

House Executive Committee

Minutes of Meeting
2026 Regular Session
May 31, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Michael T. Johnson, chair of the House Executive Committee, called the meeting to order at 3:25 p.m. in Room 1, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Kim Carver
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel
Representative Michael Charles Echols
Representative Les Farnum
Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman
Representative Kyle M. Green, Jr.
Representative Dodie Horton
Representative Edmond Jordan
Representative Vanessa Caston LaFleur
Representative Rodney Lyons
Representative Dixon Wallace McMakin
Representative Shaun Raphael Mena
Representative Christopher Turner
Representative Roger William Wilder, III
Representative Michael T. Johnson, chair

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Barbara W. Carpenter
Representative C. Travis Johnson
Representative Jack G. McFarland

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Angela Smith, Assistant Clerk of the House/Executive Committee Administrative Assistant for House Executive Committee
Michelle D. Fontenot, Clerk of the House
Cindy Mancuso, Executive Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Jabari Williams, Sgt at Arms

The House Executive Committee meeting was called to order at 5:00 P.M. by Chairman Mike Johnson, Speaker Pro Tempore of the House of Representatives.

The roll was called by Assistant Clerk Angela Smith. Rep. Turner moved to adopt the minutes from the meeting held June 3, 2024, which motion was agreed to.

Speaker Pro Tempore Johnson opened the meeting by asking Clerk Michelle Fontenot to share what the duties and responsibilities of the House Executive Committee were.

Clerk Fontenot explained that the responsibility of the committee is to establish each member's annual vouchered allotment pursuant to House Rule 6.26(D), which is set at the beginning of each legislative term. She noted that in June 2024, the House Executive Committee adopted a resolution establishing a monthly allowance of \$1,500 per member. These funds are intended to cover district office expenses, including rent, utilities, telephone service, and other necessary operational costs. Clerk Fontenot also reviewed the procedures governing the use of supplemental account funds for printed materials and discussed appropriate uses for those expenditures.

Chairman Mike Johnson asked for clarification that the committee was not meeting to adjust the \$1,500 monthly allowance established at the beginning of the term. Clerk Fontenot confirmed that was correct. Chairman Johnson stated that, at a future meeting, he would like the committee to consider allowing members to use excess supplemental funds to offset lodging expenses incurred during legislative sessions. Clerk Fontenot explained that, under the current resolution, members may carry forward up to \$3,000 in unused funds from one fiscal year to the next, as well as an additional \$6,000 designated exclusively for printing expenses.

Representative Green sought clarification regarding the carryforward provisions, asking whether the current carryforward amount was \$3,000 with a proposal to increase it to \$6,000. Clerk Fontenot explained that this was not the case. The standard carryforward amount remains \$3,000, and members are permitted an additional \$6,000 carryforward solely for printing purposes.

Representative Green then asked what happens if a member uses little or none of the \$1,500 monthly allotment and accumulates a surplus of approximately \$18,000. Clerk Fontenot explained that any unused funds revert to the House budget. Cindy Mancuso, Executive Counsel to the Speaker, added that the \$1,500 allotment functions as a reimbursement program requiring members to submit receipts for eligible expenses. She further explained that supplemental funding comes from the House Operating Budget and that unused funds are not maintained in individual accounts but instead remain available to support the ongoing operations of the House of Representatives. She noted that the budget allocates approximately \$1,500 per month per member and approximately \$100,000 per month for supplemental expenditures.

Representative Wilder asked whether members receive an additional \$1,000 monthly rental allowance separate from the \$1,500 supplemental allotment. Clerk Fontenot responded that they do not; the total monthly allotment is \$1,500. Representative Wilder then asked when the amount could be amended, noting that inflation has made it increasingly difficult to operate a district office within the

current funding level. Chairman Johnson reiterated that any changes to the resolution would have to wait until the beginning of the next legislative term.

Chairman Johnson moved that the committee discuss at its next meeting the possibility of allowing members to use excess supplemental funds to offset lodging expenses incurred during legislative sessions. The motion was agreed to.

Representative Farnum inquired whether supplemental funds could be used to pay expenses associated with a condominium he purchased in Baton Rouge for use during legislative sessions, including homeowners association fees and internet service. Clerk Fontenot expressed concern that the property is privately owned and explained that public funds must be expended for public purposes. She noted that using public funds for expenses associated with private property could present legal and ethical concerns.

Representative Jordan stated that his primary concern involved the potential tax implications of such a proposal. Clerk Fontenot explained that a statutory change enacted approximately two years ago through legislation authored by former Representative Nelson allows members to elect whether their per diem payments will be treated as taxable or non-taxable income. She further explained that members who reside within a 50-mile radius of the Capitol may choose whether to have their per diem taxed. Ms. Mancuso added that per diem payments are intended to cover meals and lodging expenses incurred while conducting legislative business and recommended that members consult a certified public accountant before making any decisions regarding tax treatment.

Representative Wilder stated that when he previously asked why his per diem was taxed, he was informed that it was due to his proximity to the Capitol. He noted that safeguards exist to address taxation concerns. He further questioned the distinction between reimbursing AT&T internet and telephone services at a district office and reimbursing similar internet expenses incurred by Representative Farnum while residing in his Baton Rouge condominium during session. Clerk Fontenot explained that district office expenses are incurred exclusively for public purposes, whereas expenses associated with a privately owned residence present a commingling of public and private use that could result in negative consequences.

Chairman Johnson requested withdrawal of his earlier motion and instead proposed that the committee conduct a study and invite a certified public accountant to discuss permissible uses of supplemental funds and related tax implications.

Representative Carver asked whether per diem payments are funded through members' supplemental accounts or through a separate source of funding. Clerk Fontenot explained that when members attend approved conferences, such as those sponsored by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) or the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC), the House pays those expenses directly. Ms. Mancuso clarified that the House also pays expenses associated with out-of-state events

when a member has been appointed by the Speaker to attend. Such expenses do not come from a member's supplemental account.

Representative Green asked whether the purchase of a mobile hotspot device would qualify as a reimbursable expense. Clerk Fontenot stated that she could not recall whether a hotspot device is reimbursable but confirmed that cell phone expenses are eligible for reimbursement.

Chairman Johnson suggested that the committee revisit these issues at a future meeting and continue discussions regarding supplemental funding and other matters within the committee's jurisdiction.

Representative Horton asked whether increasing the \$1,500 monthly allowance had been considered. Clerk Fontenot responded that only the Executive Committee has the authority to make such changes but stated that staff would be available to provide any assistance requested.

Representative Green asked when the monthly supplemental allotment was last adjusted. Clerk Fontenot indicated that she believed the last increase occurred around 2016. Ms. Mancuso stated that she believed the increase occurred in 2012, when the allotment was raised from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per month.

Having no other business to discuss, Chairman Johnson moved to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Michael T. Johnson
House Executive Committee