

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, 6 March 2024, 4:00 pm

400 N. Peters Street, Suite 206, New Orleans, LA 70130

1. Call to Order, Reading of the Agenda, and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm and the agenda was read into the record.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS				VOTES
First Name	Last Name	Present	Absent	Approve mtg notes
Glade	Bilby	X		X
Christian	Pendleton	X		X
Heidi	Raines	X		Abstain
David	Bilbe	X		X

INTRODUCTION OF ATTENDEES:

GUESTS		
First	Last	Role
Karley	Frankic	FQMD Executive Director
Shelby	Ursu	FQMD Coordinator
Jane	Cooper	FQMD Chair
JT	Hannan	Southeast Director, Intergovernmental Affairs Office

2. Public Comment:

No written public comment was received.

3. Motion – Consider a motion to approve the previous meeting notes

Christian Pendleton made a motion to approve the previous meeting notes. David Bilbe seconded the motion, and it was approved.

4. Committee Chair’s Comments

Chair Glade Bilby welcomed the Committee members and discussed his concern regarding the recent permit-less carry legislation that could negatively impact safety for residents, businesses, and visitors in the French Quarter. Mr. Pendleton reported that he believes that State Representative Alonzo Knox is addressing the legislation with a proposed gun-free zone amendment for the French Quarter. The Committee agreed that the FQMD should take a position on the matter, noting that public safety is of prime importance to the agency. Mr. G. Bilby will update the Board of Commissioners on this legislation at Monday’s Board meeting and discuss taking a position with the Commissioners. JT Hannan introduced himself to the Committee members and added to Mr. Pendleton’s point that he believes legislators are working to carve the French Quarter and the Downtown Development District out of this bill. He encouraged the FQMD to voice their concerns, stating that their voices would add valuable input to the discussion. Mr. G. Bilby suggested that when Mr. Knox’s amendment to the bill is finalized, the FQMD can review it before releasing a public statement.

5. Discussion by Committee of State Legislative Strategy with guest JT Hannan, Southeast Director – Intergovernmental Affairs Office of the Governor

French Quarter MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

a. 2023 State Appropriation Extension

Mr. G. Bilby reported that it may be possible to extend the 2023 State appropriation deadline to the end of 2024, but noted his concern regarding the spending of the funds if there is no extension. Jane Cooper clarified that the FQMD is not asking for more funding, but more time to spend the allocated funds. Mr. Hannan stated that he did not see an issue for the Administration with the appropriation being extended to the end of the year but did not have a definite answer on the matter at this point in time.

b. 2024 Appropriation for Ongoing Programming

Mr. G. Bilby stated that the FQMD is looking for funding from the State on a permanent basis. Mr. Pendleton stated that the FQMD presents Key Performance Indices (KPIs) to the City and has consistently followed all of the required policies and procedures, including year after year of clean legislative audits. Karley Frankic added that the FQMD needs consistent and reliable funding, noting that there are currently only two FQMD employees. In order to scale up programs the agency must be scalable. Mr. G. Bilby added that the money that the FQMD generates for the French Quarter and the State is not something to overlook, pointing out that tourism is growing every year. Ms. Frankic suggested finding a way for the State (Louisiana Economic Development) to fund an economic impact study specifically focused on the French Quarter, pointing out that by showing the State that the French Quarter's economic impact extends far beyond its physical footprint it could help demonstrate the value of the French Quarter to the State. This would in turn support the case for the legislators to extend further funding to the FQMD.

c. Governor Landry's transition team recommendation to amend FQMD's Enabling Legislation

Mr. G. Bilby addressed the Senate Bill 365 by Senator Harris, stating that he felt it could expand the FQMD's enabling legislation. Ms. Frankic stated that the bill may add to the FQMD's functionality but does not, as written, add additional powers. Heidi Raines pointed out that one of the time-consuming challenges that the FQMD faces is trying to fix property of the City of New Orleans, noting that the bill does not cut corners or change the procurement process that the FQMD would need to go through regarding replacing or repairing City-owned assets. She stated that the City would still need to consent to any maintenance or repairs. Ms. Cooper suggested that if Bill 365 were strengthened, it could give the FQMD more authority. Mr. Hannan stated that the bill is a step in the right direction, but improvements to it could be made to allow for more flexibility for State political subdivisions. He noted that the 2025 Superbowl is a catalyst for the City and State to work together towards improving infrastructure and law enforcement. Mr. Hannan suggested that the FQMD craft a well-written Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) adding to Mr. Harris's bill to present to the City including a masterplan, noting that the FQMD should advocate their successes and details regarding the inner programming KPIs. Ms. Cooper agreed, stating that a concise masterplan would be a beneficial way to approach discussing the needs of the FQMD in terms of funding, staffing, and authority. The FQMD will draft a CEA that will detail the FQMD's achievements, operating structure and budget, and masterplans regarding infrastructure, sanitation, and lighting to present to the City.

6. New Business– To consider and take action upon any other matters that may properly come before the French Quarter Management District Government Affairs Committee

No new business was discussed.

7. Next meeting date:

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee is Wednesday, May 8th 2024, at 3:00 pm.

8. Adjournment

Mr. D. Bilbe made a motion to adjourn. Mr. G. Bilby seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:04 pm.