

**ST. TAMMANY PARISH TOURIST & CONVENTION COMMISSION  
REGULAR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 10, 2024**

The **Regular Board Meeting** was held on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at the Holiday Inn Covington, 45 Louis Prima Drive, Covington, LA 70433.

Chair Marlaine Peachey called the Regular meeting to order directly following the Public Hearing on the Proposed Budget. She gave the **Invocation** and led the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

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COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Marlaine Peachey  
Patti Elish  
Alex Carollo  
Barry Bagert  
Katherine Dominique  
Mark Myers  
Lacey Osborne

COMMISSIONERS

EXCUSED  
Melissa Ruddick

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

*A quorum was present.*

OTHERS PRESENT

Donna O'Daniels, President/CEO  
Devan Richoux, Chief Financial Officer  
Katie Guasco, Chief Marketing Officer  
Tanya Leader, VP of Sales & Service  
Nicole Davis, Communications Manager  
Roberta Carrow-Jackson, MC Manager

Thomas Huval, Commission Counsel  
Kadee Krieger, St. Tammany Farmer

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**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Marlaine Peachey asked if anyone had anything to change or add to the agenda.  
Alex Carollo made **a motion** to approve the agenda as is and Mark Myers seconded.  
***The motion carried.***

## OLD BUSINESS

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A **motion** to approve October 29, 2024, Regular Board Meeting minutes was made by Barry Bagert. Mark Myers seconded, and ***the motion carried.***

### FINANCIAL REPORT

Devan Richoux presented the Financial Report for October & November 2024. Barry Bagert made a **motion** to approve the Financial Report. Katherine Dominique seconded, and ***the motion carried.***

### STAFF REPORT

Donna welcomed Nicole Davis to the team.

Katie Guasco presented the Marketing and Communications department report:

In 2024:

- VTN allocated \$1.3 million towards marketing and communications, with \$650k specifically for advertising.
- VTN achieved measurable growth engagement with year-over-year device increase from 14.6% to 15.5%.
- Awareness of VTN ads rose, with 50% of respondents in key markets recognizing the campaign (a 4% increase).
- Repeat visitation grew by 7%, surpassing competitors in Baton Rouge and Lafayette.

Visit The Northshore used paid, earned, shared, and owned media to build an audience and drive conversions.

This model includes awareness, consideration, conversion, retention, and advocacy. Depending on the target, VTN could be meeting them at any point in the model.

The Shore to Be Campaign is still doing well – all social media reaches have grown.

The Taylor Swift spin-off numbers are in: Total visitor spending rose by 39%, restaurant spending rose by 196%, hotel occupancy was up 17%, ADR was up 60% and lastly RevPar was up 88%.

Next up is the Superbowl – digital strategies and out-of-home strategies are being targeted towards sport fans for the big game.

## STAFF REPORT (CONTINUED)

Social media, blogs, and e-newsletters continue to do well. Christy Paulsell is working on creating blogs about accessibility. VTN also now has an ongoing seasonal fishing article series by Keith Lusher.

Community relations committee update: murals continue to progress. Covington mural is to begin this week. Abita is also set to begin soon. Mandeville is still selecting an artist, and Madisonville is still working on a new site since the Ugly Dog Coastal Kitchen is being sold.

### Continuing education:

- Sarah attended the Louisiana Culinary Trails event in Denver, CO.
- Katie attended the DI Advocacy Summit.
- Nicole attended the LTLA class and presented her final group project in December.
- Sarah joined the Leadership Northshore board.
- Roberta attended the Destinations International Social Inclusion Summit in Spokane, WA.

### Tanya Leader presented the Sales & Services department report:

Tanya presented the Leads & Service Requests from October/November. These are all estimates because this is foreshadowing.

### Meetings and conferences:

- National Coalition of Black Meeting Professionals
- SGMP JLM committee meeting
- SGMP National board meeting
- LSAE Board meeting
- Here Comes the Bride expo

### Northshore Meetings & Sponsorships:

- Louisiana Realtors Association 3-day meeting, 20 attendees & 26 room nights
- Louisiana Notary Association monthly meeting, over 20 attendees
- 2025 Bidy Basketball tournaments to be played at Pelican Park and Coquille at the end of March 2025
- Culture Campout- a multi-cultural event taking place at FSP from January 17-19, 2025

Visit The Northshore hosted sales missions to New York and Florida with our partners from Visit Baton Rouge, Visit St. Francisville, and Tourism Tactics by Tico.

Visit the Northshore attended Travel South International and had a full book of appointments (40) with interested Tour Operators and Receptive Operators. This was in partnership with VBR.

## STAFF REPORT (CONTINUED)

DEI Committee: Zondra and Roberta attended the Destination International Social Inclusion Summit.

Industry Relations Committee: Shore & Tell University applications have been accepted and reviewed. The 2025 Class will be announced in early January.

## BUILDING UPDATE

Bathrooms are waiting for blue grout to match tiled floor. Once the bathrooms are finished, substantial completion should be obtained soon after. Furniture has been installed and delivered.

## NEW BUSINESS

### RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE AMENDED BUDGET FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2024

Alex Carollo read the resolution aloud. It was noted by Devan Richoux that the advertisement of this public in the Farmer had an error in the expenditure line but the one presented is correct. Mark Myers made a **motion** to adopt the resolution. Barry Bagert seconded, and ***the motion carried.***

### RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE BUDGET FOR YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2025

Mark Myers read the resolution aloud. Barry Bagert made a **motion** to adopt the resolution. Mark Myers seconded, and ***the motion carried.***

### PROPOSED MEETING DATES FOR THE 2025 CALENDAR YEAR

Marlaine Peachey read the dates aloud. Alex Carollo made a **motion** to adopt the resolution. Barry Bagert seconded, and ***the motion carried.***

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2025

Marlaine made a **motion** to nominate Patti Ellish for Chairman, Alex Carollo seconded, and ***the motion carried.*** Marlaine made a **motion** to nominated Alex Carollo for Vice Chairman, Barry Bagert seconded, and ***the motion carried.*** Barry Bagert made a **motion** to nominate Melissa Ruddick for Treasurer, Mark Myers seconded, and ***the motion carried.***

## COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

-Barry Bagert inquired if VTN received any tax revenue from Airbnbs. Donna said yes. However, if it's not booked through Airbnb (such as VRBO), we do not get any revenue from that at this time.

-Mark Myers stated that the Harbor Center is still in negotiations with a developer for a possible hotel addition.

## GUEST COMMENTS

Devan Richoux reminded the commissioners about Sexual Harassment and Ethics trainings which are due by Dec 31.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, beginning at 2:00 PM at the Harbor Center in Slidell.

ADJOURN

Barry Bagert made a **motion** to adjourn, and Mark Myers seconded. ***The motion carried*** and the meeting adjourned.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

  
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DEVAN RICHOUX, CFO

  
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PATTI ELLISH, CHAIRMAN