

**Louisiana's Cajun Bayou Tourism**  
**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, December 18, 2024**

**The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm**

**Members Present:**

Monique Crochet, Chair  
Marguerite Knight-Erwin, Vice Chair  
Jeremy Punch, Secretary/Treasurer  
Donnell Zeringue  
Kyle Williams (4:35 pm)  
Amy Hebert (4:40 pm)  
Zina Sampey  
Joshua Falgoust

**Members Absent:**

Kristine Strickland

**Staff Present:**

Cody Gray, President & CEO  
Ian Wallis, Sale & Marketing Manager  
Brandi Hebert, Finance/Operations Manager  
Brenda Trosclair, Travel Counselor

**Public Present:**

Walton Guidry  
Bill McKee

**Approval of Agenda:**

Action Item #1: M. Knight-Erwin moved to approve the agenda as presented; D. Zeringue seconded the motion. Motion passed (6-0).

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

Action Item #2: D. Zeringue moved to approve the November 2024 meeting minutes, and the November 2024 budget hearing minutes as presented; M. Knight-Erwin seconded the motion. Motion passed (6-0).

**Public Acknowledgments/Comment:**

Mrs. Crochet welcomed new incoming board members, Mr. Walton Guidry and Mr. Bill McKee. Mr. Guidry and Mr. McKee introduced themselves to the board and staff.

**Financial Report:**

Mr. Punch went over the need to revise the 2024 Operations Budget to comply with applicable laws and restrictions. He went over the necessary changes.

Action Item #3: D. Zeringue moved to approve the revised 2024 operations budget as presented; Z. Sampey seconded the motion. Motion passed (7-0).

Mr. Punch reported that Total Income for the month of November was **\$79,642.86**. Lodging tax was **\$64,991.51** and Interest & Dividends Earned were **\$14,651.35**. Expenses exceeded revenue by **\$8,740.19** for the month. The Budget versus Actual Report was then discussed.

Action Item #4: M. Knight-Erwin moved to approve the financial report as presented; A. Hebert seconded the motion. Motion passed (8-0).

#### **President and CEO's Report:**

Mr. Gray then discussed the two-year occupancy comparison for October. He then went over the November weekly occupancy comparison between this year and last year.

Next, he announced that the bill has passed congress and is currently on the president's desk to include Lafourche Parish in the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area. After clearing the president's desk, state legislation will have to be introduced and passed.

He then gave updates on the Wayfinding Signage project. The board viewed and discussed the options for the newly designed gateway signs. The board would like to proceed with option B. Mr. Gray will now bring that recommendation from the board back to MERJE.

Lastly Mr. Gray went over recent meetings, networking, fostered relationships, upcoming LCBT activities, and the Destination Promotion Report.

#### **Sales & Marketing Report:**

Mr. Wallis went over the Monthly Sales and Outreach Report which included five sales leads: Super Bowl 2025, Powerlifting America, Expression Voyages, ULS Academic Summit, and the Grand Reveil Acadien 2025. He then reported definite business with Y'allstars Southern Skate Showdown, UL Management, Sun Tours, National Association of Counties, and Southland Conference Tennis Championships. He also reported that there was no lost business.

He then gave a summary of hotel property and rate updates, the new 2025 campaign, Super Bowl, LA Cajun Bayou-Tangi Tailgate Partnership, Grand Reveil Acadien, NTA Travel Exchange, Travel South International, and upcoming conference/trade shows.

#### **Chair's Report:**

Executive Session-Employee Performance Review.

Action Item #5: M. Knight-Erwin moved to go into Executive Session according to La. R.S. 42.17 (A)(1)- Executive Session Employee Performance Review; K. Williams seconded the motion. Motion passed (8-0).

Action Item #6: M. Knight-Erwin moved to end the Executive Session; D. Zerinque seconded the motion. Motion passed (8-0).

Action Item #7: J. Falgoust moved to increase the President & CEO's annual salary to \$82,000; K. Williams seconded the motion. Motion passed (8-0).

Mrs. Crochet reminded the board about Ethics Training and thanked Mrs. Amy Hebert and Mrs. Kristine Strickland for their services to the board.

**Committee Reports:**

The Special Projects committee gave an update on the exhibit design and construction progress on the new visitor center.

Action Item #8: Z. Sampey moved to approve the report as presented; A. Hebert seconded the motion. Motion passed (8-0).

**New Business:**

Mr. Gray went over the required Sexual Harassment Training with the board.

**Election of Officers**

Action Item #9: M. Crochet moved to nominate M. Knight-Erwin as Chair; A. Hebert seconded the motion.

Action Item #10: M. Crochet moved to accept M. Knight-Erwin as Chair by acclamation; J. Punch seconded the motion. Motion passed (8-0).

Action Item #11: M. Knight-Erwin moved to nominate M. Crochet as Vice-Chair; A. Hebert seconded the motion.

Action Item #12: D. Zerinque moved to accept M. Crochet as Vice-Chair by acclamation; J. Falgoust seconded the motion. Motion passed (8-0).

Action Item #13: M. Knight-Erwin moved to nominate J. Punch as Secretary-Treasurer; M. Crochet seconded the motion.

Action Item #14: J. Falgoust moved to accept J. Punch as Secretary-Treasurer by acclamation; D. Zerinque seconded the motion. Motion passed (8-0).

2025 meeting dates and time were discussed. Meetings will still be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month at 4:30pm.

**General Discussion:**

**Adjournment:**

Action Item #15: J. Falgoust moved to adjourn the meeting; K. Williams seconded the motion. Motion passed (8-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Minutes were approved on 1/15/25

The undersigned confirms the accuracy and proper approval of minutes

Monique Cochet  
Board Secretary/Treasurer Vice Chair