

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 18, 2020**  
**4:00 P.M.**

**AGENDA**

CALL TO ORDER – Board President Jason Jacob (4:03 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Board Vice President Candace Temple (4:03 p.m.)

I. ROLL CALL – Assistant to the Deputy Library Director Rosana Sotile (4:03 p.m.)

Jason Jacob, Board President – Present

Candace Temple, Board Vice President – Present

Martha Guarisco, Board Treasurer – Absent (Present at 4:06 p.m.)

Delores Watts – Absent

Donald Luther, Jr. – Present

Kathy Wascom – Present

Nicole Allmon-Learson - Present

*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, Library Assistant Business Manager; Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director; Jamaal Thompson, Network Technician I; Jonathan Thompkins, Network Technician I

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 20, 2020 – A motion to approve was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Nicole Allmon-Learson. **The motion was carried unanimously.** (4:04 p.m.)

III. SPECIAL ORDERS – There were no items to cover under Special Orders.

IV. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Rhonda Pinsonat (4:05 p.m.)

- Expenditures through May 31, 2020 are 34.14% of the operating budget, and no more than 42% of the budget has been spent.
- Cash collections from property taxes for 2020 are \$2.44 million; 5.35% ahead of 2019.
- There was a discussion regarding available funds for upcoming capital projects: Spencer Watts stated funds were already set aside for the next three capital projects and are still available.

B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein (4:09 p.m.)

- “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of ongoing Library programs

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson (4:20 p.m.)

- There is now a new format for maintenance reports.
- Preventative maintenance and minor repairs at various branches have been completed; Purchase Orders were approved for issues needing parts or professional services.
- Explanation of the power outage at Main Library: The Energy Management System malfunctioned, and the overheating of computer servers disabled the Internet. No alert system is in place.
- The Main Library generator has a diesel fuel leak; Architectural Services will oversee the project, and Library staff are monitoring the gauge and have distributed absorbent material.

- There was extensive damage at Carver Branch Library due to a patron's car striking the building; Architectural Services will produce a scope of work and probable costs.
  - Electrical work was completed at River Center Branch Library.
  - Disinfectant fogging has begun at all branches.
  - Re-bidding for mechanical improvements at Main Library was necessary; contract awards for roof and HVAC replacements at the Outreach Facility took place; and a bid review for the chiller replacement at Eden Park Branch Library and the boiler/chiller replacement at Delmont Gardens Branch Library has also taken place.
  - There was a discussion regarding damage costs at Carver Branch Library: Kristen Edson stated the scope of work and probable costs will be sent to the insurance company.
  - There was a discussion regarding power outages and alert notifications at Main Library: Spencer Watts stated that there have been conversations with the utility company in the past and the Library is working to find better solutions on its own. Kristen Edson stated that maintenance staff receive email notifications and work "on-call" rotations for weekends.
  - There was a discussion on the new format of maintenance reports and category explanations.
2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Spencer Watts (4:38 p.m.)
- Contract negotiations with the architect for the design of the new South Branch Library took place.
  - A suggestion was made to hold a budget work session for the Board in late July or early August.
  - There was an explanation and discussion of Macmillian's discontinuation of its e-book embargo; "forever books" are no longer available.
  - The internal effectiveness study was put on hold but will restart soon.
  - There was an explanation and agreement regarding the reformatting of minutes for future Library Board meetings.
  - There was an explanation of technology issues and the Library's computer services department's response during the pandemic. Also, cybersecurity training took place, and new contracts were finalized with vendors for managed services and a staff intranet.
  - Regarding social and racial equity: Mr. Watts stated his views, which he had shared with senior staff, division heads, and branch managers, regarding the current sense of urgency and energy surrounding racial and social equity. This is a national discussion that was initially generated by reactions to the death of George Floyd, but has broadened to consider a wider range of essential questions regarding racial and social justice. Mr. Watts explained his view that the library has traditionally been a place that assists and helps people. It remains a place that provides resources and services that allows people to gain access to knowledge and find help in achieving goals, while also addressing issues in the community, such as lack of technology, and better access to health information. Mr. Watts, however, stated we must be careful not to be complacent, and we should take this occasion to explore how some of our initiatives could be reinvented, and we should seek new ways to reach and be of service to those in need. The library should take a new and more vigorous look at its services, and he listed some areas where the library could concentrate or improve on existing efforts.

Board President Jason Jacob asked for public comments. No public comments were made

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

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. UPDATE ON RIVER CENTER BRANCH LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION – Spencer Watts (5:00 p.m.)

- Final acceptance was approved by the Metro Council on April 22, 2020.
- Close-out work was completed in April/May 2020.
- Delivery of furniture continues.
- Staff occupied the building and are working on data and technology issues; shelving of materials is complete.
- The building should open to the public the last week of June.
- A special opening event and dedication may be held in 6 months to 1 year.
- There was a slideshow presentation of updated project photos.

- B. UPDATE ON RENOVATION OF GREENWELL SPRINGS ROAD REGIONAL BRANCH LIBRARY – Patricia Husband (5:17 p.m.)
- Meetings with the contractor and architect for review of construction progress and final punch-list items took place.
  - The keying schedule was reviewed with the contractor.
  - Progress continues in Phase 3, including circulation services and entrance areas.
  - Phase 2 clean-up work and corrections are in progress.
  - A few items from Phase 1 still remain for completion.
  - There have been furniture delivery issues due to the pandemic: delivery is scheduled for July-August 2020.
  - The end panel designs were finalized.
  - Shelving installation began June 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - There was a slideshow presentation of updated project photos.
- C. UPDATE ON RENOVATION OF JONES CREEK REGIONAL BRANCH LIBRARY – Kristen Edson (5:23 p.m.)
- There was a slideshow presentation of “before” and “after” project photos.
  - Grading at the rear of the building was delayed due to rain.
  - Plumbing and electrical rough-ins are complete, as well as other finishes; ceramic tile installation continues.
  - Accent paint colors await approval.
  - The project is still awaiting determination of proper window flashing: There was a meeting with the architect, contractor and Tyvek representative.
  - Furr-down reframing and additional prep work continue.

Board President Jason Jacob asked for public comments. No public comments were made

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. REPORT ON IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LIBRARY OPERATIONS AND SERVICES – Spencer Watts and Mary Stein
- Slide show presentation by Mary Stein (5:27 p.m.):
    - Library staff created a Covid-19 Info Guide for website.
    - Call-Ahead and curbside services were initiated, as well as extended due dates, tax assistance, and an extended Wi-Fi range.
    - The Digital Library is heavily promoted: Creation of digital “e-cards”, and Library staff created resource videos for the public.
    - Library staff contributed to PPE production and supply chains; inventory tracking was a priority.
    - Online programs and summer reading are being emphasized.
    - There was an explanation of the Library’s phased reopening, collecting of mandatory supplies, and disinfecting protocols.
    - Libraries re-opened on June 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Spencer Watts (5:46 p.m.):
    - Essential workers and volunteer staff consistently worked many hours each week.
    - There is ongoing distribution of masks, sneeze guards and other supplies for staff and the public.
    - Library administration is awaiting results of the Battelle Labs study of the effects of Covid-19 on book surfaces.
    - There was a discussion of reopening issues: masks and “caution fatigue”; closed book stacks; and the closure of meeting rooms.
    - Comments were made by Jason Jacob, Candace Temple and Martha Guarisco in appreciation of Library staff working extra hours and adapting to changes
- B. DISCUSSION REGARDING PLANNED PROJECTS FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM, INCLUDING SOUTH BRANCH CONSTRUCTION, AND EXPANSIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS FOR SCOTLANDVILLE AND BAKER BRANCHES – Spencer Watts (6:00 p.m.)
- Sufficient funding is available for the construction of South Branch Library.

- \$3.8 million was set aside for the Baker Branch Library renovation, but it may need readjustment.
- The Scotlandville Branch Library renovation budget is \$7.7 million. It is the Library system's largest property. The renovation will add a significant archival section and a facilities shop, as well as additions to public service areas of the branch.
- Future projects include developing Zachary Branch and Baker Branch Libraries with more robust and expanded features. Earlier in the development of the capital plans, there was discussion of possibly selecting one of those facilities to be a "regional" library. The planning has since evolved to develop Scotlandville, Zachary and Baker Branch Libraries all at an enhanced community level with complementary features to better serve that area in the Parish.
- There was a discussion regarding accelerating some projects, specifically the construction of South Branch Library.
- There was a discussion regarding the advantages and disadvantages of having a regional branch library in North Baton Rouge.

Board President Jason Jacob asked for public comments. No public comments were made

VIII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL (6:11 p.m.)

- Nicole Allmon-Learson commented her appreciation and thanks to Library staff for efforts during the pandemic.
- Jason Jacob commented he was happy to see everyone again and that everyone is well.

IX. ADJOURNMENT (6:13 p.m.) – Board President Jason Jacob requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Nicole Allmon-Learson.

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:13 p.m. by unanimous vote.**