BioDistrict New Orleans
Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2026 | 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: Greater New Orleans Foundation, 919 St. Charles Ave, New Orleans, LA 70130

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, Emily Arata, Arnel Cosey, Charlotte Parent, Nicole Honoree, Jenny Mains, Gregorie Tillery, Blake Stanfill (Vice Chair), Andy Kopplin (Chair)

Commissioners Present via Zoom: None

Commissioners Absent: Larissa Littleton-Steib, Josh Fleig, Patrick Norton, Michael Hecht, Judith Dangerfield

Quorum: Present

III Introduction of Guest(s)

Andreas Pashos (Consultant to BioDistrict), Sharonda Williams (Counsel to BioDistrict), Kris Khalil (NOBIC), Richard McCall (CenTrio), Rep. Shawn Mena (LA House of Reps), Rich Collins (Times-Picayune)

IV Adoption of Previous Board Meeting Minutes

Mr. Kopplin requested approval of the minutes from the previous BioDistrict board meeting on January 14, 2025. Ms. Arata motioned for approval, and Ms. Honoree seconded. There was no discussion or public comment, and the motion was unanimously approved.

V Financial Report

Mr. Pashos displayed the report on the projector. He summarized that during the last board meeting he went into detail on all the transactions which took place in 2025, and for this meeting he will focus on transactions that have taken place since the beginning of 2026. The financials are current to the end of February.

a. **Financial Report**

Mr. Pashos shared that the district received a City payment in February for a bit more than $1.5 Million. To date the total funded by the City is about $2.7 Million. The only expenses so far this year include the monthly administrative contracting support, USPS PO Box, and our website domain annual fee all for a total of about $15K.

Under encumbered funds, the values represent the two CEAs with NOBIC, the remaining tree maintenance work on Tulane Ave, and the support to the Charity redevelopment project.

Regarding City funding so far, we have received the full funding for 2023 and 2024, but we still haven't received any funds for 2022 and 2025. Mr. Pashos also noted that the City budget is planned to cover all budget categories, except for four categories, which are planned to be covered by State funds: Bus shelters, lighting, transit safety and Charity redevelopment.

b. **Update on City and State Funds**

Mr. Pashos shared that the Secretary of LED has shared her written approval of the BioDistrict 2026 budget, which clears another hurdle towards receiving State funds. The next step in that process is to confirm which City funds were connected to which quarters, as we need to send that information to the State in order to receive those funds.

Mr. Kopplin shared a reminder that just six months ago the district's bank account was nearly empty, and since receiving two payments from the City since September, the cash reserves are now significantly more substantial.

Dr. Mains wanted to clarify that there are two years still pending to be paid by the City: $59K for 2022 and $1.4M for 2025. The expected amount to be paid by the City for 2026 is also expected to be $1.4M, but none of it is due yet.

VI Chair's Report / Action Items

a. Authorization for Chair to sign contract with Prime Business Advisory Solutions, LLC for initial preparation of ten policy and procedure manuals for $2,500 each for a maximum of $25,000 and ongoing monthly fiscal oversight for up to $3900 per month at a rate of $195/hr

Mr. Kopplin highlighted that this contractor works with the Port of New Orleans, Youthforce NOLA, GNO Inc and others and has received positive reports and is needed to assist the BioDistrict with setting up the financial controls needed for public organizations that have $400K in prior year expenses. They will create process manuals for the district to meet State audit requirements. Ms. Sharonda Williams has reviewed the contract and suggested some amendments that will be included.

Ms. Honoree moved to approve the contract with Prime. Mr. Tillery seconded. There was no further discussion or public comment and the motion was unanimously approved.

b. Authorization for Chair to sign contract with an accounting firm from the Louisiana Legislative Auditor Approved CPA list for the district's 2025 audit

Mr. Kopplin shared a reminder that the district met an expense threshold in 2025 that triggers a state audit. The audit will cover 22 written checks from last year, so it should not be too complex. Prime Business Solutions will solicit proposals from firms who can complete the work prior to the June 30 deadline.

Ms. Arata moved to approve authorization of the chair to sign a contract with a selected firm. Mr. Tillery seconded. There was no further discussion or public comment and the motion was unanimously approved.

c. Authorization for Chair to sign CEA with STEM NOLA for educational programming aligned with BioDistrict strategic plan

Mr. Kopplin summarized that part of the strategic plan directed supporting STEM education, and supporting some programming this summer would provide that impact.

A committee to review proposals will include Ms. Cosey and Mr. Tillery.

Science High School and STEM NOLA have shown interest in working with the district. Mr. Honoree supports finding existing programming to fund since it's already Spring.

Ms. Arata moved to approve authorization for a proposal approved by the committee. Mr. Tillery seconded. Mr. Khalil commented on the importance of supporting STEM programming in the bio, healthcare, and life sciences industry. The motion was unanimously approved.

d. Authorization to renew Non Profit Directors & Officers Insurance expiring in May

Mr. Kopplin requested authorization to secure a policy. Ms. Arata motioned for approval, and Ms. Honoree seconded. There was no discussion or public comment, and the motion was unanimously approved.

VII Chair's Report / Discussion Items

a. Welcome Jenny Mains, Deputy Mayor Economic Development, City of New Orleans to the Board

Mr. Kopplin welcomed the Deputy Mayor to the board, as the Mayor's designee, replacing Lowry Curley. Mr. Kopplin expressed eagerness to continue to partner with Dr. Mains and Mayor Moreno.

Dr. Mains noted her enthusiasm at being appointed to the board especially given that her experience and background as a trained physician.

b. Appreciation for Dr. Lowry Curley's service on the Board

Mr. Kopplin acknowledged Dr. Curley's eight year service to the board, noting that Mr. Curley played a very active role in supporting the district from the perspective of a startup founder.

c. Update on Charity Hospital Redevelopment

Mr. Kopplin communicated that Mr. Norton is not in attendance, but there is anticipation that a public announcement will take place soon once the project's financial package is finalized.

Ms. Honoree asked for a reminder on the amount the district and State committed to the project. Mr. Kopplin mentioned that the district supported a net present value of about $11.7M, and the State approximately $50M. The City has also committed, particularly for the housing portion of the development.

d. BioDistrict New Orleans Entrepreneur Week 2026

i. District driving tour with IDEAcorps MBA Consulting Challenge teams with GNO Inc.

Mr. Kopplin shared that the district is working with GNO Inc to lead a driving tour of the district for visiting MBA students from around the country to learn about the local development.

ii. BioDistrict Main Stage Panel with XOCOM, LSUHSC and TUII

Mr. Pashos communicated that for the BioDistrict panel at NOEW, which is hosted at Loyola this year, it will take place on the upcoming Friday afternoon on the main stage. Earlier presentations at the main stage that day will include the Mayor. Mr. Pashos mentioned that Mr. Kopplin will be moderating a panel with panelists representing major developments in the district, including Dr. Leo Saone from XOCOM and Dr. Lucio from LSUHSC, leading the NCI designation work. These two projects along with Charity Hospital redevelopment are the three most transformative projects in the district currently. The panel will be rounded out by Kim Gramm from the Tulane University Innovation Institute.

e. Update on EDA Funding Opportunity for BioDistrict with consultant Jason Rittenberg

Mr. Pashos shared that Jason Rittenberg is travelling today and cannot attend the meeting. Mr. Pashos will share some resources from Mr. Rittenberg after the meeting: a 10 minute video recording and a 40 slide deck with findings.

Mr. Kopplin reminded everyone that this project is related to an EDA Disaster NOFO due to Hurricane Francine some years ago. We had conversations with stakeholders at the end of 2025, and there are no build ready $20M district projects. The applications are rolling and the district is planning to submit multiple smaller project proposals.

f. Update on RFP process

Preparing to release RFPs for public realm and communications support

Mr. Kopplin highlighted that Sharonda has reviewed some RFPs and we are getting ready to release. The plan is to put together committees to review received proposals.

f. Update on Congressionally Directed Spending Requests

Mr. Kopplin summarized that last year the district submitted requests for multiple projects. Last year, the request for XOCOM was approved by HUD for $3.4M. The BioDistrict is open to supporting project requests in the district, and will submit requests this year as well.

g. Update on Groundwork New Orleans Tree Planting Project on Tulane Avenue

Mr. Kopplin communicated that trees have been planted on and around the LSUHSC. For trees on Tulane Avenue DOTD permitting and approval is in process. More trees are planned in upcoming weeks before it gets too hot. Ms. Honoree mentioned that the trees that have been planted are quite small.

h. Update on Bus Shelters & CEA with the RTA

Mr. Kopplin shared that conversations with RTA are continuing so the district can provide support for high quality bus shelters in the district. The district has budgeted a significant amount to support this work. The health corridor includes the district, all the way to Ochsner's main complex in Jefferson Parish.

RTA is working on a draft CEA to send to the district for a value of about $1M. Ms. Honoree recommended that district branding is part of the scope.

i. Update on BioDistrict partnerships with New Orleans BioInnovation Center

Mr. Kopplin thanked Mr. Khalil for inviting the district to the Cognito Therapeutics visit and invited Mr. Khalil to speak to the various engagements between the two organizations. Those include SBIR/STTR support, EDA NOFO proposals, and sponsorship for the BioChallenge. Mr. Khalil thanked the board for their support in the ecosystem.

j. Upcoming BioDistrict meeting with Entergy New Orleans

Mr. Kopplin informed the board that Entergy New Orleans requested a meeting with the district, as the primary utility provider in the district. Entergy has office space and headquarters within the district boundaries.

k. Reminder of Financial Disclosure Statements due May 15th

Mr. Kopplin reminded the members that their annual disclosures are due soon, and that Mr. Pashos will be in touch to support the members with submitting those.

VIII Vice Chair's Report / Discussion Items

a. Update on innovation committee discussions with local stakeholders regarding best ways to support entrepreneurs in the BioDistrict

Mr. Stanfill shared an update on ecosystem conversations and the impactful information being gathered to provide more detailed direction for district funds geared towards entrepreneurship support. Mr. Stanfill will share more updates in the future and potential paths forward.

Mr. Kopplin summarized that the district is looking for a coherent strategy and multi-year program commitment.

IX New Business

Mr. Kopplin requested that the board create a Governance Committee to start identifying steps forward towards the district's structure and future vision.

The committee includes Mr. Kopplin, Mr. Stanfill, Ms. Honoree, Mr. Fleig and Mr. Norton.

X Partner Updates

Mr. Khalil communicated an upcoming ribbon cutting for Beken Bio which is a company opening up space at NOBIC. A local startup, Performance Health, has been acquired recently as well, highlighting the progress of the local ecosystem.

XI Public Comment(s)

Rep. Shaun Mena offered assistance with the tree planting project and needs from state agencies.

Mr. McCall noted that current important discussion topics in his space include resilience and comprehensive energy in the district.

XII Adjournment

Ms. Arata 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 3:44pm.