

**RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION
FOR THE PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE**
Regular Meeting – 5:00 p.m.
BREC Administration Building
6201 Florida Boulevard
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Commission Minutes
August 27, 2026

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) was held at BREC's Administrative Offices on August 27, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Michael Polito. Commissioner Wade Evans offered the invocation, and Commissioner Carl Stages led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was taken and a quorum of Commissioners was present, including Michael Polito, Chair; Wade Evans, Vice-Chair; Carl Stages, Treasurer; Dr. Murelle Harrison; David McDavid; Collis Temple III; and Lon Vicknair. Commissioners Marshall Ortego and Dustin Yates were absent. Staff members present were Dr. Brooks M. Williams, Superintendent; Aneatra Boykin, Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel; Steven Knight, Chief Information Officer; Chad Brewer, Reshon Clayton, Dina Duplantis, Angela Harms, Jim Fleshman, Corey Luttrell, Michael Raby. Dr. Evante Topp, Executive Director of BREC Foundation, and Murphy Foster, legal counsel, were also in attendance. The rest of the audience consisted of other BREC staff, media, and the public.

Public Comment

Chairman Polito announced that public comment would be allowed prior to a vote being taken on any agenda action item and explained the process to be observed.

Adoption of Minutes

Resolved, that the reading of the minutes of the Recreation and Park Commission Meeting of July 23, 2026 be dispensed with, and that they be approved as written.

Motion to approve by Mr. Temple

Second by Mr. McDavid

There being no discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0

The minutes were approved unanimously.

Consent Calendar

The next item was under the Consent Calendar as follows:

Resolved, that the Commission review and accept the Routine Personnel Transactions from July 8, 2026 through August 4, 2026.

Motion to approve by Dr. Harrison

Second by Mr. Evans

There being no discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Presentations

The BREC video showcasing upcoming activities for the month of August was played.

Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

Chairman Polito introduced the audience to the new Superintendent, Dr. Brooks Williams, who began his Superintendent's Update by giving an overview of his first three weeks in the role. He stated that he made an attempt to spend time away from the desk, taking an opportunity to "see" BREC; he also met with employees, Commissioners, mayors, the (BREC) Foundation, CPERS, coaches, community partners, and the media. He stated that he toured a few BREC facilities and started working through some of the audits, contracts, and other issues that were already underway before he assumed the role of Superintendent; he remarked that he has been doing a lot of listening and asking a lot of questions. He said that he discovered in talking to people that there is an enormous amount of pride in BREC, but also some frustration with a number of processes; however, those are things that can and will be fixed.

Superintendent Williams presented the July Monthly Attendance Report, and stated that going forward, the numbers will be looked at a bit differently – fluctuations in attendance will be questioned so that the reasons for them can be addressed. He spoke about the impact of BREC volunteers, how to keep current volunteers as well as attract new ones.

The Superintendent stated that he wanted to tour the facilities to see them for himself. He wanted to understand the staffing and to be able to compare what is actually done to what the taxpayers are told is being done. He said that he has seen significant deferred maintenance and a very large capital need across the system. BREC needs to prioritize and stop allowing the newest issue to become the next priority. He stated that BREC needs to get back to the basics, and it cannot promise more than it has the budget and staffing to operate. He also presented on the upcoming City-Brooks Park community meeting scheduled for September 17, 2026; park security and safety; and the partnership with local law enforcement and the NFL for the new flag football league.

Superintendent Williams concluded his report by stating that what is important right now is that people need to see the value of BREC quickly, which involves fixing things people can see and finishing things that were promised, as well as being consistent about how decisions are made internally as a staff. He stated that his goal is to create a system where the processes produce consistent and visible wins.

Chairman Polito thanked Superintendent Williams and welcomed him to BREC as the audience applauded.

Standing Committee Reports

Chairman Polito read Item a under Selection of Professionals:

Resolved, that the Commission approve an amendment to Contract #2026000199 with Sasaki Associates for the City-Brooks Community Park Master Plan and Lakes Vision, to add \$40,045.05 for additional services of expanded engagement and coordination, additional management and stakeholder meetings, Special Committee presentations, and public meeting support. The original contract amount was \$600,000.00; the new total is \$640,045.05. Authorize Superintendent to execute appropriate documents upon final legal review.

Motion to approve by Mr. Evans

Second by Dr. Harrison

Commissioner Evans stated that he begrudgingly motioned to approve because he is on record as not supporting BREC underwriting this fully at the beginning, and he will continue to reiterate his displeasure for BREC being the one to underwrite the entire project because there were good partners involved and willing to pay for more than half. He stated that the community

has since demanded more public engagement, which had been removed from the scope of the original contract to get the number down; this contract increase is the result of that additional public engagement.

Chairman Polito recognized an audience member, Pennie Mae Landry, who expressed her concern with the contract and her preference for using in-state contractors.

Chairman Polito stated that she misunderstood the monthly payment as if it is broken down. Commissioner Evans chimed in, saying that the monthly payments are not broken down across the entire contract amount and annuitized over the term, but are paid as services are rendered.

Commissioner Vicknair stated that he, too, was against the increase for BREC and that he thinks it can be worked out without committing additional funds, even given the change in scope and additional community engagements. He looks forward to seeing the outcomes resulting from this investment.

Commissioner Evans stated that he believes that local companies should receive deference and that Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) should be structured, where legally allowed, so that home-grown companies can receive extra points; however, cancelling the contract is not an option at this juncture.

Commissioner Stages stated that the partners that wanted to put up additional funds have always had the opportunity to do that and help pay for this work. He asked if the extra funds were covering incurred expenses. Planning and Engineering Director Angela Harms affirmed that they were, stating that most of the stakeholder meetings have already taken place, with a couple more on the schedule. She stated that the costs have been incurred but not paid. Commissioner Stages asked for clarification if the original amount requested had been reduced to \$40,000. Ms. Harms affirmed that the original contract amendment amount was reduced. Commissioner Stages inquired about the consequences of a no vote from the Commission. Ms. Harms stated that the work would stop. Commissioner Temple stated, for clarification, that all the funds invested would go “down the drain” without a finished product. Ms. Harms confirmed.

Chairman Polito stated that the night that he and Commissioners Evans and Vicknair did not vote in favor of the motion approving BREC to fully fund the agreement, the Commission approved the original contract amount of approximately \$630,000.00; post-approval, the scope involving community engagement meetings was reduced and the final cost was \$600,000.00. This contract amendment puts the money back in; the work was done, and Sasaki is due the money.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Polito called for a roll call vote with the following results:

Yeas: 5	Mr. Stages, Mr. Temple, Mr. Polito, Mr. Evans, Dr. Harrison
Nays: 2	Mr. Vicknair, Mr. McDavid
Absent: 2	Mr. Ortego, Mr. Yates

The motion was approved.

Reports of Special Committees

None

Special Orders

None

Unfinished Business and General Orders

None

New Business

Chairman Polito read Item A under New Business:

Resolved, that effective August 27, 2026, the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge authorizes and empowers Brooks Williams, Superintendent and Ex-Officio Secretary for the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge, to execute all agreements and documents, including all agency financial documents, for and on behalf of the said Commission.

Motion to approve by Mr. Vicknair

Second by Mr. McDavid

Commissioner Harrison asked if this authorization would be for the entirety of the Superintendent's contract or if this would have to be done annually. Chairman Polito recognized Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel Aneatra Boykin, who stated that this would be in effect for as long as Dr. Williams served as Superintendent.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Polito read Item B under New Business:

Resolved, that the Commission, in response to the District Attorney's August 21, 2026 written findings concerning the Commission's July 23, 2026 executive-session notice, hereby rescinds and supersedes the July 28, 2026 letter to Friends of City Park Baton Rouge, Inc. This action is taken to address the identified procedural notice issue and does not constitute an admission of liability, wrongdoing, retaliatory intent, or waiver of any right, claim, defense, or position held by BREC or any Commissioner. The Commission, in open session, will consider whether to rescind, modify, supersede, ratify, or take other action concerning the July 28, 2026 letter.

Commissioner Evans moved to rescind the letter and send a new letter to Friends of City Park (FOCP), seconded by Mr. Stages.

Chairman Polito recognized Ms. Landry from the audience, who expressed her concern with what she considers a lack of transparency from the BREC and the Commission.

Chairman Polito responded, saying that BREC is committed to doing a better job in all areas going forward. He also apologized to FOCP and Peter Davis, who was present in the audience, for any ill intent perceived by the organization, and stated that if FOCP would agree to use the disclaimer, the Commission would agree to rescind the letter if notified as such in one week. Mr. Davis stated that they would notify the Commission in one week.

Commissioner Evans modified his motion and moved to rescind the original letter and send a new letter if no affirmative word regarding adding a disclaimer to their materials is received from Friends of City Park by September 4, 2026, seconded by Mr. Vicknair.

Chairman Polito recognized Ms. Landry, who again expressed her concern with the presumed lack of transparency and the intent of the Commission.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Polito called for the vote with the following results:

Yeas: 7

Nays: 0

The motion was approved unanimously.

Adjournment

Chairman Polito called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Evans made a motion, Commissioner Vicknair seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m. without objection.

Brooks M. Williams, Superintendent
and Ex-Officio Secretary

Michael Polito, Chairman

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