

**Board Meeting
July 16, 2024**

**St. Landry Parish Economic and Industrial Development District
Business Resource Center
5367 I-49 S. Service Road
Opelousas, LA 70570**

Agenda

- I. WELCOME..... Chairman, Donald Dejean
- II. PLEDGE
- III. ROLL CALL
- IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS – Limit of 3 minutes
- V. ADOPTION OF JUNE 2024 REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES - Action
- VI. FINANCIALS, JUNE 2024.....Treasurer - Seth Robin – Action
- VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS
 - a. Opelousas Downtown Development June Board Meeting (Notes)
 - b. Opelousas Downtown Development July Special Board Meeting (Notes)
 - c. Central St. Landry Economic Development Board Meeting (Notes)
- VIII. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. Project Rosie
 - b. Washington Lighting
 - c. Washington EDD
- IX. NEW BUSIESS
 - a. 2024/2025 LBIA Grant
 - b. Retail Strategies Agreement
 - c. SLED Maternal Leave Policy
- X. PRESENTOR – Chris Arceneaux – Catalyst Properties
- XI. BOARD COMMENTS
- XII. ADJOURN

Voting Members Present: Don Dejean, Andy Dakin, Seth Robin, Chelsey Sharplin, Dr. John Hamlin, Erika Milton, Roma Stewart, Candace Pappillion, Juan Joseph, Susan Vigee

Voting Members absent: Kevin Doucet, Kevin Fuselier, Sharon Ortego, Daniel Lyons

Voting Members Present Virtually:

SLED Staff Members Present in Person: Bill Rodier, Janece Riser, Brittany Cretchain, Victoria Mott

Guests: Shawnee Milburn (Parish Government), Jessie Bellard (Parish President), Polly Koury (SLEMCO), Landon Boudreaux (SLEMCO), Brennon Breaux (SLEMCO), Herman Fuselier (Parish Tourism), Zach Hagger (Entergy), Chris Arceneaux (Professional Golfer)

It was determined a quorum was present.

Chairman Don Dejean opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed the guests at 10:09 AM.

Andy Dakin has proposed a motion to amend the agenda to remove the discussion on the Maternal Leave Policy from Line 9, item c due to the need for legal consultation on the matter. Seth Robin seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

Public Comments: Guests introduced themselves and what company they work for.

Adoption of June 2024 Regular Board Meeting Minutes: A motion was made to accept the June 2024 board meeting minutes as submitted by Susan Vigee and seconded by Juan Joseph. The motion was carried without objection.

June 2024 Financial Report: Mr. Seth Robin presented the financial report, detailing the revenues and expenditures. A motion was made to accept the financial report as submitted by Erika Milton and seconded by Juan Joseph. The motion was carried without objection.

Committee Reports:

Opelousas Downtown Development District June Meeting: Chairwoman Lena Charles provided a summary of their meeting and welcomed questions from the board.

Opelousas Downtown Development District July Special Meeting: Chairwoman Lena Charles provided a summary of their meeting and welcomed questions from the board.

Central St. Landry Economic Development District Meeting: Mr. Bill Rodier provided an update on the Equine Sale Center. He highlighted that the center has undergone refurbishment, resulting in a fresh and clean appearance. Additionally, he noted that there will be a yearling sale coinciding with the Grand Reopening, marking a significant milestone for St. Landry.

Mr. Rodier informed the board that over the next 18 months, the I-49 and all four interchanges will undergo updates to their lighting systems to enhance visibility and safety. He explained that this would be under a DOTD lighting program providing for a 90/10 match on the project and that CSLED would be committing 800k for the match component of the project.

Old Business:

Project Rosie: Bill Rodier initiated discussions concerning Project Rosie, the ongoing initiative involving Walmart and the St. Landry Industrial Development Board . Mr. Rodier began by confirming his consistent communication with Walmart officials, ensuring alignment on the information to be shared in the public forum and that Walmart was aware that the project would be discussed in a public meeting and therefore it was acknowledged that the non-disclosure agreement signed by board members would no longer be applicable towards the project

Mr. Rodier addressed concerns regarding the Walmart Nondisclosure Agreement, asserting his willingness to accept full responsibility should any issues arise concerning confidentiality obligations.

Project Rosie aims to revise and update an existing PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) agreement between Walmart and the St. Landry Industrial Development Board). The original agreement, established in 1999, pertains to property owned by the IDB where Walmart operates a distribution center.

Current Agreement: Under the current terms, Walmart pays approximately \$195,000 annually instead of traditional property taxes to the St. Landry Economic Development for the facility. The agreement, with unusual terms, allows Walmart discretion to extend its lease up to 2059.

Contract Renewal: The renewed contract reduces the PILOT agreement duration to 2040, aligning it more closely with current economic and operational realities, therefore reducing the initial agreement potentially 19 years. Mr. Rodier noted that this had been a key objective in the negotiations. Walmart would also agree to modestly increase their existing PILOT agreement to the IDB by 5k per year for five years and then level off at 220k until termination of the agreement in 2040.

Current Status: The Walmart distribution center currently employs 1,043 staff and generates an economic impact of approximately \$445 million annually in the region. Considering competitive

pressures, Walmart aims to modernize the facility to enhance operational efficiency and remain competitive with rivals like Amazon.

Project Details:

- **Purpose:** To refurbish the facility with state-of-the-art technology for more efficient operations.
- **Commencement:** Scheduled to start in 2028, with a mandatory completion date of October 1, 2029.
- **Extensions:** Walmart can request a 6-month extension, subject to approval by the IDB. Extensions may also be granted in the event of natural disasters.
- **Investment Commitment:** Walmart has committed a minimum investment of \$150 million, although Mr Rodier noted that projections suggest the project may require \$300-350 million, or perhaps even higher.
- **Incentive Structure:** The agreement provides for an abatement of what is termed new personal property associated with Project Rosie of 67% of the projected taxes. 30% of this would be redistributed by the IDB to the assigned parish taxing entities and 3% would be maintained by the IDB as an administrative fee. This PILOT on personal property would also be scheduled to terminate in the year 2040.
- **Labor Impact:** The upgraded facility will demand a higher skill set from employees, potentially leading to increased wages.

Objective: Mr. Rodier informed the board that the primary objective of Project Rosie has been to secure Walmart's long-term presence in the area by modernizing facilities and operations, thereby safeguarding local employment and economic benefits.

Conclusion: Mr. Rodier noted that the renegotiation of the PILOT agreement through Project Rosie reflect a strategic effort to align Walmart's operational needs with local economic development goals. Mr. Rodier further noted that by investing in advanced technology and infrastructure, Walmart seeks to maintain competitiveness and economic impact in the region.

After review and discussion of the updated PILOT agreement, a motion was made by Susan Vigee to accept the amended PILOT and give Bill Rodier the authority to sign on behalf of SLEDD. Candace Papillion seconded the motion. The motion was carried without objection.

Washington Lighting:

Mr. Rodier noted that the Town of Washington has successfully passed a resolution for a request to proceed with the lighting project, incorporating the necessary adjustments as per the Department of Transportation and Development's (DOTD) requirements. This approval marks a crucial step forward in enhancing community infrastructure.

In support of this initiative, the St. Landry Economic Development Board (SLED) has approved an increase of up to \$300,000 in potential funding for the project.

During discussions, Bill Rodier requested authorization to commence collaboration with Bruce Gaudin in drafting the legal Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) with the Town of Washington. This agreement will formalize respective responsibilities and commitments, ensuring clarity and accountability throughout the project's implementation.

Furthermore, Bill Rodier noted that he will be working closely with Parish President Jesse Bellard to finalize the Parish's CEA, particularly focusing on outlining the Parish's maintenance obligations related to the lighting infrastructure.

A motion by Andy Dakin was made to allow Bill Rodier to work with Bruce Gaudin in preparing the needed CEA's. Seth Robin seconded the motion and it carried without objection.

Washington EDD: Mr. Rodier informed the board that he had not received this document from Philip Sherman at Adams and Reese and asked that this item be tabled.

Project Updates: Bill Rodier gave updates on all the current and upcoming projects, highlighting Project Curtain. Project Curtain entails the establishment of a Steel Coating shop in Washington, which is anticipated to have far-reaching impacts on the local community and economy.

This project is poised to bring multiple benefits to the area, including the creation of new employment opportunities and the potential for economic growth. By introducing a Steel Coating shop, Washington stands to enhance its industrial capabilities and bolster its economic

infrastructure. This development aligns with SLED's goals of fostering sustainable growth and prosperity within the region.

Mr. Rodier also stated that Hobby Lobby and Whataburger will be opening mid to late August and fielded questions by the board on various additional economic development projects.

New Business:

2024/2025 LBIA Grant: Bill Rodier presented an idea of adding a generator to the incubator to create a hub for small businesses to conduct business during times of disaster. Mr. Rodier informed the board that the project would likely be in the range of 100k in total project cost and that the LBIA Grant would only cover up to 25k leaving SLED with the possibility of a 75k cost for the project. Mr. Rodier further informed the board that he anticipated the LBIA Grant announcement and possibly its due date could come before the August board meeting. Janece Riser noted this project would have to be bid on due to its overall cost and that had not been done yet. The board agreed to go forward with an application for the LBIA Grant if it comes open and to seek bid proposals.

Retail Strategies Agreement: Mr. Rodier gave the board an overview of what Retail Strategies provides in terms of retail recruitment in the greater Opelousas area for a cost of 40k annually. Mr. Rodier informed the board that he has discussed engaging their services for Eunice with their leadership at a discounted rate due to the existing contract by CSLED. He further noted that he had discussed with Retail Strategies to service all of St. Landry parish. Discussion ensued. Mr. Rodier informed the board that he would get clarity from Retail Strategies in a proposal for Eunice and the entire parish taking into consideration their existing involvement in the area through the contract with CSLED.

SLED Maternal Leave Policy: Item was removed from agenda so that the board could get legal opinions on the matter.

Presenter: Chris Arceneaux - Mr. Chris Arceneaux introduced himself and his son, KJ Arceneaux, and began their presentation on the proposal of an 18-hole golf course in the area.

They also gave updates on upcoming events:

August 17- Dine with Don @ Evangaline Downs

September 21 - Golf for a Cause

October 26 – Veteran's Cup

Board Comments: None

Adjourn: With no further matters to discuss in front of the Board, Erika Milton motions to adjourn the meeting. Seth Robin seconded the motion, and it moved without objection. The meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM

SECRETARY:



Erika Milton

CHAIRMAN:



Don Dejean