



Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 17, 2022

**Attendees:**

Dr. James Gilmore, **Chairman**  
Tasha Clark-Amar, **Vice Chairperson**  
Brian Lafleur, **Secretary (arrived late)**  
Stephanie Cargile, **Treasurer**  
April Hawthorne, **Executive Director**  
Dezmion Barrow, Board Member  
Dr. Jacqueline Mims, Board Member  
Bill Pizzolato, Board Member  
Myra Richardson, Board Member  
Melvin Davis, Board CPA  
Nahshon Route, Esq. Board Attorney

**Absentees:**

Eugene Johnson, Board Member  
Jessie Glasper, Board Member  
Dr. Leroy Davis, Board Member  
Gary Chambers, Board Member  
Tara B. Williams, Board Member

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Gilmore called the meeting to order at 12:13 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

**II. Opening Prayer**

The opening pray was led by Myra Richardson

**III. Public Comment (No public comment.)**

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

A. Motion to approve January 2022 Minutes by Tasha Clark Amar.  
Seconded by Myra Richardson. Motion carried unanimously.



- B. Chairman Gilmore: Request those Minutes be printed and included in Board packets, instead of being emailed.

## **V. Reports From Community Partners**

Executive Director Hawthorne informed the Board that Senator Regina Barrow was unable to attend due to conflict with legislative session in progress.

*Action: Report from Senator Barrow deferred to a future board meeting.*

## **VI. Financial Reports**

- A. The Finance Report was presented by Melvin Davis, CPA. Mr. Davis provided the Board with an overview of the Financial Statements as of December 31, 2021, and January 31, 2022. Highlights were noted as follows:

1. For the December 31, 2021, statements, changes were made to Accounts Payable and Salaries & Wages in Statement A, and Wages, Social Security Contributions, Medicare Contributions and Materials & Supplies in Statement B.
2. As of January 31, 2022, total assets were \$562,011.49 and total current liabilities \$1,629.54. This represents a significant decrease in liabilities from the previous month.
3. There was no sales tax revenue during the month of January. Expectation that there will be none until March.
4. Mr. Davis informed the Board that in compliance with the requirements of the Budget Act, the Proposed 2022 Budget will be posted to the website for public inspection for a period of 10 days. The budget will then be brought forward to the March meeting for formal adoption.

- B. Mr. Davis walked the Board through the Proposed 2022 Annual Budget and the Amended 2021 Operating Budget, noting that both were reviewed by the Finance Committee at its meeting on February 15, 2022. Highlights were noted as follows:

1. Amended Budget variance is less than 5%.



2. Legislative expenditure is projected at \$55,675. This is a slight decrease from the previous year.
3. There is a year-over-year increase in the projected cost for auditing due to expanded audit requirements for the organization.
4. \$30,500 is projected for Economic and Business Development, most of which is allocated to advertisement/sponsorship and professional services for events and programs.
5. A combined total of \$360,000 in grant funding was received from the City and State in 2021. Expenditures from this amount totaled \$90,143. Excess amounts have been brought forward for utilization in 2022.
6. The Audit Engagement letter from Roslyn J. Johnson, CPA, LLC was shared with the Board. As per the agreement, the Audit will begin on April 1, 2022, with the final report provided to the organization by June 30, 2022.

C. Motion to Approve 2021 Amended Budget by Stephanie Cargile.

1. Seconded by Dr. Gilmore. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Motion to approve Preliminary Proposal for 2022 Budget and to publish for public comment made by Stephanie Cargile.

1. Seconded by Tasha Clark Amar. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Motion to Approve Audit Letter to Engage Auditor by Stephanie Cargile.

1. Seconded by Dezmion Barrow. Motion carried unanimously.

VII. **Chairman's Report**

A. The Chairman noted that four (4) applications have been brought forward for approval to receive the Façade and Signage Improvement Program Grant.

The Chairman provided an overview of each application, including the proposed improvements and anticipated costs. He noted that grant funding is provided to a maximum of \$5,000 and applicants are required to submit proof of expenditures before funds are released by BRNEDD. Board members and the public were provided the opportunity to comment and ask questions.



1. Treasures From Heaven/Remnant House Ministry (new signage, digital message board – Cost \$22,000).
  - a. Motion to approve by Bill Pizzolato and seconded by Dr. Jacqueline Mims. Motion carried unanimously.
2. Straight Outta Scotland Restaurant & Catering Services (installation of siding, signage, new roof, exterior paint, new fence – Cost \$6,345.21). Board questions cost. Keep eye on expenditures.
  - a. Motion to approve by Tasha Clark-Amar and seconded by Myra Richardson. Motion carried unanimously.
3. The Renaissance Center Event Venue (Proposed changes: exterior paint upgrade, column repair, new lighting, façade signage enhancements – Cost \$13,500.).
  - a. Motion to approve made by Dr. Jacqueline Mims and Seconded by Dr. Gilmore. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Vivid Images Commercial Printing (Proposed changes: exterior paint on building, restriping of parking lot, adding signage on front side of building – Cost \$11,600).
  - a. Motion to approve made by Dr. Jacqueline Mims and seconded by Dezmion Barrow. Motion carried unanimously.
5. **Action Item:** Ad Hoc Committee must meet to discuss whether Board will increase this grant to \$10,000 because we have 23 applicants, but we still need to spend the remaining funds.
6. Discussion took place regarding opportunities to increase awareness about the availability of the program. Executive Director Hawthorne noted that efforts in this regard are ongoing including newspaper, billboard, and bench advertisements in the district.

B. Board Resolution

Executive Director Hawthorne informed the Board of the need to change the signatories on the account with Hancock Whitney Bank so that the new Vice-Chairperson, Tasha Clark Amar is added, and Dr. Jacqueline Mims removed.



1. Dr. Jacqueline Mims moved to approve the Board Resolution as stated, with immediate effect. Seconded by Stephanie Cargile. Motion Carried unanimously.

C. ExxonMobil Lease Agreement

The Chairman informed the Board that the lease agreement with Exxon Mobil for the office space is up for renewal. The new agreement was reviewed by General Counsel and no issues were identified.

1. Tasha Clark Amar moved that the Board authorize the Chairman or Executive Director to sign the lease renewal with ExxonMobil. Seconded by Myra Richardson. Motion Carried unanimously.

G. Bayou Kitchen Contract

The Chairman noted that this agenda item had been deferred due to the Board elections and subsequent change in board membership.

Executive Director Hawthorne walked the Board through the updated proposal for the Bayou Kitchen pilot workforce program. Highlights were noted as follows:

- Contractual agreement would be for 12 weeks, effective March 1, 2022.
- Initial program intake will include five (5) students.
- Program budget is \$35,000. The majority of which will go towards student stipends, with each student receiving \$5,000.

The Bayou Kitchen Board Chair and Project Director took questions from the Board.

1. Tasha Clark-Amar moved to table decision on the Bayou Kitchen Contract to the next Board meeting. Seconded by Dr. Jacqueline Mims. Motion Carried unanimously.

*Action: Bayou Kitchen to provide additional information regarding its Articles of Incorporation, Board governance and staffing costs for the program, etc.*

There was agreement on the importance of ensuring that organizational initiatives and partnerships are in adherence with ethical and legal standards.



**VIII. Executive Director's Report.**

100 Days Report

A copy of the report was provided to the Board with the meeting packet.

*Action: Report to be shared electronically with elected officials in the district.*

Progress on Strategic Goals

Executive Director Hawthorne provided an update on progress against the strategic plan.

It was recommended that the strategic plan be reviewed and revised to ensure the organization remains agile and responsive to changes in the internal and external environment, including legislation, funding, COVID impacts, etc. A Strategic Plan Committee will be formed to lead this work in collaboration with SSA Consultants.

Significant Developments

Executive Director Hawthorne provided an update on key initiatives and developments from the 100 days report. Highlights were noted as follows:

- As of January 25, 2022, \$22, 801.79 had been expended on FSIP.
- Work is underway to develop a proposal to the mayor for recurring line item in the city Budget for 2023. Proposal will be shared with the Board before going to the mayor. Several additional funding opportunities are also being explored.
- The D&O Insurance and General Liability insurance have been renewed.
- High level of participation in district projects through the last quarter of 2021. Work expected to continue through 2022.

Discussion took place regarding ongoing district projects and opportunities to further support economic development in Baton Rouge.

*Action: Executive Director Hawthorne to follow-up with Donnie Miller with BRAC and update the Board at the March meeting.*

**IX. Unfinished Business**

None

**X. New Business**



None

XI. **Announcements**

A comment was raised regarding sponsorships. It was noted that applications for sponsorship must align with economic development and demonstrate return on investment for BRNEDD. *Action: Executive Director Hawthorne to review sponsorship form.*

The next Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 17, 2022, at 12pm.

XII. **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn was made by Tasha Clark Amar and seconded by Myra Richardson.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:37 p.m.