Downtown Development District Board of Commissioners Meeting
Ronald E. Gardner Board Room
Tuesday, September 1, 2026– 3:00 PM
In Person
201 St. Charles Avenue, Suite 3912

Meeting called to order at 3:03 p.m. Roll taken, Quorum present.

Members Present: Chair Chris Ross, Vice-Chair Alex Glaser, Treasurer Kenny Rubenstein, Secretary Ryan King, Commissioner Sevetri Wilson Taylor, Commissioner Gregory Curtis, Commissioner Frank Zumbo, Commissioner David Piscola, Commissioner Edwin Murray, Commissioner Michael DiSimone, Commissioner Stephanie Burks,

Members Absent:

Staff/Counsel Present: Michael McKnight, CFO, Erika Sensenbrenner, Counsel, Adams & Reese

Attendees: Jonah Meadows, Times Picayune, Robert Ramelli, Daniel Shanks, Jennifer Avegno, Troy Henry

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

Call for Public Input Cards: N/A

Public Comments:

Action Items:

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from August 4, 2026, Board Meeting – **Action Item***
2. Approval of July Financial – **Action Item***
3. Resolution 26-07 Award of Labor and Maintenance Contract for Holiday Lighting and Banners – **Action Item***

Approval of Meeting Minutes August 4, 2026, Board Meeting - **Action Item***
Motion to approve August 4, 2026, meeting minutes by Commissioner Piscola. Second by Commissioner Disimone. Motion carried.

July 2026 Financial Report
The financial report for July showed actual revenues of $10 million against a budget of $7.7 million, with operating expenses at $5.1 million against a budget of $6.3 million. The Finance Committee chair noted that the current budgeting method using equal monthly divisions may not accurately reflect historical variances in revenues and expenses and requested staff to develop a more realistic year-to-date budget for 2027.
Motion to approve July 2026, Financial Report by Commissioner Piscola. Second by Commissioner Curtis. Motion carried.

Resolution 26-07 Award of Labor and Maintenance Contract for Holiday Lighting and Banners –
The board discussed the award of a holiday lighting and banner installation contract, with staff recommending Clean Force Integrated Solutions as the winning vendor despite Ramelli Group's lower price. Ramelli Group and Clean Force both participated in the discussion, with Ramelli Group questioning the scoring process and price difference of approximately $60,000 over the contract term. The board voted to table the decision to allow for further review of the scoring criteria and pricing analysis before making a final award decision.

A motion made by Commissioner Zumbo to defer the decision, second by Vice-Chair Glaser. Motion carried.

Chairs Report:

President's Report:

Homeless Outreach Program Expansion Proposal:

Seth Knudsen and Taylor Dials presented a proposal for expanding a homelessness outreach program from the French Quarter to the downtown area, which pairs social workers with law enforcement officers to offer services and shelter to people experiencing homelessness. Taylor reported early success in the French Quarter, where NOPD requests to move people decreased by 40% after one week of engagement, though only about 10% of offered shelter placements were accepted. The discussion highlighted challenges in addressing underlying issues like mental illness and substance abuse, with Taylor explaining that while funding from organizations like Unity is limited in addressing these needs, the city is seeking federal funding for complex case teams to help the most difficult cases.

Homeless Outreach Program Improvements

Seth Knudsen discussed improvements in addressing substance abuse and homelessness, highlighting a new sustainable model involving homeless outreach teams composed of service workers and law enforcement officers in the downtown area. The program aims to incentivize individuals to enter shelters while enforcing laws, with funding focused on short-term interventions for those newly encountering homelessness rather than long-term support. He emphasized the need for additional funding to expand the program and address system gaps, while also addressing concerns about legal requirements and the availability of shelter beds.

Clean and Safe Strategy Updates

Seth Knudsen discussed the balance between clean and safe initiatives and other strategic priorities, emphasizing that while clean and safe should remain foundational, future efforts should focus more on broader public realm improvements. He updated the board on bond fund allocation, including plans for district lighting, sidewalk improvements, crime cameras, and signage, with a meeting planned with Steve Nelson to coordinate efforts. The meeting also included welcoming Stephanie Burks as a new member.

Downtown Performance and Planning Updates

Seth Knudsen reported that clean team performance remained good at 92% in August, with some stain and spill issues addressed by contractors. Quality of life initiatives included ongoing street sweeps on Canal Street and focused enforcement in specific areas, while Canal Street Phase 2 construction is set to begin next week. The team conducted a constituent budget workshop for 2027 with limited but engaged attendance. Upcoming events include a real estate breakfast series and the Future of Downtown event on October 15th featuring a keynote speaker from the Brookings Institution, while the strategic plan is scheduled for Board adoption in October and millage reauthorization will proceed in September.

Old Business: **N/A**

New Business: N/A

Executive Session: N/A

Adjournment: Commissioner Piscola made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Burks second the motion. Motion carried.