

VISIT BATON ROUGE

BOARD MINUTES

February 2020

A scheduled board meeting of Visit Baton Rouge was held on Thursday, February 27, 2020 at its office located at 359 Third Street.

Present were:

Scott Michelet
Norman Chenevert
Donna Collins Lewis
Mary Stein
Kim Ginn
Adrienne Moore
Pastor Lee Wesley
Ben Blackwell
Mickey Freiberg

Absent:

Claude Reynaud

Present but not participating in formal actions:

Paul Arrigo, Staff
Lauralyn Maranto, Staff
Jessica Coffing, Staff
Karron Alford, Staff
Geraldine Bordelon, Staff
Chuck Elkins, Legal Counsel
Tim Boone, The Advocate

Paul Arrigo called the meeting to order and opened the meeting for public comment.

Mr. Arrigo reported that an item regarding the 2019 Audit needed to be added to the agenda and needed 2/3 votes to add.

On a motion by Adrienne Moore, seconded by Mary Stein to add the item to the agenda.

Motion carried.

Mr. Arrigo welcomed new board members Kim Ginn and Adrienne Moore.

On a motion by Pastor Wesley, seconded by Kim Ginn to approve the January 23, 2020 minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

Jessica Coffing presented the Treasurer's Report and reviewed January's financial statements.

Paul Arrigo and Department Heads presented the President's Report.

Discussion was held regarding the Visit Baton Rouge's occupancy taxes.

A motion was made by Pastor Wesley, seconded by Ben Blackwell to adopt the following Resolution:

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CONCERNING
THE SENSE OF THE BOARD WITH RESPECT TO DIVERSION OF VBR REVENUES
FEBRUARY 27, 2020**

WHEREAS, it is the express mission of the Visit Baton Rouge ("VBR") to increase visitation to and awareness of the entire Parish of East Baton Rouge (the "Parish"), and to support the travel and tourism industry in such Parish, thereby enhancing the employment and economic impact of such industry.

WHEREAS, the travel and tourism business in East Baton Rouge is a broad, vibrant, and sustainable industry which is responsible for annual visitor spending of approximately one billion dollars and directly employs more than thirteen thousand persons in our Parish.

WHEREAS, pursuant to multiple acts of the Louisiana Legislature, and with the approval expressed by the vote of the people of our Parish, a hotel occupancy tax has been levied by the Board of Directors of VBR (the "Board") on the occupancy of hotel, motel, and overnight camping facilities in the Parish;

WHEREAS, under the Board's guidance and stewardship, such tax revenues are used by VBR to (i) promote the entire Parish statewide, nationally, and internationally as a desirable location to host a business or governmental meeting or to enjoy a leisure visit; (ii) to assist the lodging industry and the parish in competitively winning meeting and event business for facilities in the Parish; and (iii) providing transportation vendors, performing arts facilities, restaurants, and tourist venues and attractions of all kinds with support and assistance with respect to attracting out-of-town visitors.

The point of all of these VBR activities is to increase spending and other economic activity by visitors to our Parish, which in turn leads to additional employment opportunities for the citizens of our parish, more revenues for parish businesses of many types, and additional revenues for municipal and parish governments.

WHEREAS, it is the opinion of the Board that diversion of revenue from VBR to other state or local political entities would splinter, confuse, and substantially lessen VBR's economic

development efforts and effect. Such lesser effort by VBR would, for the Parish as a whole, lessen the employment of Parish citizens by hotels, restaurants, meeting and event venues, and other visitor attractions, and lead to lower revenues and net income for Parish hotels, restaurants, meeting and event venues, other visitor attractions, and local governments.

WHEREAS, it is the opinion of the Board that diversion of VBR's revenue may adversely affect VBR's financial and material support to the Baton Rouge Film Commission, the Baton Rouge Area Sports Foundation, and the Baton Rouge River Center.

WHEREAS, such diversion of revenue may adversely affect and impair VBR's ability to repay its long-term debts including its debt to the City of Baton Rouge relating to the acquisition and renovation of its office in East Baton Rouge Parish.

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors believes that expressing the sense of the Board concerning the effects on its governmental mission of any re-direction or diversion of VBR's lawfully authorized, levied, and voter-approved tax revenues to any other state or local political entity is proper and wholly consistent with VBR's governmental mission and its legal duty.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that based upon the above, it is the unanimous and unqualified sense of the Board of Directors of Visit Baton Rouge that any occurrence or action which would divert, redirect, or otherwise deprive VBR of its legally authorized, levied, and voter-approved tax revenues would be substantially detrimental to Parish-wide employment in the travel and tourism industry (including the restaurant industry), to overall Parish economic activity and development, and more specifically to the positive economic impact of the travel and tourism industry in the entirety of East Baton Rouge Parish.

Motion carried.

Discussion was held regarding audit engagement of Postlethwaite & Netterville to conduct the 2019 Audit. On a motion by Norman Chenevert, seconded by Kim Ginn to adopt the following Resolution:

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CONCERNING APPROVAL OF
VBR'S 2020 LOUISIANA COMPLIANCE QUESTIONNAIRE
FEBRUARY 27, 2020**

WHEREAS, as part of its 2020 financial audit, the Louisiana Legislative Auditor has requested VBR to prepare the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire (the "Questionnaire") attached to this resolution.

WHEREAS, the Questionnaire requests that certain VBR officers certify to VBR's auditors and the Louisiana Legislative Auditors certain facts about VBR, its legal status, and its compliance with various legal and contractual requirements.

WHEREAS, the Questionnaire has been prepared and reviewed by VBR professional staff, then signed by the VBR President & CEO and the VBR Secretary/Treasurer certifying such Questionnaire as true and correct to the best of such officers' knowledge and belief.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that based in large part upon its high opinion of the professionalism, reputation for truthfulness, and the unquestioned integrity of the staff and officers of VBR, the Board of Directors of Visit Baton Rouge unanimously and without reservation state, that to the best of its knowledge and belief, that the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire and the data and information disclosed therein are true and correct in all material respects as of the date of this resolution.

Motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.