

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Meeting of Monday, March 7, 2016

**MINUTES**

(as approved May 2, 2016)

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| **Commissioners Present:** |  |  |
| Steve Caputo | Mia Matassa | David Speights |
| Jeremy DeBilieux (lv 4:20) | Nicholas Musso (arr 2:45) | Robert Watters |
| Brian Furness | Jim Oliver | Ted Young |
| Duke LoCicero | Kim Rosenberg |  |
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Absent: Darryl Berger, Al Groos

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| **Committee Chairs and Staff:** | |  |  |
| Bob Simms, Security Task Force (STF) | | Emily Remington, Executive Director | |
| Gail Cavett, Infrastructure Committee | |  |  |
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| **Guests[[1]](#footnote-1) (Affiliation if listed)** |  |
| B. McGovern, French Quarter Business Association | Pat Meadowcroft, VCPORA |
| C. Gniady, French Quarter Citizens | Albin Guillot, Resident, FQMD Security Task Force |
| Meg Lousteau, VCPORA | Beverly Fulk, Resident, Security Task Force |
| Susan Guillot, French Quarter Citizens | Britt McGovern, French Quarter Business Assoc. |
| Carolyn Goodwin, VC-6AP | Glade Bilby, French Quarter Citizens |
| Ernest Luster, NOPD | Derrick Francis, Mayor’s Office |

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Introduction of Attendees

Chair Jim Oliver called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm. The agenda (Attachment 1) was noted.

The Secretary called the roll and stated that a quorum was present.

1. Executive Session for the consideration of matters related to the Executive Director

Commissioner Watters moved that the Commission go into Executive Session. (M1: approved unanimously). The Commissioners left the room and returned to the public session after an interval.

1. Public Comment

Chair Jim Oliver reminded members of the public wishing to address particular items to record their interest on the sign-up sheet.

1. Approval of the January 2016 Minutes

Commissioner DeBlieux moved adoption of the January 7, 2016 Minutes (M2: Approved unanimously –Attachment 2).

1. Chairman’s Comments

Chair Oliver introduced new Commissioners LoCicero and Speights. He underlined efforts and contacts designed to ensure FQMD’s funding stability and sustainability. Noting that he had nothing to present to the Board as yet, he noted meetings with the Mayor’s office and the Downtown Development District on Security Task Force proposals, he stressed the need to reach a solution acceptable to all. He stated he did not exclude the possibility of a Board meeting before the (May 2) regular meeting.

1. Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director Emily Remington:

* Thanked STF Co-Chair Robert Simms for his work on public safety issues;
* Reported a $75,000 contribution from the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) and the Convention Center;
* Noted the need to prepare statements of fiscal and employment policies in conjunction with the audit, and that the documents would be presented to the Board;
* Received 30 applications for the Operations Manager (OM) position and had conducted 13 interviews; and
* Noted that the office would be closed on March 25 and on Good Friday.

1. Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Jeremy DeBlieux’ Report (Attachment 3) noted that, as of February 29, a balance of about $85,000, the FQTF reported a cash balance of about $41,000 and that the Bourbon Patrol balance of $11,900 would be refunded to the French Quarter Business Alliance as previously approved by the Board. The Motion (M3) to approve the Treasurer’s Report was approved unanimously.

1. Adoption of Louisiana Legislative Auditor’s Compliance Questionnaire

Noted was the need to adopt the Louisiana Legislative Auditor’s Compliance Questionnaire (Attachment 4). The Motion (M4) was approved unanimously. Chair Oliver reminded that all Commissioners needed to comply with Louisiana requirements to file an annual financial statement and undergo one hour of training.

1. New Committee Members

a/b. Nominees to the Infrastructure Committee

Chair Oliver proposed that Robert Simms and Mia Matassa to be members of the Infrastructure Committee. Committee Co-Chair noted that Mr. Simms already does engineering reports for the Committee and informs regarding STF/public safety issues. She pointed out that Mr. Simms would be a “residential” member whereas Ms. Matassa is a member of the business community. Commissioner Watters expressed his opposition, avowing that it was bad practice to have members with multiple committee responsibilities. Commissioner Rosenberg moved the appointment of Mia Matassa to be a member of the Infrastructure Committee; the Motion (M5) was approved unanimously. Commissioner Rosenberg moved the appointment of Robert Simms to be a member of the Infrastructure Committee; the Motion (M6) was approved.

c/d. Nominees for the Security Task Force (STF)

Proposed for membership on the Security Task Force were Albin Guillot and Dwyer McComsey. The Motion (M7) to approve their appointments to the STF was approved unanimously.

1. Report by Chairs, Infrastructure Committee

Co-Chair Gail Cavett reported on current Infrastructure Committee projects:

* *Storm drain project.* The Sewerage and Water Board (SWB) is moving ahead with installing debris protection screens in the 100–700 blocks of Bourbon Street. In response to Commissioner Musso’s questions, she indicated that there were no cost estimates to install debris protection screens in the entire French Quarter.
* *Sidewalk repairs.* Sidewalk repairs would start by late March and DPW had been requested to keep FQMD informed so as to monitor. As of March 7, contractor was marking repairs on Chartres Street with brick and concrete. The ensuing discussion focused on the need to replace like paving with like paving (e.g., brick with brick, concrete with concrete; stone with stone), and holding the City responsible for the work performed. Commissioner Musso volunteered to send Vieux Carre Commission (VCC) guidelines, but noted the VCC has no inspection capability. Chair Oliver reminded that the FQMD approved the project focus last year.
* *Hop-*on/Hop-off bus (HO/HO). HO/HO’s request to enlarge the Jaz bus terminal remains a problem (600 block of Decatur). DPW’s request for letters of opposition or support generated 23 businesses (80 percent of those responding); even the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) declined to support. HO/HO is not interested in getting a location at the foot of Conti Street. Commissioner Rosenberg moved (M8) that the Board oppose enlargement of the RTA bus stop in the 600 block of Decatur Street and elimination of the Freight Zone parking space. She noted that her motion did not imply objections to RTA use or to the RTA’s position on such use. Commissioners Watters and Deblieux stated they would have to abstain because of their French Quarter Business Association (FQBA) affiliation: the FQBA was conducting a hearing on March 9.
* *Oversize vehicles.* Oversize vehicles remain a problem in the French Quarter, according to Co-Chair Gail Cavett, who plans to work with the STR to create a Traffic Enforcement Detail that would be funded by fines. Drivers report that GPS directions are primarily responsible for violations.

The Motion (M9) to approve the Infrastructure Committee Report was approved unanimously.

1. Report by Chairs, Security Task Force

Co-Chair Robert Watters’ reported that a meeting attended by Sidney Torres, who had expressed concerns regarding response times and personnel attendance, and the Mayor’s office was amicable and endorsed continued use of the FQTF app. The FQTF also received funding approval. The Mayor’s office issue a press release on March 7 (Att 5 – Copy pending).

Co-Chair Robert Simms briefed on FQTF operations and operational issues (see Report, Att. 6). He underlined that the FQTF continues to be a vital and responsive tool: use of the app accounted for 25 percent of calls; 26 percent were dispatched, and 49 percent were initiated by the officer(s) on duty.

Co-Chair Simms reported that the Polaris vehicles were at the end of their service life and replacements were urgently needed. Business leaders have promised to fund new vehicles, but not if the FQTF comes under the DDD’s operational mandate.

Co-Chair Simms asked that the 2016 Goals (Attachment 10 – copy pending) be approved to guide the work of the Task Force. A Motion (M10) offered by Commissioner Watters was approved unanimously.

A Motion (M11) to approve the STF meeting report (M11) carried unanimously.

1. New Business

* *Marijuana decriminalization.* Albin Guillot raised concerns regarding the decriminalization of marijuana. He opined that it would help if the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the FQMD weighed in in opposition … at least exempting the French Quarter from decriminalization. Commissioner Watters opined that possession convictions were creating a class of unemployables. Chair Oliver stated that the City Council would consider the issue during the week, and thus it was too late for the FQMD to weigh in. He noted that neither the CVB nor the hotel and restaurant associations had taken positions on the issue.
* *Vagrancy*. Commissioner Caputo noted that homeless and vagrants were a significant problem, and that the numbers sleeping on the sidewalks seem to have increased. Commissioner Watters suggested sending out a blast regarding the use of the FQTF app to help address the problem.
* *Pedicabs*. Commissioner LoCicero urged enforcement of laws covering pedicab operation.
* *Transportation Planning Study*. Commissioner Musso noted the need for a French Quarter transportation study.

1. Future Meetings: May 2, 2016
2. ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment was approved by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian R. Furness

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Brian R. Furness

Secretary, FQMD

Annex 1: Motions approved at the Meeting of March 7, 2016

Annex 2: List of Attachments

**ANNEX 1: Motions[[2]](#footnote-2) – Meeting of March 7, 2016**

1. *Executive Session` (Agenda II).* Robert Watters: “That the Commission go into Executive Session for the consideration of matters related to the Executive Director.” Second: Kim Rosenberg. Approved unanimously.
2. *Minutes (Agenda IV).* Jeremy DeBlieux: “That the Minutes of the Meeting of January 11, 2016 be approved.” Second: Matassa. Approved unanimously.
3. *Treasurer’s Report (Agenda VII).* Kim Rosenberg: “That the Treasurer’s Report be approved.” Second: Watters. Approved unanimously.
4. *Auditor’s Compliance Questionaire (Agenda VIII).* Kim Rosenberg: “That the Louisiana Legislative Auditor’s Compliance Questionaire be approved.” Second: Matassa. Approved unanimously.
5. *Nominee for the Infrastructure Committee (Agenda IX, a,b).* Kim Rosenberg: “That Mia Matassa be made a member of the Infrastructure Committee.” Second: DeBlieux. Approved unanimously.
6. *Nominee for the Infrastructure Committee (Agenda IX, a,b).* Kim Rosenberg: “That Robert Simms be made a member of the Infrastructure Committee.” Second: Young. Approved: Yeas 10, Nays 1 (Watters).
7. *Nominees for the Security Task Force (Agenda (IX, c,d).*: Kim Rosenberg: “That Albin Guillot and Dwyer McComsey be made members of the Security Task Force. Second: DeBlieux. Approved unanimously.
8. *Bus Stop on Decatur (600 block) (Agenda X)’ .* Kim Rosenberg: “That the FQMD oppose enlargement of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) bus stop in the 600 block of Decatur Street and elimination of Freight Zone parking.” Second: Ted Young. Approved: Yeas 9, Abstentions 2 (Watters, Deblieux).
9. *Infrastructure Committee Report (Agenda X).* Steve Caputo: “That the report of the Infrastructure Committee be approved.” Second: Matassa. Approved: Yeas 10, Abstentions 1 (Musso).
10. *Security Task Force Goals (Agenda XI):* Robert Watters: “That the goals of the Security Task Force be approved.” Second: Matassa. Approved unanimously.
11. *Security Task Force Meeting Notes (Agenda XI):* Kim Rosenberg: “That the meeting notes of the Security Task Force be approved.” Second: Young. Approved unanimously.
12. *Adjournment.* Approved by acclamation.

**ANNEX 2: Attachments – Meeting of March 7, 2016**

1. Agenda — Meeting of March 7, 2016
2. Minutes — Meeting of January 11, 2016
3. Treasurer’s Report (includes spreadsheets for FQMD, FQTF, and Bourbon Patrol)
4. Louisiana Auditor’s Compliance Questionaire
5. Press Release on the French Quarter Task Force (FQTF), Mayor’s office, March 7, 2016 (copy pending)
6. STF Briefing
7. STF 2016 Goals

1. From sign-in sheets. Undecipherable names not included. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Approved unanimously” means the Motion was approved by all Commissioners present. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)