



## LOUISIANA PUBLIC DEFENDER BOARD

Thursday, May 19, 2022 – 2:00 p.m.  
Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors  
600 North Street  
Baton Rouge, LA

### Minutes

1. **Call to Order and Comments, Chairman Michael C. Ginart, Jr.** A meeting of the Louisiana Public Defender Board, pursuant to lawful notice, was called to order by its Chairman Michael C. Ginart on Thursday, May 19, 2022, at approximately 2:25 p.m.

The following Board members were present<sup>1</sup>:

Flozell Daniels	Pat Fanning	Michael Ginart
Frank Holthaus	Holly Howat	Lyn Lawrence
Donald North	Allyson Melancon	Frank Thaxton

The following Board member was absent:

Zita Andrus

The following members of the Board's staff were present:

Rémy Voisin Starns, State Public Defender  
Barbara Baier, General Counsel  
Anne Gwin, Executive Assistant  
Michael Mitchell, Trial Level Compliance Officer

Chairman Ginart recognized new Board Member, Honorable Frank H. Thaxton, III (Ret.) and welcomed guest Senator Regina Barrow (District 15/Baton Rouge).

2. **Adoption of the Agenda.** Mr. Pat Fanning moved to adopt the agenda. Mr. Lyn Lawrence seconded the motion which passed unopposed.

3. **Public Comment.** Mr. Ginart indicated public comment would be held after Executive Session.

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<sup>1</sup> Board member Frank Thaxton is newly appointed by Supreme Court Chief Justice John Weimer replacing Cindy Woodard who resigned effective 4/22/22. There remains one vacancy as a result of Ross Foote's resignation effective 3/31/22.

4. **Executive Session<sup>2</sup>.** Ms. Allyson Melancon moved to go into Executive Session, Mr. Lawrence seconded the motion which passed unopposed. Mr. Flozell Daniels moved to leave Executive Session. Professor Donald North seconded the motion which passed unopposed.

5. **District 19 – District Defender\*.** The board took no action; however, Chairman Ginart indicated the Board would provide a written report on this issue at the appropriate time.

6. **Interim District Defender Appointments\*.**

b. District 40 (St. John the Baptist Parish) State Public Defender Starns reported he has spoken with District 29 (St. Charles Parish) District Defender Fenwick (Fen) Swann regarding the Interim position in District 40 (St. John the Baptist Parish) and Mr. Swann has accepted. He indicated that Ms. Fontella Baker in District 40 has assumed a leadership role in that district assisting District Defender Richard Strick until his formal departure from the position in June. Mr. Daniels moved to adopt the recommendation and appoint Mr. Swann as interim in District 40 (St. John the Baptist Parish). Professor North seconded the motion. There was no opposition.

a. District 15 (Acadia, Lafayette and Vermilion Parishes). Mr. Starns reported that Mr. G. Paul Marx has indicated he will not renew his contract for FY23 and that the process to form the Selection Committee in that district has begun. He indicated Mr. Marx has agreed to stay on pending selection of a permanent replacement. Professor North moved to adopt the recommendation. Mr. Lawrence seconded the motion which passed unopposed.

7. **Authority to Disburse FY22 O-Level Funds\*.** Mr. Starns reported that, in addition to the remaining \$1.622M in DAF, staff has begun the annual budget review for unused monies. Mr. Daniels asked for clarification on the cancellation of contracts presented in the materials. Mr. Starns reported that the three Expert Witness Fund and the Justice Works contracts were cancelled for the remaining two months of this fiscal year resulting in approximately \$255,000<sup>3</sup> for reallocation to the districts. He clarified that the Expert Witness Fund contracts are non-operational contracts and will be re-funded July 1 (FY23). Mr. Daniels requested that a Budget Committee meeting be held prior to the Board meeting on June 23. Mr. Fanning asked for clarification on Mr. Starns' request. Mr. Starns stated that he is requesting the authority to disburse the \$255,000 of scrubbed funds prior to the June meeting, if necessary. Professor North moved that the Board grant the State Public Defender the requested authority. Mr. Frank Holthaus seconded the motion which passed unopposed.

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<sup>2</sup> The Board may vote to go into executive session pursuant to La. R.S. 42:16 and 42:17 (formerly La. R.S. 42:6 and 42:6.1), by a two-thirds vote of the members present. The executive session is limited to matters allowed to be exempted from public discussion pursuant to La. R.S. 42:17, including character and professional competence of a person; provided, however, such person(s) may require that such discussion be held at an open meeting pursuant to La. R.S. 42:17(A)(1). No final or binding action will be taken during executive session. The board will discuss District 19 (EBR Parish) District Defender Lisa Parker.

<sup>3</sup> \$180,000 in unused Expert Witness Funds (IP-NO and CPCPL) and \$75,000 from Justice Works.

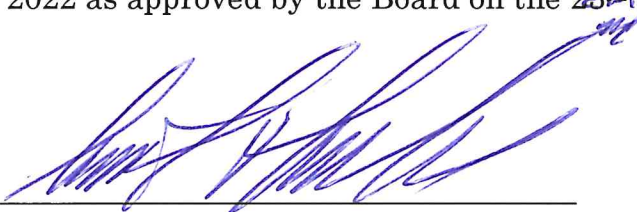
Professor North indicated that a Budget Committee would be set in the near future and urged his committee members to attend. Chairman Ginart asked Judge Thaxton if he would serve on the Budget Committee. Judge Thaxton agreed. Mr. Ginart asked that dates be sent out to the Committee.

Mr. Ginart indicated resolutions commending Board member Ross Foot and District Defenders Richard Stricks and Paul Marx for their service to public defense would be presented at the June 23 meeting.

8. Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for June 23, 2022, at 1:30 pm at the Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors, 600 North Street in Baton Rouge.

9. Adjournment. Mr. Lawrence moved to adjourn. Mr. Holthaus seconded the motion which passed unopposed.

I **HEREBY CERTIFY** that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct account of the proceedings of the meeting of Louisiana Public Defender Board meeting held on the 19th day of May, 2022 as approved by the Board on the ~~29th~~ day of June 2022.



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MICHAEL C. GINART, JR., CHAIRMAN