



Board Meeting

Date and Time: September 22, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

**Meeting Place: 5367 I-49 S. Service Road
Opelousas, LA 70570**

AGENDA

- ❖ Welcome
- ❖ Pledge and Opening Prayer
- ❖ Roll Call
- ❖ ODDD Business Recognition Program – DezMeaux’s Boudin (Opelousas)
 - Owned by Brent Mose
 - 720 Street Vine Street
 - Opelousas, La. 70570

- ❖ Approval of August 25, 2023, Meeting Minutes
- ❖ Monthly Financial Report
- ❖ Executive Director’s Report
 - Monthly status report of activities for and effecting the ODDD.

- ❖ **Old Business:**
- ❖ South Park Project (Update)
 - Bond Attorney Consideration
 - Feasibility Study
 - Opelousas Historic District National Registry (Update)
 - ODDD Big Grant (Update)
 - TAP Grant - Landry Street (Update)

- ❖ **Board Members Comments**

- ❖ **Adjourn**

The following members were present in person: Chairwoman Lena Charles, Pat Fontenot, Sarah Branton, Don D’avy, Ogden Pitre, Keith Broussard

The following members were absent: Robert Hillard

The following SLED members were present: Bill Rodier (CEO of SLED) Teresa Reaves (SLED), Brittany Cretchain (SLED), Janece Riser (SLED)

Guests present in person: Herman Fuselier (St Landry Tourism), David Jarrell (Morgan Goudeau & Associates), Gretchen Erlingson (Opelousas Main Street), Reggie Dupre (Opelousas Main Street) Dustin Miller (State Representative district 40), Mr. Bobby Ardoin (St Landry Now),

Stephen Woods (St Landry Parish Government), Chris Rideaux, Brent Mose, Cilicia Savoy (St. Landry Parish Government)

Guests present virtually: Kelly Calhoun, Wesley Shafto, Eric Lafleur, Emma Short

Chairwoman Charles welcomed the board and opened the meeting at 9:15 AM.

It was determined that a quorum was present.

Chairwoman Charles welcomed everyone and introduced the guests in attendance.

ODDD Business Recognition Program: Chairwoman Charles announced the Business of the Month of September as DezMeaux Boudin, owned by Mr. Brent Mose. Mr. Mose said that his boudin recipe started in his grandparents' kitchen and they eventually sold their boudin in their grocery store. After they retired, Mr. Mose wanted to bring the family recipe back to the public, so he opened DezMeaux's Boudin.

Approval of August 25, 2023, Meeting Minutes: A motion was made to accept the August 25, 2023, minutes as submitted by Mr. Pat Fontenot and seconded by Mr. Ogden Pitre. Motion carried without objection.

Monthly Financial Report: The financials were presented by Mr. Keith Broussard. He went over the balances, income, and expenditures. Questions and discussion ensued. A motion was made to accept the financials as submitted by Mr. Ogden Pitre and seconded by Mr. Pat Fontenot. Motion carried without objection.

Executive Director's Report: Mr. Bill Rodier gave a report regarding projects going on in and around Downtown Opelousas. Mr. Rodier said that he continues to interact with the property owners of the vacant downtown properties. The high interest rate is beginning to hold back some of the developers that he has spoken with six months or a year ago and he said that maybe putting some incentive programs in place would be a good idea, but he didn't yet know what that might look like. Ms. Sarah Branton asked if some of the buildings are historic and Mr. Rodier said yes, but even with the 10% historic rehabilitation tax the interest rate is still an issue. Mr. Rodier said that there are 64 buildings that are affected by the City of Opelousas Vacancy ordinance.

Mr. Rodier gave a report that Chik fil A is planning to open in November, and they are seemingly on schedule. He didn't have an update on Whata Burger, but he mentioned that there is another restaurant interested in being in that property space as well, however, he didn't know who it is at this time. Questions and conversations ensued. Mr. Keith Broussard made a comment stating that he feels it would be important for the ODDD to know who the Chik Fil franchisee is. Mr. Rodier said that he will do his best to find out this week.

Chairwoman Charles asked if the new Loves was open and if they had their Grand opening. Mrs. Janece Riser answered that Loves had a soft opening and will have their grand opening later and when they do, our staff will invite the ODDD Board as well.

Old Business:

South Park Project Update:

Bond Attorney Consideration: Chairwoman Lena Charles reported that there was an issue with the CEA because the bonding attorney because the bonding attorney that they had previously used is now retired. With that said, Chairwoman Charles introduced attorney Eric Lefleur who was present virtually. Mr. Lefleur said that he and his team have reviewed the CEA and are ready to work with the ODDD Board. He said that when it moves before the financing options it can be funded by the local area St Landry Parish banks. He said that if it goes before the local banks, it will be less expensive and can allow more local banks to work together to fund the project. Mr. Don Davy asked, if we get approval from the state, what is the time frame to secure the funds? Mr. Lefleur said there is no time frame. You can move at your own time. Mr. Ogden Pitre asked what the interaction would be between the different entities and if he could explain the issues within the original CEA document. Mr. Lefleur explained the authority of the different entities and how they interact. The CEA is designed to lay things out specifically so that each party knows their responsibility. Mr. Don Davy asked what the process is with the fees. Mr. Lefleur said that the fee schedule is set by the Attorney General's Office. Mr. Lefleur presented the fee schedule that he sent back in June. Chairwoman Lena Charles made an announcement that she was not informed of anyone contacting Mr. Lafleur in June. Mr. Lafleur replied that he was contacted by Mr. Craig Lebouef's office, and then Mr. Keith Broussard said that he had contacted Mr. Craig Lebouef about the numbers as to what it would cost to do the bond, but he had never seen this report by Mr. Lefleur either. More discussion ensued. Mr. Lefleur mentioned that the bonds are bank qualified and tax exempt if the board does not exceed Ten Million dollars, which he said they will not. Mr. Lefleur presented an amortization chart over a period of ten years, and he also said that it is better to do the entirety of the bond all at once to save costs. He then added that they don't have to use the entire amount if they end up not needing it. Mr. Lefleur also reported that If the bond goes out to 15 years, it will no longer be bank qualified. Ms. Lena Charles asked if they could renegotiate the terms and some point and Mr. Lefleur said yes, but you cannot pay it off early. Ms Sarah Branton asked if they could make changes to the CEA, or if it would cause issues. Mr. Lefleur answered that changes regarding management of the facility would not be an issue with the bond, but that they can't change the length or amount of the bond. Mr. Lefleur said that as a close estimate it would cost \$623,000 over ten years to borrow ten million dollars at 5.5% interest. He also ran the numbers at fifteen years which would be \$470,000 over the fifteen years and at 5.5% interest but it would add five years and take it out of bank qualification. That means it wouldn't be available for the local banks to help provide. Mr. Eric Shafto from Eric Lafleur's office interjected that if the board puts two million dollars down from their bank account it would drop the interest rate to 2.7% to finance.

Mr. Bill Rodier asked if it would make any difference if they went with it as tax exempt, and Mr. Lafleur said yes it would.

Chairwoman Lena Charles reported that we always want to present choices, and Mr. Bill Rodier had worked with a bonding attorney out of North Louisiana. She asked Mr. Rodier to report on that and he said, yes, he has worked on some other projects with an attorney named Mike

Brusatta that works with a firm called Butler Snow, one of the largest firms in the state. Mr. Rodier said that he didn't want to outstep his bounds but noted that Mr. Brusatta has good references and would be available as a second opinion. Mr. Pat Fontenot then said that the board knows Mr. Lefleur already and he feels comfortable with Mr. Lefleur and would like to make a motion to move forward with Attorney Eric Lefleur taking over as the bonding attorney. Mr. Ogden Pitre said he feels the same and he mentioned that Mr. Lefleur is familiar with the project and the board wouldn't have to bring him up to speed with anything and he seconded the motion. to retain Eric Lafleur as the Bonding attorney. The motion was carried without objection.

Chairwoman Charles reported that it is essential to move forward with a feasibility study done. There was discussion and questions. Chairwoman Charles said she would entertain a motion to move forward with a feasibility study for phase one to include the right management in place not to exceed \$15,000. Ms Sarah Branton said it would be prudent. Mr. Don Davy made a motion to engage Synergy based on their proposal dated September 6th, 2023, up to and no more than \$20,000 for phase one of the project. A question was asked by Mr. Pat Fontenot if the feasibility study would delay the project moving forward with the bonding process, and the answer from Mr. Lefleur was no, it could go on simultaneously. Mr. Don Davy asked what the timeline will be, and the answer was 30 to 90 days. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pat Fontenot. Motion carried without objection.

Mr. Dustin Miller requested to speak, and Chairwoman Charles reported that there would be time at the end of the meeting.

A RESOLUTION GIVING PRELIMINARY APPROVAL TO THE ISSUANCE OF NOT EXCEEDING FIVE MILLION DOLLARS (\$5,000,000) OF TAXABLE OR TAX-EXEMPT SALES TAX REVENUE BONDS OF THE OPELOUSAS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, STATE OF LOUISIANA; PROVIDING CERTAIN TERMS OF SAID BONDS; MAKING APPLICATION TO THE STATE BOND COMMISSION FOR APPROVAL OF SAID BONDS; AUTHORIZING A FORM OF COOPERATIVE ENDEAVOR AGREEMENT AND PROVIDING FOR THE AUTHORIZATION AND DELIVERY THEREOF; AND PROVIDING FOR OTHER MATTERS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH:

Chairwoman Lena Charles read the resolution out-loud. She asked if there were any public comments. There were none. Mr. Eric Lefleur said there are no fees associated with the cost of this resolution for the ODDD or the ED until it moves forward, so if the cost of doing this is a concern, there is no cost. A motion was made by Mr. Pat Fontenot authorizing the CEA to be presented to the Bonding Commission. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Ogden Pitre. Motion carried without objection. A motion was made to allow Chairwoman Lena Charles to sign the CEA between the St Landry Parish Governing Authority as well as the City of Opelousas for the South Park Project Phase One by Mr. Don D'avy and seconded by Mr. Pat Fontenot. The motion carried without objection.

Opelousas Historic District National Registry Update: Ms. Kelly Calhoun had to leave the meeting and so Chairwoman Charles said she would send out a written update on this topic.

BIG Grant Update: Ms. Sarah Branton reported that no additional projects have been completed at this time. The recipients have until December 31, 2023, to complete the work.

TAP Grant Update: Chairwoman Charles turned it over to Ms. Janece Riser. Ms. Riser reported that the City of Opelousas approved the last two change orders, numbered #1 and #2, approved in the September 13th meeting. Ms. Riser said Change Order #3 was paid to Briggs Brothers in the amount of \$27,119.20 which includes Change order #1 in the amount of \$12,709.78 and is just waiting on Chairwoman Charles' signature so that the check can be cut. As of yesterday, September 21st, there has not been another request for payment however there is tear out to be done and there will be another expense for that. Ms. Riser reported that they have done the work, but we don't have a number to bring before the board for payment to Briggs. Mr. David Jerrell gave a report on where the project stands with the DOTD. Chairwoman Charles reported that the fire hydrant was leaking. Mr. Jarrell explained that the fire hydrant wasn't leaking before the project. He also said that there is some asphalt work and striping to be done to finish the project.

New Business:

Capital Outlay 2024: Chairwoman Charles explained that the Capital Outlay Application Process officially opened on September 1st and wants to be able to apply for Capital Outlay Funding for Phase 2 of the South Park Project. She invited Representative Dustin Miller to speak. Mr. Miller gave a brief statement and said that he would offer his help and support in securing Capital Outlay funding for phase two of the South Park Project. Chairwoman Charles said that she would like to hire Mr. Purvis Morrison to handle the lobbying for the request of the capital outlay. The closing date for the application process is November 1st, 2023, and the lobbying session begins February 2024 and runs through July 2024. Ms. Sarah Branton asked about a lobbyist already working for SLED and Mr. Bill Rodier explained that Mr. Nick Gautreaux works for CSLEDD Capital Outlay but that he would probably help. Mr. Rodier Offered to ask him. Discussion ensued. It was decided to go with Mr. Morrison for the application and then discuss the lobbying process later. A motion was made by Mr. Pat Fontenot to hire Mr. Purvis Morrison and his company, M & M Associates, at a \$2500.00 total fee for the application for the Capital Outlay Funding. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Don Davy. Motion carried without objection.

Chairwoman Charles asked Representative Miller if he was going to put in for Capital Outlay funding for Vine Street and he answered that DOTD oversees that and will put in for that funding.

Mr. Bill Rodier asked Representative Miller if they need to have a sit-down discussion about what will be in the capital outlay request to put him in the best position to get it funded. Mr. Miller said it would be a good idea and that whatever will help this project to keep moving forward would be great. Mr. Rodier said he would reach out to Mr. Purvis Morrison and get the ball rolling.

Board Member Comments: Ms. Sarah Branton mentioned that the Main Street group is continuing to move forward. The meetings are the first Thursday of the month at the Main Street Tourism office. Mr. Don Davy reported that he has accepted an invitation to be on the Parish Planning Commission.

Public Comments Ms. Sarah Branton reminded the board that last month she reported on the group that is going to be working on the Opelousas Master Plan and introduced Ms. Gretchen Erlingson who gave an update of the meetings. She said that they are being held monthly at the Mainstreet tourism office. Representative Dustin Miller said that he thinks that the board is supposed to allow the public to speak on something before there is a vote made on anything.

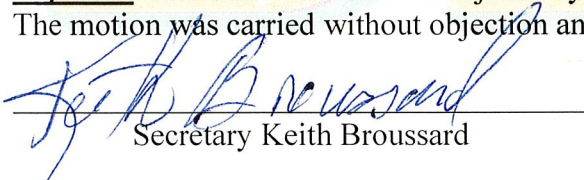
Mr. Dustin Miller also spoke about the Southpark project and said that he is concerned that if things don't move forward on the project soon the next football season will be missed for 2024. Mr. Miller also gave a thank you to Ms Gretchen Erlingson and the board for their hard work on the downtown main street projects.

Active discussion ensued regarding the resolution to apply for the bond. Mr. Eric Lefleur and Mr. Ogden Pitre said it was permissible to add the resolution at this meeting regarding rules of order. Mr. Pitre said that typically, it is done at the beginning, but it can be done at any time.

A motion was made to add the resolution to the agenda under "Bond Attorney Consideration" by Mr. Pat Fontenot and a second to the motion by Mr. Don Davy. Motion carried without objection.

Chairwoman Charles gave a brief update on a building that the Walking Ladies are working on and it will be on the agenda next month.

Adjourn: A motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Don Davy and seconded by Mr. Ogden Pitre. The motion was carried without objection and the meeting was adjourned at 11:13 am.


Secretary Keith Broussard


Chairperson Lena Charles