



**Build Baton Rouge Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting**

Date: Monday, May 13, 2024

Place: 757 Main Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70817

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Minutes

Attending Board Members: Rodney Braxton, Chairman; Charles Landry, Vice Chair; Will Campbell, Treasurer; Suzanne Turner, Secretary

Excused Board Members: Bobby Hamilton (each, a "Commissioner")

Also attending: Gretchen Siemers, Vice President; Kendra Hendricks, Senior Manager of Economic Development and Finance; Tricia Prewitt, BBR Office Coordinator; Amanda Robertson, V.Graham; Kincaid Jackson, Kean Miller; Helena Cunningham, Consultant; Dong Lain Tram

Meeting Called by: Rodney Braxton

Type of Meeting: Build Baton Rouge (BBR) Board of Commissioners – Regular Meeting

Note Taker: Tricia Prewitt

❖ **Action Item**

- Mr. Braxton called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.
- Mr. Braxton confirmed receipt of proof of notice of meeting and the posting of public notice.
- Mr. Braxton Confirmed the number of Board Commissioners present and the constitution of a majority.
- The Board reviewed the minutes from the BBR Board of Commissioners April 11, 2024, regular meeting. Ms. Turner made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Landry seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

❖ **Discussion Item: Budget**

- Ms. Robertson presented the YTD profit-loss actual vs. budget, program statement of activity, and cashflow projections for the period ended April 30, 2024. Ms. Robertson reported that April ytd results, revenue and income are in line with expectations, expenses are being managed well, and there are no concerns. There were no objections.

❖ **Discussion Item: Administrative Update/Land Bank**



- Ms. Siemers gave the administrative update, not much to report, building signage is complete and the office has new furniture.
 - For the Land Bank, Ms. Siemers reported on the Florida Corridor Plan, stating that we will have our final meeting of the steering committee at the beginning of June, where we will be releasing the draft plan for approval. After that, we will be taking the plan to the CCEDD, BBR, the planning commission, and then the Metro Council. Ms. Siemer's requested that the board stay active in communicating the plan to the above entities. Ms. Cunningham mentioned the article in the Business Report about the plan and Ms. Siemers, and congratulated Ms. Siemers on an excellent interview.
 - Ms. Siemers reported that we are on the verge of closing on the Ardendale Property. We are working with our surveyor, who has discovered a previous recording error in BBR's favor, resulting in at least 10 acres that were not accounted for. After some discussion, the board agreed that this would increase the asking price.
 - Regarding Shada, Mr. Jackson reported that the hearing date would be sometime in July. Ms. Siemer's asked the board to confirm that BBR is still working on bringing in a grocery store. Mr. Braxton confirmed that that has not changed.
 - Ms. Siemers directed the board to review the handout for the Community Partner's Program. After some discussion, the board indicated that the plan does need revision. Mr. Landry explained that the previous process that was done 10 years ago was managed by a large staff. BBR no longer has the capacity to clear titles. He suggested that if someone wanted to sign a lease/usage agreement and forgoes a clear title, then we should consider it. Mr. Landry requested that BBR should come up with a broader list of usages. Ms. Cunningham inquired about the different types of acquisitions. Ms. Siemers stated that the properties acquired with federal funding are being closed out and should be closed out within the next few weeks. Ms. Cunningham requested a policy change for the Community Partner's Program. Ms. Turner asked if a new policy would have a completely different public impact. Mr. Braxton stated that no, it would just be the process that is different. Ms. Siemers assured the board that we do look at use and will have more information for the board to build test cases.
- ❖ **Discussion Item: Legal Update**
- Mr. Jackson updated the board on meeting procedures that were questioned by the auditor. Before going to executive session, there must be a motion and 2/3 vote, topics must be announced prior to vote, and there is a small list of what can be discussed in executive session. Minutes must show formal action or no formal action taken, once out of session. All votes should be individually listed instead of unanimous. As an unelected board with the authority to levy taxes, BBR is required to capture board meetings on audio or video, to be saved for at least two years.
- ❖ **Action Item: Deferred from April 11, 2024, Approval of the CEA for the Exxon Mobil project which was approved by the Metro Council and the RDA is a party to**



- Mr. Landry left the room, as he has recused himself for this and the following action item. He returned briefly to answer questions before leaving the room again before the vote. Mr. Braxton introduced the action item and opened it up for discussion. Ms. Turner inquired if Exxon Mobile is a client of Mr. Braxton's and Mr. Landry's. Mr. Landry returned to the room to answer yes and explain that none of the projects exist at this time, the purpose is to pursue the projects, if they get the projects, it would be at least 2 years before any money coming in. Mr. Braxton asked what the will of the board is. Mr. Campbell stated that he was fine, and Ms. Turner stated that she was fine, if that doesn't tie us to the 3% outlined in the preliminary documents. Mr. Braxton gave assurances that it would not. Ms. Turner made a motion to approve, Mr. Campbell seconded, Mr. Braxton did a roll call vote with Ms. Turner, Mr. Braxton, and Mr. Campbell all in favor, with Mr. Landry abstaining.
- ❖ **Action Item: Deferred from April 11, 2024, Endorsement of the Ordinance approved by the Metro-Council regarding the LSU Project**
 - Mr. Braxton opened this up for discussion. Ms. Turner stated that she did not feel she could personally support it because of the process that has been used, because she wrote the guidelines for the planning documents for LSU, and all of this work is being done outside of years of planning, and as a resident of downtown and as someone who was involved in all that planning, it is an insult to Ms. Turner that a big developer will come in and many people will line their pockets and this is not what this organization was created for. Ms. Turner stated that the board needs to look at traffic, a new city, etc., that the way this is happening is not how planning generally works, unless it is run by developers already bought by the community or by the university. Ms. Turner requested that the RDA be clearly portrayed as not working with big developers, and not making things just for the elite. After some discussion, Mr. Braxton made the motion to approve to publicly endorse the LSU Project. Mr. Campbell acknowledged Ms. Turner's comments and seconded. Mr. Braxton called for a roll call vote. Mr. Braxton and Mr. Campbell supported the vote, Ms. Turner opposed. Mr. Landry was then brought back in.
- ❖ **Discussion Item: Public Comment:**
 - Ms. Tram, from St. Anthony Catholic Church, requested the purchase of the land bank property next to her church. As it is earmarked for a grocery store, the board asked staff to work with Ms. Tram and the church to investigate the possibility of leasing it on a short-term basis.
- ❖ **Action Item: Adjournment to Executive Session for discussion of real estate and personal matters**
 - Mr. Landry moved that the board adjourn to Executive Session to discuss real estate transactions. Mr. Campbell made a motion and Ms. Turner seconded. The board adjourned to Executive Session at 11:33 and returned at 11:48, no action was taken.
- ❖ **Action Item: Adjournment**



- Mr. Braxton made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Landry made a motion; Ms. Turner seconded. The meeting adjourned the regular meeting at 11:50 a.m.