

MINUTES FOR SPECIAL 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
July 15, 2021
4:00 P.M.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Donald Luther, Jr.

- I. ROLL CALL – Assistant to the Deputy Library Director Rosana Sotile
Jason Jacob, Board President – *Present*
Candace Temple, Board Vice President – *Present*
Martha Guarisco, Board Treasurer – *Present (4:08 p.m.)*
Delores Watts – *Present*
Donald Luther, Jr. – *Present*
Kathy Wascom – *Present*
Nicole Allmon-Learson - *Absent*
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; Bryce Tomlin, Computer and Technical Services Coordinator.

II. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED 2022 LIBRARY BUDGET

A. OVERVIEW OF BUDGET

- The 2022 requested budget for total uses, excluding transfers to capital improvements fund, has only slightly increased from the 2021 budget (2.7% increase in operational budget).
- Some line items will reflect substantial increases, while others will reflect decreases, due to shifting assignments among object codes based on Munis criteria.

B. ALLOTMENTS AND SALARIES

- The requested 2022 personnel allotment is increasing by one position from the 2021 allotment.
- Branch Services is requesting a new position of Librarian II for the River Center Branch Library; Administration is requesting reclassification of a Library Technician I to a Library Technician II; and Circulation is requesting reclassification of a Library Aide (20 hours) to a Library Page (20 hours).
- Discussion of reclassification of positions; the administrative Librarian Technician I performs duties outside the scope of work for that position, so it requires a reclassification to Library Technician II; the circulation Library Page is a more universal classification and the pay amount will remain the same as the Library Aide position.
- Spencer Watts commented that the City-Parish Administration ended the hiring freeze in April; the Library has unfrozen positions that were frozen during the pandemic; positions related to the new South Branch library remain frozen at this time, but will be released in FY 2022 for planning and development purposes.
- Discussion on the decrease of student librarian positions and the benefits of utilizing substitute workers with flexible hours on a weekly basis.
- Discussion on total number of full-time and part-time employees; FTE is the full-time equivalent, which is a combination of full-time and part-time; part-time employee schedules are efficient for the Library system's hours, especially for coverage on nights and weekends.

C. ADVERTISING

- The requested budget is a combination of major print runs, radio and television advertising, and other bundles, including digital components; the amount is not much different than last year's budget.
- Discussion regarding paywalls; the Library uses both digital and print for newspaper advertising, and the digital ads are in front of the paywall.

D. CAPITAL OUTLAY (>\$5,000)

- The Critical Power Solutions line item is an uninterrupted power supply in the server room and is coming to its end of life.
- The Cell Phone Repeater is to increase the cellular signal at the River Center Branch Library; installation costs only; no monthly fees; includes a warranty.
- Requesting a box truck and three extended cab trucks for Facilities Services and maintenance; the Library has had issues in the past with securing a moving contract; additional trucks will assist with moving collections as needed; vehicles are purchased through the City-Parish fleet management contract.

E. COMMUNICATIONS

- The requested budget has increased from last year due to the re-bidding of services previously supplied by COX Communications.
- \$146,000 has been added for the Emergency Connectivity Fund; the fund is part of the American Rescue Act for libraries and schools to help unserved and underserved communities establish internet connections; would be a 100% reimbursement of upfront costs, but the Library must have the funds available to begin; internet services would be established outside of the Library, at point-of-need areas within the community; continued discussion on challenges of establishing utility services in rural areas.
- Question regarding who are the cell phones for, in reference to the cell phone line item; many Library staff are assigned work-related cell phones, especially Facilities Services, Branch Managers, Division Heads, Computer Services, Outreach Services, and Administration; around 60 total cell phones have been assigned for Library staff system-wide.
- Clarification on the acronym POTS: it stands for “Plain Old Telephone Service”.

F. COMPUTER SOFTWARE & RELATED SUPPLIES

- The highest estimated cost in this category will come from the Server Backup/Recovery Solution; a backup location is being established at the Library’s building on North Blvd.; it would be simpler and more efficient to move the server backup to the cloud; the estimated cost is a yearly cost of the cloud service; will also include restoration of service in case of server failure; cybersecurity is built into the service package; discussion for cloud backup has continued for over a decade among libraries in Louisiana, especially after major hurricanes; maintenance and upkeep will be performed by the vendor and is included in the cost; this is only the first quote received; will explore others.
- Clarification on the Deep Freeze Mac line item: it is a software that wipes clean any changes made on an Apple product to restore it to its previous state; is used for patron Apple computers in Makerspace areas; regular patron PC’s also have something similar but with a different vendor; will wipe clean anything malicious or counter-productive that was installed during a patron’s session, restoring the computer for secure use in the next session.

G. CONTRACTUAL SERVICES

- Budget request increases for this year include professional landscaping and private security for library branches – Main Library, Eden Park, Delmont Gardens and Scotlandville Branch Libraries; East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff Deputies are included in the contract employees budget.
- Question regarding if the Library is still fogging its buildings as part of Covid-19 disinfecting; the Library’s Facilities Services staff continue to fog.
- Clarification regarding landscaping vs. grounds keeping: landscaping refers to plants and shrubs, while grounds keeping refers to grass cutting.
- Clarification on the Cabildo Staffing line item: it is a general labor company with a City-Parish contract that the Library utilizes for manual assistance in lifting and moving heavy items during building renovations; they also assisted with painting pony walls at the Main Library; they are used on an as-needed basis.
- Clarification on why the Courier Services and Cash Handling Services are separate contracts: several years ago they were on the same contract; City-Parish Purchasing department decided to separate the contracts; both have the same vendor.

H. DUES AND MEMBERSHIPS

- This 2022 budget request decreased from 2021; Library staff utilized the budget app to submit their preferences on which professional membership dues they would like reimbursed instead of the Library paying upfront for the costs.

I. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- Budget indicates monthly and yearly costs of grass cutting at each library location.
- The Storm Clean-Up line item refers to situations when a large amount of debris is needed to be removed; Facilities Services staff also assist with storm clean-up; does not occur that often.

J. INSURANCE

- Premiums are unknown at this time; they will be determined once City-Parish performs its risk management assessment.
- Question regarding how much money the Library needs to keep for insurance expenditures, such as the flooding of Greenwell Springs Regional Library: the Library's deductible is \$1million per event; the Library is self-insured; additional coverage is included in the fund balance.

K. JANITORIAL AND EXTERMINATION

- The requested budget page shows detailed costs for janitorial services at each library location, monthly and yearly.
- The contract for the Main Library janitorial services is a separate bid from the contract for the other branches, due to the LEED certification of Main's building; this may change in the future.
- City-Parish Purchasing divides the bid package into three groups, based on the location of the branch, with the intention of allowing vendors to service buildings that are closer in proximity to one another; this would also allow smaller companies more opportunities for business.
- The pressure washing line item refers to small areas of concrete, such as parking lots, or areas where water accumulation has caused a build-up of slime or algae.

L. OTHER OPERATING & MAINTENANCE SUPPLIES

- This budget also includes the programming budget, professional services for performers and supplies for events and programs; this year's requested budget is less than last year's budget.
- The Library spent less on programming in 2020 because of the shutdown and pandemic; it was estimated that more would be spent this year, but it has been a slow start due to Covid-19 infection rate spikes and programming restrictions; it is anticipated that in the coming year the Library will be able to provide a full schedule of programming and use more supplies and resources.

M. PRINTING AND BINDING

- Some of this budget was not spent last year and earlier this year because most of it is tied to the Library's programs; the amount requested is almost the same as last year's requested amount.
- The requested budget includes printing the newsletter, the handbills, Children Services programs, bookmarks, library cards, literacy print runs, etc.
- Question regarding if the print runs for the Source newsletter were reduced, as requested by former Metro Council member Matt Watson; the print runs were reduced to 7,000 prints; the page count also reduced to 24 pages from 32 pages, due to Covid-19 and a decrease in Library programs; patrons were polled on their delivery preference and many signed up for electronic delivery; it was delivered in electronic format only during the pandemic shutdown.

N. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Rouge Solutions & Services has three separate line items on this budget request; it's a single contract but easier to understand the budget when listed separately; includes the annual cost for the Library staff intranet, new custom applications to streamline workloads, and enhancements to the products the Library currently uses.
- Question regarding Jim Jenkins as a budget line item: he is a Library retiree and the obituary database specialist for the Library; he is digitizing all obituaries ever printed in The Advocate so they can be accessed online at any time; contracted under a professional services agreement; the microfilm collection can still be accessed on the second floor at the Main Library in Special Collections.
- Discussion on Baton Rouge Arts Council Contract; all performers and presenters for Library programs are grouped under the Baton Rouge Arts Council contract; the Council is the booking agent for Library programming and pays the performers directly; the Library receives an invoice from the Arts Council for the amount the performer charged, plus a 10% booking fee; this simplifies the process for paying performers; the contract amount this year is \$269,000.

- Discussion on Bradbury Miller & Associates; this is the recruitment company used to recruit the Library Director, and they specialize in Library careers; they assisted in finding current Library Director Spencer Watts; they will now assist in beginning the process to find his replacement when he retires in the near future.
- Discussion on the Volunteers of America Case Worker Contract; requested budget amount is \$150,000; the Library has eight locations for case workers and a rotational case worker that visits various locations; they are available a few days a week, attending different library branches on different days; they assist patrons with various needs, such as housing assistance, displaced youth, counseling services, and helping them find access to other services they may not have known they are eligible for; invoices received by the Library document the number of people the case workers spoke to; they provide two licensed social workers that work 40 hours a week, and several case workers who work 3 – 4 hours each day at various branches; the case workers are not licensed clinical social workers but have extensive knowledge in the field; Library staff also work with case workers to assist patrons.
- Discussion on Makerspace professional contracts; they are not full time positions; the Library contracts workers with special skill sets for its maker spaces; they create curriculum, host demonstrations and other types of maker trainings.
- Clarification on Claire Delaune contract line item; she is the social media correspondent for the Library; she creates social media content, as well as monitoring the Library's social media accounts; formerly she was the Public Relations Coordinator for the Library, but is now contracted for 30 hours per week.

O. RENTAL/LEASE AGREEMENTS

- The Library has two temporary storage space leases: the Renaissance Park storage space and the Baton Rouge Police Department Complex storage space; the spaces will be needed until the new archival storage building is constructed at the Scotlandville Branch Library, which will be about two to three years from now; the Renaissance Park provides 15,000 sf of storage, and the Police Department Complex provides 4,000 sf.

P. REPAIR/MAINTENANCE – BUILDINGS

- The requested budget for 2022 has changed considerably due to separating the line items to provide more details; the contracts are bid through the City-Parish Purchasing department for specific services for Library buildings; the budgeted amount is based on utilization reviews over several years of what the Library needed to have performed at its locations.
- The budget also includes minor capital improvement projects, such as chiller replacements at Baker and Zachary Branch Libraries; the minor branch improvements package increased the budget significantly; this is the quickest and most economical way for the needed improvements to be completed; half of the improvements budget will be for Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library, specifically for updating the restrooms, data closets, key card access, and painting.
- Other parts of this budget include maintenance supplies and services; the building materials and minor apparatus and tools line item budgets have been reduced because they are not used as often; the Library does not actually build many things.
- Discussion on the role of Facilities Manager, Alvin Rattle, in determining the budget; he is able to recognize the need for service contracts in areas that were lacking, such as boiler preventative maintenance and air handling unit cleaning; the Library's Facility Services staff don't have the technical skills needed for certain projects nor the available staffing level and time; he is also diligent in following up with contractors and evaluating their work

Board President Jason Jacob asked for a vote on adjourning for a break. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 5:49 p.m.
Board President Jason Jacob called the meeting back to order at 6:31 p.m.

Q. REPAIR/MAINTENANCE – OFFICE EQUIPMENT

- The majority of the requested budget includes renewals of computer software services, including licensing, support and maintenance.
- Discussion on copy costs line item; this includes a monthly maintenance fee that depends on the number of prints and copies per machine; the Library receives an invoice for the costs per black-and-white and color prints and copies; Library patrons receive \$2 worth of free prints made from the public computers.
- The Zoom subscription is used primarily for virtual programming; the Library will continue to offer both live and virtual programs.
- Discussion on other software subscriptions; Iguana is used for the Library's IMLS; Barracuda is the Library's email spam filter; many of the software products integrate with each other.

- Question on the Demco Sign-Up Online Calendar subscription; it is used for the Library's events calendar that is accessible through the Library's website; it displays all of the Library's events and programs on the main page of the website.

R. SPECIAL EVENT EXPENSES

- This budget category operates under certain conditions determined by the City-Parish; the Finance Department has directed that the Library's reoccurring special events be included here; includes the Maker Faire, the One Book One Community, and the Author-Illustrator events; the budget is for the items and supplies needed for promoting the events.

S. TRACKABLE SUPPLIES < \$1,000

- This budget is used for supplies in which the Library provides its own inventory tags and tracks internally; the City-Parish only tags items that are worth \$5,000 or more; the Library is required by auditors to track items worth \$250 or more.
- Examples of items tracked include book trucks, task chairs and assorted items that could be potentially removed from the Library unknowingly.

T. TRACKABLE SUPPLIES \$1,000 - \$4,999

- The task chairs line item was misplaced in this budget category; it belongs in the Trackable Supplies <\$1,000 budget category and should replace the task chairs line item that is already there.

U. TRAVEL AND TRAINING

- This budget category is exactly the same as last year; the budget amount did not increase.
- In-person conferences are now reopening; the Library has already begun booking travel for two conferences this fall.

V. UTILITIES

- This budget is for the costs for basic utilities at each Library location.

W. VEHICLES

- This category includes a list of vehicles owned by the Library and their mileage; high mileage vehicles used by Facilities Service are scheduled to be replaced.

X. WASTE DISPOSAL AND RECYCLING SERVICES

- This budget is for payments of waste collection/disposal and recycling at each Library location.

Y. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- The Library consulted with Architectural Services which recommended a 15% increase in construction costs; the 15% increase was applied to all aspects of the South Branch Library construction project, but should not have been applied to the land cost; the amount has been recalculated.
- The Dark Fiber project, during the previous USAC window, was included in the operating budget; it was moved to capital improvements because of the scale of the improvement; will receive 87% of reimbursement for services; the project may not move forward if there are long-term operational support and sustainability issues; the new RFP will be significantly different because it will include a second round of grading with vendor presentations, and the Library will be able to question the respondents.
- Clarification on estimated growth of property taxes: the amount printed was calculated before City-Parish Finance gave the Library the correct amount to include; it will be reprinted with the correct number before the budget is submitted for approval; the estimated general property taxes for 2022 will be \$49,292,220.
- Discussion on increase of office supplies budget; it was previously under-budgeted; it's now based on actual expenditures and re-categorizing equipment.

III. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

Board President Jason Jacob thanked everyone for their hard work and asked for final comments by the Library Board of Control. No comments were made.

IV. ADJORNMENT – 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 7:16 p.m. by unanimous vote.**

