

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
APRIL 15, 2021
4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER – Jason Jacob, Board President (4:02 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 – Present
Delores Watts – Present
Donald Luther, Jr. – Present
Kathy Wascom – Present
Nicole Allmon-Learson – Present (4:36 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; Bryan “Cyn” Foreman, PC/LAN Specialist.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 18, 2021 – A motion to approve was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

III. SPECIAL ORDERS –There were no Special Orders.

IV. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

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

- For 2021, operating expenditures through March 31st are 19.29% of the operating budget. Through March, we should have spent no more than 25% of the budget.
- Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2021 remain ahead of those collected in 2020, as we are approximately 1.05% ahead of the same date last year.
- Also included are the final statements for calendar year 2020. Operating expenditures finished at 82.29% of the operating budget, and cash collections for 2020 ended at roughly 5.66% ahead of 2019.
- Kathy Wascom asked if the Library’s tax millage is going back to 10.52; Spencer Watts responded that yes, it occurred last year due to the rollback that was included in the 10-year plan; Ronnie Pierce responded that the property tax bill you will receive this year will reflect the lower millage rate.
- Donald Luther, Jr. asked Ronnie Pierce if the back-taxes recorded for 2019 are from people making late payments on their property taxes and if the Library earns any interest on it; Ronnie Pierce responded that there are small amounts earned, and once a year the Sheriff’s office will make a journal entry to transfer money into the Library’s interest account, which averages around \$30,000-\$40,000.

B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein (4:07 p.m.)

- “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of Library programs.
- Opera Louisiane held a Young People’s Opera Program at the Main Library, featuring a modern performance of Figaro.
- On April 11th, the Baton Rouge Concert Band held a performance, *Afternoon at the Movies*, at the Main Library; the Civic Orchestra of Baton Rouge will also hold an outdoor performance on April 17th.
- Last Saturday’s Garden Discoveries program was “Inside Scoop on Baton Roots Community Farm.”

- Current exhibits at the Main Library include Autism Awareness Month, an Ernest Hemingway Series, and Poetry Month.
- Yesterday's Business Forum speaker was Nick Saban; next month's speaker will be Josh Linkner, on May 12th.
- The Saturday Science program will be held April 17th, featuring Keith Comeaux, NASA Deputy Chief Engineer of the Mars 2020 Mission, and a Baton Rouge native.
- The Library system hosted the EBR Emergency Rental Assistance Program at four branches on March 27th; the Main Library also hosted the Young Entrepreneur's Academy pitch night.
- The Library's Special Collections staff assisted with research for the restoration of downtown's Martin Luther King, Jr.'s monument at City Plaza.
- Dr. Robyn Merrick, Southern University's Vice President for External Affairs, will host a virtual book discussion of the One Book, One Community selection, *The Yellow House*; the Authors After Hours program will be held on May 15th at the Main Library.

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson (4:18 p.m.)

- The contracted arborist has made annual visits to various library locations to assess the trees; a dying tree at Central Branch Library needs to be removed; several other branches will receive pruning services.
- Remediation work is underway at Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library due to water damage in a mechanical room that houses the air handling units; air ducts will also be cleaned; all air handling units will be refurbished once remediation work is complete, as well as other units at various branches.
- The roof at Carver Branch Library was soft-washed, and a leak was detected; the repairs have been included in the contractor's bid for repairs from last fall; the cost of metal roofing supplies has increased significantly; Architectural Services is researching lower cost options.
- After February's freeze, the heating control system at Eden Park Branch Library was determined to be outdated and upgrades are needed; the branch has raised flooring and will prove more challenging than others to access the heating system.
- Also after the freeze in February, a leak was discovered at Fairwood Branch Library in a chiller water line that was insulated; repairs are underway.
- A leak was discovered in the landscaping irrigation at Jones Creek Regional Library; repairs have been completed and were covered under the warranty.
- Two monumental signs have been designed for the Jones Creek Regional Library; still waiting for a cost proposal; the design will be used as a guide for future sign projects; the sign at Greenwell Springs Road Regional Library is under consideration for replacement, as it is not as visible as it once was.
- The parking lot lights at Main are being retrofitted with LED lights; consideration has been given to also retrofit the 2nd floor lights with LED lights; a man-lift was purchased for installation and to assist with other projects.
- A punch-list walk-through for the Main Library server room upgrades was held April 13th; outstanding items are related to the FM 200 system.
- The kickoff meeting for Main's boiler replacement was held March 22nd; design work is complete; work continues on the bid documents.
- Work continues on installation of partition walls at Carver Branch Library; water leaks were discovered around the new storefront windows but were repaired quickly by the contractor.
- Final acceptance for the Eden Park Branch Library chiller replacement was issued on April 14th.
- A minor improvement package is under consideration for six library branches; most issues identified over the past few years have been interior and exterior painting; Bluebonnet Regional Library will also receive improvements to public bathrooms, data closets, some flooring, and light fixtures.

2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Spencer Watts (4:30 p.m.)

- The City-Parish has lifted the hiring freeze that was in effect since the beginning of the pandemic; not all vacant library positions will be filled immediately, but some have already been posted.
- A pause has been placed on the Management Partners project; the contract time expired; work will resume soon.

- A slideshow of photos of new furniture at Jones Creek Regional Library was shown to the Board; several punch-list items are still being completed; minor improvements to shelving have been made; water management issues at the rear of the building are ongoing, including adding new catch basins.
- The Scotlandville Branch Library design contract has been approved by the Metro Council; should be executed within the next few weeks; the Baker Branch Library design contract was placed on the agenda this month; final revisions are underway for the building program drafts.
- Library staff continues to work on the budget for FY 2022.
- Computer Services update: Library staff are working with the Wi-Fi vendor to complete the server configurations for the upgraded system and to troubleshoot issues; staff are collaborating on the new makerspace at River Center Branch Library in regards to rules, procedures, guidelines and practical operational guidance; work resumes on Main's VDI configurations that was put on hold during the server room HVAC upgrade construction work.
- The American Rescue Plan Act includes funding for libraries that would be distributed through IMLS to state libraries; possibly could extend library services to community areas; unsure how much funding will be given to the states; funding could also be gained from the Emergency Connectivity Fund, administered by the FCC through the e-rate program.
- It was recently noted that City-Parish departments can now have supplemental, more detailed work roles for personnel; the Library is looking into implementing this as it will help to both define responsibilities and meet certain management challenges.
- Regarding current and upcoming roofing projects, last year's active hurricane season was a major factor in driving up the costs of material; this year is again predicted to be active, so prices will likely remain high.
- Covid-19 Update: Infection rates among Library staff remain low; one case was reported this month and one case last month, with no cross-transmission to other staff; Library staff continue to practice care and diligence with safety protocols; many staff have taken advantage of the vaccine availability; a staff survey at the end of March indicated 138 staff received the vaccine, 15 were registered on a waiting list, and very few responded they did not plan to vaccinate; the Library is considering changing its quarantine period for materials as new CDC guidelines are released and other libraries across the country begin to reduce their quarantine periods to 24 hours, and some are removing the quarantine completely; the Library will also reduce its building fogging; other guidelines will remain in place, such as social distancing rules, mask wearing policies, and possibly adding more preventive barriers for the computer common area, as well as opening up more study rooms and reinstating touch screen devices.
- Question from Nicole Allmon-Learson regarding if reducing the quarantine period would free up space being used for storage of quarantined items; Spencer Watts responded yes, it would help only partially in the smaller branches because their study room space is filled with furniture that was removed from the floor for social distancing. He added that there is also consideration of restoring some open-for-business hours, at least at the Main Library, but would be several weeks away from making that decision.

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. SETTING OF DATE FOR SPECIAL 2022 BUDGET WORK SESSION – Jason Jacob (4:57 p.m.)

- Jason Jacob asked the Board and Library staff if anyone has any dates in mind for the budget work session; Spencer Watts responded with the reminder that the City's finance department requested that the Library Board of Control approve its budget at the July board meeting, therefore the budget work session will need to occur before then.
- Brief discussion on 4th of July holiday week; also possibly holding the budget work session on the originally scheduled July board meeting date and moving the board meeting to the following week; in the past, the work session was usually held on a Saturday.
- It was decided that a poll would be emailed to the Board members with several choices of days to help gauge their availability.

B. UPDATE ON SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY – Spencer Watts and Patricia Husband (5:03)

- Systematic review of the charrette statements reaffirmed that majority of comments were positive; also questions and comments on practical matters that prove useful for consideration.

- A photo of the conceptual parking lot layout was shown to the Board.
- Parking remains a major concern; the TND is asking that the 40-foot setback along the Glasgow Rd. frontage be set at 20 feet; would help meet the goal of 69 to 70 parking spaces.
- Question from Kathy Wascom regarding where would the extra parking spaces be located; Spencer Watts responded that the building may be shifted forward to free up space currently designated for mechanical placement, or place the mechanical parts on the roof.
- The current size of the proposed building is around 18,000 sq.ft.; although it's considered large for a community branch, building a smaller branch to eventually add square footage to in the future would be expensive and disruptive; the oak tree preservation also makes it difficult to reconfigure the site layout.
- Kathy Wascom asked for clarification regarding why the TND will ask the Zoning Commission for the 20-foot setback; Spencer Watts explained it is so that the site can be reconfigured to allow for more parking and to try to meet the 70 parking spot goal.
- Patricia Husband and Spencer Watts also explained that the Fairwood Branch Library is only 15,800 sq.ft. with 65 parking spaces and how the parking spaces are sometimes filled by late afternoon; although South Branch is projected to receive a lot of patrons arriving on foot or bicycle, even with 68 to 70 parking spaces at South Branch, the area will still be constricted, similar to Fairwood Branch.
- Brief discussion on size of common vehicles and possible parking spaces for golf carts.
- A design team meeting was held on March 22nd; the City-Parish does not intend to purchase additional land as it would be too expensive and would only provide minimal advantages; a two-story building was also considered but would consume too much space and cost for elevators, stairways, bathrooms, and additional staff; the design team examined three to four site and building configurations, each with several variations; they also answered schematic design questions, such as placement of storage for attic stock and energy management systems.
- Photos of conceptual floorplans for shelving, collection placing and displays were shown to the Board.
- A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, April 16th, to review preliminary interior concepts.
- Patricia Husband and Spencer Watts discussed how the size of the large meeting room would correlate to more parking spaces being filled depending on events and meeting sizes; possibly up to 90 cars.
- Question from Nicole Allmon-Learson regarding if the 68 to 70 parking spaces would also include employee parking; Spencer Watts responded yes, at peak times there could be 12 to 14 staff cars needing accommodation.
- Question from Martha Guarisco regarding what would happen if the boundary is not able to be moved; Spencer Watts responded that if that happens, they may have to cut 1,000 sq.ft. from the building size.
- Question from Donald Luther, Jr. regarding who makes the final decision of moving the 40-foot boundary; Spencer Watts responded that the Zoning Commission and Metro Council would decide, with the TND approving it first; Kathy Wascom commented that the area and neighborhood are happy to have a library and probably would not mind the 20-foot buffer instead of 40 feet.
- Question from Delores Watts regarding ADA parking spaces; Spencer Watts responded that the plan will include ADA spaces, but it was decided not to include bus or motorcycle parking.
- Martha Guarisco asked how many ADA spaces are shown on the site layout; Patricia Husband responded there are 5 spaces; Jason Jacob asked if the ADA spaces are governed by code; Spencer Watts responded that there is a code and a minimal number of spaces required; Delores Watts commented that the same codes that govern ADA parking also apply to all public parking.
- Question from Kathy Wascom regarding if the other sections on the site plan that are designated as "light office" would have to use Library parking spaces; Spencer Watts responded that those businesses would have their own designated parking.

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

- Martha Guarisco thanked Library staff for showing the Board the South Branch shelving diagram, as she finds it intricate and interesting.

- Candace Temple commented her appreciation for attention to detail that goes into various Library projects and maintenance issues.
- Kathy Wascom commented that she enjoys reading the maintenance summary reports.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – Board President Jason Jacob requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Martha Guarisco. **The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 p.m. by unanimous vote.**