

# French Quarter MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

Monday, 14 December 2020

2:10 pm – 3:32 pm

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Via Teleconference:

<https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/2047589217>

Meeting ID: 204 758 9217

Video:

<https://meetings.ringcentral.com/personallink.html>

Audio:

+1 (469) 445 0100

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### Commissioners Present:

Susan Klein  
Heidi Raines  
David Bilbe  
Frank Zumbo

Jane Cooper  
Jeremy DeBlieux  
Christian Pendleton

Steve Caputo  
Gail Cavett  
Mamie Gasperecz  
Matthew Emory

**Commissioners Absent:** Juliet Laughlin, Robert Watters

**Executive Director:** Karley Frankic

### Guests:

Bob Simms, FQTF  
Erin Holmes, VCPORA  
David Speights, NRMSI  
Paul Rioux, BGR Research analyst  
Amy Stelly, VCPORA  
Allen Johnson, French Market Corp.  
Sherry Cannon, FQMD SEC  
Dustin Wynne  
Barbara Waiters, DDD  
Mike Ince, LA Lt. Gov. Office

Brittany McGovern, FQBA  
Andrew Sullivan, CM Palmer, Chief of Staff  
Stan Harris, LRA  
Jasmine William-Jones  
Eric Smith, CNO, CAO  
Bridget Neal, LA Lt. Gov. Consultant  
Ross Bourgeois, NOHSEP  
Leslie Alley, FMC  
WWL Newsroom  
Unidentified Caller from 504-669-1070

- I. **CALL TO ORDER: ROLL CALL: INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDEES** at 2:13 pm. Ms. Frankic read the Agenda as noticed.
- II. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Written public comments and live comment requests should be submitted electronically via email to [publiccomments@fqmd.org](mailto:publiccomments@fqmd.org). Emailed public comments will be accepted from the time the agenda is released until conclusion of its reading. Emailed public comment received after the reading of the agenda will not be considered. Each submission must contain: 1)the commenter's first

and last name, 2) the commenter's address, 3) whether the commenter is being paid in connection with his or her comments, and 4) the agenda item to which the comment pertains. Any public comment submission or live comment request missing this information will not be read aloud or recognized for live comment. Live comment during a teleconference meeting via the following formats shall be accepted:

- Electronically raise their hand to request to comment. Upon being recognized to speak by the chair their microphone should be turned on. After speaking the microphone shall be returned to mute.
- Post comments relevant to the action item in the 'Chat Box'.
- Live comment speakers will be given two minutes to comment. The speaker may be muted by the moderator at the conclusion of the two-minute limit.

Mr. Pendleton read comment letters from the submissions against Commissioner Cooper's action of removing signs on the Esplanade Avenue neutral ground supporting the French Quarter EDD sales tax ballot measure. These letters shall be posted on the FQMD website:

- Larry and Apple Lane, French Quarter Residents
- Bob Simms, French Quarter resident and long-time FQTF volunteer coordinator
- Jasmine Williams-Jones, Treme' resident and French Quarter employee
- J. P. Miller, French Quarter employee

Ms. Cooper sincerely apologized for removing two ballot signs on December 4<sup>th</sup> as mentioned above. She noted it showed very poor judgement and especially apologized to her fellow Commissioners and the VCPOA Board Members. She also resigned her in-coming Chairmanship of the FQMD Security and Enforcement Committee. She asked everyone to work together to have the best security outcomes for the French Quarter.

Mr. Pendleton thanked Commissioner Cooper for her apology which he believed to be sincere and for her personal call of apology to other Commissioners and to Mr. Simms. As Board Chairman he stated he was disappointed in her actions since it has caused some to question the integrity of the Board and our integrity must be maintained. He spoke with the VCPOA Board Chairman and Executive Director to ask if there was confidence in Ms. Cooper remaining as their FQMD representative. They replied although being disappointed by her actions, they did have confidence in her remaining on the FQMD Board, since her years of service on the VCPOA Board and the community outweighed this one action. He felt everyone in the past has said or done something they regretted and to that end, he accepted her apology. He told every Commissioner we represent not only ourselves, but our appointing agencies and therefore we should always represent them to the best of our abilities.

- III. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS: Mr. Pendleton stated that the voters have spoken and FQMD must honor our words to them and work hard to make the French Quarter safer. "There were no winners in this election." He stated we all agreed that the French Quarter needs to be safe and secure but disagreed on the solution to that problem. He recognized the concerns regarding the French Quarter Task Force (FQTF) and the app it uses. He reported that he had several positive conversations with Mr. Sidney Torres who confirmed that he would not prevent us from using the app or his equipment and would help us work with the City to create a new and better agreement that recognizes the need for more POST certified officers and to put a clear plan in front of the voters.

His decision to release Councilmember Palmer's statement was his alone. He believes FQMD has a responsibility to communicate with its stakeholders. To that end he read the statement of Mr. Josh Cox, lead negotiator for Mayor Cantrell on the FQ EDD sales tax into the record and saw no reason to not send out the District C Councilmember's statement. He believed this statement was not intended to attack Mr. Simms even though he felt that way and Mr. Pendleton is sorry for that. He felt this was an attempt by the Councilmember to communicate what she believed had occurred during these negotiations. FQMD voted in a heavy majority to not support the sales tax because there was no agreement in place, even though FQMD negotiated in good faith with the City for over eight months. This included stressing the need for POST certified officers as FQMD lobbied for a safe French Quarter. He stated that Mr. Simms has been a great neighbor and volunteered for years to make the French Quarter safer for all who live, work, and visit here. With passionate dedication he has volunteered vast hours for the FQTF Supplemental Police Patrol (SPPP). Mr. Pendleton thanked him for his friendship, leadership, and for contributing to the safety of our neighborhood. He stated his thoughts and council would always be welcomed.

- IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT – Mr. Frankic thanks the Commissioners that offered support to her family this past month as they manage a personal tragedy. She was gratified to know FQMD has such compassionate individuals that donate their time to lead this agency. November was a busy month as new committee chairs and vice-chairs reviewed the 2020 goals and look toward 2021 goals for presentation at the January meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Below are highlights of the work that has been done and an introduction to new projects on the horizon.
- a. Administrative – The 2021 meeting calendar was distributed in the Commissioners meeting packet and will be uploaded to the website in accordance with the bylaws. She had conversations with the State Office of Community Development (OCD) about the \$1,000,000.00 appropriation of CDBG-DR Hurricane Katrina funds. These allocations are difficult to spend due to the challenge of finding tie-backs to Hurricane Katrina. The funds cannot be used for an urgent need but do need to serve a lower-to middle income population. That said, in calls with OCD and the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, replacement of the Vieux Carré line minibuses would be a qualifying project. We were advised that OCD has other funds that can help with the startup operations. I have spoken with the Downtown Development District (DDD) to begin a conversation about their tie-in to the project and there is excitement from their staff about the possibility of working together to bring back this bus line. RTA has data supported evidenced of need for the hospitality workers that utilize public transit. This project will be sent to the Livability Committee to evaluate if the project should be recommended to the Board.
  - b. Public Safety – On Friday, she received a Proposed Needs Assessment Project (PNAP): Scope of Project Document from the Travelers Aid Society of Greater New Orleans by way of our partners at the French Market Corporation.

PNAP Introduction: A focused needs assessment of individuals living on the streets in the French Quarter overseen by the French Quarter Management District (FQMD), the French Market Corporation (FMC)), and the Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association (FMIA) in those areas for the purposes of gaining accurate data on the population there, their needs, and realistic solutions desired by and available to that population. The use of targeted surveys administered by individuals familiar with homelessness services call record the histories and demographics of individuals who are homeless in the area and determine what proportion of

individuals would accept shelter if suitable shelter were provided; what proportion of individuals could be assisted in returning to a home elsewhere; what proportion of individuals are connected to and/or aware of available resources; what proportion of individuals face specific barriers (mental illness, severe substance abuse, mobility challenges, etc.) that prevent them from accessing services without significant continued street outreach assistance. This project will be sent to the Security & Enforcement Committee to evaluate if FQMD should participate and what value it could add to the project.

c. Quality of Life

1. 5G Small Cell Towers – The Vieux Carre’ Commission (VCC) 5G subcommittee passed a non-binding recommendation to approve the latest designs by Toro Blanco that would be selected on site-specific basis. The subcommittee did ask that a gooseneck design option be made available.

d. Commercial & Residential Vitality

1. Mayor’s Proposal for “Reimagining the French Quarter” - On November 16th, the Mayor's Neighborhood Engagement Office held a virtual design charrette to solicit feedback on the Pedestrianization plans for French Market Place. The pilot will run through the rest of the year, closing French Market Place to vehicular traffic each Thursday morning at 7:00 a.m. until each Monday morning at 7:00 a.m. The pedestrian mall will feature public art, tables, chairs, and umbrellas available for public use. This effort is intended to allow for additional seating and patronage opportunities for the businesses and vendors along the corridor by reducing vehicular traffic. Attendees questioned the closure's impact on commercial and residential access to loading zones, the procedure for sanitation and garbage pick-up, and the possibility of bicycle and pedicab usage. Many also wondered if there would be certain operational hours for the use of this furniture. The charrette facilitators were unable to offer most responses but do plan on using this information to refine the designs. It was noted that this effort, initially a response to COVID social distancing measures, may become a permanent fixture. After evaluation, a final proposal could include a permanent closure of French Market Place from Barracks to Governor Nicholls with a permanent parklet system.

2. Sidewalk repairs - Mr. Jorgensen completed the 2020 sidewalk assessment by amassing a new program of data collection. Commissioner Raines has generously offered to donate graphic design assistance to layout the cover letter and summary data in the same style as the sanitation flyer. We are hoping to push this out before the end of the year.

e. Meetings attended:

Date	Meeting
11/11	City Webinar on the FQ EDD
11/11	VCC Mtg re: 5G light pole tower designs
11/16	Security & Enforcement Committee Mtg
11/17	FQBA Quality of Life Committee Mtg
11/17	5G Working group discussion
11/17	MAX mtg
11/17	City Webinar on the FQ EDD
11/18	Government Affairs Committee Mtg
11/18	VCPOA Annual Mtg
11/18	City 2021 Millage Rededication: District "C" Town Hall
11/19	FQMD Parity Team Public Meeting
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11/19	NO&Co. Tourism University - Marketing Campaigns
11/19	Greater New Orleans Hospitality Working Group Mtg.
11/20	RTA call re: Vieux Carre shuttle
11/23	MAX Mtg
11/27	Special Board Mtg
11/30	Livability Committee 2021 leadership planning call
12/1	MAX Mtg
12/2	LA OCD mtg re: CDBG-DR appropriation
12/2	Livability Committee Mtg
12/3	NO&Co. State of the Industry Insights
12/3	City Virtual Town Hall with Mayor Cantrell
12/4	RTA & DDD mtg re: Vieux Carre line
12/7	Exec Team Mtg
12/8	GNOF Greater Together Equity Fund Webinar
12/9	MAX Mtg
12/10	Gov Affairs Committee 2021 planning call
12/11	FQ Citizens mtg
12/11	AT&T Bourbon St. Walk Thru

VI. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 9, 23 and 27, 2020 MEETINGS MINUTES – Ms. Klein

Ms. Gasperecz motioned (**M1**) to “approve the November 9 Regular and the November 23 and 27, 2020 Special Board Meeting minutes as submitted...” seconded by Mr. Caputo and unanimously approved.

VII. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 2020 TREASURER’S REPORT and BUDGETS – Mr. DeBlieux noted FQMD is running as lean as possible with no irregular expenditures. There were no questions regarding the submitted reports.

- a. Mr. Emory moved (**M2**) to “approve the November 2020 Treasurer Reports as submitted...”, seconded by Ms. Klein and unanimously approved.
- b. 2020 Revised Budget – Based on actual budget. We are required to publish a revised budget at year end to show the actual 2020 expenditures. Ms. Klein moved (**M3**) to “approve the 2020 Revised Budget as presented...”, seconded by Mr. Zumbo and unanimously approved.
- c. 2021 Budget – This budget was reviewed by the Finance and Development Committee, Mr. DeBlieux and Ms. Frankic. Expenditure suggestions were presented given current funding which can be amended as funding changes. Mr. Zumbo asked about the meeting and conference expense. This is for any FQMD meeting expenses and conferences that Ms. Frankic may attend. This is a placeholder with nothing currently scheduled. Ms. Raines motioned (**M4**), “to approve the 2021 Budget as submitted...”, seconded by Ms. Gasperecz and unanimously approved.

Mr. Pendleton thanked everyone who worked on these reports especially during COVID funding times.

VIII. DISCUSSION OF FRENCH QUARTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (EDD) SALES TAX : Chairman Pendleton stated there were no winners currently, but everyone agrees on the need for French Quarter safety. To move forward action must take place on both sides of the issue. In no particular order we promised the voters that we would keep the patrols moving requiring an expeditious agreement extension with the City that Mr. Torres shall assist with. The dedicated funds shall be used for these patrols as they have been operating. This agreement has nothing to do with the milage proposal that voters just rejected.

- a. Mr. DeBlieux motioned (**M5**) that “the Chairman submit an extension letter on the expiring CEA to Mayor Cantrell not to exceed six months or until the FQMD funding expires, whichever

comes first...”, seconded by Mr. Caputo.

Discussion: The current funding and expenditures would allow funding through the second week in March. This document would be an extension of the current CEA. Ms. Raines further clarified it does not have anything to do with the current FQ EDD tax vote.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Pendleton noted as FQMD works on this temporary agreement, it is also important to honor our promise to the District voters and work to put this back on the spring ballot. FQMD shall continue to work with Councilmember Palmer’s office and the City Council as the governing agency for the CEA.

- b. Mr. DeBlieux motioned (M6) that “the FQMD supports placing the French Quarter EDD sales tax on the April 24, 2021 ballot for the purpose of funding programming of supplemental POST certified patrols and public safety initiatives in the French Quarter administered by the FQMD...”, seconded by Mr. Caputo and unanimously approved.

Public Comment: In response to Ms. Neal questions, it was stated that 1) the current monthly expense for the patrols is based on the current number of officers patrolling and 2) the FQ EDD April ballot measure once approved by City Council is passed onto the Bond Commission. Mr. Pendleton believes the Mayor wants to partner with the French Quarter to make it the best it can be. He also feels the ballot language must be very clear for the voters.

Mr. Simms said as he understands it this item must be placed on the City Council agenda today to be on the April 24<sup>th</sup> ballot. Also, given current patrol expenditures he did not see how the funds would last into March. He asked if there was a replacement for him? Mr. Pendleton stated he was irreplaceable, but that the various tasks he performed will have to be divided up and addressed differently which shall be challenging. It was agreed the task force must continue operating well for the District electors to vote for it.

Mr. Simms thanked Mr. Pendleton for his kind words, but he does not understand why FQMD did not defend him regarding Councilmember Palmer’s public communication. Mr. Pendleton noted he spoke to Mr. Simms privately after the election and reiterated he would never condone anyone being attacked publicly or privately. Mr. Pendleton noted all during his chairmanship he has noted privately and publicly how grateful FQMD is to him for all the volunteer services he provided. Also, he is sorry if Mr. Simms and others felt Councilmember Palmer’s letter was an attack on him. He believed it was her attempt to correct the public record regarding her office’s negotiations with the City and it was not his job to filter her communication. He stated Mr. Simms had done nothing that deserved to be attacked. Mr. Simms said he accepted Mr. Pendleton’s response. Mr. Emory asked what could the Board do to address this situation to move forward, because he empathizes where a misstatement is made that makes a person feel underappreciated. Mr. Simms wished FQMD would recognize his hurt and wants to stress his past efforts are appreciated and needed for the future. Mr. Emory recognized all Mr. Simms efforts and the past and current challenges we face to improve French Quarter safety. He thanked Mr. Emory for his understanding and sentiment. He asked for a statement from FQMD that it did not participate in the thought process or production of Councilmember Palmer’s

communication as this was verified by Mr. Pendleton. Mr. Zumbo stated it should “go on record” that FQMD did not participate in the communication and publicly thank Mr. Simms for his years of dedicated service. Chairman Pendleton said we could never repay Mr. Simms for all his service to our neighborhood, and he would support that.

Ms. Gasperez motioned (**M7**) that “The FQMD Board of Commissioners plays no role in any public official’s announcements, or any of its stakeholder organizations...”, seconded by Ms. Raines and unanimously approved.

Mr. DeBlieux motioned (**M8**) that “the French Quarter Management District celebrates and recognizes Mr. Bob Simms’ years of dedicated service to the French Quarter Task Force, its residents, businesses, and visitors, and to the safety of everyone involved...”, seconded by Mr. Zumbo and unanimously approved.

Mr. DeBlieux shared the Government Affairs Committee along with Ms. Raines and Ms. Frankic shall begin the process for City Council approval and City negotiations for CEA. Also, FQMD is on schedule for the spring ballot. As approved above (**M5**), Chairman Pendleton shall negotiate to extend the current SPPP CEA to avoid a December 31, 2020 shut down of the FQTF. This would extend services for six months or until the funds run out. Ms. Frankic clarified since this is a short-term agreement the Mayor may activate this by her signature without City Council ratification. A new CEA shall be negotiated for services past that point.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

X. NEXT MEETING DATE: 11 January 2021

XI. ADJOURNMENT: Mr. DeBlieux motioned (**M9**) “to adjourn at 3:30 pm...”, seconded by Ms. Klein and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Klein (signed original available)

Susan Klein, Secretary