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LAFAYETTE PARISH COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

BROUSSARD • CARENCRO • DUSON • SCOTT • YOUNGVILLE • LAFAYETTE CITY-PARISH CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT • LAFAYETTE PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 15, 2023 MEETING – LAFAYETTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (LEDA)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Jan-Scott Richard, COG President & Scott Mayor, called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

2. SILENT PRAYER & PLEDGE

Mayor Richard offered a silent prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. INTRODUCTIONS

All in attendance were introduced. All COG entities were in attendance, with the exception of Youngsville.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

A motion was offered and seconded to approve the minutes of the COG meeting of August 16, 2023. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. APPROVAL OF TRESURER'S REPORT

A motion was offered and seconded to adopt the Treasurer's Report with a balance of \$1,049.98. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

- a. **DISCUSSION:** Economic Development Update – Mandi Mitchell, LEDA President & CEO
Ms. Mitchell offered a presentation with updates specific to LEDA, offerings to Lafayette Parish, and the municipalities within Lafayette Parish. She introduced the LEDA staff and identified each of their assignments of representation for municipalities in Lafayette Parish. Ms. Mitchell highlighted LEDA's new strategic vision and mission, with focus on attracting top talent with Lafayette Parish as a location of choice. She touted Lafayette Parish as a leader in economic initiatives and innovation, and underscored the importance of diversifying the economy to provide equitable access to related opportunities. Ms. Mitchell noted that Lafayette Parish has the highest concentration of oil and gas jobs in the state, so LEDA is concerned about diversification of the economy to help complement and bolster other sectors of the economy. She discussed the unique niche that exists in the Parish in the aviation industry, particularly involving maintenance and repair of aircrafts, services and operations which are located in Lafayette Parish, with LEDA

seeking to expand on such business and industry. Ms. Mitchell provided an overview of LEDA's programs and services, as well as having explained how LEDA helps businesses attain as many benefits and incentives as possible. She shared information about LEDA's annual job fairs throughout the year, along with specific efforts to aid entrepreneurship. Ms. Mitchell applauded the attainment of the Louisiana Development Ready Communities designated by Broussard, Carencro, Lafayette, and Scott. She discussed retail attraction strategies and how LEDA will be working with the municipalities to develop these key strategies to reach shared goals. Additionally, she shared marketing strategies to help showcase Lafayette Parish and LEDA's approaches in that regard. Ms. Mitchell also reviewed programming for certified sites that meet certain criteria for companies seeking places to locate, and she also explained the need for addressing small and minority business development. She promoted partnerships with various community stakeholders and organizations, such as with Lafayette Parish School System, for purposes of workforce development and career readiness initiatives. Ms. Mitchell reported that none of Lafayette's core industries are forecasted for economic downturn and, again, offered the support of LEDA to municipalities in the expansion of any of the endeavors she discussed this evening. Along with sharing other annual economic metrics for Lafayette Parish, Ms. Mitchell answered questions posed by those in attendance and thanked all officials for participating in this evening's meeting and presentation.

b. **UPDATES:** State Officials / Parish Elected Officials

League of Women Voters – Ms. Jo Ann Lejeune encouraged everyone to go out and vote.

SLEMCO – Wayne Phillips shared that SLEMCO was ranked 7th best in 2021 and 9th best in 2022 among public/co-op utilities in the country.

c. **MUNICIPALITY UPDATES**

- i. **Broussard** – Broussard Fire Chief Bryan Champagne gave an update on the City of Broussard's redevelopment project, the West Fairfield Drive project construction, the purchase of a complex of buildings to accommodate public safety, to include Public Works, Police, and Fire Departments. He announced that the Broussard Christmas Parade would be held on December 2, 2023.
- ii. **Carencro** – City Manager Purvis Morrison reported various construction updates in the City of Carencro, along with infrastructure improvements that are underway, but signaled considerable disruption to many of those processes, which he forecasted as being temporary in nature. He shared that Carencro secured a \$3.4 million grant for gas line improvements. Mr. Morrison celebrated several business openings that are on the horizon in Carencro, along with forthcoming positive development of the much-needed sewer plant in Carencro.
- iii. **Duson** – Mayor Johnny Thibodeaux thanked LEDA for their insight on retail strategies and noted sales tax revenue increases in the Town of Duson over the past four (4) years. He discussed improvements to Duson Community Center and parks/playground equipment. Mayor Thibodeaux shared that Duson officials are currently working on the 2024 budget and recently gave a 4% cost of living adjustment in salaries and increased insurance benefits for their employees. He reported updates on the \$6 million roundabout project that will soon be underway, along with information on water enrichment projects and initiatives, as well as repairs to roads and bridges in the Town. Mayor Thibodeaux congratulated the City of Scott for their new veterans' memorial.

- iv. **Lafayette Consolidated Government** – Lafayette Parish Councilman Bryan Tabor gave brief updates for LCG. In lieu of Mayor-President Josh Guillory, Doyle Boudreaux reported a number of updates, to include the completion of fire flushing truck program and strides toward fixing issues within the realm of Parish fire protection. He also gave an update on the Duson roundabout project, as well as projects benefitting the Parks, Arts, Culture & Recreation Department assets, especially at Brown and Moore Parks. Mr. Boudreaux discussed the Find My Home app(lication), along with road projects, such as the Louisiana Avenue Extension, Lake Farm Road, Cue Road, and North Saint Antoine Street projects. He highlighted that there is a lot more cohesion between the municipalities and how that has bolstered various performance metrics.
- v. **Lafayette Parish School Board** – School Board Member Hannah Mason encouraged outreach to school board members, regardless of the districts you live in. She reported on stipends that were recently given to teachers and support staff, with the goal being to continue raising teachers’ salaries. Ms. Mason shared details on forthcoming changes to uniforms and the new weapons detection systems in schools to strengthen safety on campuses. She stated that test scores on the rise and that LPSS was ranked as a top school district in the state with 30,000 or more students and she highlighted five (5) consecutive years of Systemwide growth.
- vi. **Scott** –Mayor Jan-Scott Richard reported that the football fields will be AstroTurf-ed, starting with Acadiana High School’s football field and he shared reflections on the dedication of the new veterans’ memorial in the City of Scott. He thanked the Scott City Council for appropriating funding for that project. Mayor Richard announced that Apollo Road should be fully open for traffic in early December and that the City of Scott was able to pass a sewer sales tax in the primary election for construction of a new sewer plant. He noted that a hotel/motel tax was also passed, which will help address quality of life improvements. Mayor Richard also provided information on the new leadership development program in the City of Scott, called Envision Scott. He closed by identifying the new businesses that recently opened throughout the City.

7. OTHER MATTERS

- a. As an afterthought, Ms. Mitchell encouraged amplifying programs that public schools are offering in Lafayette Parish. She shared the observation that Lafayette Parish is not losing its population, as other areas of the state are experiencing, so she suggested that something is being done right in Lafayette Parish. Ms. Mason also encouraged officials to promote the efforts of public schools. It was stated by someone in attendance who had recently attended the Civic Cup award presentation, where attendees at that event noted the same observations as shared by Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Mason.
- b. Mayor Richard thanked the staff and officials and staff from LEDA for hosting the meeting and providing the meal. He reminded everyone that the next COG meeting will be held on Thursday, February 15, 2024 and that the meeting will be hosted by the Town of Duson.

8. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.