

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM (LSM)
NEW ORLEANS JAZZ MUSEUM AT THE OLD U.S. MINT
CAPITOL PARK MUSEUM, MULTIPRUPOSE ROOM
660 N. FOURTH STREET, BATON ROUGE, LA
MONDAY, MAY 19, 2025
12:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bunnie Cannon, Darryl Gissel, Kaitlyn Palmer, Karl Connor, Lisa Ballay, Malcolm Hodnett, Mary Coulon, R. Duncan Brown, Julie Samson (as the designee for the Lt. Governor), Sandy Shilstone, Wendy Lodrig.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Benjamin Dupuy, Courtney LeBlanc, Florence Jumonville, Jay Batt, Julio Guichard, Ken Pickering, Nick Mueller, Philip Albert, Suzanne Perlis, Thelma French, Tiffany Adler.

LSM STAFF: Becky Mackie, Jeff Anding, Julia George Moore, Nicole Coleman, Steven Maklansky.

OTHERS PRESENT: Rhonda Findley, Jason Strada, Kristin Shannon, Lauren Stroah (Journalist), Camille Atkinson (CRT Intern).

A quorum was present.

1. **Call to Order** – Wendy Lodrig called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. Wendy asked for a moment of silence in the passing of member Jay Batt who left us suddenly this morning.
 - a. **Swearing in of new Board Members** – Before adopting the agenda, Wendy Lodrig asked that Julia George Moore swear in new Board Member Lisa Ballay. All members of the board and staff introduced themselves to Lisa. Lisa introduced herself to the board.
2. **Adoption of the Agenda** – Karl Connor motioned to adopt the agenda. R. Duncan Brown seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
3. **Adoption of Minutes from the March 24, 2025, Meeting** – Darryl Gissel called for a motion to adopt the minutes. R. Duncan Brown seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
4. **Chairman's Report** – Wendy Lodrig congratulated the staff for the opening of the Pioneers of Women's Carnival exhibit. Secondly, committee assignments are in process. Lastly, an amendment to Article 6 of bylaws, which would increase the number of standing committees by two, is presented.

Section Nine is proposed as a new section to the bylaws and adds an Education Committee which will advise the board on the educational programs and outreach from the museum ensuring they align with the museum's missions and values.

Section Ten is proposed as a new section to the bylaws and adds a Governance Committee that shall advise the board on the selection of the principal officers of the board. The committee shall poll the board for nominations for a vote and shall conduct succession planning for the principal officer positions.

Bunnie Cannon made a motion to amend the bylaws to include sections nine and ten as proposed for the Education and Governance Committees to be added as standing committees. Mary Coulon seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Director's Report

- a. **Capital Projects** – Becky Mackie reported on the current phase of work on Madame John's Legacy which is nearing completion. Staff walk throughs have been scheduled. State funding for the Historic Structure Report is pending after the bond commission meets in the Fall.

Renovations are complete for the vacant Pontalba apartments, and all units are now showable. Five units on the third floor are still vacant.

Jazz Museum is clearing paperwork with the Economic Development Administration so the work can be put out to bid. This will include exterior improvements, a permanent outdoor stage, permanent artwork, statues, and upgrades to the grounds.

Presbytere will be closed for three to four months to the public so the fire suppression system can be added. The targeted months are mid-to-late September into January.

The E. D. White house is receiving a new welcome center with handicap access and a deck replacement.

- b. **Public Programs** – Becky Mackie reviewed the opening of the *Bienvenue Lafayette!* exhibit and the many partners who helped to make it a success. Friends of the Cabildo conducted public programs, The Daughters of the American Revolution funded a plaque and a small interactive that is in the gallery at the Cabildo. The American Friends of Lafayette provided funding for the reenactor Mark Schneider during the French Quarter Fest. The Pioneers of Women's Carnival opening was also a big success and several women's carnival crews attended the event.
- c. **Katrina Refresh** – The Hurricane Katrina Exhibit refresh design for the 20th anniversary is wrapping up. Renderings were shared with the board. Contracts for the fabrication and installation of the storm theater, wind chamber, and other updates have been awarded. Solomon Group was awarded the fabrication and installations contract and is working with staff on new media production.
- d. **Ticket Hub** – Museum Ticket hub is under development with anticipation of opening in July. Jason Strada (Friends of the Cabildo) and Jeff Anding (marketing) are working hand and hand to ensure the completion of the work.

Becky spoke on the importance of data and shared some marketing metrics that were put together by Jeff Anding. Opening the New Orleans museums on Mondays enhanced attendance over the spring break months. We are considering going back to six days a week during the slow periods: July, August, & September.

- 6. **Strategic Plan** – Becky Mackie spoke about the strategic plan and its two phases for transformative growth and sustainability. Phase one addresses foundational internal and operational issues to improve organizational health. Phase two focuses on enhanced audience engagement, education, outreach, and awareness. The staffing plan reflects the current 68 authorized full-time positions, 11 job appointments on contract for up to 4 years each, and 19 part-time staff. Anticipating the state will not increase our number of authorized full-time positions, the plan to support growth is to engage consultants and contractors where appropriate and to fundraise for grant funded temporary positions.

- a. **Mission Statement** – Sandy Shilstone reviewed the current and proposed version of the mission statement. Wendy Lodrig added that during the recent Executive Committee meeting, the Collections chair asked for one revision, that the word “Collects” be added. A new Code of Ethics for the Louisiana State Museum was also reviewed. This would be in addition to the State of Louisiana’s code of ethics which all board members agree to upon being appointed to the board.

Bunnie Cannon motioned to approve the strategic plan (inclusive of the Five Year Financial Model and Five Year Staffing Plan), Mission Statement (with “collects” added in-between “celebrates” and “preserves”), and the LSM Code of Ethics. Malcolm Hodnett seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Irby Finance

a. Commercial Updates

- i. Award lease for 537 St. Ann Street– Rhonda Findley introduced herself and her rental plans for 537 St. Ann and shared her condolences on the sudden passing of board member Jay Batt. **Karl Connor motioned to approve the lease effective June 1, 2025 with a monthly minimum rent of \$5,600 plus percentage rent, rent to commence September 1, with an initial term of 5 years and an option of two additional 5 year extensions. Sandy Shilstone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

- b. **Residential Updates** – Darryl Gissel updated the board that five units on the third floor of the Lower Pontalba are still vacant. The rent is roughly between \$2,200 – 3,000 a month. The current tenant at 535 St. Ann on the third floor of the Pontalba requested a rent reduction based upon his awareness of current rates offered to new tenants. He requested we reduce the per-square-foot rate from \$2.52 to \$1.83. Management agrees that his rent is high relative to others with comparable apartments and recommend a compromise of \$2.05/sq ft. for his lease renewal on July 1st, 2025, which will bring his rent to \$3,128.00 a month. **Karl Connor motioned to approve the lease reduction to \$3,128.00 per month. R. Duncan Brown seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

- c. **Financial Updates** – Becky Mackie reviewed the Irby Trust Income Statement. Rental income is doing well compared to budget. We anticipate exceeding residential income by about \$111,000 this year. Commercial income should be on track with a positive variance in percentage rent offsetting a shortfall in base rent. Interest income is projected to exceed budget by approximately \$57,000.

In order to balance the original budget error of \$150,000 and cover board authorized budget additions for major repairs, its forecasted we would have had to spend down \$984,000 from the Trust, however we only are forecasted to draw down \$695,000 because of additional income and less payroll and benefits that the Trust should have to reimburse the state this year due to vacancies.

8. **Collections Committee** – Mary Coulon filled in for the chair Florence Jumonville. The Collection Committee proposed the deaccession of visual arts and music objects that are not relative to the LSM mission. All items are reviewed professionally by curators. **Sandy Shilstone motioned to approve the proposed deaccession of items. Darryl Gissel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Outgoing loan extensions – There are four loan extensions. The committee was notified that one item inadvertently was not included at the last approval meeting.

Incoming loan extensions – Members were notified of eight incoming loans from the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame 2025. Three loan extensions to the permanent display at Capitol Park Museum have been approved.

At the last Collections Meeting Florence Jumonville introduced a proposal to raise the Museum Director's approval threshold for conservation treatment from \$1,000 – \$3,500. The increase will allow the museum director to approve before receiving the recommendation of the collection committee and approval of the board of directors. **Malcom Hodnett motioned to approve the proposed conservation treatment approval increase to \$3,500. Kaitlyn Palmer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

There were no new accessions. Becky shared with the Board a photo of John T. Block of Lafayette, Louisiana who recently visited LSM painting storage to view portraits of his ancestors, Lt. Michel Dragon and his daughter, Marianne Celeste Dragon, both attributed to Jose Francisco Xavier de Salazar y Mendoza (ca. 1750-1802) Both date to about 1795, executed during the Mexican-born artist's period of activity in New Orleans (1782-1802). Block's great-great-grandfather gifted the pictures to the Louisiana State Museum in 1917. The portrait of Celeste Dragon is scheduled to go on display at the Carnegie Museum of Art (Pittsburgh) in the exhibition *Fault Lines: Art, Imperialism, and the Atlantic World*, which opens in July.

9. **E.D. White** – Malcom Hodnett gave a brief report about the roof replacement, which is finished and the repairs for the porch and deck, which are next. Costs for the porch are being covered by the Friends of E.D. White group.
10. **Louisiana Civil Rights Museum Advisory Board** – Karl Connor gave a brief report on the meeting that was held with Jason Strada and Chris Cook about the training of the ten docents and the available funding. He noted a meeting with Marvel Studios about expanding the Page Exhibit with some education material and a short film. There was discussion about creating a new exhibit that should be ready in July.
11. **Exhibits** – Steven Maklansy spoke on an exhibit that will be opening in February or March. And gave a description of Bernardo Galvez who was a Spanish hero. Bernardo Galvez was Governor in Louisiana and served in support of the American Revolution. The story will be told with objects of our own collection, and we are adapting an interesting exhibition of the American Revolution in the West that was presented outside of St. Louis. There are discussions with Spanish cultural organizations to represent the Spanish government with key artifact loans from Spain.
12. **Capitol Park and Regional Museums** – Cody Scallions discussed the regional museums, and the upcoming new inductees weekend coming June 26th – 28th in Natchitoches at the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Museum. The joint travel exhibit with CODOFIL titled Louisiana French is a traveling exhibit opening June 7th. The Wedell Williams Museum hosted the Cajun Cruise and Car Club event that included over 100 visitors and 50 vintage cars on display. Capitol Park Museum boilers are currently being installed and are expected to be completed in June.
13. **Friends of the Cabildo** – Jason Strada spoke about their third annual Rum Rendezvous where Louisiana Rum industry is highlighted. The annual symposium is scheduled in December as part of American 250. Jason also spoke about the Jazz Fest film events that are an amazing experience, melding film and musical performances.

14. Louisiana Museum Foundation – Kristin Shannon reviewed upcoming exhibitions, the recent partnership with French Quarter Fest and the reenactment of Lafayette. The Cabildo was open as a hospitality lounge during one day of French Quarter Fest with special access to the Lafayette exhibit. Kristin also covered the opening event for the Pioneers of Women in Carnival exhibit, and the prints that were created from the live painting at the opening by Stephaine Daphne. June 9th is the kickoff at the Studio of Michalopoulos for the next exhibit opening in conjunction with the November 21st Founder's Ball. Tank from Tank and the Bangas, a feature performer on Michalopoulos' official 2025 Jazz Fest Poster will perform, along with the Rebirth Brass Band. June 30th is the LMF annual membership dinner at Brennan's. Museum Month is approaching in August; membership with any participating museum will allow access to all museums in New Orleans.

Becky Mackie added that support from our LMF is in addition to sources of funds included in the five-year financial model, and they provide a lot of funding throughout the museums. Becky also mentioned upcoming meetings and fundraising.

15. Old Business – Wendy Lodrig mentioned that there is pending legislation on two bills. Julia George Moore spoke on House Bill 108, that will remove the requirement of having a master's degree in museum science for the Director of the Louisiana State Museum. She also reviewed Senate Bill 210 which changes the composition of the board and cleans up several provisions requiring updates and edits to create synergy between policy and law. This bill also adjusts the number of members it takes to a fixed number for a quorum.

16. New Business – None.

17. Public Comments – None.

18. Adjourn – Karl Connor motioned to adjourn the meeting. R. Duncan Brown seconded, motion passes unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Minutes Accepted

Sandra Shilstone, Secretary