

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**Wednesday, September 28, 2022, 3:04 p.m. – 4:33 p.m.
DDD Ronald Gardner Board Room**

Roll taken, Quorum present – Meeting called to order at 3:04 p.m.

Members Present: Chair Chris Ross, Commissioner Leann Moses

Members Absent: Commissioner Carla Major

Other Board Members Present: Gregory Curtis, (via telephone)

Staff/Counsel Present: Davon Barbour, Anthony Carter, Hunter Hebert, T. Trent Dang, Brittany Carnes-Stone Pigman

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

Public Comment Card –Submitted by Aaron J. Jordan regarding Agenda Item #V. This letter is essentially a carbon copy of the letter submitted last month in which Mr. Jordan expressed his concern that the DDD meeting minutes are not submitted to its website in a timely manner. Chairman Ross recommended the letter be entered into the record.

Action Items

- Approval of August 31, 2022, Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
- Approval of August 2022 Financials
- Approval of 2023 Millage
- Approval of 2023 Budget

Approval of Meeting Minutes from August 31, 2022– Action Item* - Motion to approve by Commissioner Moses second by Commissioner Ross. Motion carried.

Approval of August 2022 Financials – Action Item* -

Anthony Carter:

- Internal sources of revenue are right on schedule
- RTA is current in their payment
- Tax collections – 83.31% of the amount budgeted for August, 97.91% of the amount budgeted YTD, 95.83% of the total amount budgeted

- Expenses are as anticipated – we are behind in receiving invoices from the landscaping contract
- Commissioner Ross asked about plans for district wide capital fund. President Barbour responded DDD will use the funds for sidewalk improvement rather than wait for property owners. Commissioner Moses agreed it is a good idea-however expressed concerned that it will set a precedent. President Barbour explained the DDD does not have the authority to impose fines on delinquent property owners, only the city does. However, through public relations and communications, the DDD will let the property owners know this is a one-time initiative from the DDD to make immediate improvements; thereafter, it is the responsibility of the property owners. DDD has executed the CEA for code enforcement. DDD will launch an educational campaign for the property owners. Chair Ross asked how the DDD will communicate the sidewalk plan and what streets are priority. President Barbour explained communication will be via DDD website, social media, speaking engagements, meetings with condo associations. Canal Street is the priority. President Barbour reiterated the DDD has monthly meetings with FQMD to address clean and safety

Commissioner Ross made a motion to approve August 2022 financials. Second by Commissioner Moses. Motion carried.

Approval of 2023 Millage - Action Item –

President Barbour explained the millage is dedicated to economic development, met with United4NOLA whose key message would like to see the DDD go bold and focus on not having to rely on the city but jump right in and get things moving along. Anthony Carter and President Barbour had a positive conversation with City Council Budget Chair Councilman Giarrusso.

Anthony Carter is recommending no change in the millage rate of 17.12 mills. DDD is authorized to collect 23.49 millage rate, however, the DDD suspends collection of part of the millage. Commissioner Moses asked for further clarification on the 17.12 mill which is a portion of the maximum 23.49. mills.

Commissioner Moses made a motion to recommend the millage of 17.12 mills to the board, with a portion of the mills to be suspended. Chair Ross second the motion. Motion carried

Approval of 2023 Budget– Action Item

President Barbour: There are three basic principles to reach economic development:

1. Deliver sensational public realm
2. Deliver safe streets
3. Deliver reliable infrastructure

If we are true to those three tenants, we can achieve a strong downtown. This work program is built around those principles so we can continue grow. We need to focus on the office market, grow the residential base, need to stabilize our retail market, shore up Canal Street. This budget focus is on economic growth.

Anthony Carter:

Internal Revenues are from the following sources:

1. DDD Events includes Holidays, Awards – projected to generate 96K next year
2. New Source Wisner Fund of 500K tagged for specific use identified later in the budget– up in the air when DDD will receive
3. Monthly payment of \$4,700 from RTA and funding DDD receives for the use of the banner poles
4. Ad Valorem taxes expect to increase at least 15% in property value assessments
5. DDD infrastructure fund in an escrow - he recommends that DDD only fund 50% of what is normally funded. DDD does not receive any interests from this fund. Commissioner Moses asked for clarification on why was there an agreement that the fund does not receive interests on this account. Anthony explained that at the time it was set up the amount of interest generated was extremely low and would not have benefitted DDD once it was split with the escrow agent. A discussion to eliminate the escrow fee is forthcoming with the escrow agent. Anthony will discuss with legal counsel to see what DDD options are. Commissioner Moses asked instead of incurring legal fees, can this be done internally or with commissioner's assistance? Anthony said traditionally we have made use of counsel for an arm's length transaction that deal with outside parties.
6. Chair Burns - does the DDD intend to communicate to stakeholders, public where funds are being utilized? He was assured the information will be publicized.

Expenses:

1. Proposing 5% increase for staff except for CEO and any new staff after DDD has passed the budget. All departments will be brought back to pre-covid staffing.
2. Other expenses:
 - a. Landscaping
 - b. Sidewalk tree maintenance/replacement
 - c. Refurbishment of trashcans
 - d. Replacements/repair of banners
 - e. Special event clean-up
 - f. Graffiti
 - g. Surveillance cameras
 - h. Maintenance/storage of vehicles, bicycles
 - i. Police detail (reduction due to staffing), private security services
 - j. Homeless outreach
 - k. Low Barrier Shelter (reducing funds to LBS, funds will be used in other ways to improve the city)

- l. Canal Street Development
- m. Job fairs (3)
- n. Affordable housing study
- o. Research and Database programs
- p. Memberships in professional organizations e.g. ICSC, IDA
- q. Presentations and Marketing – establishment of a real estate and leasing brokers roundtable
- r. Participation in the Bio district planning
- s. Creation of a fund to encourage local retail
- t. Communication - redesign of DDD collateral, website
- u. Professional services – Escrow fee, hiring of professional HR person
- v. Legal Services – city tax litigation
- w. Rental of office space will be back to normal level next year
- x. Reducing travel to conferences by employees – travel will be for directors only

Commissioner Moses made the Motion to approve 2023 budget. Second by Chair Ross.
Motion carried

General discussion:

- Chair Ross asked about the RTA shelter and RTA plans. President Barbour will share the RTA plans and information that he has
- Chair Ross - Discussion about how the DDD uses funds - DDD will communicate/transparent with stakeholders
- Chair Ross - Does the DDD have employee appreciation events? President Barbour will consult with counsel if this can be done because of Louisiana public employee rules
- Commissioner Moses suggested the DDD reach out to Taylor Foundation for a possible grant to assist with the installation of cameras
- Anthony Carter will provide a chart to see how Wisner funds impact the budget
- Can DDD public safety/space assets tie into the city 311 system? President Barbour explained District360 program, and the DDD staff progress re tracking assets.
- Commissioner Moses asked if it was possible for District360 to track blighted properties. President Barbour to research
- President Barbour connected with the City of Lafayette at the Vancouver IDA conference. Plan on collaborating with them to modernize the enabling legislation
- President Barbour mentioned the possible creation of a fund to encourage retail in the downtown area
- President Barbour communicated because of the DDD attendance to the Las Vegas ICSC conference, NOLA will now host an ICSC conference on November 10, 2022

Old Business: 2021 Audit delayed due to city providing inaccurate information. DDD unable to submit by deadline – 60-day extension requested

New Business

Executive Session

None

Adjournment

Request for adjournment by Commissioner Ross, Motion by Commissioner Major, Second by Commissioner Ross. Motion carried.