

Minutes of May 23rd, 2025

ODDD Board Meeting



Board Meeting

Date and Time: May 23, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting Place: 5367 I-49 S. Service Road
Opelousas, LA 70570

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Pledge and Opening Prayer
3. Roll Call
4. ODDD Business Recognition Program: Crawfish House & Grill
1214 S. Union Street, Opelousas LA
5. Public Comments – Limit to 3 Minutes
6. Approval of March 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes
7. Approval of April 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes
8. Approval of April 29, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes
9. Monthly Financial Report
10. Introduction of Amended 2024-2025 Operating Budget
11. Introduction of Proposed 2025-2026 Operating Budget
12. Provide Public Hearing Date – Proposed June 13, 2025, 10 AM
13. Executive Report
- 14. Old Business:**
 - a) Vacant Structures Ordinance Update- Lance Ned
 - b) Love the Boot Update – April 5, 2025 – April 13, 2025
 - c) South Park Project
 - o Phase I & Phase II (Update)
 - o Rights for Sponsorship – Elizabeth Brooks
 - d) ODDD Big Grant (Update)
 - o Update on 2024
 - o New 2025
 - e) ODDD Historic District (Update) – Calhoun Preservation
 - f) Maison De Chambre – (Update)
 - g) Brownfields Coalition Application – (Update)
 - h) Love Fest (Update)
 - i) Art Expo (Update)
- 15. New Business**

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a) State of Louisiana TAP Grant

16. Board Member Comments

17. Adjourn

The following members were present in person: Lena Charles, Pat Fontenot, Keith Broussard, Sarah Branton, Don D'Avy, Ogden Pitre, Rob Hillard

The following members were absent:

The following were present virtually:

The following SLED members were present: Janece Riser, Brittany Cretchain, Victoria Mott

The following guests were present: Bobby Ardion, Gretchen Erlinson. Grasshopper Mendoza, Steve Picou

Chairwoman Lena Charles welcomed the board and guests, opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, and prayer at 9:09 AM.

It was determined that a quorum was present.

Don D'Avy made a motion to amend the agenda to include a report by Purvis Morrison with M&M Associates under 'Old Business, Item A'. Ogden Pitre seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

ODDD Business Recognition Program: Chairwoman Lena recognized the business of the month, Crawfish House & Grill, as the ODDD Business of the Month for May 2025. Crawfish House & Grill is located at 1214 S. Union Street, Opelousas, LA 70570.

Public Comments:

- Bobby Ardoin, representing *St. Landry Now*, clarified that both he and the news organization are committed to reporting facts as they are presented, without taking a position for or against any particular issue. He also noted that obtaining information from the City of Opelousas has, at times, been challenging.

Approval of March 21, 2025, Meeting Minutes: Don D'Avy made a motion to accept the March 21st, 2025, Meeting minutes as presented. Rob Hillard seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

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Approval of April 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes: No motion was required as this item does not need to be approved as there was no quorum at the meeting that this item references.

Approval of April 29, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes: Ogden Pitre made a motion to accept April 29th, 2025, Special Meeting minutes as presented. Don D'Avy seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

Monthly Financial Report: Treasurer Keith Brossard went over the monthly financials highlighting the revenues and expenditures. Ogden Pitre inquired about why the bond funds were reflected under income rather than as a liability. It was explained that the funds will appear as a liability once a payment becomes due. Further discussion on the matter will take place with the accountant, Craig LeBoeuf. Ogden Pitre made a motion to accept the financial report as presented. Sarah Branton seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

Introduction of Amended 2024-2025 Operating Budget: Treasurer Keith Broussard provided a brief overview of the amended 2024–2025 operating budget, outlining the key changes from the original version. No action was required on this item.

Introduction of Proposed 2025-2026 Operating Budget: Treasurer Keith Broussard provided a brief overview of the proposed 2025–2026 operating budget, outlining the key expected revenues and expenditures. No action was required on this item.

Provide Public Hearing Date: Lena Charles informed the board that the date for the public budget hearing would be June 13th, 2025, at 10 AM.

Executive Report: Bill Rodier updated the Board on several ongoing projects within Opelousas, including developments involving the Abdalla properties and various buildings being addressed through the Brownfields Grant program.

OLD BUSINESS

Purvis Morrison (M&M Associates) Update: Purvis Morrison reported that he and Representative Dustin Miller have been actively working to secure \$4.3 million in funding through Connect Louisiana for the Community Center project. This amount would cover the financial obligations of both the Opelousas Downtown Development District (ODDD) and the City of Opelousas for this phase of the project. Sarah Branton inquired about Mr. Morris's involvement in the Vine Street Overlay Project and requested that the project be made a priority once again.

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Vacant Structure Ordinance Update: Lance Ned, with the City of Opelousas Code Enforcement, provided an update on properties currently carrying fines and liens. He also noted that future enforcement efforts are expected to be more efficient, as a new staff member has been added to assist with the workload. Don D’Avy informed the Board that the Opelousas Middle School building will be closed and repurposed as the St. Landry Parish School Board annex building.

Love the Boot Update: Lance Ned provided an update on the recent beautification projects conducted as part of the Love the Boot initiative. He noted that multiple community groups and local businesses volunteered their time and resources for the effort. Thanks to generous flower donations, the flower beds in front of City Hall were cleared and replanted.

South Park Project

Phase I & II: Lena Charles provided an update on the South Park Phase 1 project, reporting that it remains on schedule despite recent rainfall. The project is still expected to be completed in time for football season. Additionally, the start date for the multipurpose building remains set for the second quarter.

Rights for Sponsorships: Lena Charles provided an explanation of how the sponsorship funds for the park would be managed. In response, Sarah Branton expressed concerns about the Opelousas Downtown Development District’s (ODDD) responsibilities related to the ongoing maintenance and management of the park.

Ogden Pitre shared his opinion that the City of Opelousas should consider establishing a Parks Commission to address these types of issues, emphasizing that ODDD functions primarily as a funding mechanism rather than a management entity.

ODDD Big Grant: Sarah Branton provided an update on the 2024 Business Improvement Grant (BIG) program. In Round 1, a total of \$88,427 was awarded across 9 businesses, resulting in total investments of \$252,947.71. Round 2 distributed \$92,530.75 to 10 businesses, generating \$241,856.20 in investments.

Altogether, the 2024 program awarded \$181,008 to 19 businesses, leveraging a total investment of \$494,801.91.

Mrs. Branton also noted that 11 applications have been submitted for the 2025 BIG Grant cycle, and the application scoring meeting is scheduled for June 9.

ODDD Historic District Update: Kelly Calhoun provided an update on the expansion of the Historic District and outlined the upcoming steps related to the National Register

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nomination packet. She explained that the next phases include finalizing documentation, submitting the packet to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review, and coordinating any required public input sessions. The official presentation is scheduled to be made at the State Capitol on December 4.

Maison De Chambre Update: Stephen Daste informed the Board that progress is being made on the New Life Center project, with the 501(c)(3) application set to be submitted soon. He also shared preliminary financial figures related to the project. A meeting is scheduled with the Acadiana Planning Commission on June 11 to explore potential funding sources. Additionally, a request has been submitted to the state to review the building's historic status to determine its eligibility for historic tax credits.

Brownfields Coalition Update: Lena Charles informed the Board that the Brownfields Grant Coalition—comprised of the Opelousas Downtown Development District (ODDD), Ville Platte, Eunice, and Abbeville—has been awarded \$1.2 million in grant funding for environmental assessment and study efforts.

Love Fest Update: Brittany Cretchain provided a brief update on the turnout for Love Fest, noting that Board Member Rob Hillard prepared jambalaya, which was served as the event meal. Mr. Hillard added that they ran out of food—an indication of strong attendance and community participation.

Student Arts Expo Update: Brittany Cretchain provided an update on the Student Arts Expo, which took place on March 29. The Opelousas Downtown Development District (ODDD) served as a presenting sponsor for the event. More than 500 students participated, showcasing their artwork and talents to the community.

NEW BUSINESS

State of Louisiana TAP Grant: Lena Charles introduced Melanie LeBeouf, who provided an update on the TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program) Grant. LeBeouf reported that the application for funding—focused on sidewalks and curbs—has been submitted, and they are currently awaiting a response.

Board Member Comments:

- Melanie LeBeouf noted that one business recently chose to relocate outside of the ODDD District due to internal business reasons.

Adjournment: With no further business to bring before the board, a motion to adjourn was

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made by Rob Hillard and seconded Sarah Branton. The motion carried without objection and the meeting adjourned at 11:09 AM.


Secretary Keith Broussard


Chairperson Lena Charles