

Louisiana Tourism Promotion District (LTPD) Board of Director Meeting
September 15, 2022 | 10:30 am
New Orleans Jazz Museum

Minutes

Call to Order: Chair Carla Tate called the meeting to order at 10:28 am

Roll Call: Emily Brooks called roll. There were three members present and a quorum.

Present: Carla Tate, Ralph Ney and Angela LaFleur

Absent: Mark Romig and Mark Latter

Approval of Minutes – Chair Tate called for approval of the minutes from the last meeting. Ralph Ney moved, seconded by Angela LaFleur. Vote carried and the minutes were approved.

Jeff Harlan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Louisiana Office of Tourism thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Harlan brought Louisiana Office of Tourism Update Books for the LTPD Board members in addition to International Market Updates, which were distributed at Summit. Harlan explained that LOT brought in representatives and tour operators from six International markets in to show them around the state and allow them a chance to meet one-on-one with Louisiana destinations.

Harlan pointed out that LOT has the “Louisiana Tourism Industry” Facebook Group, which will allow our office to highlight what we’ve been working on in the state and better allow partners to connect with our office and International representatives

Last year, LOT had \$17 million in ARPA funds, which were earmarked for marketing, advertising, special projects and other tourism initiatives. These funds were non-recurred in our current budget; therefore, LOT will be seeking a vote from the board to request \$15 million in LTPD funds for FY ‘23.

Harlan explained that the LOT is funded with fees and self-generated revenues derived from the Louisiana Tourism Promotion District and our standard budget mechanism is stable. The Revenue Estimating Committee (REC) prepares and publishes estimates of collections to be recognized for the current and following years for all state operating funds. Harlan gave a brief overview of the budget, district tax collections, and interagency funds over previous years.

He noted that Grants for Festivals and Events have significantly increased, especially this year with the new Festival and Events Recovery Grants program that has temporarily taken the place of the Competitive Grant Program. LOT has awarded ~\$435,000 in FERG grants through December. Additionally in FYs 22 and 23, LOT has provided a 100% match to Cooperative Marketing Program participants, which has aided in CVB recovery from the pandemic, hurricanes, etc.

It was noted that some elements of the FERG program will remain in place when it switches back to the CGP. Harlan clarified that the grants will not change, the match allocations will just be adjusted.

Harlan then brought up the two items on which the district will be voting. First would be the 2023-2024 operating budget and the other would be an additional \$15M from the LTPD funds for the 2022-2023 operating budget.

On behalf of the LOT, Harlan requested a \$29.1 million budget approval based on the REC forecast, which is estimated conservatively. The changes in our budget from the current year to the requested year are primarily due to fluctuations in retirement rates and employee performance adjustments. Any additional funding over the current year is allocated to advertising. Ney asked about the section called "Other Charges" under "Professional Services," which had decreased by \$4,570,000. Harlan explained that the decrease there is due to the \$4 million that is subject to appropriation by the legislature; the \$500K is for the administration of the Major Events Incentive Fund that may or may not be funded; and the \$70K birding trail grant that will be completed in the current fiscal year. LOT was also granted an additional position to oversee the Major Events Incentive Fund.

Chair Tate called for a motion to approve the budget request as presented. Ney moved, seconded by LaFleur. Vote carried and the budget was approved.

Harlan also brought forth a request to approve \$15 million to go towards additional initiatives and activities for the LOT including but not limited to the African American Heritage Trail Relaunch, Macy's and Rose Parade continuation, City Activations around the US and FAMs around major events in Louisiana to help promote the area.

Ney asked how much is currently in the fund, Harlan replied that there is approximately 21 million in the fund so if this \$15M is approved that would leave around \$6M. He went on to say it's good to have a bit of a budget buffer.

LaFleur asked if there was an opportunity to have the Macy's and Rose floats go around the state and was told no due to restrictions on the floats by the parade organizers or the floats themselves. Vito Zuppardo noted that the small Rose Parade Float model can possibly travel around with the Lt. Governor.

Chair Tate called for a motion to approve the \$15 million request to the legislature. Ney moved, seconded by LaFleur. Vote carried and the \$15 million request for the legislature was approved.

Emily Brooks reminded the Board about the LOT Industry Portal on www.LouisianaTravel.com/Industry and the resources available to them there.

Chair Tate thanked everyone for attending. She called for a motion to adjourn. LaFleur motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ney. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:29 am.