**Present:** Joan Coffman, Scott Day, Mimi G. Dossett, Mike Gambrell, Albert M. Hamauei, Bruce Javery, Ross Lagarde,

**Absent:** Bill Newton, Eric Schouest, Mike Tillman, William Wainwright

**Staff**: Chris Masingill, Kyle Buckley, Vincenzo Caronna, Sharon DeLong, Keith Espadron, Elizabeth Lee, Kate Moore

**Counsel:** Mark Balkin | Hardy Carey Chautin & Balkin

**Guests**: None

Vice President Gambrell called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. Commissioners present established quorum.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

No public comment on any agenda item.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

With no other modifications, the Consent Agenda, which consisted of the April BOC meeting minutes and financial statements, was approved. *Albert Hamauei, seconded by Bruce Javery, motioned to approve the consent agenda. All were in favor. Motion passed.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

Masingill noted that due to timing related circumstances with state partners that there are two Agreements for Professional Services for the LED/EDA grant program needed to be added to the agenda. Vice President Gambrell requested a motion for the action. *Mimi Dossett, seconded by Bruce Javery, motioned to add the agreements to the agenda.*

**Contract for Professional Services – The Bernard Group**

With the recent modifications to staff responsibilities and Jolie Bernard stepping away from her full-time role with St. Tammany Corporation, the Bernard Group will provide transition and technical support. Masingill requested approval of the contract, which includes the following three components:

* As Elizabeth Lee has stepped into the public information officer role, this contract provides for a transition period through December 21, 2023, to bridge relationships with media contacts and outreach.
* With the nine STC website platforms to manage, Bernard’s expertise is needed to maintain these sites and provide technical website management support while the organization is in this transition period.
* The April announcement of the Gulf South Commerce Park garnered over 20,000 hits to the website causing it to temporarily go out of service. Bernard and the technical services team were able to restore the site in a timely fashion and she will continue to facilitate future upgrades and stabilization of the website as interest in Gulf South Commerce Park continues to grow.

*After a short discussion on contract details, Joan Coffman, seconded by Mimi Dossett, motioned to approve the contract. All were in favor. Motion passed.*

**Agreements for Professional Services | LED/EDA Grants**

Masingill noted that Louisiana Economic Development was awarded a federal grant through the Economic Development Administration, and LED has provided a sub-award to St. Tammany Corporation to serve as the grant program manager for the Regional Entrepreneurship and Equity Initiative is a five-parish initiative encompassing St. Tammany, Washington, Tangipahoa, St. Helena, and Livingston Parishes. The purpose of the Regional Entrepreneurship and Equity Initiative is to facilitate programming across a 5-parish region that brings awareness of entrepreneurship and business formation and develops technical support systems through programming and partnerships with a specific focus on connecting underrepresented communities, specifically African American entrepreneurs, with business technical assistance opportunities. The two professional services contracts presented represent direct small business and entrepreneurial technical assistance and community assistance and entrepreneurial ecosystem building technical assistance, respectively. STC will act as the fiscal agent of oversight and administration of this LED grant. These are initial draft contracts for us to begin negotiations with the professional services entities. *Scott Day, seconded by Al Hamauei, motioned to approve both agreements. All were in favor. Motion passed.*

**OLD BUSINESS – None**

**EXECUTIVE UPDATE**

**Administrative & Operational**

After months of negotiations and navigating the issues with the State CEA, and following our meeting with State Treasurer’s office, two major components have come to successful fruition:

* We initiated contact with the Governor’s office to make them aware of the issues.
* We initiated a legislative solution focused on:

1) an extension for the ability to utilize remaining funds after July 1; and

2) the addition of a waiver with legislative language that exempts EDOs and tourist commissions with a population of 250,000 or more from filing a CEA with the State.

Graduate Research Fellow Kyle Buckley has accepted the offer to join the team on June 1 as Economic Development Specialist for Business and Technical Services. We will also welcome DaSean Spencer, a recent Tulane graduate, who will serve for eight weeks as the IEDC Equity Fellow. Spencer will begin June 12 and is interested in assisting with minority-owned business initiatives. A new position posting is forthcoming for an Economic Development Specialist for Marketing, Research, & Strategic Initiatives.

Executive staff continue to work with Chris Abadie on identifying a new temporary office location. A few options have been identified and will be presented at a later meeting. Developing an ad hoc advisory committee was discussed to review action steps to relocate the offices to another facility. Any Commissioner interested in serving on the potential ad hoc committee should contact Masingill.

With regular requests for Commissioner contact information, we are exploring communication pathways for the public to contact the board.

Ashley Llewellyn and Elizabeth Lee are the staff members leading the application effort for St. Tammany Corporation to earn the designation as an Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO), through the International Economic Development Council. This was a goal of Masingill’s and would be a strong affirmation and major milestone of the organization. If accredited, the award will be presented at the IEDC Annual Conference in Dallas, September 16-20, 2023. Commissioners who want to attend the conference should contact Masingill or Sharon DeLong by July 28.

The second cohort of IDEAinstitute Northshore is in process and going well. Additionally, Caronna is facilitating ongoing technical assistance with local entrepreneurs and STartUP Northshore is planning a Northshore pitch competition for entrepreneurs to vie for cash awards. The pitch night will take place in August or September.

Planning begins in September to determine the vision for THRIVE 2.0. Masingill invited Commissioners to add their input.

There will be a region-wide reception on July 13, 2023, honoring Dr. Will Wainwright on his recent selection as President of Southeastern Louisiana University, with Ashley Llewellyn leading the event coordination effort.

**Economic Development**

An unprecedented special called Parish Council meeting takes place tonight at 6:30 p.m., May 18, 2023, regarding the recent BEC announcement. The meeting was called to adopt and approve this economic development project.

There has been a lot of movement with the Gulf States Commerce Park with three projects in the works, two of which are expected to create $150 million in capital investment collectively. Masingill detailed future activity for the site, noting $27 million in potential property taxes is projected to be realized once the park is fully developed. Commissioners requested talking points to support this effort with Parish Council and Parish Administration. The commerce park will be featured in an upcoming issue of Northshore BIZ New Orleans along with Crosby Development Additionally, a significant coordinated multi-platform marketing plan with international reach is currently being developed for the park, led by Kate Moore.

Recognizing our unique competitive advantages for the distribution and logistics industries, STC has joined our regional Northshore economic development partners in Tangipahoa, St. Bernard, and Washington Parishes by formalizing efforts as the Louisiana-Gulf South Logistics Alliance. The group's mission is to leverage the Alliance’s human capital, tools, resources, and expertise to expand business attraction activities, increase capital investment, and enhance economic growth in the Greater New Orleans Region. The Port of New Orleans will be an engaged strategic partner of the group and STC will act as convener.

Final stages of an application for a Foreign Trade Zone with the Port of New Orleans awaits a letter of support from Parish President Cooper, who has appointed Gina Hayes to act as liaison to assist in communications.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioners wishing to attend the IEDC Annual Conference Sept 16-20 in Dallas, please contact Sharon at sdelong@sttammanycorp.org.

The next Board of Commissioner meeting will be held from 3 p.m. – 5 p.m., Thursday, June 15, at the District office, 21489 Koop Drive, Suite 7, Mandeville LA 70471.

**ADJOURN**

*The meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm. on a motion by Mimi Dossett, seconded by Joan Coffman. All were in favor. Motion passed.*

Minutes reviewed and submitted by the STC Staff.