



**BioDistrict New Orleans  
Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes  
September 3, 2025 | 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Location: Greater New Orleans Foundation, 919 St. Charles Ave, New Orleans, LA 70130**

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**I Call to Order**

The BioDistrict Board Meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Andy Kopplin, at 2:39 pm.

**II Board Member Roll Call**

Commissioners Present: Kaneisha Akinpelumi, Blake Stanfill, Emily Arata, Charlotte Parent, Andy Kopplin, Nicole Honoree, Gregorie Tillery, Josh Fleig, Arnel Cosey

Commissioners Present via Zoom: None

Commissioners Absent: Larissa Littleton-Steib, Michael Hecht, Lowry Curley, Judith Dangerfield, Patrick Norton

Quorum: Present

**III Introduction of Guest(s)**

Andreas Pashos (Consultant to BioDistrict), Sharonda Williams (Counsel to BioDistrict), Tyler Correa (DDD), Kris Khalil (NOBIC), Mary Mysing-Gubala (MCNO), Richard McCall (CenTrio), Evie Poitevent (GNO Inc)

**IV Adoption of Previous Board Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Kopplin requested the approval of the minutes from the previous BioDistrict board meeting on May 14, 2025. Charlotte Parent motioned for approval, and Arnel Cosey seconded. There was no discussion or public comment and the motion was unanimously approved.

**V Financial Report**

Mr. Kopplin asked Mr. Pashos to review the financial report with the board. Mr. Pashos displayed the report on the screen and explained that the left hand side shows the balance sheet. The district has one bank account that holds all our funds. It currently has a little under \$45,000. On the right hand is the profit & loss for the whole year from January to end July. At

the top is seen the payment received from the City in January for about \$391,000. We have not received any further city funds. Looking below at expenses there are administrative and financial management service fees, NDO insurance, USPS box, legal fees and QuickBooks software costs. Other expenses include the Ujamma sponsorship from earlier in the year for \$2,000 and the landscape enhancements for about \$295,000 which were part of the CEA with the Downtown Development District (DDD). In July the only new expenses were the administrative and financial services and the quickbooks membership.

The second page is financial tracking and forecasting vs our City budget. It tracks City specific funds and expenses. It is the budget that was approved by City Council in 2024 for 2025.

Mr. Kopplin added that we haven't used much of our budget, and the main reason is that the City hasn't sent the next payment. Once City payments are received, we are then eligible for a State match. Mr. Kopplin summarized that the process to received the State match includes approval from LED, and financial validation from the Department of Revenue.

Mr. Kopplin highlighted that the City and State payments should eventually be automatic in quarterly installments. Because these funds are newer, they haven't yet been implemented in the usual process. He communicated that he spoke with Jeff Schwartz this morning regarding this matter, including validating banking information, and there don't seem to be any roadblocks, and the process is moving.

The district did approve a \$90,000 CEA with Groundwork New Orleans and the first payment of about \$15,000 will be withdrawn tomorrow. If we don't get further funds we won't be able to pay that whole agreement.

Ms. Parent asked if the City payments are meant to be automatic quarterly and Mr. Kopplin assured that was indeed the case. We won't receive the 2026 funds until we go through the budget process with the Council in November, but we're still waiting for funds from 2024 and 2025.

Mr. Kopplin mentioned that most of these funds are uncommitted to specific contracts.

Mr. Pashos picked up on the financial report at the last page, which is the budget that was approved for the State funds by the board.

Mr. Kopplin summarized that State money is limited to public infrastructure.

Mr. Kopplin communicated that last year the City Council was presented with a budget for 2024 through 2026, so we are now presenting the same one this year for 2026. It was mentioned that what the City approved are the higher level budget line items of administration, advertising and program services. Within those categories the board can still move funds around as needed. He also mentioned that BioDistrict money that is not spent, doesn't go away, it remains in the district's account.

## **VI Chair's Report / Action Items**

- a. **Authorization for Chair to renew 6 month contract with AAAM LLC for \$7,500 per month to continue to provide administrative and financial management support**

Mr. Kopplin summarized that when the New Orleans Business Alliance (NOLABA) shut down in January the district contracted with Mr. Pashos for support in logistics, accounting, programming and he has done that well for about the last six months. Initially it was a six month contract because we were unsure about next steps, and Mr. Kopplin recommended the agreement be extended another six months because Mr. Pashos is doing an excellent job and basically providing the role NOLABA was going to provide. Mr. Kopplin said he would entertain any discussion, but the idea is another six months at the same rate. Charlotte Parent motioned for approval, and Nicole Honoree and Gregorie Tillery seconded. There was no discussion or public comment and the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Kopplin thanked the board and Mr. Pashos.

## **VII Chair's Report / Discussion Items**

- a. **Update on City Funds**

- i. **Andreas Pashos is working with multiple City departments to finalize the 2025 Q1, Q2 and 2024 balance payments**

Mr. Kopplin reiterated what was said earlier in the meeting that a City payment is imminent.

- b. **Update on State Funds**

- i. **District is working to submit the annual budget and annual plan requirements for LED review and approval before receiving state funds**

This was not pursued until the full 2024 City payment is received, so that we can communicate to the State the amount that needs to be matched. This way will ask State to match the full 2024 amount when that time comes.

- c. **Update on Groundwork New Orleans Tree Planting Project on Tulane Avenue (No planting yet, permitting/documentation approval begins in September)**

Mr. Pashos met with Mr. Todd Reynolds from Groundwork and communicated that the stage of the program right now is focused on design and permitting. The tree plantings on Tulane Ave are going to be bounded by highway I-10, so from Claiborne to Carrollton, both sides of Tulane Ave. The project includes different types of trees, different sizes of trees and Groundwork is open to any feedback and specific requests. Mr. Pashos said if there is a section of Tulane Avenue that you'd like the project to focus on, please let him know. Mr. Reynolds invited the district to come out and tour the street together.

Mr. Kopplin asked Ms. Mysing-Gubala if she or MCNO has any feedback. He explained the idea is to create a beautiful tree canopy corridor similar to St. Charles Avenue. Ms. Mysing-Gubala mentioned that some trees have been planted recently and mentioned that the 2500 block of Tulane Ave is lacking trees. Ms. Nicole Honoree asked if trees would be planted on sides of road or medians, and Mr. Pashos answered that both are options being looked at. Nicole Honoree asked if Todd could provide some dates he is available for tours so that LSU Health Science Center could be engaged. The focus is trees and the tree canopy, not landscaping.

**d. Budget for 2026 submit to City & LED (City due October 3rd, LED Nov 1st)**

Mr. Kopplin confirmed that the submission is due at the end of the month to the City, but the district has an approved budget to submit already.

**e. Annual Report submit to City & LED (Nov 1st)**

Mr. Kopplin communicated that Mr. Pashos would be working on the annual report.

**f. Update on Congressionally Directed Spending**

Mr. Kopplin summarized that the Xavier Ochnser College of Medicine proposal was moved forward to the next round of the earmark process. It doesn't mean that it will necessarily be approved, but if earmarks are accepted, it's a possibility.

The Charity Hospital proposal was rejected because hospitals are not accepted, even though the project is not about a hospital; changing the project name for future submissions would be prudent.

**g. Update on Bus Shelters & RTA**

Mr. Kopplin updated trustees about ongoing conversations with RTA to improve bus shelters on Tulane Avenue. A path forward would be for the BioDistrict to enter into a CEA with the RTA because RTA can implement construction of new bus stops, and we have lots of bus stops have no shelter against rain or sun. The trees would help somewhat, and the BioDistrict is waiting on plans from RTA for next steps.

**h. BioDistrict presentation to CenTrio Board**

Mr. Kopplin thanked CenTrio for the invitation of the BioDistrict to present to their board. CenTrio provides water to heat and cool facilities all around the BioDistrict. Anyone who wants to develop around the district should consider CenTrio as an asset as they have a reliable source of heating and cooling for HVAC systems that could be very cost effective to building owners.. This method called "district power" is an efficient way to distribute power.

**i. BioDistrict to present to DDD board in November**

Mr. Kopplin thanked the DDD for the invitation to present to their board. DDD have been really good partners with the district. The DDD still maintains the landscape, and

installed banners on the downtown portion. Ms. Honoree asked if banners can be placed in other parts of the district as well. The visibility is important so that everyone understands the boundaries better. Can go to areas where no one objects to the banners and at the same time work through any potential issues in other areas. Mr. Kopplin asked Mr. Pashos to work with the DDD on ideas for how to expand the siting of the banners.

**j. EDA Funding Opportunity**

Mr. Kopplin reminded the board that Mr. Pashos presented on this opportunity previously. He reflected that three years ago a New Orleans team was finalists for Build Back Better grant which was a finalist and won \$500,000 but did not win the overall prize of as much as \$50M. Mr. Pashos explained that the grant is for areas that were victims of natural disasters, and Orleans Parish is eligible as a result of Hurricane Francine in 2023. The total available funding is \$1.3B and it has three categories, each with increasing scope. BioDistrict fits the requirements. The categories start from planning to complete projects with construction.

Josh Fleig believes there may be some deadlines that have passed or the funds have been expended.

The final category is very in depth and includes multiple smaller projects totaling \$20-\$50M.

Mr. Kopplin mentioned that the BioInnovation Center and Tulane believe we should apply for this funding. He believes we need to find and hire a consultant to help the district create this proposal.

Charlotte Parent believes we should target the largest potential. LED is supporting another proposal for the transformation category related to shipbuilding but that does not mean LED can't support multiple submissions.

Mr. Kopplin mentioned that even if this proposal is unsuccessful the material would be useful for later funding opportunities.

Kaneisha reminded the group that the previous submission was a very heavy load, and recommends finding help sooner rather than later.

**k. RFP Process Updates**

Mr. Kopplin communicated that these are still in work in progress with Mr. Pashos. He wants to make sure the district follows the best process and that they go out to bid.

## **VIII Vice Chair's Report / Action Items**

### **a. Authorization to sign CEA with NOBIC to support SBIR/STTR grant writing efforts**

Mr. Stanfill communicated how difficult it is for younger companies to capture SBIR/STTR funding. A missing component for them is grant writing assistance. This proposed CEA with NOBIC includes workshops and individual support. NOBIC can help researchers from any organization.

Mr. Kopplin mentioned that this category has \$91,250 budget. Mr. Fleig mentioned how the LTTO office under LED does similar grant writing assistance. There could be budget from them to support this project as well.

Mr. Kopplin communicated to Ms. Sharonda Williams that there are three board members on the BioDistrict board that are also on the NOBIC board. Since this vote is for an approval for a CEA with NOBIC, Ms. Williams stated that these board members must recuse themselves from both the discussion and the vote.

Those three members left the room for the remainder of the discussion.

Charlotte Parent moved that the board approve the CEA with NOBIC up to the amount of \$91,250 for grant writing services. Seconded by Arnel Cosey and Andy Kopplin. There was no further board discussion.

Kris Khalil thanked the board for the consideration and mentioned that this program is very important for young companies, US technology advancement, and also an economic development lever. Winning an SBIR/STTR grant increases the opportunity for additional federal funding. It has a good ROI and the funds NOBIC historically had funding this program are ending, but the impact is so high that they are a priority to keep.

The motion was unanimously approved.

### **b. Authorization to sponsor NOBIC's BioChallenge in October 2025**

Mr. Stanfill shared details about the BioChallenge, some history and the prizes for the winners. The focus is on brain health and happening this Fall. An info sheet has been shared with the board and Mr. Stanfill recommends the board approve to sponsor at the gold level for \$25,000. Amounts more or less can also be considered, but supporting this type of event would be impactful.

Mr. Kopplin shared that this funding could be drawn from two potential budget categories. Mr. Pashos shared that the community engagement budget category which may be used for sponsorships is \$75,000 and another potential category for entrepreneurial support is \$237,000.

Kris Khalil thanked Mr. Stanfill for serving on the steering committee and mentioned his excitement for this programming, but this time without any federal money. This is now an international pitch competition and testing how to get organizations from other parts

of the country and world to do work in New Orleans and in Louisiana. Mr. Khalil invited the board to the competition on the morning of October 30 and to a dinner the night before to meet the competitors. The sponsorship funds will go towards operating costs for the event and also the prize pool.

Ms. Arnel Cosey clarified that prizes are strategic to attract organizations here.

Ms. Parent asked if NOBIC has any other major sponsors. Mr. Khalil mentioned they do. Mr. Stanfill summarized his support. Ms. Cosey moved to sponsor the BioChallenge at the Gold level of \$25,000. Ms. Parent seconded. There was no further board discussion.

Mr. Tyler Correa reflected that as DDD was the major sponsor last year, and the pitches were extremely impressive.

Ms. Cosey wanted to clarify which category will be used. Mr. Kopplin mentioned that the community engagement category made the most sense.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The recused board members returned to the room and Mr. Kopplin summarized the board's discussions and votes. He also communicated that the board members on the NOBIC board do not receive compensation. Emily Arata noted that neither do BioDistrict board members.

## **IX New Business**

There was no discussion or public comment.

## **X Partner Updates**

Ms. Parent communicated that UMC celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary last week.

Ms. Arata mentioned that XOCOM submitted their accreditation documentation for approval.

Ms. Honoree mentioned that the director of NCI visited and learned about local capabilities. Even though LSU is the lead, the NCI designation is envisioned to be a large partnership model.

## **XI Public Comment(s)**

Ms. Mysing-Gubala asked about plans related to housing. If all this development that is being worked on is successful, housing will become a larger pain point. She asked who on the board are residents within the district per our board structure requirements. Ms. Cosey and Mr. Greg Tillery were identified as the members who live within the district. She also mentioned that short term rentals are an issue for the board.

Mr. Kopplin reminded the board that the Kresge Foundation worked a \$30M housing fund in Memphis and discussions are taking place to try and recreate that in New Orleans. The fund

may be housed outside of the BioDistrict, but creating more affordable housing has been a priority of the BioDistrict in all of its strategic plans.

## **XII      Adjournment**

Mr. Kopplin moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Parent. The Chair called for discussion and public comments, of which there were none, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:02pm.

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