

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
OCTOBER 21, 2021
4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER – Jason Jacob, Board President (4:05 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Martha Guarisco, Board Treasurer

- I. ROLL CALL – Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director
Jason Jacob, Board President – Present
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 (4:24 p.m.)

A quorum was present

STAFF PRESENT – Spencer Watts, Library Director; Mary Stein, Assistant Library Director; Patricia Husband, Assistant Library Director; Ronnie Pierce, Library Assistant Business Manager; Tara Dearing, Children Services Librarian IV; Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director; Autumn Rice, Library Technician I; Tim Martin, Network Technician I.

- II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2021 – A motion to approve was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

III. SPECIAL ORDERS

- A. PRESENTATION RECOGNIZING SPAHT SCHOLAR, DONNA BRITT – A motion to move agenda item III to agenda item IV was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

IV. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

- A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Ronnie Pierce (4:07 p.m.)

- For 2021, operating expenditures through September 30th are 60.19% of the operating budget.
- Through September, we should have spent no more than 75% of the budget.
- Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2021 are trailing those collected in 2020, as we are approximately 0.22% behind the same 10 months last year.
- Although last year's October total included third quarter interest earnings, because of the stock market's uneven performance over the past few months, we don't know if interest earnings, once posted, will offset the property tax revenue decline.
- Discussion regarding the small decline in revenues; it has no overall material effect on the Library's budget; it may be several more weeks before we receive information on the interest income; discussion on fund transfers from areas with a surplus to encumber funds for important building projects and requisitions.

- B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein (4:15 p.m.)

- "Around the Parish" slideshow and report.
- Presentation of recent media articles covering various Library events and topics.
- The Library hosted FEMA's MRIC through September 29th; also hosted the Blue Roof project sign-up, as well as the Army Corps of Engineers, NASA, and the Small Business Association.

- The Library hosted a fashion show event organized by “No Sistah Left Behind”, promoting domestic violence awareness.
- Delmont Gardens Branch Library held an open house charrette to gather community feedback on the possibility of constructing a new library branch building.
- November’s Business Forum speaker will be network guru Dr. Ivan Misner, also a best-selling author.
- The Library is also sponsoring a cybersecurity webcast on October 27th through the Greater Baton Rouge Business Report.
- Children’s Services partnered with LSU’s Museum of Art for “Stories in Art”; children engaged in story times and art projects, such as pottery and clay.
- The River Center Branch Library hosted Art Flow Junior, a student art show, as part of the Ebb & Flow Festival.
- The Baton Rouge Concert Band presented “Listening Library”, a literary themed concert, in the plaza of the Main Library on Goodwood.
- Opera Louisiane, a children’s and young adult opera group, will host Open Air Fair at the River Center Branch on November 6th.
- Other upcoming musical highlights include Bachtoberfest, the Baton Rouge Civic Orchestra, Talented Fall Concert, Winter Concert, and the Holiday Nutcracker Community Tour.
- The U.S.S. Kidd Veterans Museum is giving free family passes for library patrons to “check out”; trial is being offered at the Main Library and at Carver and River Center Branch Libraries.
- Baton Rouge Community College presented “Surviving Shakespeare.
- The Bookmobile attended Homeschool Day at Zachary Community Park.
- The annual Author-Illustrator program was held virtually on October 7th and 8th; the program was broadcast into 87 class rooms in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System, with over 1,000 views; over 100 professional participants registered and viewed the presentation.
- A book giveaway by LA Reads: The Center for Literacy & Learning was held at the Main Library on Goodwood; the Library participated in awarding other prize packets.
- The annual Baton Rouge Mini Makerfaire will be held October 18-23; will include a Hebocon workshop, a school robotics showcase, and a robot battle.
- The Louisiana Book Festival will be virtual, October 30 – November 13; it will still be free of charge.

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Patricia Husband (4:32 p.m.)

- Slideshow presentation of scaffolding at the Main Library for light replacements and stair cleaning.
- At the Main Library, cleaning of the monumental stairs was completed, as well as the replacement of the lights; ceiling areas over Circulation and Children’s Services were completed on October 15th; the waterfall art piece was also cleaned as well at the high beams in the area.
- A new perimeter alarm system was installed and is now working at Outreach Services; allows for the three separate areas of the building to be controlled independently.
- Grout cleaning was completed at Outreach Services, Baker, Scotlandville, Fairwood, and Zachary Branch Libraries.
- Architectural Services submitted monumental sign drawings for Jones Creek and Greenwell Springs Regional Libraries, for the Library to review; a public works quote will be issued for both signs.
- A public works quote will also be issued for drainage projects; one will include the space behind the large meeting room at the Main Library where the side walk collects water due to the low spot; the other will be for Delmont Gardens Branch Library where water pools in the staff parking lot during heavy rains.
- New flooring and a moisture barrier in Teen and Children’s Services was installed at Greenwell Springs Regional Library over the weekend of October 16th; this is a warranty item, due to moisture at the slab joints that caused the new flooring tiles to pull away.
- Unauthorized parking at Outreach Services has been an issue; a towing company has been secured to have vehicles towed as needed; “no parking” signs have been ordered; a request for quotes for striping the property area has been issued; lighting is being reevaluated for the surveillance cameras.
- Several edits to the construction documents for the Outreach Phase II project were submitted to the Architect and we are waiting on revisions to come back.
- Library staff met with the interior designer to review tile selection for the Jones Creek Regional Library emergency exit door; this will only be replaced if other mitigation measures do not help; final review of initial edits is complete, and waiting on comments from Architectural Services before sending them out for bid.

- A Notice to Proceed was issued on October 1st for the Main Library boiler replacement; still waiting on submittals from the installer.
2. Due to an extenuating circumstance, a motion was made to postpone Agenda Item III “PRESENTATION RECOGNIZING SPAHT SCHOLAR, DONNA BRITT” to next month’s Board meeting. A motion to postpone was made by Delores Watts and seconded by Donald Luther, Jr. **The motion was carried unanimously.**
 3. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Spencer Watts (4:41 p.m.)
 - A charrette type of event was held at Delmont Gardens Branch Library on September 24th and 25th; 32 members of the public attended and provided feedback on the possibility of either renovating the current building or constructing a new library building at an alternate site; almost all in attendance were in favor of building a new library branch at an alternate site; assessments for purchasing the alternate site could possibly soon begin; will be added as an agenda item for next month’s Board meeting.
 - Covid-19 Update: No reported Library staff infections over the past several weeks; the mask mandate expires at the end of the month, but unsure if it will be renewed or not; the City-Parish is offering vaccinations and free flu shots; there has been some concern regarding using Library meeting spaces and often not wearing masks and/or not following social distancing guidelines, but groups are expected to be self-regulating.
 - Library staff are developing new literacy efforts, including new and more structured approaches to building skills and bolstering vocabulary; also aligning efforts with those of the public school system to aid children in areas that have experienced low test scores for reading proficiency; the Library has joined the Mayor’s joint literacy task force; should have more updates at the start of the new year.
 - The Library has received bids for the replacement bookmobile; supply chain issues and rising costs of materials have caused production snags and delays.
 - Library staff met with members of the Botanic Garden Foundation on September 29th to review opportunities for continued and new cooperative efforts, at the Foundation’s request; the Library currently has a successful relationship with the Foundation; the Library offered assistance in connecting the Foundation with other organizations; the Library also committed to producing a promotional bookmark for the Foundation.
 - Computer Services Update: Progress has been made in the dark fiber project, comparing its utility to an IRU solution; the purchasing-approved template has been secured for the e-rate RFP; the template will also allow preparations for the website redesign RFP; extra security cameras are being added to the library building at North Blvd due to recent unauthorized parking issues; the security camera system’s operating system at River Center Branch will be transferred to a different company; Library staff are completing training for the credit card readers.
 - The monumental signs at Jones Creek and Greenwell Springs Regional Libraries will be replaced through the public works process per a City-Parish mandate; Architectural Services has provided concept drawings of the proposed signs; the drawings were provided to Board members at the meeting.
 - Frequent complaints continue about a long-term patron who parks his vehicle for extended times and cares for two small dogs; the Library is hesitant to issue regulations for one particular situation that could prove detrimental for other patrons, including those who spend long hours at the library to utilize its resources.
 - The Library continues to receive letters from patrons in disagreement of the shortened operating hours; the building continues to receive special sanitation cleaning at night, and it is necessary to close an hour earlier than usual so that the cleaning crew has enough time to finish; the Library is also still facing a staffing shortage.
 - Jones Creek Regional Library manager, Yvonne Hull, has retired; Leila Reilly was selected as her replacement, having previously managed Fairwood Branch Library.
 - Discussion regarding members of the public who may not use the Library for its intended purposes; the Library is aware that many of its locations have visitors that may be experiencing homelessness, mental issues, or behavioral issues, and concerns are managed as they arise; the City-Parish also provides aid through its homelessness task force, specifically in the downtown area; the Library will continue to look for solutions that won’t inadvertently make access to the library more difficult for other patrons.

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 SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY – Spencer Watts and Patricia Husband (5:31 p.m.)

- Selected photos of updated landscaping and floor plans were show to the Board.
- A meeting was held with the architectural design team on October 6th; the following topics were discussed:
 - Landscaping: addition of flowering plants to provide seasonal color; discussion on ornamental grass growth and maintenance; changing the wood deck to a concrete platform; ADA access for pavers; a contract was secured for maintenance and care of the oak tree; parking lot entrance may be reconfigured for better use of one larger lot instead of two smaller lots; will not lose any net square footage of the property.
 - Electrical Plan Review: power and data relocated to directly behind monitors, not below; additional power added to the gallery; relocation of the book drop and water fountains; lighting placement above the book shelves; emergency lighting review; addition of USB/power outlet combinations for patron areas; combination of the architectural floor plan with the technology plan will be discussed at next week's meeting.
 - Floor Plan Review: additional furniture to be added to the courtyard, along with power and data; rearrangement of computer tables for better circulation; changing of work stations to adjustable height tables and wider aisles.
 - Finish Schedule Review: discussion on types of flooring, paint colors, base types, and use of chair rails; adjustments will be made based on the Library's feedback; discussion on Teen Services partition wall; discussion on incorporating an entire wall of glass board.
- Architectural Services will determine when the Design Developments are complete and the construction document phase can begin.
- Other observations were made by Architectural Services and include the following:
 - Clarification on code compliance for door distancing in meeting rooms
 - Specifications on height clearances in the roof drain plan and concerns regarding overflow
 - Need for proper separation between galvanized aluminum gutters and any steel tubing
- The next meeting will be held October 27, with a focus on furnishing types and placement.

B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY – Spencer Watts and Patricia Husband

- Photos of updated site plans and floor plans were shown to the Board
- Library staff met with the architects and Architectural Services on September 29th; the following changes were made to schematic designs:
 - Relocation of archives building to be closer to the existing building; the two buildings could potentially be combined for future use
 - Archives building square footage was downsized from 9,400sf. to 7,400sf; still provides adequate space for standard storage, vertical lift storage and workspace for Facilities staff; building could also be used as temporary public service space during construction
 - Possible glass atrium at front of building; relocation of Black Heritage collection for visual appeal
 - Shelving throughout most of the building will be at 66 inches; will provide an open concept
 - Asked for additional restrooms and stalls; single-use restroom was relocated
 - Book drop was relocated; no sorting system in the building; the space will also include attic access
 - Two meeting rooms will provide a combined capacity of 120 people, or 20% more than current capacity; mechanized partition is being considered; also considering a fold-out stage; meeting room doors and courtyard doors will be double doors
 - Slightly increased capacity for public computers
 - Addressing roof drainage and gutters
- Question and discussion on whether or not the parking lot will be one-way in and one-way out: the parking lot is being addressed and may possibly be impacted by the Safe Routes to Safe Places public project; could possibly add a specialized pedestrian walkway to the library and bus stop; the project will also widen streets and add sidewalks; two entrances for the library parking lot could be universal entrances and exits- drivers can either enter or exit.

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

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. APPOINTMENT OF EVALUATION COMMITTEE; ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF LIBRARY DIRECTOR – Jason Jacob (6:05)


- Board President Jason Jacob asked Board Treasurer Martha Guarisco to assist with the evaluation, to which she agreed.
- Board member Donald Luther, Jr. also agreed to assist with the evaluation process.

Board President Jason Jacob asked for comments by the Library Board of Control.


VIII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

- Donald Luther, Jr. expressed his congratulations to Yvonne Hull on her retirement; he thanked Tara Dearing for presenting at the meeting; he also thanked another library staff member for assisting a patron with foreign language interpretation.
- Martha Guarisco expressed her admiration for the work that goes into selecting design choices in construction and renovation projects.
- Delores Watts expressed her appreciation for the visual components shown to the Board during the meetings when discussing the design process and selections.
- Question from Kathy Wascom regarding school visits by library staff; Mary Stein responded that Librarians, as well as the bookmobiles, still visit schools, especially those that lack a library or have a very small library; she shared a story of student research and the benefits of having librarians available.
- Jason Jacob expressed his gratitude for the Library continuing to work with the Botanic Garden Foundation; he stated that he may become a member of their board in the near future; he hopes the partnership will grow and that the gardens can be fully realized for what they were originally intended.
- Clarification from Patricia Husband regarding drainage at Delmont Gardens Branch Library; the Library does not know why the water is pooling; it may not be from topographical changes; it could possibly be a result of work that was performed on the boiler's chilled water line

IX. ADJOURNMENT – Board President Jason Jacob requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m. by unanimous vote.**



Mr. Jason Jacob, President



Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director