

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Meeting of Monday, May 2, 2016

**MINUTES[[1]](#footnote-1)**

(as approved July 11, 2016)

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

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| **Committee Co-Chairs and Staff:** |  |  |
| Bob Simms, Security Task Force (STF) | Emily Remington, Executive Director |
| Gail Cavett, Infrastructure Committee |  |  |
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| **Guests[[2]](#footnote-2) (Affiliation if listed)** |  |
| B. McGovern, French Quarter Business Association | Pat Meadowcroft, VCPORA |
| C. Gniady, French Quarter Citizens | Susan Guillot, French Quarter Citizens |
| Meg Lousteau, VCPORA | Beverly Fulk, Resident, Security Task Force |

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

Chair Jim Oliver called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm. The agenda (Attachment 1) was noted.

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

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 March 7, 2016 Minutes

Commissioner DeBlieux moved adoption of the March 7, 2016 Minutes (M1: Approved unanimously –Attachment 2).

1. Chairman’s Comments

Chair Oliver assured those present that negotiations were underway for a new Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) with the City to cover the operations of the French Quarter Task Force (FQTF). He thanked all for their hard work. He singled out Security Task Force (STF) Co-Chair Bob Simms for partnering with others to get the FQTF on track.

1. Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director Emily Remington reported that work regarding:

1. The search for appropriate office space, made necessary by the NOPD’s requirement for the 8th District office space, continued; and
2. The documentation necessary to nail down the $75,000 New Orleans Tourism and Marketing Corp. (NOTMC) grant continued.

With respect to agenda items included in the Executive Director’s Report:

* 1. FQMD Employment Policies.

After some discussion, the Board accepted Commissioner Rosenberg’s suggestion to defer consideration to the July meeting of the “Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual” of May 2016 (Attachment 3), pending further review and vetting.

* 1. Executive Director 2016-17 Goals.

Executive Director Remington presented her draft professional goals (Attachment 4) for 2016, as had been reviewed with Chair Oliver. Several commissioners observed that the goals needed to take into account the possibility that she would be required to backstop the FQTF Operations Manager and the STR. FQTF funds would have to be wisely spent, and the Executive Director would need to have a well-defined, important and ongoing role. Commissioner DeBlieux opined that the goals should include grant writing. Chair Oliver deferred further consideration and asked that the STF consider appropriate the goals and report to the Board.

* 1. Proposed FQMD Fundraisers

Noting the possibility that the FQMD’s FQTF administrative allowance from 5.0 percent to 2.5 percent, Executive Director Remington suggested that the FQMD consider fundraisers such as (1) a celebrity chef bake sale, (2) hotel penthouse tour, (3) lecture series (perhaps featuring local experts such as Tulane geographer Campetella); and/or (4) quality-of-life events, such as a yoga task. Gail Cavett offered to submit suggestions based on extensive community organization experience with galas and dinners. Commissioner Berger noted that the objective was to finance steady operations, expecially after 2018. Commissioner Watters suggested that the Executive Director confer with community organizations, such as VCPORA, the FQBA, and FQC; noting that raising awareness would help raise funds. Commissioner Furness stressed that raising funds linked to a specific project might prove easier than raising general purpose funds. Further consideration was deferred.

* 1. Review of 2015 Audit Results

Executive Director Remington reported that, in accordance with the audit report, a credit card was obtained, a new expenditure review process had been implemented, and new accounting software obtained. Chair Oliver stated that he would follow up with the auditor.

1. Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Jeremy DeBlieux reported that FQMD’s “Ending Cash” for March, 2016 was $151,706.15 (Attachment 5) and for April, 2016 was $143,307 (Attachment 6). Supplementary reports showed the position of the FQTF and Bourbon Patrol accounts. Commissioner Rosenberg’s motion to approve the reports was approved unanimously (Motion 2).

1. Report by Co-Chairs, Infrastructure Committee

Co-Chair Gail Cavett reported (Attachment 7) on:

* *Sidewalk Repairs.* Sidewalk repairs were underway, and encompassed work primarily in the commercial areas of the French Quarter. Commissioner DeBlieux raised concerns that replacement of existing brick and flagstone sidewalks would be done in concrete. City law requires replacing like pavement with like. Commissioner Watters’ motion (Motion 3), expressing the desire of the Board that sidewalks be repaired in either brick or flagstone as appropriate, was approved unanimously.
* *Hop-on Hop-off (HO HO) Bus Stop Update.* Co-Chair Cavett represented FQMD at the French Quarter Business Association (FQBA)’s debate on the HO HO Bus request to enlarge the bus stop at Decatur/St. Peter streets. FQMD, FQBA, FQC, VCPORA and 23 businesses in the 600 block opposed the request, and the Regional Transit Administration declined to write a letter of “no objection” in response to DPW’s request.
* *Canal Street Sinkhole.* Co-Chair Cavett updated the Board on planned repairs to Canal Street after an underground structure collapsed creating a large sinkhole. Commissioner Berger stated the traffic impact on Canal, and even on Poydras, would be significant.
* *Streetlights.* Co-Chair Cavett reported that work was underway to repair and replace streetlights.
1. Report by Chairs, Security Task Force

Co-Chair Watters reported that the City was reviewing the terms of the CEA governing FQTF operations. Sidney Torres was included in the discussions, and would be purchasing new vehicles and developing a new version of the App. Efforts would be made to get more money to defray FQTF operations, and the contractor’s role (currently performed by Pinnacle) would be expanded to provide continuous coverage (24/7/365).

Co-Chair Watters further reported that Deputy Mayor for External Affairs Ryan Berni suggested the change in scope raised the possibility of a bidding process for a new third-party FQTF management service. Accordingly, an FQMD group, composed of Robert Watters, Jim Oliver, and Emily Remington, would investigate, employing legal counsel as necessary. Mr. Watters stated that he and Commissioner Rosenberg would look into the various elements, including a scope of work and a draft request for proposals, and take into account the work done in the Personnel Advisory Committee. Commissioner Rosenberg’s motion (M4) to authorize the FQMD Chair and STF Co-Chairs to take all the steps necessary, but not to incur expenses exceeding $3,000, to participate in the solicitation of a third-party FQTF management service passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Watters further explained that because the “FQMD Operations Manager” idea had been dropped in favor of contracting a monitoring service to provide 24/7 coverage, FQMD would have the responsibility of monitoring the use of funds and overseeing performance. The question is the extent to which the Executive Director will be the FQMD oversight person; and that FQMD will have to define the oversight process. Commissioner DeBlieux recalled that the FQMD is purchasing a service, and thus has the right to discipline the delivery. STF Co-Chair Simms noted that FQMD cannot direct or supervise the NOPD officers.

Co-Chair Bob Simms (see Attachment 8) briefed the Board on current public safety/crime trends and on FQTF operations. Main elements included:

* *FQTF Vehicle Issues.* Current vehicle issues include an accident that seriously damaged one of the electrical vehicles, and increasing evidence that the Polaris vehicles are wearing out. Responding to Commissioner DeBlieux, Co-Chair Simms said that using NOPD vehicles would not likely result in significant savings, and that NOPD vehicles were generally unsuitable for FQTF operations. He also noted that turning vehicle maintenance over to the NOPD would likely lead to vehicle availability shortages. Co-Chair Simms noted that Sidney Torres would be funding the purchase of new vehicles.
* *Crime statistics and FQTF operations.* Co-Chair Simms pointed to recent CrimeStat statistics and FQTF operational data, noting the continued importance of self-initiated actions as an important indicator that FQTF patrol officers are proactively engaged. He also pointed to increased robberies in the Marigny Triangle, and that minimal NOPD vehicle patrols were leading the NOPD to deploy additional assets to the area. FQTF continued to maintain its high-visibility patrols in the mainly resident sections of the French Quarter.
* *FQTF Phase 3.* Co-Chair Simms summarized the tri-partite (Simms, Torres, Berni) discussions aimed at launching FQTF Phase 3 was based on moving to a 24/7 administrative and monitoring service; all agreed it was neither realistic nor prudent to have a volunteer spending 60 hours per week involved in the FQTF. Phase 3 was scheduled to roll out in mid-May, 2016. Noting the benefits of his renewed collaboration with entrepreneur Sidney Torres, Phase 3 would feature new vehicles — smart cars — ; an updated App; new full-time command center that would provide additional capability and better performance tracking; a new promotion program; addition of an additional daytime officer who would focus on traffic and other issues (the revenue from tickets would help the city). Other dimensions include a reduction in FQMD’s administrative fees, reduced vehicle maintenance costs, and continued oversight participation by Sidney Torres and Bob Simms. The monthly Phase 3 cost to FQMD would be $95,000, an increase of $20,000 from an additional CEA with the City. Mr. Torres anticipates investing an additional $80,000 – $100,000. Assuming FQMD adopts Phase 3, the idea of transferring operations to the Downtown Development District (DDD) has been abandoned.
* *FQTF finances.* Chair Oliver said that the budget would focus on ways and means for funding operations. Co-Chair Simms pointed to a proposal by Chemical LLC to contribute 5 percent of its French Quarter sales to support the FQTF and asked for businesses to attend a future briefing to explore this option.
1. New Business
* Commissioner Furness suggested that it would be worthwhile to review the reasons for the failure of the NOLA Patrol.
* Chair Oliver reported problems with collecting the “Quarter for the Quarter.”
1. Future Meetings: July 11, 2016
2. ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment was approved by acclamation at 4:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Brian R. Furness

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Brian R. Furness, Secretary

Annex 1: Motions approved at the Meeting of May 2, 2016

Annex 2: List of Attachments

**ANNEX 1: Motions[[3]](#footnote-3) – Meeting of May 2, 2016**

1. *Minutes (Agenda IV).* Jeremy DeBlieux: “That the Minutes of the Meeting of March 7, 2016 be approved.” Second: Matassa. Approved unanimously.
2. *Treasurer’s Report (Agenda VI).* Kim Rosenberg: “That the Treasurer’s Reports for March and April 2016 be approved.” Second: Young. Approved unanimously.
3. *Sidewalk Repairs (Agenda VII.a).* Robert Watters: “The desire of the Board of Commissioners is that sidewalks being repaired in the FQ be repaired in either brick or flagstone as most appropriate. In particular when 35% or more of a section (defined as the entire area comprising the property line of the building fronting the sidewalk) needs repair it should be replaced with brick or flagstone even when the sidewalk being repaired is covered in concrete.” Second: Rosenberg. Approved unanimously.
4. *Participation in the process to obtain an FQTF management entity (Agenda VIII).* Kim Rosenberg: “That the FQMD Chair and STF Co-Chairs be authorized to take all the steps necessary, but not to incur expenses exceeding $3,000, in the process of obtaining a FQTF third-party management service.” Second: Watters. Approved unanimously.
5. *Adjournment.* Jeremy DeBlieux: “That the meeting be adjourned.” Approved by acclamation.

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

1. Agenda — Meeting of May 2, 2016
2. Minutes — Meeting of March 7, 2016
3. “Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual,” May 2016 (draft). (ref: Agenda V.a).
4. Remington, Emily. Professional Goals for 2016. Memo of 28 April 2016. (ref: Agenda V.b).
5. Treasurer’s Report, March 2016 (includes spreadsheets for FQMD, FQTF, and Bourbon Patrol). (Ref: Agenda VI).
6. Treasurer’s Report, April 2016 (includes spreadsheets for FQMD, FQTF, and Bourbon Patrol). (ref: Agenda VI).
7. Infrastructure Committee Report to the FQMD. May 2, 2016. Briefing by Co-Chair Gail Cavett. (ref: Agenda VII).
8. Security Task Force: “FQTF Report for May 2, 2016.” Briefing by Co-Chair Bob Simms. (ref: Agenda VIII).
1. Technical note: The meeting was recorded on an Etekcity USB disk recorder, file2016-04-12-07-04-50.wav. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. From sign-in sheets. Undecipherable names not included. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Approved unanimously” means the Motion was approved by all Commissioners present. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)