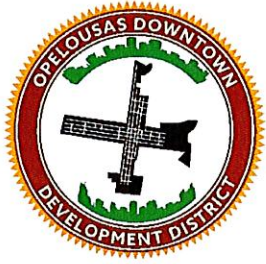


# Minutes of September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## ODDD Board Meeting



### Board Meeting

Date and Time: September 19, 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: Best Suits  
133 S. Main Street, Opelousas LA
5. Public Comments – Limit to 3 Minutes
6. Approval of August 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes
7. Monthly Financial Update
8. Executive Report
9. **Old Business:**
  - a) Vacant Structures Ordinance Update- Lance Ned
  - b) M&M Associates – Purvis Morrison
    - o Capital Outlay Update
    - o Connect LA /South Park Community Center Update
    - o Vine Street Project Update
  - c) South Park Project
    - o Donald Gardner Stadium Renovation Update
      - Stadium Press Box Signage Standards Proposal – EB Brooks – Action Item
      - Development of Individual School Sponsorship Package Templates Proposal – EB Brooks – Action Item
      - Naming Rights – Action Item
      - CEA Notice of Cancellation – Action Item
  - d) ODDD Big Grant
    - o 2025 Grant Session Update
10. **New Business**
  - a) Catalyst Committee Update
11. Board Member Comments
12. Adjourn

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

The following members were absent:

The following SLED members were present: Bill Rodier, Brittany Cretchain

The following guests were present: Bobby Ardion (St. Landry Now), John Guilbeau (City of Opelousas Alderman), Chris Rideau

The following guests were present virtually: Janece Riser (SLED), Purvis Morris, EB Brooks, Kelly Calhoun

Chairwoman Lena Charles welcomed the board and guests, opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, and prayer at 9:06 AM.

It was determined that a quorum was present.

Don D’Avy made a motion to amend the agenda to add two items under old business.

- A report from Kelly Calhoun on the Historic District
- A report from Steven Daste on the Maison De Chambers Project

Sarah Branton seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

**ODDD Business Recognition Program:** Chairwoman Lena recognized Best Suits as the ODDD Business of the Month for September 2025. The shop, located at 133 South Main Street in Opelousas, LA, was honored for its impact within the district.

**Public Comments:** Bobby Ardoin addressed concerns about the placement of public comments at the beginning of the agenda and suggested they be moved to the end. Mr. Ardoin also raised questions regarding fairness in a proposed school sponsorship package. Lena Charles clarified that moving public comments was in response to participants’ requests and elaborated on the purpose and structure of the school sponsorship package. Further discussion ensued about the appropriateness of public comment placement relative to agenda items.

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**Approval of August 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes:** Sara Branton noted that the board comments were incorrect and that she was not in attendance at the last meeting. Rob Hillard made a motion to accept the August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, meeting minutes with the necessary corrections. Pat Fontenot seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

**Monthly Financial Report:** Treasurer, Keith Broussard went over the monthly financials highlighting the revenues and expenditures. a net loss of \$1,626,100, attributed primarily to payments made for the ongoing stadium renovation and associated debt service. It was clarified that these “losses” reflected the strategic use of funds to pay down project debt, not operational shortfalls. Mr. Broussard recommended transferring \$2.5 million into a new Certificate of Deposit (CD) at a local bank, citing available interest rates of 4–4.28% for terms of six to seven months. The rationale was to maximize returns by setting a portion of the district’s funds in a secure, interest-earning account while maintaining sufficient liquidity for ongoing projects. The report further broke down project expenses, highlighting total construction costs for the stadium at \$1,868,342. After reviewing the financial figures and investment recommendations, Don D’Avy made a motion to allow the treasurer to transfer the \$2.5 million of funds into a CD account at a local bank that offers the best interest rate. Ogden Pitre seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

Don D’Avy made a motion to accept the financial report as presented. Pat Fontenot seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

**Executive Director Report:** Bill Rodier provided a comprehensive update on Opportunity Zone investment programs, outlining the benefits for downtown revitalization and the enhancements in Louisiana’s new high impact jobs program. Rodier discussed ongoing efforts and significant challenges in property acquisition for development. Rodier invited questions and shared insights on how these programs can serve as tools for economic growth in frontline and rural communities.

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### OLD BUSINESS

Vacant Structure Ordinance Update: Lena Charles noted that Lance Ned was unable to attend the meeting but informed the board that she requested more consistent monthly updates from city departments concerning the status of vacant structures.

### South Park Project:

Stadium Press Box Signage Standards Proposal: Elizabeth Brooks presented a report on stadium renovations, specifically plans to standardize press box signage and develop fundraising templates for participating schools. A central feature was the introduction of plans to standardize the press box signage. The intention is to create removable signage for each school utilizing the stadium so that, after each game, signage reflecting that school's branding can be put up or taken down as appropriate. This approach was designed to maintain the facility's neutrality, preventing any impression that it serves exclusively as a "home field" for one school over another. Mr. Chris Rideau, Opelousas Parks Director, elaborated that the signage would be the type that could be clipped to the fence and easily removed, ensuring the identity of the stadium remains inclusive. No Action was taken by the board on this item.

Development of Individual School Sponsorship Package Templates: EB Brooks informed the board that she proposed developing fundraising templates and materials for each participating school, enabling them to approach potential local sponsors. This initiative offers schools the ability to contribute to future park development while reinforcing community ties.

There were also discussion and clarification regarding field markings and logos. It was generally determined that a center field logo or permanent field markings for a particular school should not be permitted, in keeping with the stadium's community-oriented, multi-

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school function. There was also discussion that while end zone customization and limited branding for special events could be considered, permanent alterations should be avoided due to the technical demands and cost involved with artificial turf.

Progress regarding the renovation of Donald Gardner itself was also discussed. Despite some construction zones and the presence of heavy equipment, it was noted that the facility was on track for upcoming homecoming events. It was also noted that the track renovations (involving a specialized sprayed-on surface) would not be complete until after football season and that the contractor had agreed to return and finish the track work following the conclusion of scheduled games.

Parking changes and logistical improvements for the stadium were also updated. It was noted that the parking lot had been reconfigured, with new accommodation for handicapped drop-off and an altered flow of traffic. While the specific numbers of spaces were not discussed in detail during the meeting, board members viewed existing diagrams projecting future parking.

Pat Fontenot made a motion to approve EB Brooks' proposal. Ogden Pitre seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

CEA Notice of Cancellation: The board discussed the possible cancellation of the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) for the multi-purpose building noting that new funding has made the original CEA funds unnecessary for project completion. It was further discussed that the Opelousas Mayor sent a letter asking that the CEA be kept in place and requested an additional \$147,000 for increased architectural fees for the project. Board members raised concerns about whether cancelling the CEA could have unforeseen repercussions, particularly regarding other funding sources that might be reliant on its existence. Chairwoman Charles clarified that the CEA was initially designated only for the multi-purpose building, not other park or stadium developments. Several members felt it

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was essential to have direct clarification from city officials about any legal or financial impacts of cancellation. Ogden Pitre made a motion to table the CEA Notice of Cancellation as an action item until Mayor Julius Alsandor can be present at the meeting and give further explanation of his request. Keith Broussard seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

### *M&M Associates:*

*Capital Outlay Update-* Mr. Purvis Morrison delivered the capital outlay update, emphasizing ongoing efforts to advance district projects funded by the state's capital budget. He reported actively working to establish communication with new department heads at DOTD, Mr. Morrison indicated that \$1.5 million remained budgeted for the planning and environmental phases of the Vine Street Project and stressed the importance of frequent updates and persistent advocacy. There was confirmation that a project manager was still assigned, but he clarified their strategy relied on engaging higher-level decision-makers for greater project visibility. Their intent was to keep all stakeholders motivated and ensure project timelines were met. Mr. Morrison committed to sending further updates as significant meetings or developments occurred.

*Connect LA /South Park Community Center Update:* Purvis Morrison provided a detailed update on the South Park Community Center project in partnership with Connect LA. He reported that the team was finalizing the Request for Bids, pending final approval of required language from facility planning officials, and hoped to publish it in the newspaper soon. Morrison informed the board that regular coordination with Connect LA and the architect has ensured that all state and federal compliance guidelines are being actively addressed. Mr. Morrison outlined a proactive project management strategy, including adding an experienced contractor and a CPA to monitor progress and handle financial documentation for reimbursements. He emphasized the importance of weekly meetings with both Connect LA and, once a contractor is selected, standing Friday meetings to maintain project momentum. He noted that the overarching goal is to meet the strict completion

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deadline of December 31, 2026, for the Community Center, by ensuring careful oversight and timely execution at every stage. There was no action taken by the board on this item.

Vine Street Project Update: This item was discussed in conjunction with the Capital Outlay Report.

### **ODDD BIG Grant:**

2025 BIG Grant Session: Sarah Branton updated the board on the BIG Grant program, r for 2024 and 2025 noting that some funds remained unused. Mrs. Branton proposed using the unallocated money to help pay for a new roof on three Main Street buildings recently donated for redevelopment. The board discussed whether this use fits the grant's guidelines and agreed that Mrs. Branton should gather pricing and investigate any legal requirements before proceeding. No final decision was made during the meeting, pending further information.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Catalyst Committee Update: The catalyst committee update focused on the ongoing effort to establish clear and transparent criteria for selecting a "catalyst project" for 2025.

Chairwoman Charles explained that, although identifying a major, transformative project was a stated goal, the board had not yet agreed on the process or standards for selection.

Committee members were working on drafting objective criteria, as each board member had their own ideas about which projects should be prioritized. There was discussion about the potential to use unused BIG Grant funds to support an approved catalyst initiative, provided it met the final selection standards. The update emphasized the importance of fairness and broad board input in shaping the criteria and ultimate project choice. The committee planned to report once the criteria were finalized, inviting ongoing feedback and suggestions from all members. No action was taken on this item.

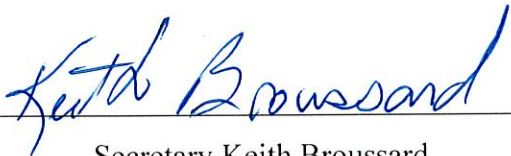
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### Board Member Comments:

- Chairwoman Charles expressed appreciation for the staff's hard work getting the Donald Garnder Stadium Project to its current state of completion and commending the dedication shown by both staff and board members.
- Keith Broussard expressed his view that an Executive Director, rather than a Project Manager, would be more appropriate for the ODDD. Discussion ensued.

**Adjournment:** With no further business to bring before the board, a motion to adjourn was made by Pat Fontenot and seconded by Ogden Pitre. The motion carried without objection and the meeting adjourned at 11:02 AM.

  
Secretary Keith Broussard

  
Chairperson Lena Charles