

**St. Tammany Parish Development District
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes | May 15, 2025**

Present: President Joan Coffman, Sandy Badinger, Sean Burkes, Elder Brown III, Mimi Dossett, Ross Lagarde, Paul Myers, IV, Louis Ochoa, Eric Schouest, Eric Singletary, Dr. William Wainwright

Absent: None

Staff: Chris Masingill, Timothy Billiot, Kyle Buckley, Vincenzo Caronna, Sharon DeLong, Kristin Durand, Keith Espadron, Ashley Llewellyn, Kate Moore, Fellow Joey Cooney

Counsel: Joe Chautin | Hardy Carey Chautin & Balkin

Guests: Amy Thibodeaux | Cleco

President Coffman called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. Quorum was met with Commissioners present. As we celebrate Economic Development Week, Coffman extended gratitude toward Chris Masingill and the team for their efforts. She announced the St. Tammany Parish Council adopted a resolution acknowledging and recognizing Economic Development week during their May meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – No public comment on any agenda item.

CONSENT AGENDA

With no modifications, the Consent Agenda, which consisted of the March BOC Meeting Minutes, March Finance Committee Meeting Minutes, April BOC General Discussion Minutes, and Financial Statements for all accounts, was *approved on a motion by Ross Lagarde, seconded by Sandy Badinger. All were in favor. Motion carried.*

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

Colliers Strategy & Consulting, Inc | Northshore Square Mall Development Study

Masingill stated as part of STEDC's service through a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the City of Slidell, STEDC will function as the fiscal agent and provide project management services for the Colliers development study of the Northshore Square Mall. While the accounting for the \$109K cost for study will be managed through STEDC, there will be no cost to the District. *Dr. William Wainwright, seconded by Elder Brown, motioned to approve STEDC's involvement in acting as fiscal agent and project manager for this initiative. All were in favor. Motion carried.*

THRIVE 2029 – Final approval

Masingill stated a strategy session and plan highlights were introduced in April, and the feedback on the mission and vision statements have been incorporated into the final plan. Llewellyn explained updates to existing industries in the targeted industry sections and the addendums. Cover letters from President Coffman and Chris Masingill will be added. By July, a one-page report describing THRIVE2029 key focus areas will be published. An implementation tracking document will be developed and the Board will be provided quarterly implementation updates and progress reports. *Paul Myers, seconded by Eric Schouest, motioned to approve the THRIVE 2029 strategic plan. All were in favor. Motion carried.*

Request for Proposal-CPA Firm

Finance Committee Chair, Paul Myers, stated that a Request for Proposal (RFP) for CPA firms was emailed out to approved vendors by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor and posted to the STEDC website on April 1, 2025, with a submission date of April 30, 2025. Two responses to the RFP were received. A memo outlining the comparison in pricing was included in the board packet, which showed a price difference of \$12,000 in annual costs between the two firms. The least expensive proposal was submitted

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Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes | May 15, 2025**

by the firm that currently conducts the independent and LLA audits, as well as monthly reviews of the books. Having done our due diligence, Myers recommended selecting that same firm for a twelve-month period and then submitting another RFP for auditing FY 25/26 fiscal year. *Elder Brown, seconded by Louis Ochoa, motioned to approve Griffin & Furman, LLC to conduct the FY 24/25 independent and LLA audits. All were in favor. Motion carried.*

EXECUTIVE UPDATE

Administrative Update

Masingill shared two staff promotions: Kyle Buckley now serving as Coordinator of Project Finance and Compliance; and Keith Espadron serving as Director of Business and Industry Development.

With staff completing the internal work on the FY 24/25 budget amendment, as well as the FY 25/26 budget, the Finance Committee will review these budgets at their scheduled June 17 meeting. The Board will receive the proposed FY 24/25 budget amendment and the draft FY 25/26 budget prior to the June Board meeting.

Strategic Initiatives

Northshore Healthscape

Llewellyn shared insights from Northshore Technical Community College's Inaugural RN-ASN Pinning Ceremony held on the evening on May 14. The first cohort included 18 graduates and NTCC currently has four additional cohorts progressing through the curriculum. The Nexus Award was presented to Northshore Healthscape for its continued steadfast support of nursing education and its commitment to regional collaboration. Representatives from each Northshore Healthscape steering committee organization were present at the inaugural event. President Coffman commended Llewellyn on her leadership in this initiative.

Governmental Partners Update

Legislative Action

Inventory Tax | Masingill noted the legislation on the inventory tax is collecting positive momentum and cited the Folgers in St. Tammany Parish as an example of the impact of this tax. He stated the Parish Council and Parish Administration have confirmed their alignment in support of a positive legislative outcome.

Fourth Penny | Masingill reported that he and Donna O'Daniels have worked together on the bill that would add an additional cent to the local portion of the Hotel Motel Tax. A portion of that additional penny will be utilized by STEDC to support business marketing and attraction efforts, and the distribution of funds is codified within the legislation.

Statute Modifications | Masingill shared that the bill updates the statute governing our local St. Tammany economic development organization through a few administrative modifications and technical changes. The proposed language clarifies the titles of board leadership, staff leadership, and organizational trade name to align with industry best practices. The legislation also updates the Nominating Committee and board member selection process. The legislation will now move to the House of Representatives for final approval.

**St. Tammany Parish Development District
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes | May 15, 2025**

Parish Wide Housing Assessment – Masingill shared that Kate Moore is serving as STEDC’s project manager working with Councilwoman Kathy Seiden and the administration on the parish-wide housing assessment and market analysis.

**Economic Development Update
Announcements**

- Economic Development Week is this week – May 12 – 16, 2025
- Agile Cold Storage Grand Opening will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 22, 2025. A tour of the freezer section is on the agenda, so attendees are encouraged to bring a winter coat for the tour.
- Tier 2.1 Personal Financial Disclosures were due by 12 p.m. today, May 15

General Update

Masingill reported that Gulf South Commerce Park continues to engage in multiple prospect related activities with potential projects in final stages of review.

STartUP Northshore

Masingill reported the Southeastern Louisiana University SBDC reaffirmed its commitment to align its programmatic and technical assistance services with STEDC through a renewed memorandum of understanding.

Vincenzo Caronna stated that STartUP Northshore has a new strategic partnership with Founder Institute - Louisiana. Through this collaboration, STartUP Northshore will serve as the exclusive economic development and entrepreneurial support organization partner for the Northshore region, supporting early-stage founders across St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Washington Parishes. This partnership enables Founder Institute - Louisiana to run two Fi-Core accelerator programs in the region over the next year. These intensive, three-month programs combine structured startup sprints with expert mentorship and investor feedback to help founders validate their ideas, build scalable companies, and prepare for future investment.

Paul Myers acknowledged Kate Moore for her participation in a panel at the University of New Orleans Northshore Real Estate Seminar earlier in the month.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Personnel

The group entered the Executive Session at 4:05 p.m. on a motion by Dr. William Wainwright, seconded by Ross Lagarde. Ashley Llewellyn took a roll call vote. Dr. William Wainwright departed at 4:28 p.m. Executive session concluded at 4:50 p.m.

President Coffman acknowledged that CEO Chris Masingill presented his official notice that he would be transitioning from his current role as CEO on August 22, 2025 to assume to President and CEO role at Louisiana Central (Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance) one of the eight regional economic development organizations in the state. Masingill noted that he will initiate the organization’s continuity and transition plan at the Board’s direction and facilitate the necessary steps to establish a national search for his replacement. President Coffman also communicated that a formal Board search committee will be established as laid out in the District by-laws and called on all interested board members interested in serving to convey their willingness to serve.

**St. Tammany Parish Development District
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes | May 15, 2025**

ADJOURN – With no further business, *Mimi Dossett*, seconded by *Louis Ochoa*, motioned to adjourn. All were in favor. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 5:35 p.m.

Minutes reviewed and submitted by the STEDC Staff.