

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**  
**MARCH 18, 2021**  
**4:00 P.M.**

**AGENDA**

CALL TO ORDER – Jason Jacob, Board President (4:11 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Jason Jacob, Board President

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 – Absent  
Delores Watts – Absent  
Donald Luther, Jr. – Absent  
Kathy Wascom – Present  
Nicole Allmon-Learson – Present (4:44 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, Library Assistant Business Manager; Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director; Timothy Martin, Network Technician I.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 25, 2021 – A quorum was not initially present to vote on approval. A quorum was present with the arrival of Nicole Allmon-Learson, and a motion to approve was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Kathy Wascom, at 4:51 p.m. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

III. SPECIAL ORDERS – Spencer Watts presented a statement on behalf of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library staff in condolence of the passing of Davis Rhorer, Downtown Development District Executive Director, and sibling to Board member Kathy Wascom. (4:12 p.m.)

IV. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Rhonda Pinsonat (4:14 p.m.)

- With 2020 expenditures expected to close across the City-Parish tomorrow, March 19<sup>th</sup>, Library operating expenditures are currently at 86.24% of the operating budget; as of February 28<sup>th</sup>, expenditures are 10.79% of the operating budget; through February we should have spent no more than 17% of the operating budget.
- Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2021 are marginally ahead of those collected last year, as we are 1.01% ahead of 2020.
- Question from Candace Temple regarding expenditures of tools under the budget's Supply category; Spencer Watts and Rhonda Pinsonat responded that it's possibly a mischarge due to various assignable categories in the Munis software; Kristen Edson responded that it is most likely the recent purchase of a new man lift that was charged to the wrong account; Ronnie Pierce responded that it will be reallocated to the correct expenditure account.

B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein (4:18 p.m.)

- The Library hosted "Pitch Night" in conjunction with Young Entrepreneurs Academy; young adults from local areas pitched business ideas to angel investors and money was awarded.
- The Library's Garden Stories program is now available at Baker Municipal Park, which is near Baker Branch Library.

- Last Saturday's Garden Discoveries program was hosted by Master Gardener, Claire Fontenot; the topic was Louisiana Iris.
- The Library continues to promote the Conscious Kids project with crafts, school visits and displays; this morning was the virtual presentation with author Derrick Barnes and illustrator Gordon C. James.
- The Library's website now offers virtual tours of library locations, including drone photos, walk-throughs, floor plan views, dollhouse views, and pins for notes and details.
- "Bear Reading to Friends" mascot is now in production for the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program; design is based on art created by author/illustrator Will Hillenbrand.
- The 2021 One Book One Community Infoguide is now available on the Library's website; Authors After Hours program will be held May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Around 36,000 computer-use library cards were issued for East Baton Rouge Parish school students over the past three months.

## C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson (4:28 p.m.)
  - Several large pine tree limbs fell at Jones Creek Regional Library during last month's winter storm, one on the roof; no damage sustained; may consider removal of some pine trees.
  - Eden Park Branch Library sustained heating issues after the winter storm; originated from the skid pump that will have to be replaced as it is obsolete, as well as other parts in the pump.
  - Main sustained a ruptured cooling coil from the storm, in the second floor mechanical room, causing a minor flood; awaiting a purchase order for a proposal to replace the damaged coil.
  - Landscaping at River Center Branch Library sustained damage; monitoring the regrowth of the plants and awaiting recommendation on replacing some plants.
  - Seven windows and several window mullions were damaged at Carver Branch Library as the result of a serious altercation between individuals outside the library building on February 27<sup>th</sup>; waiting on replacement glass to arrive; mullions have been repaired; masonry repair will be included in the current contractor's work for the ongoing meeting room repairs.
  - Bluebonnet Regional Library incurred several power outages, not winter storm related, that caused damage to parts of the HVAC system; received recommendation to install a phase monitor to prevent burning of the variable frequency drives and fuses in the air handling units.
  - Landscaping at Jones Creek Regional Library was installed the week of February 8<sup>th</sup>; photos of the new plants were shown to the Board.
  - The ceiling star lights have been repaired in the Children Services area at Main; still experiencing issues with the fire alarm system triggering false alarms; the signal converter arrived, and Computer Services staff are working on installing it.
  - The ceiling grid was installed the week of March 1<sup>st</sup> in Main's server room; waiting for contractor to install the piping above the ceiling grid before tiles are reassembled; next week they will complete the strapping of the roof unit to the exterior wall; sealing the penetration for the piping is complete; the server room has been below 62 degrees consistently since the units went online; substantial completion date is set for March 23<sup>rd</sup>.
  - Owner training for the new chiller at Eden Park Branch Library was held February 24<sup>th</sup>; the test and balance report was received at the end of February; the final acceptance should be on the Metro Council agenda within the next several weeks.
2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Spencer Watts (4:35 p.m.)
  - The contract for design of the Scotlandville Branch Library was an item on the Metro Council agenda last week; will be presented at a public hearing for approval on March 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - Negotiations have been initiated for the Baker Branch Library design contract; may show up as an agenda item on the Council's March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, or the first meeting in April.
  - Patricia Husband, Assistant Library Director, has completed program drafts for both projects; ready to be delivered to architects; she has also created a preliminary outline of various previous improvements with timelines, features and critical components; this information is very helpful to the designers for their planning and approach to design elements.
  - As part of the Entrepreneurship Learning Cohort, Reference Librarian, Ned Denby, was selected as a key presenter in a national webinar on March 17<sup>th</sup>, sponsored by the ULC.
  - Preliminary returns from the surveys conducted by Management Partners have been received; 299, or 72%, staff members participated; surface data indicated employees would like to see

better internal communication and concerns regarding job safety; future focus groups will provide more in-depth analysis.

- Preliminary planning for the FY 2022 Budget will soon begin; the City-Parish Finance Department wants the Library to have its budget approved by the Board at the July meeting.
- Computer Services update: Staff are working with the Wi-Fi vendor to complete server configurations for the upgraded system; new access points will then be installed at Main and River Center Branch Library; the VDI configurations were put on hold during the server room HVAC upgrade project, and the vendor has been contacted to resume work; staff are discussing strategic migration steps with the Library's Citrix Managed Services vendor; the Exchange Online migration has been completed for all users; the first draft of the Library's Incident Response Plan has been completed and submitted to the City's cybersecurity team for review; the self-check kiosk use is at 19.6% (34,062) items for the year.
- Covid-19 Update: The Library's capacity limits have not substantially changed; still following protocols for cleaning, building fogging, and other sanitizing procedures; maintaining contract for the servicing of the hand sanitizing stations throughout the system; still quarantining returned items for 72 hours, but a recent study indicated transmission of the virus on books and materials has not been a high risk; the Metropolitan Library of Columbus, Ohio, conducted a poll of 78 libraries within the ULC; almost 63% are currently using quarantine levels of 72 hours or more; most are considering lowering the level to 48 or 24 hours; the City-Parish has been able to provide vaccinations for library employees, and most of them were able to take advantage of a pop-up distribution on March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Spencer Watts presented to the Board a thank-you card from Carver Branch Library regarding cakes that were sent by the Board to the branch after the recent altercation that took place outside the library building.
- Question from Kathy Wascom regarding what percentage of library staff has been able to receive at least one vaccination; Spencer Watts responded there is not a full count just yet; Mary Stein responded that an internal survey will be sent to library staff on Monday.

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 RENOVATION ON SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY – Spencer Watts (4:51 p.m.)

- Charrette sessions were held at Bluebonnet Regional Library on March 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>; attendance was light, as to be expected with public event restrictions; 25 attendees on Wednesday and 31 on Thursday; majority of feedback was positive, highly enthusiastic and supportive; people liked the modern lines of the building, the green space, the preservation of the oak tree, and well defined spaces for teens and children; a slideshow of photos from the charrette sessions was shown to the Board.
- An Infoguide has been created for information and updates on the construction project and can be found on the Library's website.
- Designers have moved into the schematic phase and have a preliminary schematic plan; still concern regarding the parking lot and limited number of spaces available.
- Received a proposal from the TND to purchase additional property; concern regarding the cost in relation to the amount of value it can actually deliver in terms of expanded parking; a meeting will be held Monday afternoon with Architectural Services and the design team to look at different parking configurations and solutions.
- Other concerns to be reviewed include restroom layout and stall count, study room placements, and mechanical considerations.
- Question from Kathy Wascom regarding if Councilwoman Jennifer Racca was in attendance at the charrette sessions; Spencer Watts responded that she was not due to the Council meeting, but that the Library will be sure to review details of the design with her since the new library will be in her district.
- Question from Kathy Wascom regarding when will the library building project be finished; Spencer Watts responded that assuming there are no major delays, such as weather events, the design and construction documents could be finished by the end of this year; the bid for a contractor could go out the early part of next year; construction should take around 14-16 months to complete, which would put the date around mid-2023.

- Question from Nicole Allmon-Learson regarding how the pandemic might impact the construction budget; Spencer Watts responded that extra money was put into the budget last year in anticipation, but hoping that prices on building materials will level out once construction is ready to begin.

B. UPDATE ON JONES CREEK REGIONAL LIBRARY – Patricia Husband (5:04)

- Final acceptance has passed; items on the punch list have been moved to a warranty item list.
- Water damaged carpet near the meeting room emergency exit door will be either cleaned or replaced; the branch manager reported that no water was present in the building after yesterday's storm.
- Finalizing work to be completed on the Letter Wall and the nook area in Children's Services.
- A slideshow of photos of new shelving and end panels was shown to the Board.
- Remaining furniture should be arriving next week.

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

VII. NEW BUSINESS – There was no new business.

VIII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

- Jason Jacob expressed his thoughts and prayers on the passing of Davis Rhorer and gave his condolences to Kathy Wascom.
- Kathy Wascom thanked everyone for their condolences and shared a fond memory of Davis and his enthusiasm and ideas of creating a better downtown for Baton Rouge

IX. ADJOURNMENT – Board President Jason Jacob requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Nicole Allmon-Learson. **The meeting was adjourned at 5:11 p.m. by unanimous vote.**

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Mr. Jason Jacob, President

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Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director