

Vermilion Parish Tourist Commission

Minutes of September 20, 2023

Members Present: Bill Comeaux, Angela LeBlanc, Tammy Gordon, Karen Broussard, Cathy Burdette
Members Absent: Henri Deshotels (surgery), Victoria Bourque (work), Lindsay Watson (prior commitment),
Others Present: Alison Miller, Charlene Beckett (Abbeville Main Street)

The meeting was called to order and all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Commissioners reviewed the Agenda. There were no additions or changes.

Charlene Beckett provided the Commission with information on the Fall Sounds on the Square, Louisiana Spirits, "If Headstones Could Talk" Cemetery Tour and other events in downtown Abbeville.

A motion was made by Bill Comeaux, seconded by Angela LeBlanc, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of Wednesday, July 19, 2023, as written.

Alison Miller provided the financial information and bills to be paid. Mrs. Miller informed the Commission that sales tax revenue was slightly down but feels that the fall festivals and events will help bring in revenue in the next quarter. **A motion was made by Tammy Gordon, seconded by Angela LeBlanc, and unanimously carried to approve the Treasurer's Report and payment of bills as presented.**

Alison Miller provided an update on tourism activities and meetings she attended on behalf of the Commission. Mrs. Miller has spoken to Chris Bessard from Abbeville and he would like to be a Commissioner. Mrs. Miller will submit Mr. Bessard's name to the Vermilion Parish Police Jury and request he be appointed. Junior Auxiliary of Vermilion will be holding the Jack-o-Lantern Jubilee in downtown Abbeville on Halloween night. Mrs. Miller and her family will hand out candy from the Cultural Center porch. Mrs. Miller also stated that the Cultural Center will be a stamp spot for Abbeville's Christmas Stroll on December 7, 2023.

Alison Miller spoke on the issues with short term rentals and that other Acadiana CVBs are experiencing the same issues. Lafayette CVB suggested that she contact Louisiana Convention and Visitors Bureaus to obtain a contact at AirBnB and VRBO to have the names and addresses for the listings in our parish to send letters. There is a campground opening soon on Hwy.14 right outside of Abbeville. Once open, Mrs. Miller will obtain information and make sure they are remitting the two percent occupancy tax.

Alison Miller attended an informational meeting put on by Louisiane-Acadie for the 2025 Grand Reveil Acadien. The dates for the GRA will most likely be October 4-12, 2025, which could make the Opening Day the same weekend as the LA Cattle Festival. After this year's festival, Alison Miller will contact the Cattle Festival board to see if they have the 2025 dates. If the date will coincide, Abbeville and Vermilion Parish could possibly hold a GRA event on the Thursday of that week and going in with the Fall Sounds on the Square. **The Commission agreed to participate in the 2025 Grand Reveil Acadien in some capacity and will wait until a discussion could be held with the Cattle Festival Board.**

Alison Miller provided the Commission with information she received from Lafayette CVC regarding a Group Travel Leader FAM Tour coming through Acadiana in March 2024. The group of approximately 20 tour operators will come to Abbeville in the afternoon of March 1 then go to Crawfish Haven for a tour and a crawfish boil. After a discussion as to why they were only going to a small portion of our parish and if information on our parish could be provided, **a motion was made by Angela LeBlanc, seconded by Bill Comeaux, and unanimously carried to have Alison Miller provide sample itineraries and other information to the group and, if needed, spend up to \$200 to help defray the cost of the meal or entertainment at Crawfish Haven.**

Alison Miller asked for volunteers to serve on the Budget Committee. Bill Comeaux, Karen Broussard, Cathy Burdette and Tammy Gordon agreed to serve. Mrs. Miller will prepare a proposed 2024 Budget and send it to the Committee for review by the end of October. The committee agreed to a lunch meeting to discuss the proposed budget.

Tammy Gordon updated the Commission with a new way to purchase fresh shrimp. Text FRESH to 833-942-5537 and you'll receive information on boats with shrimp to sell.

Karen Broussard asked Angela LeBlanc about the Lockwood Restaurant in Gueydan. Mrs. LeBlanc provided information as well as information on the other restaurants in Gueydan. She also gave an update on activities occurring.

The next meeting of the Vermilion Parish Tourist Commission will be held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 3:30 pm at Vermilion Parish Tourist Commission.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Tammy Gordon, seconded by Cathy Burdette, and unanimously carried to adjourn.

Minutes taken and respectively submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alison Miller".

Alison Miller, VPTC Secretary