

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**Wednesday September 29, 2021 – 4:00 PM
ZOOM TELECONFERENCE**

Roll taken, Quorum present - Meeting was called to order at 4:03 pm

Members Present: Leo Marsh, Gregory Curtis, Chris Ross, Cleveland Spears, Michelle Craig

Members Absent: None were absent

Other Board Members Present: None

Staff/Counsel Present: John Pourciau, Anthony Carter, Sabrina Smith, Devona Dolliole, Leigh Ferguson, Ryan Bordenave, Joshua Vairin, Courtney Payton (Counsel)

Notice: The time, location, and agenda had been adequately and publicly noticed.

Call for Public Input Cards:

Public Comments – Commissioner Curtis requested that public comments be allowed during the discussion of the agenda items.

Action Items

- Approval of August 25, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
- Appointment of Legal General Counsel
- Approval of Resolution for Check Signing Authorization
- Approval of 2022 Budget

Approval of Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from August 25, 2021 – Action Item* -

Commissioner Curtis requested a motion to approve the August 25, 2021 meeting minutes. Moved by Commissioner Ross; Supported by Commissioner Spears; Motion carried unanimously.

Appointment of Legal General Counsel – Action Item – John Pourciau reminded the Committee that our current legal counsel, Aaron & Gianna, PLC, resigned effective October 15, 2021. To temporarily fill the need, the statements of qualifications received under the RFQ #2018-10-02 Legal Counsel Services were reviewed and he recommends Sher Garner for the short period of six months.

Commissioner Curtis will ask those on the Board with a legal background to sit on a committee to review the next RFQ to go out under the newly appointed President & CEO.

Commissioner Curtis requested a motion to approve the appointment of Sher Garner as the temporary legal counsel to represent the DDD for a term not to exceed six months. Moved by Commissioner Ross, Supported by Commissioner Curtis., Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Resolution for Check Signing Authorization – Action Item – Anthony Carter stated that the check signing authorization was needed to remove Richard McCall as signer and replace him with John Pourciau.

Commissioner Curtis requested a motion to approve the resolution for checking signing authorization. Moved by Commissioner Ross, Supported by Commissioner Spears. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of 2022 Budget - Action Item* - Anthony Carter stated that he met recently with Commissioners Curtis and Ross along with John Pourciau to discuss the 2022 budget. He also touched on the following:

Interest Earned (Line 62) – The interest revenue related to the DDD internal sources is generated from the bank balances of the following accounts: Whitney National Bank Money Market Account, and the Whitney National Bank Reserves Account.

Banner Deposits / Miscellaneous Revenue (Line 63) – Banner deposits are currently \$250 per application. Participants of the banner program may choose to utilize the entire system at one time, or they may utilize only a portion of the system (i.e., Canal Street, Loyola Avenue or Poydras Street). When the system is not used by outside parties, the DDD will display general district banners, such as Mardi Gras banners and Holiday banners. Currently, the DDD is hoping for the return of events cancelled in 2021 due to COVID-19 (Sugar Bowl, French Quarter Festival, Jazz and Heritage Festival, Essence Festival and Bayou Classic to name some possibilities). Monthly revenues generated through pressure washing the RTA transit shelters in the amount of \$4,900 per month are included. Additionally, a \$11,000 LWCC dividend for workers' comp insurance is included.

Ad valorem Taxes, gross (Line 67) – Ad Valorem Taxes are reflected as the gross amount actually collected by the City of New Orleans on behalf of the DDD, before collection and assessor fees are withheld. The 2022 tax revenue projection is based on 3.5% increase in property value assessments. This reflects the fact that at the time of the closing of tax rolls in August 2021 the Assessor's office was showing an increase of slightly more than 7% over those for 2021, subsequently the tax rolls are reopened to consider a reduction in assessments due to damage caused by Hurricane Ida. The millage proposed is 17.12 mills, which would fund the operations. We have assumed a collection rate equal to that of 2021.

Personnel Costs (Line 85) – The Public Space Operations Department will be comprised of three (3.0) Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) after a return to full staffing. For the 2022 Budget, wages and salaries for the department are being increased by 3% above the 2021 levels.

Enhanced City Services (Line 87) – Proposal to provide funding for two (2) civilian Quality of Life officers from the City of New Orleans with the ability to issue citations. This would potentially free up resources to better address other issues in the District.

Sidewalk Tree Maintenance/Replacement (Line 92) – The monthly contract covers pruning, weeding of tree wells and arborist services has been maintained at the same level. Termite treatment of trees on Canal Street at a cost of \$15,000 due to the expiration of gratis treatment resulting from completed LSU research project. An additional \$60,000 has been budgeted for treatment and tree replacement costs related to the spread of Texas Palm disease.

Holiday Lighting (Line 99) – Decorations were displayed in 2021, so this expense is for the removal in January and installation at the end of 2022.

Special Event Clean Up (Line 111) – Through the year the DDD provides concentrated services to particular areas of the district affected by Downtown events. The cost includes \$45,000 for contractors for Mardi Gras and \$50,000 for the other events (e.g., spring and fall concert series, White Linen Night, Essence Fest, and Bayou Classic, etc.), which are uncertain in the wake of COVID-19. The DDD has recommitted itself to its goal of having Downtown clean and ready for business by the beginning of the workday after every event.

Graffiti (Line 112) – Funding for program to remove graffiti on private property.

Surveillance Cameras (Line 113) – This provides funding for approximately twelve (12) installation projects.

Public Safety Rangers (Line 133) – The details of this line item include a variety of expense types, but the most financially significant details include general supplies for bicycle repairs, the mobile smart system to allow for real-time reporting, staff development for necessary certifications, uniform expense and radios/cellular telephones expenses.

Police Detail Services (Line 136) – The budget for 2022 represents the cost of normal police detail. The police detail is at a rate of \$38.25 per hour for all shifts Monday - Friday and \$50.58 per hour all day Saturday, Sunday and Holidays.

Private Security Services (Line 137) - The budget for 2022 represents the cost of the private security detail provided by Pinnacle Security, with sufficient funding to provide coverage from 2:00pm until 6:00am, seven days a week.

Facade Incentive (Line 178) – Matching grants to support \$120,000 of traditional facade projects, \$30,000 for lighting in the 100 Blocks and an additional \$30,000 to continue the vacant storefront art program.

Commissioner Ross, as the Chair of the Finance Committee, stated that he was fine with moving forward with the budget to the full Board.

Commissioner Curtis requested a motion to approve the 2022 Budget. Moved by Commissioner Ross, Supported by Commissioner Curtis; Motion carried unanimously.

Cassandra Sharpe, constituent, asked about the DDD adjusting taxes. John Pourciau explained that the DDD does not assess any taxes and that it is done solely by the assessor's office.

Project Updates

1. **Status of Audit** – We are awaiting confirmations from the City. Extension has been given until September 30, 2021 and now it has been moved to December 31.
2. **Bond Sale** – February Board gave preliminary approval of no more than \$6.5 million to pay off previous bonds and cover the infrastructure CEA and other capital projects.

Old Business – President & CEO Search – The initial interviews have been completed and the Executive Search Committee will meet on the upcoming Monday, October 4 to discuss the outcome and make a decision on the next step moving forward.

New Business – No new business

Executive Session – No executive session

Adjournment – Commissioner Curtis requested a motion to adjourn; Moved by Commissioner Ross, supported by Commissioner Craig. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 5:09 pm.