

River Parishes Tourist Commission
Board Meeting | November 16, 2023 | Official Minutes

The River Parishes Tourist Commission Board of Directors met on Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 5:00 PM at the Port of South Louisiana Office Complex at 1720 LA Highway 44 in Reserve, Louisiana 70084.

Call To Order

Board Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM.

Roll Call

Willma Harvey, Director of Sales and Business Development, called the roll.

Board Member	Board Assignment	Attendance
Elizabeth Joseph	President	Present
Terrence Jones	Vice President	Absent
Camella Landry	Secretary-Treasurer	Present
Robert Taylor	Commissioner	Present
Steven Bourgeois	Commissioner	Absent
Noble Benoit	Commissioner	Present
Ricardo Smith	Commissioner	Present
Tracy Smith	Commissioner	Present

(6-2) Quorum met.

Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Tracy Smith led the Prayer, and Commissioner Ricardo Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Camella Landry motioned to approve the November 16, 2023, Agenda. Commissioner Tracy Smith seconded the motion. Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph called the question with the following results:

Elizabeth Joseph	Voted	Yes
Terrence Jones	Absent	-
Camella Landry	Voted	Yes
Robert Taylor	Voted	Yes
Steven Bourgeois	Absent	-
Noble Benoit	Voted	Yes
Ricardo Smith	Voted	Yes
Tracy Smith	Voted	Yes

The motion, having been duly made and seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph declared the motion adopted on November 16, 2023.

Public Comment

President Elizabeth asked if there were any public comments. There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Tracy Smith motioned to approve the October 19, 2023, meeting minutes. Commissioner Noble Benoit seconded the motion. Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph called the question with the question with the following results:

Elizabeth Joseph	Voted	Yes
Terrence Jones	Absent	-
Camella Landry	Voted	Yes
Robert Taylor	Voted	Yes
Steven Bourgeois	Absent	-
Noble Benoit	Voted	Yes
Ricardo Smith	Voted	Yes
Tracy Smith	Voted	Yes

The motion, having been duly made and seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph declared the motion adopted on November 16, 2023.

Financials

Executive Director, Denise Burrell, presented the financials for the month of October 2023, and Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph noted that the income is below budget on room tax income.

Professional fees paid to Deveney, the advertising agency, were discussed, followed by a lengthy conversation regarding retaining Deveney or possibly reducing Deveney's costs versus hiring an employee capable of performing several of Deveney's duties. The Contract Committee will thoroughly review Deveney's contract and report to the board.

Commissioner Tracy Smith motioned to approve the October 2023 Financials. Commissioner Robert Taylor seconded the motion. Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph called the question with the following results:

Elizabeth Joseph	Voted	Yes
Terrence Jones	Absent	-
Camella Landry	Voted	Yes
Robert Taylor	Voted	Yes
Steven Bourgeois	Absent	-
Noble Benoit	Voted	Yes
Ricardo Smith	Voted	Yes
Tracy Smith	Voted	Yes

The motion, having been duly made and seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph declared the motion adopted on November 16, 2023.

Approvals

Directors and Officers Insurance Policy

Commissioner Tracy Smith motioned to approve the renewal of the Directors and Officers Insurance Policy in the amount of \$1,332.00 with Riverlands Insurance Company. Commissioner Ricardo Smith seconded the motion. Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph called the question with the following results:

Elizabeth Joseph	Voted	Yes
Terrance Jones	Absent	-
Camella Landry	Voted	Yes
Robert Taylor	Voted	Yes
Steven Bourgeois	Absent	-
Nolan Benoit	Voted	Yes
Ricardo Smith	Voted	Yes
Tracy Smith	Voted	Yes

The motion, having been duly made and seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph declared the motion adopted on November 16, 2023.

Resolution 2023-15-2023 – Bonfire Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA)

Commissioner Tracy Smith motioned to approve and authorize the Executive Director, Denise Burrell, to sign the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement for the Bonfire Festival 2023.

Commissioner Noble Benoit seconded the motion. Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph called the question with the following results:

Elizabeth Joseph	Voted	Yes
Terrance Jones	Absent	-
Camella Landry	Voted	Yes
Robert Taylor	Voted	Yes
Steven Bourgeois	Absent	-
Nolan Benoit	Voted	Yes
Ricardo Smith	Voted	Yes
Tracy Smith	Voted	Yes

The motion, having been duly made and seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph declared the movement adopted on November 16, 2023.

Resolution 2023-16 - 2024 Regular Meeting Schedule

Executive Director Denise Burrell proposed that the 2024 River Parishes Tourist Commission Board Meeting officially meet every two months instead of every month. She noted that the meeting cycle aligns with the River Parishes Tourist Commission's Bylaws.

Discussion regarding the proposed new meeting schedule included the possibility of not having a quorum and items needing action would have to remain in pending status for an additional month, the length of time it takes to prepare for a monthly board meeting is a burden on the staff, and the understaffed agency at present is a significant issue and possibly contributes to the workload on the team to prepare for monthly meetings.

Commissioner Taylor moved to approve the proposed 2024 River Parishes Tourist Commission Board Meeting schedule as follows:

- February 15
- April 18 (Meeting & Budget Committee)
- June 20
- August 15
- October 17
- December 19

Commissioner Landry seconded the motion. Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph called the question with the following results:

Elizabeth Joseph	Voted	Yes
Terrence Jones	Absent	-
Camella Landry	Voted	Yes
Robert Taylor	Voted	Yes
Steven Bourgeois	Absent	-
Noble Benoit	Voted	Yes
Ricardo Smith	Voted	Abstained
Tracy Smith	Voted	Yes

The motion, having been duly made and seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph declared the movement adopted on November 16, 2023.

Resolution 2023-17 – 2024 King Kat Tournament Trail Confidential Sponsorship Agreement

Executive Director Denise Burrell gave special recognition to St. Charles Parish, presented a verbal economic impact, and showed a few positive comments on social media about the success of the 2023 King Kat Tournament. She noted several last-minute changes were necessary during the tournament and indicated that planning and coordinating for the 2024 tournament would begin earlier this year.

Commissioner Tracy Smith motioned to approve and authorize the Executive Director, Denise Burrell, to sign the 2024 King Kat Tournament Trail Confidential Sponsorship Agreement. Commissioner Camella Landry seconded the motion. Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph called the question with the following results:

Elizabeth Joseph	Voted	Yes
Terrence Jones	Absent	-
Camella Landry	Voted	Yes
Robert Taylor	Voted	Yes
Steven Bourgeois	Absent	-
Noble Benoit	Voted	Yes
Ricardo Smith	Voted	Yes
Tracy Smith	Voted	Yes

The motion having been duly made and seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph declared the motion adopted November 16, 2023.

Resolution 2023-18 - Papa Noel: The Legacy of the Levee Bonfires Sponsorship

Executive Director Denise Burrell displayed a film trailer about the history of the bonfires created by Mr. Mark Niedelson, Producer/Director. The video will air on PBS in December, and Mr. Niedelson will film live at the 2023 Festival of the Bonfires. Mr. Niedelson is asking the

River Parishes Tourist Commission to pay the licensing fee to film, which will include fifteen-second Q&A spots.

Commissioner Camella Landry motioned to approve \$5000.00 to pay Mr. Mark Niedelson for the licensing fee to film live at the 2023 Festivals of the Bonfires, including fifteen-second Q&A spots. Commissioner Noble Benoit seconded the motion.

Commissioner Camella Landry noted the importance of sponsoring the Festival of the Bonfires, a popular event that has become more popular since its inception in 2000. She also mentioned that her family, residents of St. James Parish, was instrumental in creating the festival.

Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph called the question with the following results:

Elizabeth Joseph	Voted	Yes
Terrence Jones	Absent	-
Camella Landry	Voted	Yes
Robert Taylor	Voted	Yes
Steven Bourgeois	Absent	-
Noble Benoit	Voted	Yes
Ricardo Smith	Voted	Yes
Tracy Smith	Voted	Yes

The motion having been duly made and seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph declared the motion adopted November 16, 2023.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Denise Burrell reported the following:

- The Marketing Partner Quarterly Luncheon Meeting is scheduled for December 19, 2023, at the River Parishes Community College in Boutte, Louisiana.
- The annual audit of the River Parishes Tourist Commission is scheduled for November 27-29, 2023.
- The construction of the cruise terminal dock is underway according to Mr. Frank Klipsch, of American Cruise Lines.
- According to R. J. Ory, the President of the Louisiana Steam Train\Garyville, the association received \$500,000.00 from the state of Louisiana.
- The Sales Report and Marketing & Public Relations reports are in the Commissioners binders for review.

Conferences, and Familiarization Tours

Willma Harvey reported attending the World Travel Market in London, England, November 6-9, 2023, and the National Tour Association Travel Exchange in Shreveport, Louisiana, November 12-14, 2023. At both tourism travel shows, she met with tour and travel buyers interested in developing tours in Louisiana's River Parishes, and their primary interests were the Bonfires on the Levee festivities, African American history, the lives of the Enslaved, and golf.

Willma Harvey will attend the Society of Government Meeting Professionals Louisiana Chapter's Annual Conference in Marksville, Louisiana, November 29-30, 2023. She will attend the United States Tour Operator Association's Annual Conference in Los Angeles, California,

December 2-6, 2023. Denise Burrell will attend the Travel South USA International Showcase in Memphis, Tennessee, December 3-6, 2023.

Community Engagement & Events

Commissioner Ricardo Smith reported on the Cultural Fall Festival held at the West Bank Bridge Park in Luling, Louisiana, on November 5, 2023. He requested that the Cultural Fall Festival committee meet with Executive Director Denise Burrell, Willma Harvey, and a board member of the River Parishes Tourist Commission to begin planning and coordinating earlier this year for the 2004 Cultural Fall Festival.

Willma Harvey reported that a small crew of German filmmakers will visit several destinations in Louisiana to scout locations for their upcoming series focusing on myths, legends, and spooky stories. The team will film in Louisiana’s River Parishes from December 8-9, 2023. Willma is creating an itinerary that will include Frenier Landing Restaurant and Oyster Bar and the Legend of Julia Brown, The Unheard Voices of the German Coast tour and a Ghost Tour at Destrehan Plantation, and Our Lady of the Blind River in St. James Parish.

Upcoming events the remainder of the year are:

- Armadillo Dash Trail 5K Half Marathon Run – November 18, 2023 – Bonnet Carre’ Spillway Trail, Norco, Louisiana
- Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern CPKC 2023 Holiday Express Train – November 29, 2023 – Along railway track at 529 Hemlock St. in LaPlace, Louisiana – 4:00PM-8:00PM
- Festival of the Bonfires – December 8-10, 2023 – Lutcher, Louisiana
- Lighting of the Bonfires on the Levee – December 24, 2023

Board Chair’s Report

The next Board Meeting is December 14, 2023, and will include the annual Christmas gathering.

Adjourn

Commissioner Camella Landry motioned to adjourn the November 16, 2023, Board Meeting. Commissioner Robert Taylor seconded the motion. Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph called the question with the following results:

Elizabeth Joseph	Voted	Yes
Terrence Jones	Absent	-
Camella Landry	Voted	Yes
Robert Taylor	Voted	Yes
Steven Bourgeois	Absent	-
Noble Benoit	Voted	Yes
Ricardo Smith	Voted	Yes
Tracy Smith	Voted	Yes

The motion, having been duly made and seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, Chairwoman Elizabeth Joseph declared the movement adopted on November 16, 2023.