

PINE BLUFF ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

July 25, 2023

The regular meeting of the Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission was held on Tuesday, July 25, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. at the offices of the A&P Commission, 623 S. Main Street. This meeting was audibly recorded. These minutes are a summarization.

PRESENT:

Advertising and Promotion Commission

Mr. Glen Brown, Jr., Chair, Secretary-Treasurer (via teleconference)
Ms. Berinda Eugene, Vice Chair
Mr. Lloyd Holcomb, Jr. (via teleconference)
Ms. Rosie Pettigrew
Mr. Steven King
Mr. Jamie McAfee

Staff

Mrs. Sheri Storie, Executive Director
Mr. Jimmy Cunningham, Tourism Development Director
Mrs. Betty Brown, Recorder

Guests

Mr. Jesse Kearney, Attorney
Mr. I.C. Murrell, Pine Bluff Commercial
Mr. George Stepps, Compliance Auditor
Mr. Jack Foster
Mr. Ivan Whitfield, NAACP President
Mr. Albert King
Mr. Michael McCray
Ms. Marlette Boales
Ms. Tamika Williams and Logan Williams
Ms. Amahria Cross

Call to Order:

Brown called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

Brown asked for consideration of the minutes for the regular meeting of June 29, 2023. Holcomb moved to accept the minutes as presented. McAfee seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Brown then asked Kearney to present an Aramark update. Kearney did not receive any response from filing a reconsideration of judgment with Judge Wyatt. Kearney has since filed a notice of appeal and estimated that he would have more answers to the next step within 120 days.

Director's Report

Storie reported on taxes collected in June.

Storie informed the Commission that the approved grant funding to ASC for Augmented Reality

Installations, in the amount of \$19,250 would not be utilized. Therefore, that money would not be disbursed.

Storie and B. Brown have met with the City Collector Mr. Branigan Evans for the purpose of sharing information between the offices and establishing a continued relationship in collecting taxes and licensing.

Storie shared the plans of A&P partnering with Kenneth & Sandra Fisher for the Tour De Bluff, for September 8-9, 2023. A&P will provide entertainment in the Bistro of the UAPB Incubator on Friday evening.

Storie is partnering with Joy Blankenship to obtain updated professional tourism photographs for advertising and marketing purposes.

Storie spoke on the letter received from Mr. Ryan Watley regarding the funding for Go Forward Pine Bluff. They understand that the funding should not have been awarded and asked for A&P to reconsider their request. Storie provided a copy of the letter to each commissioner. Storie recommended that the Commission assign the money to the unallocated event funding line item. This way A&P could fund those future events directly.

Brown entertained a motion to move the funding to the unallocated event funding line item. McAfee made a motion to move the \$19,250 formerly GFPB funding to the unallocated event funding. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Pettigrew made a motion to move the unused grant funding from ASC/AI to the unallocated event funding line item. McAfee seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Marketing Committee – There has not been a meeting. Eugene anticipates a meeting will be scheduled within the next week.

Finance Committee – Storie presented the financial summary report.

Old Business

Storie presented an updated resolution for check signatures. The resolution's revision was the removal of Lawson, retaining Eugene as an additional signatory.

McAfee made a motion to approve the resolution to add Eugene to the check signatories. Pettigrew seconded. The motion passed with 6 votes. Eugene abstained.

New Business

Storie updated on the open position of the Public-At-Large member of the Commission. The selected person would fulfill the term of Lawson which expires October 31, 2025 and would be eligible to be reappointed. By law the position must be posted on the city website for 30 days before the closing. The applications received will be distributed to commissioners for review and consideration after the close of that 30-day period. Due to the timing of the open position posted on the city's website, Storie informed the Commission that applications should be ready for review by the September meeting.

Funding for the SE AR 84th District Fair- Home Economics & Horticulture division - Storie explained that the request comes as a result of the state's discontinuation of funding the fair that occurred in 2021. A&P assisted last year with the funding of this division of the fair and Storie was recently presented with the request for this year. The Commission was presented with the packet for the request. Storie informed the division representative that they would be notified when the grant funding cycle for 2024 opened for funding request applications.

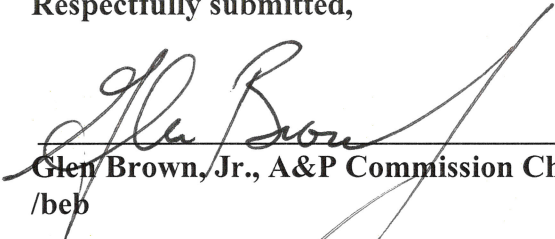
McAfee made a motion to accept and fund the request of \$10,825 for the Home Economics & Horticultural exhibit. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Whitfield commented his gratitude for Storie for her willingness to answer the questions asked of the NAACP.


With no further business to be discussed McAfee moved to adjourn. Pettigrew seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:16 PM.

The next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, August 22, 2023 at 4:30 PM at the offices of the A&P Commission.

Respectfully submitted,



Glen Brown, Jr., A&P Commission Chair
/beb



Sheri Storie, A&P Executive Director

*The minutes contained herein follow the best practices of **Robert's Rules of Order** and is not a transcription of the meeting. As is standard procedure, these minutes serve as a record of the action(s) taken by the Commission and is not a record of detailed discussion that took place during the meeting.*



July 25, 2023

Mr. Ivan Whitfield, President
Pine Bluff Branch NAACP

Mr. Albert King, Jr., Chairman
Political Action Committee

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Pine Bluff Unit #6028
P.O. Box 9064
Pine Bluff, AR 71611

Dear Mr. Whitfield and Mr. King, Jr.:

I am writing in response to the questions and concerns that were outlined in your May 18, 2023 and July 12, 2023 letters regarding the Pine Bluff Advertising the Promotion Commission. Please see the responses to your questions below:

1. **Is the A&P operating outside of the commission by-laws?** Given the context provided in your letter dated July 12, 2023:
 - a. Per the Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission Bylaws, section **VII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST** was added to the bylaws on December 15, 2021. Therefore, there could not have been an instance of operating outside of this section of the A&P bylaws prior to December 15, 2021.
 - b. Referring again to section **VII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST** in the A&P bylaws, it states:
 - A. *A Commission member or appointed committee members shall not be interested, directly or indirectly, in the profits of any contract for funding supplies, equipment, or services to the Commission.*

Additionally, the bylaws state:

This prohibition shall also apply to contracts for furnishing supplies, equipment, or services to be performed for a private organization that has or is to receive grant funds from the Commission in which the Commission member, appointed committee member, his or her spouse, child, parents or other persons standing in the first degree of relationship holds any ownership, oversight, executive, or managerial office.

Based upon this information, it appears there was a violation of the A&P bylaws. The A&P Commission should not have funded Go Forward Pine Bluff in 2023 as John Lawson (former A&P commissioner and chair), was also serving on the GFPB board of directors.

2. **Is there a pattern of self-dealing or conflicts of interest?**

- a. There was a conflict of interest in January 2023 with the former chair making a motion and voting to approve event funding for Go Forward Pine Bluff. The former chair was also serving on the board of directors for GFPB at the time. As noted above, the A&P Commission should not have funded Go Forward Pine Bluff.

Mr. Ivan Whitfield / Mr. Albert King, Jr.
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
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3. Is the commission acting without a majority?

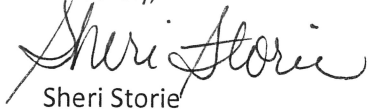
- a. As stated in your letter dated July 12, 2023, only three (3) votes were counted for the chair position during the January 25, 2023 commission meeting per the meeting minutes. After listening to the audio of the meeting, these minutes are accurate. Therefore, the motion should not have passed due to a lack of majority vote.
- b. Additionally, according to the same meeting minutes, votes were never taken for the officer positions of vice-chair and secretary-treasurer. Even though there were no other nominations for these positions, a vote should have been taken and would have needed four (4) affirmative votes to pass.
- c. While this is certainly a procedural error that needs to be corrected, officers remain in their positions until replaced. Both the vice-chair and secretary-treasurer were in these same positions in 2022. Therefore, the lack of a vote on the officer positions has no bearing on the current status of these officer positions.

4. In the absence of a majority, are A&P actions valid?

- a. Per section **IV. MEETINGS (D)**: A quorum shall consist of four (4) members. No meeting shall be held for the transaction of any business if a quorum is not present.
- b. Per section **V. VOTING (C)**: An affirmative vote of a majority of the Commission's membership shall be required for passage of any motion.
- c. The officer positions have no bearing on whether or not business is conducted during meetings, as long as there is a majority of the commission members present.
- d. In reviewing the minutes from January 2018-May 2023, the only instance I found in which the commission passed a vote without four (4) affirmative votes was the vote taken to appoint John Lawson to the chair position.

I hope the information provided in this letter answers your questions. If I need to further clarify any information, please feel free to contact me and I will do so.

Sincerely,



Sheri Storie
Executive Director

cc: Berinda Eugene, Vice-Chair
Glen Brown, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer
Lloyd Holcomb, Jr., Commissioner
Rosie Pettigrew, Commissioner
Jamie McAfee, Commissioner
Steven King, Commissioner