

PROCEEDINGS OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TAKEN AT A REGULAR MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2026, AT 8:30 AM, AT CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ACADIANA, 405 ST. JOHN STREET, LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

Present: Emily Hamner, Rex Moroux, Jaci Russo, Denice Skinner, Jeremiah Supple, and Melinda Taylor.

Absent: Kim Ledet.

The meeting was held on the campus of Catholic Charities of Acadiana on St. John Street, in conjunction with a gathering of the Urban Revitalization and Development Committee of One Acadiana. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM by Chair Jaci Russo. The Chair reminded attendees that there would be an opportunity for public comment at the end of the meeting regarding any DDA-related topic or any specific action item on the agenda. Public comment cards were made available, and comments were limited to three minutes per item.

Board Materials for Approval

Skinner moved, with Hamner's second, to approve the Minutes of the February 18, 2026 Board Meeting and to accept the 2025 Year-to-Date Budget-to-Actuals for review. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing the Execution of the First Amendment to the Agreement for Environmental Maintenance and Supplemental Safety Services with Block by Block, Inc.

Chief Executive Officer Kevin Blanchard provided context on the resolution, explaining that the DDA contracts with Block by Block (Mydatt Services, Inc.) to provide uniformed ambassador services throughout the downtown service area. He noted that the First Amendment extends the agreement through December 31, 2026, establishes a revised monthly flat fee, updates the banked hour valuation, and expands the service area to include the Catholic Charities campus area. He explained that the expansion is funded entirely by Catholic Charities, with no DDA millage revenues used to support services outside the downtown service area, and that Catholic Charities' participation proportionately reduces shared program overhead costs for the DDA. He noted that from a legal perspective, the arrangement produces a direct public benefit to the DDA.

Hamner moved, with Taylor's second, to adopt the Resolution Authorizing the Chair of the Board of Directors to Execute the First Amendment to the Agreement for Environmental Maintenance and Supplemental Safety Services with Block by Block, Inc. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing the Execution of an Agreement for Ambassador Services with Catholic Charities of Acadiana

Blanchard introduced the resolution, noting that it authorizes an agreement under which Catholic Charities of Acadiana will fund the extension of ambassador services to the Catholic Charities campus and an approximately 15-block surrounding area generally bounded by Voorhies Street to the south, Cameron Street to the north, St. Antoine Street to the west, and Pierce Street to the east. The DDA's role is that of a program administrator and pass-through entity. He noted that Block by Block carries liability insurance covering its full network of cities, and that the DDA's obligations to Catholic Charities are limited to providing advance notice in the event of cancellation of the overall contract and to passing quarterly payments to Block by Block.

Kim Boudreaux, representing Catholic Charities of Acadiana, addressed the board and guests. She described the scope of services provided on the St. John Street campus, including street outreach, a hygiene center, the St. Joseph Diner (serving approximately 700 meals per day), shelter services for men and women, intensive case management, a behavioral health clinic operated in partnership with a psychiatric nurse practitioner, and mail services for individuals without a fixed address. She noted that the shelter operates at capacity each night, with approximately 50 individuals turned away daily due to limited capacity. She described the broader context of the area's homeless services landscape, including the loss of approximately 40 percent of regional homeless shelter beds in recent years, a resulting increase in the unsheltered population, and a \$1 million loss in state funding following a line-item veto based on a mischaracterization of the organization's services. She described the challenges created by well-intentioned but uncoordinated charitable activities in the area and explained that the

ambassador program would provide a consistent, professionally managed presence to address environmental conditions on and around the campus. She expressed appreciation for the DDA partnership and noted Catholic Charities' commitment to move forward with funding the program without waiting for outside sources.

Taylor moved, with Moroux's second, to adopt the Resolution Authorizing the Chair of the Board of Directors to Execute an Agreement for Ambassador Services with Catholic Charities of Acadiana. The motion passed unanimously.

CEO Update

Blanchard welcomed new board member Jeremiah Supple, who had been appointed by the City Council the previous evening and was present for his first meeting. Blanchard reported that the DDA had submitted a memorandum in opposition to a proposed zoning ordinance that would permit a daiquiri shop in the downtown area, citing concerns about public order and nightlife management in the urban core. He noted that a final council vote was expected on March 24th and that discussions regarding a potential compromise remained ongoing. He also reported that the Council was expected to ratify the DDA's previously approved budget amendment on that same date. Blanchard previewed the DDA's ongoing work to initiate a Downtown-Urban Core Redevelopment Plan in partnership with LCG and the City Council. He noted that a field of interest fund had been established at the Community Foundation of Acadiana to support the effort, with institutional backing from the University of Louisiana, LITA, LCDC, Ochsner, and others, and that the matter was tentatively expected to be introduced at the March 24th City Council meeting.

Director Update

Director of Development and Planning Rachel Holland reported that the DDA remains on track to relocate its offices to 207 Vermilion Street, at the corner of Vermilion and Buchanan Streets, in the April-May timeframe. She noted the new space would house DDA and DLU staff as well as the Downtown Ambassadors and their equipment, with both indoor and outdoor storage. She updated the board on ongoing streetscape improvements, including painting of street furniture by the ambassadors, and noted that new trash cans are anticipated to be installed along Jefferson Street, in the parks, and on adjacent side streets in the coming month.

DLU Update

Downtown Lafayette Unlimited Executive Director Jessica Hauerwas reported on recent and upcoming programming downtown. She noted a successful Downtown Live event the previous weekend and highlighted several activities scheduled for the upcoming weekend, including Patty in the Park, Art Walk, and the Students Arts Expo, which would include the unveiling of a mural by artist Dirk Guidry at 12:00 PM Saturday, produced in partnership with the Acadiana Center for the Arts and the City of Lafayette.

Public Comment

No public comment cards were submitted.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.