

**St. Tammany Parish Development District
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Minutes | February 20, 2025**

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

Absent: Eric Schouest

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

Counsel: Mark Balkin | Hardy Carey Chautin & Balkin

Guests: Parish President, Mike Cooper; Councilman Joe Impastato; Councilman Jeff Corbin; Kathleen Wilkins, small business advocate

President Coffman called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. Sharon DeLong conducted roll call to establish a quorum. Coffman welcomed new staff member Kristin Durand, Director of Communications & Public Information Officer for the organization.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No public comment on any agenda item.

CONSENT AGENDA

With no modifications, the Consent Agenda, which consisted of the January BOC Meeting Minutes, and Financial Statements for all accounts, was approved on a motion by Dr. *William Wainwright*, seconded by *Ross Lagarde*. All were in favor. Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS

Sales Tax District #3 Rededication and Extension

Parish President Copper provided a brief history and an overview of the St. Tammany Parish Extension and Rededication of the District 3 Sales Tax which is on the March 29, 2025 ballot. He expressed that this is not a new tax or a tax increase. The extension and rededication will fully fund major traffic and drainage improvements as well as the District Attorney and public safety agencies. Revenues generated from the rededication and extension of the sales tax will go towards maintaining public infrastructure, including roadways and drainage facilities—ensuring the public health, safety, and welfare of Parish residents through the year 2056.

Councilman Impastato reiterated the importance of public safety to economic development. President Cooper and Councilman Impastato fielded questions from the Board. With no further questions, *Masingill read the resolution into the record. The resolution was approved on a motion by Sean Burkes, seconded by Ross Lagarde. A roll call vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted to approve the resolution supporting the rededication and extension of the District #3 sales tax. Motion carried.*

Library Millage Continuation

Councilman Cobrin provided a concise overview of the St. Tammany Parish Library Millage Renewal. The St. Tammany Parish Library receives 96% of its funding through a dedicated millage, which officially expired December 31, 2024. In 2024, St. Tammany Parish Library system – which consists of twelve locations throughout the Parish – boasted over 600,000 visitors, 1M+ items checked out, nearly 170,000 Wi-Fi users, and more than 4,000 community events. This millage continuation will guarantee this essential public service is properly funded and maintained, furthering the reputation of St. Tammany as a first-class community. Corbin fielded questions from the Board. With no further questions, *Masingill read the resolution into the record. The resolution was approved on a motion by Louis Ochoa, seconded by Mimi Dossett.*

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As the economic development entity for St. Tammany Parish, Masingill thanked President Cooper, Councilman Impastato, and Councilman Corbin for their continued engagement and collaboration.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS- None

EXECUTIVE UPDATE

Business Attraction & Marketing Plan

Masingill shared that our newly launched business attraction and marketing plan implementation is receiving broad-based attention and positive feedback. On February 3, we rolled out the new business development focused landing page www.investsttammany.com/business which includes our first economic development video. Concurrently, targeted print and digital ads were featured on nola.com, The Times-Picayune, The Advocate, and Gambit demonstrating STEDC's proactive approach in business recruitment and expansion. These efforts were focused on the big game as a test run for a larger campaign in the future. These preliminary engagements yielded over 300K impressions on the website and over 500 clicks exploring the additional website enhancements.

Since 2018, the terms *relationships*, *relevance*, and *results* were used to guide our strategic priorities. While keeping those elements in mind, our additional operating principles are **sustaining** business retention and expansion efforts; **scaling** business formation and collaborative partnerships and **securing** investments that enhance the economic landscape.

The first draft of the new 3-year strategic plan has been received and is currently under review by the staff leadership. Our goal is to have the plan ready for adoption at the April board meeting.

Masingill attended the first review of the statewide economic development plan (LEDP) and noted the intent to align the local and regional plans to demonstrate how the local, regional, and state entities are all working together to advance economic opportunity in Louisiana.

Strategic Initiatives

STartUp Northshore

Vincenzo Caronna reported on the renewal of the 2-year contract with The Idea Village, extending our partnership in facilitating the IDEAINstitute Northshore 10-week accelerator cohorts through 2026.

For the third year in a row, we are bringing the New Orleans Entrepreneurship Week Experience (NOWE) to the Northshore. Join us on Monday, March 24 for the "Scaling Louisiana Masterclass". In partnership with Arena Collective, STartUp Northshore will host the half-day learning intensive at The Greenwood in Covington from 12:30 – 7 p.m. Masingill noted the opportunity for five \$1,000 sponsorships are available to anyone interested in supporting this initiative.

Workforce and Talent

BESE Bridging Success Northshore Event

Ashley Llewellyn noted that education, industry and government leaders recently gathered at Fontainebleau High School for a half-day of presentations, panels, and tours focused on the relevance of the high school experience, that value of industry-based credentials, and the success of paid student internship program.

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Llewellyn, alongside Melissa Strata-Burger gave a presentation about the collective efforts to advance pathways to prosperity through our Workforce Roundtable. Caronna highlighted the partnership with STPPS through the Junior Achievement Trust Your Crazy Ideas pitch competition featuring De-Bolt, the student founded business that will compete regionally at New Orleans Entrepreneurship Week (NOEW) next month.

Llewellyn stated that, along with celebrating its centennial anniversary, Southeastern Louisiana University achieved record enrollment this spring semester.

Gulf South Commerce Park

Masingill proudly reported that construction of the water tower is complete. This marks a major milestone at the park by securing water capacity for future tenants and bolstering business attraction efforts.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – ORGANIZATIONAL BENCHMARKS

Sandy Badinger, seconded by Elder Brown, motioned to move the meeting into Executive Session. *A roll call vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.*

Sandy Badinger, seconded by Paul Myers, motioned to conclude Executive Session. *All Commissioners present voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.*

Elder Brown, seconded by Paul Myers, motioned to approve and adopt the Organizational Benchmarks as presented. *All Commissioners present voted to approve the motion. Motion carried.*

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m. on a motion by Mimi Dossett and seconded by Eric Singletary. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes reviewed and submitted by the STC Staff.