



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

Date: Thursday, September 16, 2024

Place: 757 Main Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70817

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Minutes

Attending Board Members: Rodney Braxton, Chairman; Will Campbell, Treasurer; Suzanne Turner, Secretary; Bobby Hamilton (each, a "Commissioner")

Not Attending: Charles Landry, Vice Chair

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; Will Belton; Patricia Norwood

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 10:05 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 August 20, 2024, regular meeting. Ms. Turner made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Campbell seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- Mr. Braxton requested the agenda be amended to add an action item be added under IV B – Board Appointment/ Approval of the Executive Search Committee Members. Ms. Turner made a motion to approve amending the agenda and Mr. Hamilton 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 August 31, 2024. Ms. Robertson reported that August ytd results, revenue and income are in line with expectations, expenses are a little bit less than budget, and there are no concerns. There were no objections.

- ❖ **Discussion Item: Administrative Update/Land Bank**
 - Ms. Siemers informed the board that BBR is currently working on the 2025 budget. She reported a delay in hearing back from the city on the 3 budgets requested because of the St. George issue.
 - Mr. Braxton updated the board on CAFA not giving an extension and his efforts to allow Build Baton Rouge to partner with CAFA on properties involved. Both CAFA and Build Baton Rouge are trying to do something positive with the properties involved.
 - Mr. Jackson gave the board a brief review of an ongoing title issue and the difficulties one of the Community Partners is having acquiring title insurance to purchase a property out of BBR's land bank. The board discussed several possible solutions for Mr. Jackson to explore, including turning the property over to the city for the Community Partner to acquire it through the city's process.
 - Ms. Siemers informed the board that the Florida Corridor Masterplan will be in front of the Metro Council on September 18 and was approved by the Planning Commission on August 19.
 - Ms. Siemers reported that the groundbreaking for Erie Park will be October 1.

- ❖ **Action Item: Approval for staff to work with counsel to enter into a MOU with BRNEDD to implement facade improvement program for Plank Road Grant obligation.**
 - Ms. Siemers reported that Build Baton Rouge is moving forward on facade and street facing improvements plan as part of the JPMorgan Chase Grant, working with Walls and BRNEDD. BRNEDD already has a facade improvement program in the works, we will be working with them to identify properties. They have a 50% match and BBR may help supplement the match. We are looking at painting, window replacement, signage, etc. Mr. Braxton made a motion to approve the staff to work with counsel to enter into a MOU with BRNEDD to implement facade improvement program for Plank Road Grant obligation and Mr. Campbell seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- ❖ **Action Item: Board Appointment/ Approval of the Executive Search Committee Members**
 - Mr. Braxton entertained a motion to approve and appoint the following people for the Executive Search Committee:
 - 1. Ebony Starks, Wilson Foundation
 - 2. Anne Trappey, Forte and Tablada



- 3. Rodney Braxton, Southern Strategy Group, BBR Chair and Executive Search Committee Chair
 - 4. Dante Bidwell - CAO for BR City/Parish
 - 5. Mark Drennan, CEO, Capital Area Finance Authority
 - 6. Suzanne Turner, Community Advocate
 - 7. Carolyn Coleman, City Councilwoman
 - 8. Whitney HoffmanSoyal, DDD Executive Director
- Mr. Hamilton made a motion to approve and appoint the committee for the executive search and Mr. Campbell seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- ❖ **Discussion Item: Audit Recommendation and General Empowering Resolution**
- Ms. Siemers reminded the Board that BBR did not have any official findings on the audit. The auditors did recommend that BBR review certain procedures, one of them being a general empowering resolution that allows for the CEO, Vice President, COO, Board Chair, and Board Vice Chair to enter into contracts up to \$50,000 without Board approval. It also allows the Chairman of the Board to enter into contracts above \$50,000 without board approval. The question is, should we amend our policy in alignment with the auditors' recommendations to require board approval for contracts over \$50,000.00. Since we are not bound to public bid law, we can create our own policies, we just need to follow them. Potentially a real estate contract might need a fast decision.
- Mr. Braxton stated that this is a discussion item to get the Board thinking about this issue and nothing needed to be decided today. Mr. Braxton requested that Ms. Siemers' email the board the travel policy for review, to be discussed at a later date.
- ❖ **New Business**
- No new business
- ❖ **Action Item: Public Comment**
- Members of the public, Will Belton and Patricia Norwood gave a brief presentation to the board regarding their work on the Melrose East Crime Prevention District and their Redevelopment District. They requested that no low-income housing be put in their district. The Board advised them that the project that BBR had in their district was completed two months previous and had been agreed on 5 years ago. BBR no longer controls it.
- ❖ **Action Item: Adjournment to Executive Session for discussion of real estate and personal matters**
- The Board was notified that there was an item to discuss. Mr. Braxton made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for discussion of real estate matters. Ms. Turner made a motion to approve adjournment to Executive Session. Mr. Hamilton seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The Board did adjourn to Executive Session for discussion of real estate matters.



- Once reconvened, Mr. Braxton reported that no action was taken in Executive Session.
- ❖ **Action Item: Adjournment**
 - Mr. Braxton made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Campbell made a motion to adjourn and Ms. Turner seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned the regular meeting at 11:22 a.m.