

MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2024
VERMILION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
REGULAR MEETING

President Patrick Duhon called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. The meeting was held at the Vermilion Parish Government Office Complex, 407 Charity Street, Abbeville, La.

Mr. Ben Rivera led the Pledge of Allegiance before Mr. Duhon requested a moment of silence.

The following members were present at the meeting: Mr. Ruben Rivera, Mr. Richard Guilbeaux, Ms. Anita Dupuis, Ms. Claire Broussard, Ms. Linda Vincent, Ms. Kristin Vincent, Ms. Anne T. Falgout, Ms. Nikki Vidos, Mr. Elliot Broussard, Mr. Patrick Duhon, Ms. Kristy Doucet-Touchet, and Ms. Megan Landry-Lalande

The following members were absent: Mr. Dexter Callahan, Mr. Joshua Anderson, and Mr. Jacob Landry

The following guests were present: Ms. Kayla Link, VEDA, and Ms. Shari Cormier, VEDA, Mr. Eddie Langlinais, VPSO, and Mr. Neil Arsement, Mayor of Maurice.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments regarding any of the items on the agenda.

MINUTES: The minutes of the December 13, 2023, meeting were approved as written on a motion made by Ms. Megan Landry-LaLande. Mr. Ben Rivera duly seconded the motion, and it was unanimously carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Ms. Nikki Vidos gave the Treasurer's Report. The board was provided with a list of invoices and expenses totaling \$3,614.75. Mr. Richard Guilbeaux motioned the board to accept the Treasurer's Report and pay the invoices. Ms. Anne T. Falgout duly seconded the motion, and it was unanimously carried.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: Ms. Kayla Link presented the board with her December Administrative Report. She noted that she completed 4 visits with existing businesses, with another 4 visits pending, and planned outreach to some of our economic drivers. She added one new project and fielded inquiries from 2 new business startups. She connected with the Louisiana Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (LEED) Center and has since been referring people to them. She noted her hope to host a business resource event in the near future.

Ms. Link informed the board that the Town of Maurice is in the process of developing a strategic plan, she asked the board to allow VEDD to support the town of Maurice by hosting town hall events and group discussions. Ms. Anne Falgout motioned the board to support the Town of Maurice's strategic planning efforts by helping to host events and facilitating discussions within the community. Ms. Falgout noted that this process aligns completely with VEDD's mission. Mr. Ben Rivera duly seconded the motion, and it was unanimously carried.

Ms. Claire Broussard entered the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: Ms. Nikki Vidos noted that the Grant Opportunity Breakfast, hosted along with the City of Abbeville and the Acadiana Planning Commission, will be held on January 11, 2024. At this event, the Acadiana Planning Commission will review grant status and opportunities with our parish leaders.

NEW BUSINESS: Mr. Richard Guilbeaux informed the board that legal counsel has not yet been able to review the wording of the proposed procedure that was drafted to meet the required changes of the Open Meetings Law. The item was tabled until the February meeting.

Ms. Link informed the board about the Rails to Trails program. This program involves reutilizing the 21 miles of unused railroads by building hiking and bike paths. She noted that this program has increased development in other areas. The board discussed VEDD's involvement opportunities. Mr. Ben Rivera motioned the board to have VEDD write a letter of support for the program and to continue support and engagement with the program as needed in the future. Ms. Claire Broussard duly seconded the motion, and it was unanimously carried.

Ms. Cormier presented the board with an invoice from LIDEA for their annual membership dues. Mr. Richard Guilbeaux motioned the board to renew the membership and pay the \$250.00 invoice. Ms. Nikki Vidos duly seconded the motion, and it was unanimously carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Ms. Nikki Vidos noted that there was no report from the Transition Committee outside of what was included in the agenda.

Ms. Claire Broussard gave the update for the Workforce Development Committee. She noted that the State of the Workforce meeting will be rescheduled. She noted that she would like to hold a breakfast meeting for members of Vermilion Parish's healthcare industry in February. She also asked the board to allow a budget for breakfast at the event. Ms. Nikki Vidos motioned the board to allow a \$300.00 budget for breakfast. Ms. Megan Landry-Lalande duly seconded the motion, and it was unanimously carried.

Ms. Nikki Vidos led the report on the Sustainable Funding Committee. Ms. Cormier noted that the second publication of the 4 required election postings has been printed in the Abbeville Meridional. Mr. Patrick Duhon then read the parcel fee election press release to the board.

Ms. Nikki Vidos informed the board that the Strategic Planning Committee is getting LDRC back on track and more information will be provided at the next meeting.

Ms. Vidos gave the update on the Hometown Revitalization Project for the Strategic Planning Committee. She informed the board that the application has been submitted to Sellers and Associates who combined it with another application for the Nehemiah Project. She noted that they are currently waiting to see what projects submitted will be approved.

Ms. Anne T. Falgout gave the update for the Communications and Promotions Committee. She noted that the website splash page is online. She informed the board that a press release would be going out with an introduction of Ms. Link. She also informed the board about the development of an educational video about VEDD.

There was no update for the Business and Industry Committee.

The board was asked to review proposed 2024 goals and submit any additional projects that they would like to see accomplished in 2024.

BOARD MEMBER UPDATES: The board members spoke about the areas they represent and shared things happening in their communities.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held at 5:30pm on Wednesday, February 14, 2024.

ADJOURN: Upon motion by Mr. Ben Rivera, duly seconded by Ms. Megan Landry-Lalande and unanimously carried, there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Ms. Anne T. Falgout
Secretary