

Board Meeting

March 17, 2026

St. Landry Parish Economic and Industrial Development District

Business Resource Center

5367 I-49 S. Service Road

Opelousas, LA 70570

Agenda

- I. WELCOMEChairman, Seth Robin
- II. PLEDGE / ROLL CALL
- III. PUBLIC COMMENTS, VIA COMMENT CARDS- Limit of 3 Minutes
- IV. ADOPTION OF FEBRUARY 2026 REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
- V. FINANCIALS, FEBRUARY 2026..... Treasurer – Candace P Haynes
- VI. SLED CD RENEWAL
- VII. BOARD REPORTS
 - a. SLED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
 - b. CSLEDD BOARD MEETING NOTES
 - c. ODD BOARD MEETING NOTES
- VIII. LBIA GRANT
- IX. WALMART PILOY UPDATE
- X. PARISH SITE DEVELOPEMNT FOCUS
- XI. SLED WORKING SESSION UPDATE
- XII. OU EDI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BASIC COURSE UPDATE

XIII. UPCOMING EVENTS

XIV. BOARD COMMENTS

XV. ADJOURN

Voting Members Present: Seth Robin, Candace P. Haynes, Sarah Forman, Kevin Doucet, Lena Charles, Chelsey Sharplin, Carleen Sylvester, Malana Helton, Kyle Keeler, Thurman Johnson, Daniel Lyons

Voting Members Absent: Devin McKnight, Perry Fontenot, John Hamlin, Toni Effingger, Susan Vigeo, Donald Dejean

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

Guests: Zach Hagar, Herman Fuselier, Landon Boudreaux

It was determined a quorum was present.

Chairman Seth Robin opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed the board at 10:03 AM.

Public Comments:

Adoption of February 24, 2026, Regular Board Meeting Minutes: A motion was made to accept the February 24, 2026, board meeting minutes as submitted by Kevin Doucet and seconded by Lena Charles. The motion was carried without objection.

February 2026 Financial Report: Candace P. Haynes provided a brief overview of the financials, highlighting revenues and expenditures. Thurman Johnson made a motion to accept the financial report. Chelsey Sharplin seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

SLED CD Renewal: After discussion, Daniel Lyons made a motion to renew the CD at Washington State Bank at 3.85% for a 12-month term by recommendation of the Executive Committee. Lena Charles seconded the motion, and it carried without objection.

Board Reports:

SLED Executive Committee: Bill Rodier explained that the Executive Committee minutes include additional items—such as SLED Business Center tenant matters, the LBIA grant, Opelousas Walmart utilities, and culinary program considerations—that are not yet ready for full Board action but are shared to keep all members informed of emerging topics.

In response to a question regarding tenant-related income loss, Mr. Rodier confirmed that the \$450 per month from Anchored Scholars has been lost. He further noted that Legacy EMS may downsize but could retain some space for remote work and use of the video conferencing room, with a final decision expected within a week.

CSLED: Bill Rodier highlighted strong momentum at the Equine Sales Facility, managed by Wendy Fryer, noting that 2026 represents the first fully “on-track” year following an initial learning curve. He reported increased activity at the facility, including electronic billboard campaigns throughout Acadiana, a rise in event leads, holiday markets, and overall higher utilization.

Mr. Rodier indicated that a forthcoming discussion with C-SLED will address whether the current contracted or part-time management structure remains sufficient, or if adjustments may be necessary as the volume and complexity of operations continue to grow.

In response to a question regarding Derby Day, he noted that SLED may incur minor additional costs, such as an estimated \$400 cleaning fee for the facility, which are expected to be minimal.

ODDD: Lena Charles reported that 2026 is expected to be a “landmark year” for the Opelousas Downtown Development District. She noted that construction and renovation efforts are underway at several catalyst sites, including the South Park community center, where groundwork began approximately one month prior, and the ongoing library renovation, which has already seen significant progress.

Ms. Charles also highlighted the successful inaugural Millburn Paxton Relay held at the upgraded track, emphasizing the broader vision of investing in youth and enhancing quality of life. She noted that additional track events are planned, including an upcoming Catholic school’s relay expected to bring more than 400 students to Opelousas.

She further reported that downtown Opelousas continues to experience private investment, with a new catalyst project anticipated to open by May.

LBIA Grant Update: Bill Rodier provided an update on the LBIA Grant, highlighting recent technology upgrades to the meeting space funded through the grant. He reported that two new cameras and a large television have been installed, and the previous television has been relocated to another area. The system includes advanced tracking capabilities, allowing cameras and microphones to automatically focus on and follow the individual speaking, thereby enhancing the quality of hybrid and remote meetings. Initial testing indicated strong audio pickup throughout the room and clear video quality during virtual meetings. It was noted that a technician will return to complete final programming of the tracking features. Overall, the project is nearing completion and is expected to significantly improve SLED’s capacity for professional and virtual engagement.

Walmart PILOT Update: Bill Rodier reported that Walmart’s contracted attorney and internal legal team have reviewed the documents and are in agreement, with only minor, non-substantive revisions proposed. The remaining items required for full execution are the signatures of Parish President Bellard and Walmart. It was noted that the PILOT is expected to be discussed at the upcoming St.

Landry Parish Council meeting prior to the Parish President's signature. Mr. Rodier indicated that no significant issues are anticipated from this discussion and characterized it as largely procedural. He further expressed that the agreement is in its final approval stage and is expected to be fully executed by the end of the month.

Parish Site Development Focus: Bill Rodier led a discussion regarding Parish site development priorities, focusing on the identification of key site(s) outside of Opelousas for targeted development efforts in 2026. He explained that while SLED will continue to carry out its core economic development functions, the Board must determine whether to prioritize a downtown catalyst project or adopt a broader, parish-wide site strategy. The Board reviewed existing Louisiana Economic Development (LED) certified sites in Port Barre, including Port Barre Central and Port Barre East, as examples of how site certification enhances visibility to prospective businesses and state partners. Mr. Rodier outlined both the strengths of these sites—such as rail and highway access, elevation, and available utilities—as well as emerging constraints, including nearby food-grade storage operations and increasing residential development, which may limit certain industrial uses. He further noted that the Highway 190 corridor between Port Barre and Krotz Springs continues to present strong potential for heavy industrial development, including opportunities for significant investment and high-wage job creation. The purpose of the discussion was to educate the Board on site competitiveness and to begin narrowing the focus toward one or more priority sites for future development and marketing efforts.

SLED Working Session Update: Bill Rodier provided an update on the recent working session, noting that the site development discussion presented was a direct result of priorities identified by the Board during that session. He explained that Board members had expressed interest in expanding SLED's impact beyond Opelousas, leading to an increased focus on a parish-wide site development strategy. Mr. Rodier outlined several key focus areas emerging from the working session, including parish site development, entrepreneurship and small business support, a potential culinary program partnership with SOWELA/SoLAcc, and the development of a podcast/video-cast initiative. He noted that for the podcast effort, staff are in the process of engaging contractors and plans to begin by interviewing Board members to refine content and delivery prior to a broader rollout. He emphasized the importance of not only creating content but also actively marketing and distributing it to maximize community impact. Mr. Rodier further stated that these priorities will continue to be addressed in Executive Committee discussions and that the Board will receive regular progress updates, at least bi-monthly, throughout 2026.

OU EDI Economic Development Basic Course Update: Victoria Mott provided an update on her recent attendance at the Basic Economic Development Course in New Orleans. She reported that the training covered core principles of economic development, including ethics, business retention and expansion, workforce development, strategic planning and research, and real estate and site development. The course incorporated case studies and collaborative learning with primarily in-state peers, allowing for practical, real-world application of the material. Ms. Mott noted that the experience enhanced her understanding of how communities attract investment, build partnerships, and implement sustainable economic development strategies applicable to St. Landry Parish. Mr. Rodier added that having staff present these takeaways is intentional, as it supports the development

of communication and public speaking skills, which are essential for both professional growth and the overall effectiveness of SLED.

Upcoming Events: Brittany Cretchain provided an overview of upcoming community and business events. She noted that the Student Arts Expo will be held on April 11 in Downtown Opelousas Square, sponsored by OVB/OBBP and the Acadiana Center for the Arts, marking the event’s third year. A Derby-themed networking luncheon, focusing on the power of collaboration, is scheduled for May 1 at the Equine Center; the event will include a brief speaker and primarily emphasize networking, with invitations and additional details forthcoming. During Economic Development Week (May 4–8), SLED plans to host two Lunch-and-Learn sessions and a breakfast event aimed at business and economic development stakeholders. On April 28, SLED and the LSBDC at UL will resume the business development series with an “AI Coffee Talk” session from 8:00–9:00 a.m. at the SLED office. Ms. Cretchain also mentioned the Easter Market scheduled for this Saturday, along with other spring events such as Healthy Kids Day at North City Park, where OGH will serve as the official healthcare provider. Board members requested that calendar invitations and email notices be sent to facilitate scheduling and participation.

Board Comments: Herman Fuselier reported that the past several months have been strong for tourism, largely due to Mardi Gras activities, which drew approximately 40,000 attendees over four days in Eunice.

With no further matters to be brought before the board, a motion to adjourn was made Candace Papillion Haynes and seconded by Chelsey Sharplin. The motion passed without objection, and the meeting adjourned at 11:11 PM.

SECRETARY:

CHAIRMAN:

Chelsey Sharplin

Seth Robin