

PINE BLUFF ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

June 22, 2026

The regular meeting of the Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission was held on Monday, June 22, 2026, at 5:00 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
Mr. David Knott, Secretary-Treasurer
Ms. Carla Bryant, Vice-Chair
Mr. Lloyd Holcomb, Jr.

Staff

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

Call to Order:

Brown called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM.

Brown asked for consideration of the minutes for the regular meeting of May 21, 2026. Holcomb moved to accept the minutes as presented. Bryant seconded. The minutes were approved.

Director's Report

Storie reported on tax collections and shared that two of the four vendors have closed their businesses at Magnolia but do have secondary locations in the city and the Saracen Resort Hotel is officially open.

She has met with the Saracen event director Tim Adams to discuss ways they can work together to bring events to Pine Bluff to utilize the casino and convention center. She is looking for small meeting trade shows to attend in early fall. She is developing a comprehensive Pine Bluff Meeting Planners Guide to promote the city at tradeshow and state sponsored events. The guide will include available meeting and event venues, as well as hotel information.

Storie gave a detailed update on the progress of the Saenger Theatre. Copies of the full report were provided to the commissioners.

Storie also provided a mobility metrics Placer.ai report for the 3rd annual UAPB Juneteenth in the Bluff Arts & Culture Festival. The event drew 5,100 total visitors and was considered a very successful event. Those attending had positive comments and the DRB Plaza was heavily utilized. Storie stated that it was an 82% increase in attendance from 2025, showing great potential for 2027. Cunningham reminded everyone that starting to plan earlier next year will benefit the '27 event.

Storie included a report from the Operation Skyhook and Black Pilots of America. The weather didn't cooperate this year but those attending were appreciative of the hospitality.

Storie has spoken with Kerry Battle of the Pine Bluff Festival Association, and he mentioned that the regular pyrotechnical person who has handled the 4th of July Fireworks was not available this year. After further conversation with Battle, she was informed that the Festival Association officially decided not to have the fireworks this year. Storie will check with Mr. Failla for an available replacement. Storie reminded the Commission that A&P will possibly have to fund the fireworks as Battle said he had not received any funding from previous sponsors.

Storie shared a copy of the itinerary for Sarah Heer with Arkie Travels. Heer's visit is the result of the influencer coop offered by Arkansas Tourism. Storie gave a brief overview of the visit including the benefits of the content bundle that Heer will provide for future use. Heer stayed at the Saracen Resort hotel, and it was suggested to have A&P tour the hotel. Storie will arrange a tour.

Storie provided a page from the Living Blues Magazine, America's oldest Blues magazine. A&P had been hoping for a Pine Bluff feature article but was happy to have Pine Bluff mentioned in the latest issue. Storie reminded everyone that we are reaching for national recognition through relationships in the music industry, and even this mention is a good beginning.

Storie presented an information packet pertaining to the self-service kayak rental opportunity mentioned in a previous meeting. She described the process it takes for an individual to rent a kayak and what the requirements would be for A&P. Discussion was held with favorable responses and Storie said she is waiting for an updated proposal on the program.

Storie reminded the Commission of an exhibition and literacy programming developed by Garbo Hearne in February. UAPB will be the first of several HBCU's to host this national tour. The traveling exhibition, *The New Brownies' Book: A Love Letter to Black Families* will be housed at the Artx3 Campus. Hearne has been working extensively with UAPB, Pine Bluff Library and the Artx3 Campus for programming for this event. Hearne has submitted a request for \$39,500 from A&P. Storie stated that funding this event will offer substantial tourism advantages for Pine Bluff by establishing the city as a regional cultural destination, drawing statewide and national visitors for high profile events. This three-year literacy programming leverages a multi-agency partnership to address critical regional literacy gaps, maximize our local investment by driving overnight stays, increasing cultural tourism traffic and generating significant media exposure across the state. Storie recommended that A&P's focus for the funding request should be primarily on advertising, literary panels, the printing of materials and general signage instead of partnership funds. Hearne also has other prospective sponsorships. Storie also provided a packet of information to the commissioners. Discussion was held. Bryant made a motion to sponsor \$17,250, utilizing reserves for the New Brownie's Book traveling exhibition with the stipulation that a list of other funding sources would be submitted. Knott seconded. The motion was approved.

Storie informed the Commission that due to the hard work of Cunningham we are beginning to run low on the matching grant funds set aside for that purpose. Currently there is \$92,000 remaining and \$64,000 is already committed to match grants that have been successfully rewarded. With the remaining balance of \$27,500 we have \$77,500 pending grant decisions that will require matching funds if approved. Storie presented the breakdown of grants funded and those pending. Storie reminded everyone that success breeds success and with Cunningham constantly searching for and writing grants to maximize our local tax dollars to build out our tourism infrastructure, it is important to keep this momentum going. G. Brown added it is important as well to ensure we don't

leave free matching money on the table. Storie reminded the commissioners that this is why protecting and strategically utilizing our reserves is vital. Cunningham presented grant funding opportunities including the National Park Service Trail, Runaway Blues Trail, Underground Railroad, Trail of Tears and the Civil Rights Trail. After discussion was held, G. Brown asked for a motion to move \$50,000 from reserves that would allow A&P to continue applying for grants. Bryant made a motion to move \$50,000 into matching grant funding from the reserve funding. Knott seconded. The motion passed.

Storie concluded her report by noting that Catfish Friday Blues and Soul Night is scheduled for June 26, the same evening as the 50th anniversary celebration of the Pine Bluff Convention Center.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee – Knott presented the financial summary report for the month ending May 31. Knott asked Storie for information regarding Taylor Field and their scheduled events. Storie stated that she would ask Mr. Rob Cheatwood regarding plans for future baseball tournaments.

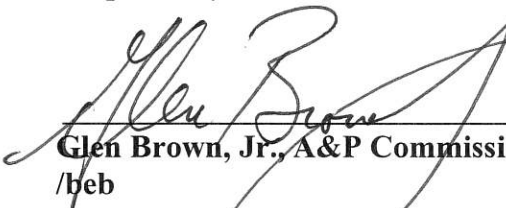
New Business

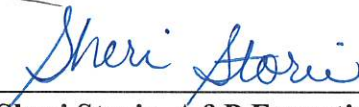
The commissioner application from Kenneth Lipsmeyer was tabled until Lipsmeyer could be present.

With no further business to be discussed, Holcomb moved to adjourn. Bryant seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

The next regular meeting will be on Monday, July 27, 2026, at 5:00 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.*