingle discussed the funding to return caskets to their proper placements after storms and efforts to clear the waterways at the ports with Representative Kerner.

Mr. Tingle discussed disaster housing, the number of people in temporary housing, community efforts to assist electrical lineworkers during disasters, points of distribution during storms, the agency's authority to prepare the parishes for disasters, and Operation Blue Roof with Representative DuBuisson.

### **Division of Administration**

Ms. Thomas discussed the revenue calculation, the guidelines from the federal treasury regarding the use of federal funds, and their impact on legislation with Representative Zeringue.

### **Louisiana State Police**

Lieutenant Colonel Jason Starnes, chief administrative officer, Louisiana State Police, 7919 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 925-6032, and Captain Jonas Martin, director of the bureau of identification and information, Louisiana State Police, 7919 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 678-6007, discussed Louisiana's concealed carry permit

costs, state police oversight regarding concealed carry, and state police resources available to the general public with Representative Miguez.

*Representative Thompson in the chair.*

#### **IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

Representative Illg offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 18 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Zeringue, Bacala, Carrier, Crews, DuBuisson, Edmonds, Hughes, Illg, Kerner, Lyons, Marcelle, McFarland, Miguez, Dustin Miller, Romero, Thompson, Turner, and Wheat voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Jerome "Zee" Zeringue  
House Committee on Appropriations