



## Notes Government Affairs Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 20 May 2020  
2:10 to 3:10pm

Via Teleconference:

<https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1483630059>

Meeting ID: 148 363 0059

Video:

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Audio:

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I. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 pm and the agenda was read into the record.

ROLL CALL:

Committee Members			
First Name	Last Name	Present	Absent
Jeremy	DeBlieux	X	
David	Bilbe	X	
Brian	Furness	X	
Brittany	McGovern	X	
Christian	Pendleton	X	
Kim	Rosenberg	X	
Jane	Cooper	x	
Sherry	Cannon	x	
Juliet	Laughlin	x	
Frank	Zumbo		X

INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDEES:

Guests		
First Name	Last Name	Role
Karley	Frankic	Executive Director
Richard	McCall	DDD
Erin	Holmes	VCPORA
Gail	Cavett	Commissioner
Robert	Watters	Commissioner

- II. Public Comment: Anyone who wishes to comment on actionable items must announce their name for the recording and indicate the item(s) on which s/he wishes to comment.
- III. Approval of April 2020 meeting notes (**action item**)  
Ms. Rosenberg moved, and Ms. Cooper seconded the motion to approve the meeting notes. The motion passed unanimously.
- IV. Update on the French Quarter Improvement Fund (Karley D. Frankic)  
Ms. Frankic reported that the City would not be propping up the FQMD-SPPP out of the French Quarter Improvement Fund (FQIF). The City's plan is to instead create a new blue light patrol by the New Orleans Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness (NOHSEP) which will be manned by grounds patrol officers and

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NOPD overtime officers. They will find efficiencies by rolling in the French Market Corporation (FMC) and Armstrong Park security personnel. Their goal is to launch the blue light patrol in November or December of 2020. FQMD has not received an updated budget from the City for the FQIF but Ms. Frankic reported that some infrastructure programming is planned to be retained in the revised budget. She further reported that it was her understanding from Mr. Smith that the City may prop up payments to the Louisiana State Police out of the FQIF.

Upon request from clarification from Ms. Cannon, Ms. Frankic detailed the phased rollout of the NOHSEP grounds patrol plan with first phase being the conversion of the FMC security patrol to NOHSEP grounds patrol officers, the second phase being replacing the private patrols in Armstrong Park with NOHSEP grounds patrol, and the third phase being rollout of the new 24/7 blue light patrols.

Ms. Rosenberg asked when the City thought that the FQMD-SPPP would end? Ms. Frankic said that as of now, the FQMD Board voted in March to reduce patrols to one officer during the day and two officers at night (7pm-7am) The fund balance will run out around February 2021. So as the FQMD-SPPP runs down the fund balance, NOHSEP grounds patrol will be ramping up. Mr. DeBlieux noted that the Board will review the deployment plan at the next board meeting. Ms. Rosenberg asked if the City realized that the French Quarter residents voted to approve the Quarter for the Quarter (FQ EDD Sales Tax) because the residents had been told that if they did not approve the FQ EDD Sales Tax then the funding for the FQMD-SPPP would be disbanded? Mr. DeBlieux responded that while he cannot speak for what the City does and does not realize, but he hoped that the mayor's and council member's appointees to the FWMD Board of Commissioners would make the proper people aware. Mr. DeBlieux noted that Mr. Smith had informed Ms. Frankic that the City would appreciate the FQMD's support in renewing the FQ EDD Sales Tax. He hopes that resident groups and the appointees would lobby the administration to continue the FQMD-SPPP.

Mr. Bilbe asked when the FQ EDD Sales Tax expired. Ms. Frankic reported that the tax and the CEA both expire at the end of 2020. The tax must be voted on again. Her understanding from City Council District C staff is that the City Council will need to vote in July to send the initiative to the Bond Commission for approval to allow the City to put it on the winter election ballot. And as the CEA is also expiring, it will need to be negotiated. Mr. Bilbe remarked that there may not be any funds generated past December. Ms. Frankic said that Mr. Smith had told her that the City was not anticipating significant revenues from the FQ EDD Sales Tax for the remainder of this year. Ms. Frankic reported that she had requested projections for revenues and an accounting of the FQ EDD Trust Fund account, and Mr. Smith said that he was working on pulling that together.

Ms. Cooper noted that she understands that FQ Citizens, VCPORA and FQMD are taking a position on how important the FQMD-SPPP is to the French Quarter and she would like to see a coordination of those efforts. It would be helpful for all to have a consistent message with the administration and the City Council District C. Mr. DeBlieux noted that FQ Advocates, FQ Citizens and VCPORA membership would be the ones voting on this ballot measure and that elected officials listen to the voters and so those three groups should take the lead on advocating with their elected officials about the FQMD-SPPP and the biggest tool that they have is their ability to vote to renew the FQ EDD Sales Tax.

Ms. Rosenberg suggested that the FQMD hold a public meeting to review the expiration of the FQ EDD Sales Tax, give the City an opportunity to present their plan, and allow the residents to show how they feel about it. **Mr. DeBlieux said that he would present this idea for a public meeting regarding the FQ EDD Sales Tax at the next Board Meeting.** Mr. Bilbe stated that the Royal Orleans would be happy to host a meeting if and when public meetings are permitted. Mr. DeBlieux noted that the meeting may need to happen before that time. Mr. Furness asked if there was any reason to think that the vote to renew the FQ EDD wouldn't pass? Mr. DeBlieux said that he thought that the neighborhoods want to see the FQMD-SPPP continue to exist. Ms. Cooper agreed and that the residents need to understand the politics of the situation and what their votes are worth in pushing forward the

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message on the FQMD-SPPP. Ms. Rosenberg asked if there could be an outside meeting at Woldenberg Park with a raised platform and a PA system where an FQMD Board representative, a City representative, and even a LA State Police representative could present their position. Mr. DeBlieux noted that it would be a decision for the Board and then he can reach out to Audubon about donating the space at Woldenberg Park and the PA.

Ms. Laughlin questioned if the FQ EDD was related to the FQMD-SPPP. Mr. DeBlieux noted that it was not, however, if the residential community wants to support the FQMD-SPPP the largest lever they have is votes for the FQ EDD Sales Tax. There is not enough money in the FQIF to keep the supplemental police patrol going for more than a year as there is no new revenues going back into the fund since there is no hotel assessment revenues.

Ms. Rosenberg noted that Cm. Palmer had previously advocated moving the FMC ~\$1M to the FQMD-SPPP. Perhaps instead of the City moving forward with its plan, wouldn't it make sense to allow the off-duty police officers to do the patrolling and expand the area to include the FMC, Jackson Square and Armstrong Park? Mr. DeBlieux reported that Cm. Palmer was in support of the City's plan to use the NOHSEP grounds patrol. Ms. Rosenberg asked where the new patrol would be managed? Ms. Frankic said that it would be operated out of the Real Time Crime Center on N. Rampart Street. Mr. DeBlieux asked that everyone review the program overview that was sent by Ms. Frankic in the committee packets.

V. Discussion of White Paper explanation of FQMD funding need

The committee reviewed the white paper of FQMD funding needs that was sent in the committee packets. Mr. DeBlieux explained the intent of the white paper was to be used when advocating for funding from public officials. Ms. Cooper noted that it was an excellent document that makes all of the points clearly and should be used in all the ways intended. **Mr. DeBlieux suggested that he take the documents, as amended and present it at the next FQMD Board meeting.** There were no objections. Mr. Pendleton noted that this should not require any action from the Board and time was of the essence to getting it in front of the law makers that need to see it. There were no objections. **Ms. Frankic will make the edits and send back to the committee to use in their lobbying efforts.** Ms. Laughlin noted that she would appreciate having this as soon as possible for he communications with state legislatures.

Ms. Rosenberg asked who from the board has been authorized to speak on this issue, as required within the bylaws. Ms. Frankic read the section of the bylaws that governs the requirement that authorization of either the Board or Board Chair, for commissioners and/or committee members to speak on behalf of the FQMD. **Mr. Pendleton delegated that Mr. DeBlieux, Ms. Laughlin, and Ms. Frankic be authorized to communicate with public officials the government affairs issues contained in this white paper,** and keep a clear line of communication.

VI. Discussion to identify all possible resources for future funding including but not limited to:

- a. CARES Act dollars
- b. CDBG funds
- c. Disaster CDBG funds
- d. Louisiana State Budget
- e. French Quarter Economic Development District sales tax
- f. Leverage of parcel fee and/or ad valorem tax

Mr. DeBlieux reported that there was a productive conversation with former state legislator, Walt Leger, and he provided information on the many avenues to pursue new funding streams. There are no direct funds available through the CARES Act PPP for FQMD as a political subdivision of the State. CDBG and



Disaster CDBG funds may be available and he is working with staff in the Lt. Governor's office about the possibility of accessing these monies. Ms. Laughlin reported that the state budget process is going to be difficult, so right now our best bet is the CDBG funds and funds through the Lt. Governor's office. They possibly have funds left over since events across the state had been canceled. Ms. Frankic clarified that it was the CARES PPP that was not available, but there was a possibility of tapping into the State's pot of CARES Act funds via the Governor's office. **Mr. DeBlieux said he would work with the Lt. Governor to communicate FQMD's needs with the Governor's staff.** Mr. Furness recommended that when speaking with the Lt. Governor's office, the French Quarter's value to tourism should be emphasized. **Mr. DeBlieux asked Ms. Frankic to follow up with Mr. Watters to share the white paper with Sen. Cedric Richmond to work on securing support at the federal level.**

Ms. Frankic noted that the inclusion of the FQ EDD Sales Tax in this portion of the agenda was in response to Ms. Cavett's question of if a portion of the funds could be redirected to the FQMD-SPPP, possibly by increasing the amount of the sales tax. Ms. Cavett that this was a brainstorm to provide funding to prop up the FQMD-SPPP while continuing the LA State Police. Mr. DeBlieux and Ms. Rosenberg noted that there was reason why the sales tax was kept below .25%. Ms. Cavett said she thinks that the residential voters appreciate that the tourists pay 90%+ of the tax and it may need to be increased to provide the shortfall in revenues. She suggested that it would be doubled for three years and then be reviewed.

Ms. McGovern noted that this would require two separate votes and CEAs. **Mr. DeBlieux asked Ms. Frankic to research why the tax was set at the level it was.**

Mr. DeBlieux recommended that the topic and an ad valorem tax should be directed to the full board of discussion. Ms. Cavett agreed. Ms. Rosenberg suggested that if there was a public meeting about the FQ EDD Sales Tax one of the issues to be addressed could be whether the sales tax should be doubled and/or what the public would prefer an ad valorem tax. **Mr. DeBlieux said that this should be discussed at a full board meeting so they could endorse a recommendation.** Ms. Cooper agreed.

VII. Discussion of an action plan recommendation for the Board of Commissioners

Mr. DeBlieux recapped the **recommendations for the Board of commissioners to include: 1. Discuss having a public meeting to discuss the FQMD-SPPP and the FQ EDD Sales Tax, 2. Discuss increasing the EDD Sales Tax to cover the FQMD-SPPP, 3. An Ad Valorem tax to cover the FQMD-SPPP, and 4. An update from Ms. Laughlin and Mr. DeBlieux on their efforts on the State level.**

VIII. New Business

No new business was discussed

IX. Next Meeting Date

The next board meeting will be after the June Board of Commissioners meeting.

X. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:13 pm.