

MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL
MAIN LIBRARY
FIRST FLOOR LARGE MEETING ROOM
7711 GOODWOOD BOULEVARD
BATON ROUGE, LA 70806
JUNE 16, 2022
4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER – Candace Temple, Board Vice President (4:03 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Kathy Wascom

ROLL CALL – Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director
Jason Jacob, Board President – Absent
Candace Temple, Board Vice President – Present
Martha Guarisco, Board Treasurer – Present
Delores Watts – Present
Donald Luther, Jr. – Present
Kathy Wascom – Present
Nicole Allmon-Learson – Present (4:18 p.m.)

A quorum was present

STAFF PRESENT – Spencer Watts, Library Director; Kristen Edson, Deputy Library Director; Mary Stein, Assistant Library Director; Patricia Husband, Assistant Library Director; Rhonda Pinsonat, Library Business Manager; Ronnie Pierce, Assistant Library Business Manager; Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director; Timothy Martin, Network Technician I.

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 21, 2022 – A motion to approve was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

II. SPECIAL ORDERS – There were no Special Orders.

III. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Ronnie Pierce (4:04 p.m.)

- For 2022, operating expenditures through May 31st are 30.09% of the operating budget. Through May, we should have spent no more than 42% of the budget.
- Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2022 remain slightly ahead of those collected in 2021, as we are approximately 0.57% ahead of the same six months last year.

B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein (4:05 p.m.)

- “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of Library programs.
- Last week, the Library launched its new circulating hotspots, “Wi-Fi 2 Geaux”; within two days, 50 of the 500 hotspots were circulated; board games and activity packs will also begin circulating.
- Master Naturalists of Baton Rouge hosted the Garden Discoveries program at the Main Library, utilizing the One Book One Community theme; the Library is part of the Mayor-president’s task force on litter and plans to host more programs focused on beautification and appreciation of neighborhoods.
- The East Baton Rouge Parish Library joined the Library Speakers Consortium, to virtually present author talks; the well-known authors include Alka Joshi, David Allen and Simon Winchester, and more.
- Jon Gordon, bestselling author and keynote speaker, will be next month’s guest for the Business Report’s virtual Business Forum; Chris Tuff was the guest for this month.
- Author Mary Manhein will be at the Main Library on Sunday, June 26th to present her new book, *Cities of the Dead*.
- Throughout the summer, the Library remains active in the community by hosting public meetings, providing its bookmobile to community events, and providing children’s books for community events; the Library also hosted the CATS 2022 Open House.

- The Ed Perkins Jazz Band performed yesterday in the Plaza at the Main Library; the Library hosted the Hip Hops & Arts Festival on the first Sunday of June and will return next year; the Baton Rouge Concert Band will perform patriotic music on July 4th at the Main Library’s plaza at 7:30 p.m.
- Over 1,100 patrons attended the STEM kickoff event for the summer reading program at the Main Library; local businesses participated with STEM and STEAM activities for all ages; the summer reading program will feature both in-person and virtual events; the theme this year is “Oceans of Possibilities”.
- Movies on the Plaza will continue throughout the month, each Friday night in June.

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson (4:22 p.m.)

- Spring mulching was completed at the Main Library, as well as Eden Park Branch Library and Bluebonnet and Jones Creek Regional Libraries.
- Quarterly maintenance on air handler units continues, which includes replacing filters and motor belts; the Library received a six-month supply of air filters; will also pilot a new air purifying service in some of the makerspaces.
- A roof leak occurred at Jones Creek Regional Library during a recent rainstorm; the leaking portion of the roof is covered under a 2-year warranty.
- New landscaping was installed at the front entrance of the Main Library; the backflow preventer for the splash pad arrived today and will be installed by next week.
- The River Center Branch Library was without hot water over the weekend due to work on the boilers; work continues on the boilers at the central plant.
- The Library received the civil engineer’s report for the main water line rupture at Jones Creek Regional Library; the concrete on the loading dock was lifted due to the pressure in the water line, which also caused damage to the door; the engineer also submitted recommendations for backfill, cement thickness and rebar for the new foundation slab; the Library will obtain quotes for repair.
- Comments from Architectural Services for phase two of the Outreach Services building renovation were sent to the architect on June 9th for review and comments; the construction project should be ready for bidding in about two months.
- A kickoff meeting is scheduled next week for the roofing and exterior restoration project for four library locations.
- The executed contract for chiller replacements at four library locations should appear on the next Metro Council meeting agenda for approval.
- The server room at the Main Library continues to experience problems with temperature regulation; Library staff met with the mechanical engineers to determine possible solutions, including the installation of two additional Liebert units that will assist with maintaining a larger capacity of servers.

2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Spencer Watts (4:31 p.m.)

- All parties involved in the River Center Branch Library litigation have reached an agreement, and a settlement will be achieved; a statement by the City Parity Attorney’s office will be released at a future date.
- The owner of one of the Library’s janitorial services companies passed away unexpectedly last week; Library business office staff worked with Purchasing to obtain an emergency contractor so that janitorial staff could remain working and receiving paychecks; the original contract will eventually have to be re-bid.
- There has been a recent surge of Covid-19 infections in the area, mostly due to the new highly-transmissible sub-variants; over twenty Library staff have been infected and over twenty exposed; staff are encouraged to wear masks if they feel the need; staff will continue to follow proper measures when exposed or infected.
- The City-Parish proclaimed Juneteenth an official holiday, to be observed on Friday, June 17; the Library will remain open on the 17th but will close on Sunday, June 19th in observance of the holiday.
- Library administrative staff continue to work on issues regarding staff scheduling and extended work weeks; most of the solutions presented may involve hiring more floating staff; the Library also continues to encounter difficulties with recruiting regular workers.
- Library staff have been diligently working on the proposed 2023 budget; a redline meeting was held June 13th, and a second redline meeting will be held June 22nd for senior staff.
- Library staff discovered procedural issues involved in the job application process provided by the City-Parish Human Resources Department; Susann Williams of the library’s Business Office worked with Patricia Husband, Chi Ling Liu and Melinda Newman of Branch Services to outline the correct procedural steps to assist job applicants.

- The architect for the Baker Branch renovation meeting requested additional information to assist him in developing the initial schematics; the architect had also delayed reporting the kick off meeting minutes, and once reported, library staff noted twenty items that needed clarification.
- Computer Services update: the Wi-Fi hotspots arrived and were quickly processed for circulation; all library branches, except for Delmont Gardens and Pride-Chaneyville Branches, have transitioned to VDI workstations; the Library reached an agreement with a robust network security service to assist in monitoring and defending against malicious attacks; Kristen Edson engaged in consultations for a website design vendor and discovered a contractor who already has a state contract to provide this service, and could do so much sooner than others.
- The Library continues to discuss and review active shooter training for its staff.
- Donald Luther, Jr. commented on the litigation settlement, the revision of staff scheduling, the HR review, and the current economic issue of inflation.
- Martha Guarisco commented on her appreciation of Library staff working to solve the payroll issues and dedication to other projects.
- Nicole Allmon-Learson discussed the potential of hiring student workers or interns; Spencer Watts responded that the substitute worker category would cover those positions; the hiring processes is very lengthy for internship requirements.

Board Vice President Candace Temple asked for public comments. No public comments were made.

IV. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – There were no reports of committees.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. UPDATE ON SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY – Spencer Watts and Patricia Husband (5:00 p.m.)

- Library staff and Architectural Services met with one of the lead project architects on May 31st; the meeting covered the following topics and the Board was shown a slide of the floor plan:
 - Location of an additional emergency exit on the north side of the building
 - The glass wall west of the conference room will remain; reduction of the laptop bar by one unit and slight reduction of shelving capacity
 - Additional row of shelving added south of the information desk
 - Two exit-only gates in the courtyard, with delayed egress features for emergency egress; a pull box may also be required
 - Courtyard grading with 5% or less slope; handrails are not needed; four drain inlets to be located in the corners
 - Discussion on plants and landscaping
 - Courtyard lighting to include uplights for the oak tree; design team will review emergency lighting in the courtyard; also discussed string light infrastructure, pole placement and commitment to avoiding light pollution
 - Confirmed data drops and power outlets for intelligent returns; recommended reserving space for a future dual return system
 - A photo of the updated design of the circulation desk was shown to the Board; reviewed functionality of the staff side of the desk, as well as heights and depths of counters, overlaps, rear shelf drop, a lowered section for additional access, and solid surface material to be used
 - Discussions on card access, additional sidewalk extension, and a possible isolated grass space
 - The design team is working through issues with the structural engineer and MEP documents; asked for a new deadline of July 17th to deliver construction documents.
- Question by Kathy Wascom regarding the parking lot plan and if it's available for viewing at the next meeting; Spencer Watts responded that it should be included in the construction documents.

B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY – Spencer Watts (5:03 p.m.)

- The Board was shown photos of exterior elevation renderings.
- A lower overhang will replace the current porte-cochere.
- The windows and design of the Teen Services area will reflect common elements with the Children's Services area, as well as the front entrance; creates a cohesive design theme.
- A landscaping meeting was held on June 2nd and covered the following topics:
 - Plant selection; including color, flowering plants, locations, and types of plants
 - Possibly reusing pavers from a previous project as a border accent

- Discussion regarding the detention pond on the south side of the archive building; may contain plantings; will be designed to hold water as it drains away from the building
- Mapping the original irrigation system for possible decommission

Board Vice President Candace Temple asked for public comments. No public comments were made.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. SETTING OF DATE FOR SPECIAL 2023 BUDGET WORK SESSION – Candace Temple (5:22)

- According to the results of the poll, the majority of the Board members chose June 30th at 4:30 p.m. as the best option for availability.
- A motion to set the date of the special 2023 budget work session to June 30, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Martha Guarisco. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

B. LIBRARY OVERVIEW OF 2022 – Spencer Watts (5:24 p.m.)

- A slideshow of report content was shown to the Board.
- Year-to-date noteworthy projects and reports include the following:
 - The Library Community Assessment Survey ran from April 18 – May 10, 2022; results will assist with updating the Library’s Strategic Plan.
 - 2022 has been an increasingly active year compared to this time last year; increases are being seen in card holder count, gate count, circulation, YouTube sessions, PC reservation use, and Wi-Fi use.
 - Personal engagement statistics also have seen an increase in numbers; includes Outreach Services visits, programming events, AWE (advanced workstation) use, meeting room and study room use, and smart table use.
 - Literacy initiatives so far this year have included the “Press Start! Ready, Set, Read!” immersive 3-year curriculum; the Home Library Pilot Project; 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten; Reading is Elementary: 1,000 Books After Kindergarten; garden story walks at three library locations; literacy calendars in English and Spanish; Heal the Block Initiative; and Making Spaces at Delmont Gardens Branch Library.
 - The One Book One Community this year was deeply rooted in Louisiana culture, as the chosen book was *Atchafalaya Houseboat*; various programs centered around nature, ecology and gardening.
 - The Library received a new bookmobile to replace the previous Elf unit; a fourth bookmobile is currently in production.
 - The Library is growing its circulation of “things”, which are non-book items; this includes the AWE stations, artwork, a telescope, Arduino kits, museum kits, Wi-Fi hot spots, board games, family activity kits, bi-folkal kits, interactive kits, and badges for maker space use; the library is developing tele-health kits.
 - Ongoing and future projects include small and large capital projects; new technology platforms and updates of existing technology; a new website and integrated library system (ILS); library staff development to ease work week challenges and improve job satisfaction; updating the strategic plan; and the search for a new Library Director.
 - Question by Delores Watts if there will be periodic updates on the many ongoing projects; Spencer Watts responded that some projects will be ongoing over an extended period of time, but the ones that will have systemized outcomes will be reported and updated.
 - Question by Kathy Wascom regarding library staff training for problem patrons or patrons calling with difficult problems; Spencer Watts responded that there are specific staff training programs offered on a continuing basis for customer service and phone etiquette, as well as diffusing in-person situations.

Board Vice President Candace Temple asked for public comments. No public comments were made.

VII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

- Donald Luther, Jr. thanked the library staff for everything they do.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Board Vice President Candace Temple requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m. by unanimous vote.**

Mr. Jason Jacob, President

Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director