

**St. John the Baptist Parish
Economic Development Committee**
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Monday, January 7, 2019

ATTENDANCE:

Present:

Michelle Jenkins
Kim Fontenot
Elizabeth R. Joseph
Robert Taylor
Tyler Lewis
Peggy Joseph
James Oubre, Jr.
Kali J. Price

Staff:

Laverne Toombs
Denise Burrell
Terri Abadie

Guest:

Adam Lefort
Buddy Boe
Ivy Mathieu
Kevin George
Lester Mitchell
Yasmaine Magee
Linda Prudhomme
Ana Gale-Orellana

Stacey Scott
Larry Sorapuru
Patrick Gordon
Mala Taylor
Wayne Aucoin
Lawrence Lawes
Chassity McComack

Absent:

Evin Stein

Call to Order

Chairwoman Michelle Jenkins called meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

Roll Call

Seven (8) Committee members were present. One (1) Absent - Quorum was met.

Opening Prayer / Pledge of Allegiance

Michelle Jenkins led prayer. Kali Price led Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments (3) Minutes – No Public Comments

Adoption of Minutes from November 5, 2018 Meeting

Motion from Tyler Lewis and seconded by Robert Tayer to adopt the November 5th meeting minutes. The motion passed with 8 yeas and 1 absent (Evin Stein)

Director's Report – Laverne Toombs (see report)

Old Business – No Old Business

New Business

- **Business Talk** – No Business Talk
- 2018 Economic Development Recap
 - Laverne Toombs – see Economic Development Monthly Report
- Election of Officers
 - Economic Development Committee (EDC) Secretary
 - Michelle Jenkins nominated James S. Oubre Jr., seconded by Kali Price
 - No discussion/opposition; all in favor
 - 2019 EDC Secretary – James S. Oubre Jr.
 - Economic Development Committee Vice Chair
 - Peggy Joseph nominated Tyler Lewis., seconded by Michelle Jenkins
 - No discussion/opposition; all in favor
 - 2019 EDC Vice Chair – Tyler Lewis
 - Economic Development Committee Chair
 - Kali Price nominated Michelle Jenkins, seconded by James S. Oubre Jr.
 - No discussion/opposition; all in favor
 - 2019 EDC Chair – Michelle Jenkins
- 2019 Goals for Administration

- Individual and/or group meetings will be scheduled with the EDC to discuss.

Community Partners' Update

- **Entergy Louisiana** – Ana Gale-Orellana
 - Presented St. John economy overview report of the parish
 - Shared awareness of new smart meters rolling out in the 3rd quarter of 2019.
 - Real time information
 - Communication will go out to residents 90 days prior to installation.
 - Customers will receive information in their Entergy bills and those who have signed up for email will receive notifications.
 - Reminders will go out as well.
 - There is an opt out for customers who do not want to have their meters changed. (Call 1800-Entergy)
- **Louisiana Small Business Development Center** – Wayne Aucoin
 - Lunch and Learn
 - January 30th - 11:30am - 1:00pm
 - SEBD – Certification - Presenter – Wayne Aucoin
 - February 20th - 11:30am - 1:00pm
 - Building Business Credit - Presented by Capital One Bank
 - Workshops
 - February 6th - 9:00am - 2:00pm
 - Creating Professional Standards in the Workplace
 - Presenter – Ron Markham
 - March 12th - 9:00am - 2:00pm
 - Social Media and Digital Marketing - Presenter – Erik Waters
 - April 9th - 9:00am - 2:00pm
 - Delivering Engaging and Outstanding Customer Service
 - May 7th - 9:00am - 2:00pm
 - May 14th - 9:00am - 2:00pm
 - Building Your Business Culture (2-part series)
 - June 5th - 9:00am – Noon
 - QuickBooks for Managers
 - FastTrac 10 Week Program
 - Starting March 14th - 5:30pm – 8:30pm
- **Port of South Louisiana** – Linda Prudhomme
 - Most important milestone of the year was the endorsement of the proposal to deepen the main channel of the Mississippi River to 50 feet by the US Army Corps of Engineers;
 - Two large project announcements this year, both big wins for the Port of South Louisiana and St. James Parish. Formosa Petrochemicals selected a site in St. James Parish for a \$9.4 billion chemical manufacturing complex;
 - Then in November, Wanhua Chemical Group Co. announced the development of a \$1.25 B chemical manufacturing complex in Convent, LA. (5-years to choose that location)
 - Port of South Louisiana celebrated 25-years of operations in the river region;
 - The Port of South Louisiana has invested over \$104 Million in the construction upgrades and improvements to the terminal and we continue to support new additions that will attract future tenants and users;
 - The Port of South Louisiana Executive Regional Airport has seen an increase in traffic thanks to many executives and contractors preferring it as an alternative to landing at and driving from Baton Rouge and New Orleans airports and, as a result, plans and projects were developed this year to improve the terminal.
 - The Port is actively engaged in supporting the transformation of our airport into a technologically sound and safe travel option for regional business clientele.
- **River Parishes Community College (RPCC)** – Absent
- **River Parish Tourist Commission (RPTC) & St. John Community Center & Soundstage** – Buddy Boe
- Operations
 - Office Move – Feb 21st
 - Audit – released at the January RPTC meeting
- Community Engagement
 - Lodging Roundtable – late January

- Site Visits – St. Charles
 - Local FAM Tours – monthly beginning February
 - Annual Updates – Council meetings
 - Louisiana Tourism Leadership Academy Scholarship
- Sales
 - American Bus Association – Willma met with 40 tour operators
 - Leads – sent to stakeholders for each show
 - Travel South – show in late February, Willma to meet with 35 operators
 - ITB – international sales show, Willma to meet with 30 operators
- Advertising & PR
 - Visitor Guide/Website – currently updating
 - River Real Series:
 - Andouille - launched
 - Historic Riverlands – launches Jan 15
 - Rougarou – launches February
 - Bonfires – launches March
 - Swamps – launches April
- St John Center/River Parishes Film Commission
 - Inquiries – 6; Film – none; January Events -1; Website – being updated
- Sales/Business Development
 - After Action Reports – 5 (NTA, OMCA, BrandUSA, SYTA, Travel South)
 - Bayou Classic Partnership
- Schedule
 - International Media Showcase – Jan 23-25, New York
 - American Bus Association – Jan 25-29, St. Louis
 - Washington Mardi Gras – Jan 30-Feb 3, DC
- **River Parishes Workforce Development** – Lawrence Lawes
 - Small Business Support
 - Increased Outreach
 - Recruiting Support continues to be strong
 - Providing pre-screening services
 - Helping to develop more effective job descriptions
 - Job Seeker Support
 - LaPlace Office very busy at new location
 - Qualitative and Quantitative increase in services
 - Increased appropriate referral to LRS and Mental Health
 - RE-ENTRY / RETURN TO WORK services qualitative & quantitative increases
 - Local businesses are being very supportive
 - Purpose is reduction in re-offending;
 - Availability of WOTC for hiring ex-offenders;
 - Availability of Fidelity Bonding for companies that hire ex-offenders;
 - Shared the process of our Business and Career Solutions Centers support of job seeking ex-offenders.
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 - Planned coordination with St. John Sheriff’s Office Reentry Program and DA’s Young Offender Program.
 - SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
 - Active involvement with increased referrals
 - Seeking local organizations to sign on for OJT placements
 - We are following up with SCSEP for placement rates
 - C-TECH presentation to RPWB to stimulate ways Cabling Technology Training can develop our local workforce to include high schools, community college, jails / prisons and probation / parole services.
 - Business Service Consultant services focused on mid-size and small businesses for:
 - Recruiting
 - Retention through consultation and employee training
 - Fidelity Bonding especially for hired re-entry felons
 - Business Service Rep planned workshops for businesses:
 - Maximizing use of HiRE as a recruiting tool;
 - Candidate interviewing techniques and issues;

- Retention methods and issues;
 - WOTC Workforce Opportunity Tax Credits.
- **River Region Chamber of Commerce – Chassity McComack**
 - Organizational:
 - 2019 is a momentous year: RRCC will celebrate its 15th year of serving as the local Chamber for the River Parishes. Stay tuned for upcoming celebration event to be planned.
 - Board retreat was held in December to set the program of work for 2019! 2019 Chairman of the Board is John Little, of Truck Farm Tavern in St. Rose.
 - In process of finalizing 2019 Annual Banquet – tentative mid Feb. 2019.
 - New member engagement coordinator continues visits in each of the 3 parishes to members and potential members. Please contact Stacey Scott on any prospects that may be interested in joining the Chamber.
 - Chamber Member Directory and Community Profile expected to be complete by end of Jan. 2019
 - Reminder: Feel free to share with businesses - Chamber 101 (orientation to learn how to maximize your investment) takes place every other month, 1st Friday, 11:30 am. Anyone interested in learning more about the chamber is welcomed. Next one is Feb. 8, 11:30 am. We'd like to thank our 2019 Chamber 101 Sponsor: Express Employment Professionals.
 - Workforce Development
 - Next Workforce Dev. Mtg. scheduled for Jan. 15, at RPCC in Reserve.
 - Advocacy
 - A Rep from each of the 3 parish's administration are encouraged to attend monthly Public Policy mtgs. to help keep us up to speed on how current legislation is affecting businesses. Individual meetings are being planned with the new Chamber chairman to discuss further.
 - Leadership River Region
 - The Class of 2019 continues with session 4 this Wednesday. This year's class is working on devising a mission statement for the program. Sponsorships are still available and needed to help ensure a successful program.
- **South Central Planning & Development Commission – Patrick Gordon / Adam Lefort**
 - Reserve Welding School:
 - Martha Cazaubon, SCPDC Planner IV, is the project planner for the Reserve Welding Education Facility project. This project is currently being revised/redesigned to conform to current and projected funding streams. The project was previously bid and exceeded constructed estimates. Bids have been rejected. Meetings are ongoing with all partners involved and hope to come to a consensus within the next month on a reasonable action plan to move forward. (EDA and the college are current funding sources)
 - Regional Economic Development Resiliency Management (REDRM):
 - Adam Lefort, SCPDC Planner I, has been assigned as the Planner in Charge for the REDRM initiative and will be kicking off the program in all 7 Parishes within the district. Scope of work will include:
 - Develop a REDRM Committee for the District made up of representatives from all Parishes in SCPDC Region
 - Coordinate all Parishes within the region with the Louisiana Business Emergency Operation Center at ULL services. (LABEOC)
 - Provide presentations to all Economic Development Groups regarding business resiliency within the SCPDC Region. (i.e. Chambers, Industrial Groups and local EDO's.)
 - Encourage all Parishes in the SCPDC Region to participate in the FEMA CRS program to lower Flood Insurance Rates for Businesses and Residents through the efforts of the REDRM Committee
 - All Staff members working on the REDRM Grant are encouraged to pursue Flood Plain Managers (CFM) Certification
 - Coordinate with REDRM Committee to prepare a SWOT analysis and create recommendations to address deficiencies
 - Prepare a Regional Resiliency Plan as part of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan for 2022-2027 (CED's) Completed 2021
 - Educate all economic groups and parishes on REDRM initiatives by disbursement of information via social media and email.

- St. John the Baptist Delta Regional Authority (DRA) Grant:
 - Stephanie Bruning, SCPDC Planner II, is the project planner for the LaPlace Main Wastewater Pump Station Rehabilitation Project. St. John the Baptist Parish was awarded \$100,000.00 with \$850,000 in match. DRA funds will be used for the rehabilitation of the main wastewater pump station located in LaPlace. The project will increase efficiency and capacity of the wastewater infrastructure for the East Bank service area that includes the majority of the residents and businesses in the Parish. It will also alleviate pollution to water bodies and sewer overflows. The rehabilitation will help to retain and attract businesses within the service area by ensuring that the wastewater infrastructure will meet not only the needs of the current population but for future growth as well.
- St. John the Baptist Loan Funding:
 - No recent activity reported. Lending is still available. Please contact Cullen Curole, Special Projects Manager at SCPDC, for details. (985) 851-2900 (Ext. 2065)
- Upcoming Meetings:
 - South Central Regional Safety Coalition meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 16, 2019 from 10am-12pm at the SCPDC Offices. Located at 5058 West Main Street, Houma, LA 70364.
 - South Central Planning and Development Commission Board meeting will be on January 17, 2019 from 10:30-Lunch, in Thibodaux, LA at Envie Restaurant. 207 E Bayou Rd, Thibodaux, LA 70301
- **St. John Business Association** – Absent
- **St. John the Baptist Parish School Board** – Kevin George
 - Shared document - SJBP School System snapshot of achievements 2013 – 2018
 - The school system is a “C”; 5.4 points away from achieving “B” status that all are striving towards.
 - Achievement – Launch of S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Program. Partnerships with LSU and Xavier University. 1st school system in August to have a pre-pharmacy program in partnership with Xavier University. Only school in the state with access to pre-pharmacy program. Also, biomedical program, computer programming, and pre-med.
 - Currently, 9th and 10th grades; 11th grade will be added for the 2019 – 2020 school year.

Announcements

- Laverne Toombs – Economic Development Department Quarterly newsletters has returned.
- Tyler Lewis - On behalf of the West Bank, thank you and they are excited about the construction of the Dollar General store on the West Bank; monumental.
 - Elizabeth Joseph added the site is a great location in the community.
- Buddy Boe – West Bank bonfires will be included in River Parishes Tourist Commission promotion and will get a drone to capture the lighting of the bonfires during the Christmas holidays.
 - Elizabeth Joseph will share pictures of the event to add to the promotions.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Elizabeth Joseph and seconded by Peggy Joseph. Meeting was adjourned at 1:26 pm.