

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM (LSM)
NEW ORLEANS JAZZ MUSEUM AT THE OLD U.S. MINT
400 ESPLANADE AVENUE
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2025
12:00 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Benjamin Dupuy, Courtney LeBlanc, Darryl Gissel, Florence Jumonville, Kaitlyn Palmer, Karl Connor, Lisa Ballay, Malcolm Hodnett, Mary Coulon, Phillip Albert, R. Duncan Brown, Suzanne Perlis, Thelma French, Tiffany Adler, Wendy Lodrig.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bunnie Cannon, Julio Guichard, Nick Mueller, Sandy Shilstone.

LSM STAFF: Amanda Smith, Becky Mackie, Chris Cook, Cody Scallions, Damond Francois, Danny Kadar, Greg Lambousy, Jeff Anding, Joyce Miller, Julia George Moore, Lisa Black, Nicole Coleman, Patrick Burns, Steven Maklansky, Travis Wagupack, Wayne Phillips.

OTHERS PRESENT: Jason Strada, Kristin Shannon.

A quorum was present.

1. **Call to Order** – Wendy Lodrig called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.
2. **Adoption of the Agenda** – Darryl Gissel motioned to adopt the agenda. The motion was seconded by Phillip Albert and passed unanimously.
3. **Adoption of Minutes from the May19, 2025, Meeting** – Benjamin Dupuy called for a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by R. Duncan Brown and passed unanimously.
4. **Chairman's Report** – Before beginning official business, Wendy Lodrig asked the board to take a moment to remember and honor board member Jay Batt, who faithfully served for more than three years. During his tenure, Mr. Batt made significant contributions, including serving as Board Vice Chair, leading the Museum Director Search Committee, and actively participating as a member of the Irby Finance Committee until his passing on May 19, 2025. The board paused for a moment of remembrance in tribute to his service and dedication.

Wendy Lodrig acknowledged all museum staff for their efforts in the successful opening of the *Living with Hurricanes* exhibit. She noted that she attended the ribbon cutting and the symposium held on August 29, 2025, and expressed appreciation to the board members who were present, as well as to the board as a whole for their continued support.

Wendy Lodrig informed the board that she completed the Audit Follow-Up Checklist and recommendations issued on May 8, 2023. She explained that it served as a progress report on the implementation of those recommendations, and she confirmed that the report was submitted within the required timeframe.

Wendy reported that the LSM Board now comprises five standing committees, with Governance and Education the newest additions. She noted that, soon, each committee will adopt a charter outlining its purpose, meeting cadence, and alignment with the board's vision and mission..

Wendy Lodrig informed the board that the Governance Committee has been asked to begin accepting nominations for the Vice Chair position.

5. **Director's Report** - Becky Mackie introduced new employee Amanda Smith, the LSM's Budget Manager. She noted that with Amanda's assistance, management will provide the board with expanded budget information that better informs on the Irby trust for the new fiscal year.

Becky reported that the Presbytère received a TripAdvisor recognition, ranking in the top 10% of attractions worldwide and elevating the museum's global profile. This recognition has prompted a review of marketing strategies, with increased focus on digital promotional tools and online presence. Jeff Andy and his team are exploring opportunities to expand social media engagement and digital marketing efforts.

a. **Capital Projects –**

- i. **Living with Hurricanes Upgrades** - The successful reopening of the exhibit, which was completed on a compressed development timeline, was noted. Enhancements include a larger theater, and a new interactive wind simulator, and more recent information on rebuilding and flood protection, while historical materials from the original exhibit were retained. Additional oral histories further enrich the visitor experience. A Banksy artwork was integrated to engage a broader community audience interested in post-Katrina recovery art. Additionally, the hallway installation features a full series of before-and-after images, made possible through the work of Steven Maklansky and the *Times-Picayune*.

Madame John - The collections team, in collaboration with the Office of Cultural Development and museum curators, is identifying preservation priorities, determining which items remaining from recent restoration work should be retained and which may be appropriately discarded. The team has begun moving selected items to the collection facility for storage.

STEM Gallery - Planning for the STEM Gallery expansion is underway, supported by Entergy funding for additional interactive installations. The team is currently compiling cost estimates.

Presbytère - The contract for the second-floor air handler replacement was awarded to Ashley Smith. Bids for fire suppression installation are expected to open within the next two weeks.

The Irby Finance Committee – Future consideration will be given for work on the rear of the Pontalba, which is not visible from the street, where brickwork requires tuckpointing. We are coordinating with the residents of the neighboring properties to gain access and intend to gather cost estimates to present to the Irby Finance Committee.

EDA - Improvements at the New Orleans Jazz Museum will begin soon, supported by \$855,000 in federal funding. The project includes installation of pedestals and statues, eliminating split levels on the grounds for improved accessibility, the addition of a café element, and construction of a permanent outdoor stage with all necessary electrical and related infrastructure.

b. **Public Programs –** Recent work focused on the successful reopening events for the *Living with Hurricanes* exhibit. Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony, a symposium was held at Le Petit Théâtre, which graciously provided the venue at no cost. The symposium featured famed local news reporter Norm Robinson and a panel of current and past state and private leaders who reflected on the hurricane and the recovery process. Approximately 500 visitors attended opening day to experience the updated galleries and new features.

Becky Mackie highlighted upcoming programs, including *Little Stompers* at the New Orleans Jazz Museum, open to the public with the next session starting in October. She also shared information on beading classes for older participants and creative learning with music for young children at the Cabildo. Additionally, this weekend's New Orleans Riverfest, hosted by the Jazz Museum, featured a second line procession from Jackson Square to the museum. Becky also highlighted Capitol Park's Discovery Day Program, which hosted summer programming for families and young people.

- i. **America 250** - Next year will feature an expanded rollout of America 250 activities. As part of the LSM's contribution to the state's hosting of public programs around America 250, Educational Travel Trunks will be launched to schools statewide. This project, coordinated by Chris Cook from the Education Department in collaboration with state libraries and tourism partners, will provide activity trunks with teacher resources and tactile facsimiles that can be checked out by schools to bring the America 250 story into classrooms.

The *Galvez, Louisiana and the American Revolution* exhibit will open in early March at the Cabildo. The exhibit will highlight the allies who used New Orleans and Louisiana as a gateway to support the colonists during the American Revolution. The Lafayette exhibit will remain on the second floor while the Galvez exhibit occupies the first floor, and efforts are underway to secure original documents from the National Archives.

- c. **Ticket Hub** – Becky Mackie reported the successful launch of the Museum Tickets & Information center at the Lower Pontalba, noting strong collaboration from staff and the Friends of the Cabildo. Jeff Anding acknowledged Jason Stroda's team and explained the Center's role as a visible, partner-operated hub for Jackson Square ticket sales.

Early results show moderate but promising activity.

Marketing – Jeff Anding provided marketing updates. Media coverage of the Katrina 20th anniversary generated 27 nationwide mentions, reaching 25.7 million viewers with an advertising value of \$238,000 and 89% positive/neutral tone.

Upcoming media opportunities will focus on the Michalopoulos exhibition in November, the E.D. White House bicentennial celebration on November 15, and the *Young Men of Illinois* exhibition.

- d. **Fundraising** - Becky Mackie reported that Director of Development, Anise Fiello, has resigned, and recruitment is underway. Fundraising was a key topic at the first Education Committee meeting, and Julia George Moore prepared a fundraising guidance document for board members, outlining ethics requirements, prohibited sources (e.g., lobbyists), coordination protocols, the "Cabela's Rule" on public resource donations, and rules regarding naming rights in Louisiana.

6. **Governance Committee**

- a. **Amendments to the Bylaws** – R. Duncan Brown reported that the Governance Committee met on August 15. The meeting covered updates to the bylaws and the Vice Chair vacancy. The committee reviewed the current bylaws with Julia George Moore in attendance to identify outdated language and ensure compliance with Act 450 (SB210) and other relevant laws. Recommended changes were presented to the board for consideration.
Karl Connor motioned to adopt the changes to the bylaws as presented to the board. The motion was seconded by Suzanne Perlis and passed unanimously.

b. **Vice Chair Vacancy** - The Governance Committee will accept nominations to fill the Vice Chair position, with a suggested cutoff date of November 24, prior to the next board meeting. Board members were encouraged to submit nominations to Duncan Brown, Becky Mackie, Wendy Lodrig, or Nicole Coleman. An email reminder will be sent following the meeting to facilitate submissions.

Duncan Brown shared that management will develop tools to ensure all members have the information needed to remain in compliance throughout the year with board member training and disclosures.

7. **Irby Finance** - Darryl Gissel began by thanking Becky Mackie and Wendy Lodrig for their work with the Irby Committee, particularly in managing the lower Pontalba property's income. He reported that all commercial units are 100% leased. There are five residential vacancies, four on the third floor and one on the second floor. Darryl noted that a few action items would be brought before the board for consideration.

a. **Commercial Updates** – Darryl Gissel informed the committee that at 537 St. Ann, one of the newest commercial tenants, Rhonda Findley, was scheduled to begin paying rent on September 1. Due to delays in completing the bathroom renovation, the Irby Committee recommends abating rent until September 15. The tenant requested a full month's abatement.

Karl Connor motioned to abate ½ month of tenant rent at 537 St Ann for the month of September 2025. The motion was seconded by Kaitlyn Palmer and passed unanimously.

Irby Commercial Policy and Procedures Manual – Darryl Gissel informed the committee that, in keeping with efforts to streamline operations and comply with new state laws, the Irby Policies and Procedures Manual for commercial tenants was reviewed. Revisions were made based on recommendations from management and those revisions were shared with the board.

Karl Connor motioned to approve the changes to the Commercial Policy and Procedure Manual as reflected in the materials shared with the board. The motion was seconded by Malcolm Hodnett and passed unanimously.

Comprehensive Usage Plan - Darryl Gissel presented the comprehensive plan for commercial and residential units. Becky Mackie noted that the plan has been modified to align with the Commercial Policy Manual, and residential references, previously absent, have been added. The plan has been reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee with minor spelling edits pending.

Thelma French motioned to ratify the Executive Committee's action and approve the changes to the Comprehensive Usage Plan. The motion was seconded by Karl Connor and passed unanimously.

b. **Residential Update** - Darryl Gissel stated that a vote is needed to approve a lease for a unit on the third floor. The monthly rent will be \$3,245, which is in line with targeted rental rates.

R. Duncan Brown moved to approve the lease for the third-floor unit at a monthly rent of \$3,245. The motion was seconded by Thelma French and passed unanimously.

c. **Property Management** - Becky Mackie stated that the state issued a request for information for leasing and property management services in compliance with state procurement regulations. The McEnery firm was selected and approved at the Executive Committee meeting, authorizing staff to move into negotiations with the firm. The Director and DCRT attorneys are incorporating the proposal language into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement. A meet-and-greet session took place with McEnery representatives, management and the Irby Finance Committee. Negotiations are progressing toward a professional oversight arrangement for Irby Trust

property management, with counter-proposals prepared on commission terms for commercial leases and construction oversight thresholds. The next meeting is scheduled for September 25.

d. **Financial Statements** - Becky Mackie informed the committee that the Irby Trust has demonstrated strong financial results, reflecting effective property management and investment strategies. Highlights include: 2.8% year-over-year rental income growth despite apartment preparation and vacancy periods; a 0.59% increase in investment income from strategic CD investments and improved yields; \$816,000 in capital improvements completed with only \$522,000 in cash required beyond current earnings; and five residential vacancies remaining on the upper floors.

Becky Mackie reported that additional funds will be moved into CD investments, a \$750,000 CD purchase that was previously approved. She noted an accounts receivable balance of nearly \$174,000, a high amount, which includes unresolved pandemic-era waivers that the legislative auditor determined should not have been extended. The goal is to resolve this balance within the year. While much of this balance may ultimately be written off, approximately \$30,000 is due from a tenant who vacated a commercial space without paying rent. The state-required debt recovery process is being followed for this recent balance.

8. **Collections Committee** – Florence Jumonville reported on collections and cultural acquisitions:

Mardi Gras Collection: Significant acquisition was made, cultivated over decades by Wayne Phillips, including Queen materials from the 1906 carnival reign, donated by Pointe Coupee Parish Library. After 20+ years of relationship-building, the complete collection—including crown, jewelry, and costumes—was donated to the museum. Trust-building involved multiple visits and community leader support. The connection to the Lindy Boggs family adds historical significance.

Routine Collections Activity: 101 deaccessions were completed, generating funds for strategic purchases. An \$1,800 concert poster collection was purchased using auction proceeds.

Incoming Loans: Items received for the Billy Cannon exhibit, Michalopoulos show, and Storyville music displays were discussed.

Conservation Efforts: Treatments completed were for fire-damaged items at the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

Malcolm Hodnett moved to accept the Collections Committee recommendation for acquisitions and loans. The motion was seconded by Suzanne Perlis and passed unanimously.

Mary Coulon moved to accept the Collections Committee recommendation for deaccessions. The motion was seconded by Suzanne Perlis and passed unanimously.

Florence Jumonville informed the board of revisions to the Collecting Statement, which is to be reviewed every other year. The committee made revisions to the existing statement, primarily replacing pronouns such as 'we,' 'us,' and 'our' with the full name of the museum or the abbreviation 'LSM' for clarity and professionalism. Additionally, language was added that emphasizes the importance of collecting current material, including ephemera, which, while not intended for permanent retention when created, is considered raw materials of history.

Suzanne Perlis moved to accept the revisions made to the Collecting Statement. The motion was seconded by Benjamin Dupuy and passed unanimously.

9. **Education Committee** - Suzanne Perlis reported that the newly formed Education Committee held its first meeting on August 6th. The committee reviewed its goals and a draft committee charter that will be presented at the next board meeting. The meeting focused on brainstorming ways for the

board to support the education staff and act as a liaison. The committee looks forward to sharing more information about educational programming at future board meetings.

- 10. E.D. White** – Malcolm reported that in June, the first official use of the new kayak launch facility—developed through a cooperative endeavor agreement with Lafourche Parish Government—took place. He noted that the new deck has been completed at the Visitor Center. On November 15, the site will host a bicentennial celebration of the house, originally built in the early 1800s and later expanded through multiple additions. The event will take place on Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., featuring crafts, food, and community activities.
- 11. Louisiana Civil Rights Museum Advisory Board** – Karl Connor reported that the Louisiana Civil Rights Museum Advisory Board elected former New Orleans Mayor Sidney Barthelemy as its new chair. The museum is closed for construction at the Convention Center and will reopen October 7. A two-year anniversary scholarly event is planned. Updates include the *Pioneer Skies* exhibit being loaned to England Airpark in Alexandria, a Boeing-funded educational film in production, and preparations for a docent training program on September 23.
- 12. Exhibits** – Wayne Phillips reported that the exhibition *Origins of New Orleans Black Carnival: The Story of the Illinois Clubs* will open on January 29, 2026, at the Presbytère. The exhibition highlights the Illinois Club, founded in 1895 and recognized as the oldest Black social club in the U.S., as well as the Young Men Illinois Club, established in 1926. Both organizations remain active today, presenting cotillions and debutantes and maintaining significant roles in Black Carnival society. Wayne Phillips noted that the centennial of the Young Men Illinois Club provides an ideal opportunity to bring these organizations' histories to public attention. The exhibition is being developed in collaboration with guest curators Dr. Kim Basdeville (Dillard University) and Kelly Parker (author), with guidance from a community planning committee. A fundraising campaign has been launched, and early interest from supporters appears promising. Steven Maklansky shared plans for the exhibition opening at the Cabildo on March 7, 2026, focusing on Bernardo de Gálvez and Louisiana's pivotal contributions to the American Revolution. Gálvez's victories at Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola ensured control of the Mississippi River and prevented British plans to seize New Orleans—decisive actions that ultimately supported the success at Yorktown and paved the way for the Louisiana Purchase. The exhibition, created in partnership with historian Stephen Kling, will adapt his prior work while placing greater emphasis on Louisiana. It will include items from the museum's collection, loans from Spain, and detailed reproductions of Spanish attire, some requiring over 300 hours of hand-stitched work. The education department is also seeking funding to produce videos highlighting other figures who contributed to the cause. Maklansky noted support from Spanish cultural institutions and emphasized that this exhibition will set the stage for the museum's broader America 250 programming. Joyce Miller reported that she is collaborating with the Michalopoulos Gallery on the exhibition *Mystical Expressionism*, opening November 22 on the third floor of the Cabildo, following the LMF Gala. The exhibition will feature 60–70 paintings, including three new large works, and will highlight Louisiana architecture and neighborhoods as reflected in Michalopoulos's art. A 50–60 page publication will accompany the exhibition, focusing on architectural forms and styles.
- 13. New Orleans Jazz Museum** – Greg Lambousy reported that Herb Alpert has pledged \$1.1 million to complete the museum's Education Center, which will include a world-class recording studio. Construction documents for the build-out will be finalized in October, supporting ongoing programs in music education, engineering, marketing, and licensing. This is in conjunction with the EDA project, funded by a \$855,000 million federal grant, \$225,000 in state funds, and matched by Herb Alpert's \$5 million total contribution. Additionally, Priscilla Gordon donated \$100,000 in memory of her husband Nate Gordon to support the Education Center. Construction is expected to begin soon, including a permanent stage, landscaping, flagstone repair, sculpture garden, and utility hookups. The upcoming December 6 Gala will take place on the Esplanade side of the building to accommodate construction.

He also reported on recent and upcoming events: Riverfest, which concluded successfully, and Hispanic Heritage Month programs in collaboration with the Mexican Consulate, including balcony performances and events running through mid-October.

14. Louisiana Museum Foundation –

Kristin Shannon reported on fundraising and event planning related to the upcoming exhibitions and galas. She highlighted the success of Greg Lambousy in securing Herb Alpert Foundation matching grants for the Jazz Museum.

Details for the Founders Ball, the opening-night gala for the exhibition Michalopoulos Mystical Expressionism, were provided. Patrons at the \$1,700 level and above have until Friday to be included in the printed invitation. The event will feature performances by the Rebirth Brass Band and Tank from Tank and the Bangas, with a special tribute to artist James Michalopoulos, whose work has been featured in Jazz Fest posters.

Honorary co-chairs include Quint Davis and Tank, and honorees are Henry and Pat Shane. James Michalopoulos will receive the Gilded Palette Award from the Lieutenant Governor. The gala will begin at 7:00 p.m., with food, dancing, and red attire requested for attendees.

15. Capitol Park and Regional Museums –

Cody Scallions reported on programming and updates for the museum's satellite locations in Capitol Park and Patterson. Jennae Biddiscombe is excited to take on her new role as Division Director for the museums at Capitol Park, Patterson, Thibodaux and Natchitoches.

At the La. Sports Hall of Fame, the marketing team is preparing a Christmas promotion campaign in collaboration with the Natchitoches Christmas Festival magazine, and recruitment is underway for Jennae's replacement for this museum.

The curator position in Patterson has been filled, restoring staff in that location.

Programming highlights include the "Awesome Opossum" live-read event with discussion and craft activities, which drew 71 children. The Friends of Capitol Park were recognized in the Baton Rouge Parents Magazine Family Favorites, receiving second-place awards for Favorite Outreach Program and Favorite Community Event (Spanish Town Parade Party).

Capitol Park received three additional second-place honors from Family Magazine: Favorite Gift Shop, Favorite Family Entertainment Venue, and Favorite Museum in Baton Rouge. Scallions noted that this recognition reflects growing competitiveness and engagement in the local community.

16. Friends of the Cabildo –

Jason Stroda reported on upcoming America 250 programming. The 13th Annual Symposium in December will focus on Spanish colonial Louisiana and its role in the American Revolution, complimenting the museum's upcoming exhibition. This will be the first in-person symposium since COVID and will also include a hybrid format for online viewing. International speakers from Spain will participate, with live translation technology enabling real-time interpretation for non-English presentations.

Additionally, the Member Lecture Series will be featured on C-SPAN in October, highlighting John Durrell's work *Descendants Divided: Legacy of Louisiana Creole Families*.

Ghostly Galivant events will take place at the Cabildo on October 17 and 24, exploring Louisiana

history through the lens of saints and sinners through the state's cultural heritage.

17. Old Business – None

18. New Business – Becky Mackie reported on the 2025–2026 calendar of committee and board meetings. Committee chairs were asked to review the schedule and notify Nicole Coleman of any scheduling conflicts so adjustments can be made promptly, ensuring all members have updated calendars.

Wendy Lodrig encouraged board members to update their board binders with materials provided.

Kristin Shannon acknowledged Becky Mackie's leadership in fundraising, highlighting her efforts in securing new partners and a major grant from Entergy, which helped offset costs associated with the Katrina 20 initiative. The growing, effective collaboration between the Foundation, Friends of the Cabildo, and the State Museum was noted and appreciation was expressed for the staff, particularly Chris Cook, for assistance with grants. The museum currently has more active grant applications underway than ever, reflecting proactive planning for America 250 initiatives guided by leadership's long-term strategic planning.

19. Public Comments – None.

20. Adjourn – R. Duncan Brown motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Phillip Albert and passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Minutes Accepted

Sandra Shilstone, Secretary