Development & Community Engagement Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 19, 2025, 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

FirstLine Network Office - 300 N. Broad Street, Ste. 207, NOLA 70119 - Service Conference Room

Present: Patrick Kiernan, Jennifer Noteware, Tina Shannon, Donna Cavato, Shannon Cian, Jocelyn Walker

1. Donna welcomed everyone and called to order at 4:19. Donna then shared that schools are winding down and looking forward to year-end classroom activities and 8th grade graduations across all four campuses.
2. Patrick made a motion to approve minutes from the March 18, 2025, committee meeting; Tina Shannon secorded; and the minutes were approved unanimously.
3. Shannon then reviewed the current development report, highlighting the most recent awards and pending applications. She stated that the department is unlikely to reach its full fundraising goal this year, with Donna noting that several grants received in previous years are no longer available due decreased federal and state funding allocations, and other private funders changing priority investments. The department has reviewed strategies to ensure success next year.
4. Shannon then pivoted to review total funds raised during An Edible Evening 2025. The organization exceeded the goals for both gross and net revenue from the event. Planning is already underway for An Edible Evening 2026, celebrating the 20th anniversary of ESYNOLA. Donna added that two long-time supporters have volunteered to co-chair the event to ensure its success.
5. Next, Donna made a presentation regarding exploration of options such as a rainy day fund or endowment to help sustain ESYNOLA long-term. The committee agreed this is a necessary conversation, particularly due to shifts in public funding, private donor interest, and other funding lapses. The FirstLine development team and committee will continue to research best options.
6. Shannon then shared highlights from the ESY friendraiser event held on April 22. It was a great success and the team was able to connect with new individuals interested in supporting FirstLine and ESY through volunteer hours and/or future committee service.
7. Shannon and Donna shared that the FY26 annual fundraising plan is in development and will be shared in first committee meeting of FY26.
8. The group then recognized Jocelyn’s three years of service and dedication to FirstLine Schools.
9. The committee reviewed proposed meeting dates for the 25-26 school year.

10. Patrick then made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:13 pm. Everyone have a wonderful summer!