



Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

6 July 2015

Commissioners Present

Jeremy DeBlieux
Brian Furness
Al Groos (tardy)
Lary Hesdorffer
Mia Matassa
Steve Pettus
Kim Rosenberg
Robert Watters
Ted Young

Commissioners Absent

Darryl Berger
Jim Oliver
Sal Sunseri

Guests

Emily Remington, Executive Director

I. CALL TO ORDER: ROLL CALL: INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDEES

Steve Pettus called the meeting to order at 12:13pm. Emily Remington called the roll.

II. Approval of Minutes

Steve distributed June 2015 minutes. Lary moved that the Board approve the May 2015 minutes. Robert seconded. Those in favor were Jeremy, Brian, Al, Mia, Lary, Steve, Robert, and Ted.

IV. Chairman's Comments

Steve welcomed attendees.

V. Executive Director Report

Emily informed attendees that the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation had approved a funding request of \$75,000. She also stated that the new FQMD website would launch at the end of August.

VI. Treasurer's Report

Steve distributed the Treasurer's Report. Robert moved that now that FQMD had secured the second part of its funding from NOTMC that an outside accounting firm be secured to oversee profit + loss and accrued liabilities at an inexpensive cost. Kim seconded. Those in favor were Jeremy, Brian, Al, Mia, Lary, Steve, Kim, Robert, and Ted.

Jeremy asked who writes the FQMD checks. Robert said the Treasurer and one other person. Steve announced that Tony had resigned as VCPORA's representative and as FQMD Treasurer. Steve nominated Jeremy to fill the position to provide additional accounting support to FQMD. Robert moved that Jeremy become Treasurer. Kim seconded. Those in favor were Jeremy, Brian, Al, Mia, Lary, Steve, Kim, Robert, and Ted.

Steve suggested the Board consider continuing Officer positions through the year end. He said that having the support of staff has been transformative: the organization is run on a full-time basis, and volunteers get the time and attention they deserve. Steve expressed interest in remaining Chair through the end of the year. Lary moved that Officer terms remain through year end. Mia seconded. Those in favor were Jeremy, Brian, Al, Mia, Lary, Steve, Kim, Robert, and Ted.

Steve said Officer elections will be held in November.

VII. Approval of Members of each Committee

Steve postponed this to the next meeting to ensure appropriate participation rates.

VIII. Status of CEAs and related matters

Steve announced that the current CEA with the City of New Orleans expired in April and that FQMD is currently operating on a handshake due to delay on behalf of City Hall. He indicated that the CVB will provide FQMD with \$75,000 each month (\$900,000/year) for the French Quarter Task Force (FQTF). Under a new CEA, Bourbon Patrol and FQTF will be all in one fund. The supplemental police patrols will work in coordination so that gaps and overlaps can be identified and that appropriate layers can be created. Steve noted that he had recently met with Commander Walls, Emily Remington, and Bob Simms to discuss NOLA Patrol, FQTF, and the Louisiana State Police (LSP) roles in improving public safety in the French Quarter. Steve stated that hopefully the EDD funding will secure the future of the entire French Quarter. The EDD will require the LSP to remain within the FQMD boundaries.

Jeremy asked who was paying for the FQTF after June 21. Steve stated that the CVB will pay through the end of the year. Jeremy asked if \$75,000/month would cover FQMD's costs. Steve said yes.

Susan Guillot asked about what the LSP's long-term plan for securing the French Quarter. Steve stated that they are a smaller picture of the future vision. LSP will be able to provide extra resources towards highly concentrated efforts driven by problem areas. These patrols will provide an even overlay throughout the FQMD boundaries, with excess patrols targeting problem areas. Steve expects communication to be ongoing between the 8th District, NOLA Patrol, and LSP.

Ann Kesler asked if Bourbon Patrol will move forward without additional FQBL funding. Steve said yes, with the money already dedicated to this project. Bob Simms stated that FQMD would spread resources throughout the year.

Jeremy asked if the state police were provided through a different fund. Steve said yes and that the \$2.5M from the hotel self-assessment tax would be divided thusly: \$900K/year to FQMD, \$500K/month to state police, \$1.2M/year to NOLA Patrol. The 2016 LSP presence will be paid by \$500K from the self-assessment tax, \$1M from the CVB, \$1M from the Convention Center, and \$2.5M from the EDD. Steve indicated that if the EDD passes, LSP staff will be trained by year end so that they are ready to hit the streets on January 1.

Steve asked Bob how much the FQTF cost per week. Bob said \$12-13K.

Susan Guillot asked for these numbers in writing. She stated she wants to share information, but the CEA isn't signed yet. Meg Lousteau asked when the CEA will be signed. Steve said when City Hall signs it. Al indicated that hotels are housing state police at this time. Meg asked how many. Al said 40-50 full-time positions.

IX. Board of Commissioner Responsibilities and Discussion

Steve indicated that he expects each Board member to participate on a Committee or a Task Force, either as a member or a Co-Chair.

X. Report by Chairs, Infrastructure Committee

Gail presented. Kim indicated that in the Committee meeting, Jim Oliver had suggested a sign design. Gail said that DPW will use what they want.

XI. Report by Chairs, Security Task Force

Bob presented. Jeremy asked if the FQMD should contemplate an end game for FQTF, like turning it over to the City so that the government can do government work. Gail asked Jeremy if he wanted another NOLA Patrol, since French Quarter residents have to have these programs to keep their neighborhood safe; the City doesn't get it done. Jeremy reasserted that this is a job for the City government and government entities, an end game is needed, and he asked how FQMD could successfully turn the program over. Bob said that it would be possible when NOPD has their staff numbers improved.

Steve said in the past five years, NOPD is down 600 officers. Gail said that NOPD cannot get involved in a detail program. Brian stated that he believed the question is how do we continue to provide security and stated that Bob Simms is working 40-60 hours/week. Robert said that FQMD would hire an operations manager in January.

Steve said that FQMD needs to share admin costs with NOPD. FQMD manages the program, which it needs to figure out how to do for less than \$20K/month in admin costs. Steve stated that the goal of the program is to supplement, not supplant, and to keep Commander Walls engaged.

Susan stated that the EDD will lose residential vote if FQTF is run by the City. The program has creditability because it's not run by the City.

Mia suggested that the end game is that we don't need the Task Force in five years.

Al stated that the hotel self-assessment came about because of the Wild Wild West that had developed. It was meant for infrastructure, not security.

Gail noted that the Infrastructure Committee would provide an education piece to NOLA Patrol. Meg asked why NOLA Patrol hadn't already been trained by the City to enforce infrastructure-related issues. Al asked that a NOLA Patrol representative could attend the next Board meeting.

Steve stated that a long-term plan is to provide an LSP sub troop in the area and to recruit 600 more NOPD.

XII. Report by Chairs, Government Committee

Kim said that the Government Committee had not met since her last report. Steve asked if the CZO had been presented to the CPC. Ramsey presented amendments that seemed to be in the purview of the FQMD due to quality of life issues. Kim quoted the statute that prohibits FQMD from becoming involved in zoning issues, but she stated that FQMD has the right to take a position on something. Brian said there's an opportunity for the FQMD to comment at least on the quality of life issue. Steve stated that Ramsey should consult with us on these issues. Meg stated that it is procedurally difficult due to the lack of process and transparency and that the lack of public vetting/hearing prohibits stakeholders from weighing in on the process.

Robert stated that for FQMD to become involved in CZO issues would be divisive. Steve stated that Ramey should ask FMQD for input. Gail stated that the process concerned her, and attendees generally agreed with her. Gail stated that the noise ordinance was just dropped on the French Quarter and that the process is so flawed when special interest lawyers become involved. Lary agreed that FQMD should not miss an opportunity to express opinions.

XIII. New Business

None.

XIV. Future meetings – Discussion

Steve stated that Board meetings would move to the first Monday of the month at 2pm and that the next meeting would be on September 14, the second Monday, rather than September 7, Labor Day.

XV. Adjournment

Kim moved to adjourn at 1:35pm. Robert seconded. The meeting adjourned.