

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 21, 2022
4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Candace Temple, Board Vice President

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 (4:54 p.m.)

Delores Watts – Present

Donald Luther, Jr. – Present

Kathy Wascom – Present

Nicole Allmon-Learson – Present (4:11 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; Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director; Jason Salisbury, PC/LAN Specialist.

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 17, 2022 – A motion to approve was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

II. SPECIAL ORDERS – VOTE TO ADOPT RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING APRIL 2022 AS PARLIAMENTARY LAW MONTH

- Board president Jason Jacob suggested moving the agenda item to occur after the Reports by the Director to allow Board member and Parliamentarian, Nicole Allmon-Learson, additional time to arrive.
- A motion to move agenda item II to occur after agenda item III was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Candace Temple. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

III. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Rhonda Pinsonat (4:06 p.m.)

- For 2022, operating expenditures through March 31st are 18.16% of the operating budget. Through March, we should have spent no more than 25% of the budget.
- Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2022 are slightly ahead of those collected in 2021, as we are approximately 1.07% ahead of the same date last year.
- Question from Donald Luther, Jr. regarding if any outstanding payments have been applied to the financial reports; Rhonda Pinsonat responded that all insurance payments and anything else from 2021 has been posted.

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

- “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of Library programs.
- The Main Library hosted the Edible Book Fest earlier this month; winners included “The Magic Cheese House”, “Where the Wild Things Jar”, “Atchafalaya Mouseboat”, “War and Peas”, “Chickens Aren’t the Only Ones”, and “The Bun Also Rises.”
- Opera Louisiane performed at the Main Library with children’s performances; the Civic Orchestra of Baton Rouge also performed last month at the Main Library and will return on May 28th.
- Rock the Plaza fest was held March 26th at the Main Library; the Baton Rouge Concert Band performed April 3rd and will return May 30th for a Memorial Day concert.

- The 12th Annual Community History Festival was held at the Pride-Chaneyville Branch Library on April 2nd; the theme was “Grandma’s House”.
- The Ebb & Flow Festival was held downtown April 4th & 5th; the River Center Branch hosted an outdoor booth with activities for children, including sidewalk chalk drawings.
- Author Marybeth Lima discussed her book, *Adventures of a Louisiana Birder*, at the Main Library on March 27th in conjunction with the library’s One Book One Community promotion; Nicholls State University Professor Dr. Stuart Tully presented on the roots of Cajun and Zydeco music, on April 10th at the Main Library.
- Gwen Roland, author of *Atchafalaya Houseboat*, will host author talks and discussions at the Main Library on April 23rd and 24th.
- The Library has been assisting BASF in collecting information on Linwood Plantation; the company held a dedication ceremony for its new memorial to honor those enslaved at the plantation on April 7th.
- Next month’s Business Forum speaker will be chef Emeril Lagasse, on May 11th.
- The Library recently received its new bookmobile vehicle that was on backorder due to the pandemic and supply chain issues; it features an awning and a lower step, which is used on visits to senior citizen and retirement centers.
- The Red Stick Farmers Market will now be appearing at the Main Library on Tuesday afternoons from 3:30pm – 6:30pm; this past Tuesday featured 12 vendors set up in the plaza instead of the outer parking lot.
- Beanstack will once again be the platform for the Library’s summer reading program.

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson (4:30 p.m.)

- Annual inspections for sprinkler systems and fire alarm panels are complete for all locations.
- Monthly lighting inspections were completed at each location.
- Exterior pressure washing was completed on Fairwood and Carver Branch Libraries; the main entrance and courtyard at Pride-Chaneyville was also pressure washed.
- Air scrubbers and UV lights have been installed at the Main Library; installation of wiring will be completed next month.
- The motor was replaced on Air Handler 9 at the Main Library; three additional motors and a chilled water pump will also be replaced in the coming weeks; the system is in its ninth year of operation, so replacements are to be expected.
- Wall repairs and painting occurred on the second floor at the Main Library, as well as the first stages of repairing the monumental sign.
- Updates for River Center Branch Library include repairing a leaking variable air valve above the staff entrance; ordering a new touch screen control panel for lighting controls; beginning work on installing air scrubbers and UV lights; and reprogramming of the faulty fire sensor in the elevator pit.
- Debris and vegetation were removed near the rear fence at Eden Park Branch Library in preparation of replacing damaged sections; waiting on a PO to have the fence portion repaired.
- Due to water pooling in the staff parking lot at Jones Creek Regional Library, a leak detection company will test the area tomorrow by pressurizing the system to pinpoint the source; water is also seeping through the cement cracks on the loading dock; the branch’s faucets and toilets will be unavailable for the duration of the test, which will take one to three hours.
- The final acceptance for the Carver Branch Library roof repairs will be on next week’s Metro Council’s meeting agenda, as well as the acceptance of low bid for the minor roofing and exterior restoration projects.
- Library staff met with the architect this week for the additional improvements at Bluebonnet Regional Library; the project will renovate and upgrade the branch’s bathrooms, lighting system, circulation workroom, children’s services area and workroom, teen services entrance space, and an expansion of the maker space.

2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Spencer Watts (4:40 p.m.)

- The Library system closed early on March 22nd and March 30th due to severe weather alerts; none of the library locations sustained damage for either of those dates.

- A new security guard contract was approved last week by the Metro Council; a bid solicitation had been issued that included requirements for thorough standards of practice and appropriate qualifications of security personnel; a meeting will be held next week to begin the transition of service to the new company.
- The Library released a community survey on April 18th to assist with updating and improving its Strategic Plan; all persons are encouraged to complete the survey; printed copies of the survey questions were distributed to the Board members.
- A meeting was held on March 31st with Architectural Services to discuss the Baker Branch Library capital project; discussions included the scope of work, efficiency, effectiveness and cost of meeting the needs of the project; also discussed roofing needs, parking lot configuration, construction phases, location of main entrance, public service areas, addition of study rooms, consolidated work areas, additional bathroom spaces, and possible reconfiguration of the enclosed courtyard.
- Computer Services Update: Bids have been received and accepted for the replacement of Advanced Workstation in Education (AWE) units throughout the library system, as well as four additional units; the WiFi hotspots should arrive soon and barcode information was sent earlier to the processing department; the AV control installation was completed at Jones Creek Regional Branch Library; all of the Library's ECF applications will be submitted in the third window of opportunity which opens in April 2022; Library staff recently visited a local XR (extended reality) company to obtain insight into content and systems that will assist in VR and AR training applications; the Library is looking into mapping out with other workforce development providers to see how they can complement and extend opportunities for the public, students and trainees.
- Work will begin soon on next year's budget request; inflation continues to affect the Library's vendors, suppliers and construction projects; the additional 15% added to construction budgets is now not enough to cover the rising costs of materials and supplies; the Library's revenue growth has also been modest; the Library also has to consider possible adjustments to employee compensation rates and how to make any changes sustainable; members of the Board will schedule a budget workshop meeting before July.
- A recent exercise with the Urban Libraries Collation's business calculator revealed the Library generated \$4.23 million worth of value directly back to the local business community when looking at the library resources that were used over the past year; the results show how much value the Library system contributes to the economic growth and development of the local community.
- A recent complaint was made by a concerned patron regarding another patron sleeping in a chair, and referred to the sleeping patron as a "street person"; the patron also expressed the opinion that the Library should adopt more stringent rules in this area; the Library responded that it has a long-standing practice of allowing people to sleep as long as it is not causing disruption or for an extremely extended period of time, and intervening as gently as possible when needed; sometimes patrons who fall asleep are tired students, workers resting in between shifts, older readers, or just fatigued persons; the Library strives to treat everyone equally.
 - Question from Jason Jacob regarding if the Library uses its security guards to intervene if a person experiencing homelessness is sleeping for an extended period of time; Spencer Watts responded that it depends on the circumstance; if they aren't able to be awakened, then assistance from a third party may be required.
 - Question from Donald Luther, Jr. regarding if the Library has a written policy on sleeping persons; Spencer Watts responded that they do not, and that most libraries have done away with having a policy on this matter.
 - Comment from Kathy Wascom that for as long as she worked at the library she would encounter many different types of sleeping patrons, young and old; there's no way of knowing why they're sleeping; a lot of librarians had a second-sense on dealing with these situations, and if a problem arose, security was always available; she hardly ever encountered any serious situations with sleeping persons; the Library is one of the safest and accessible places within the parish.
 - Spencer Watts stated that it's important to treat everyone the same, no matter if they're experiencing homelessness or not; there's no litmus test to determine if they are homeless or not; there is a large number of people experiencing homelessness at the bus stops and visiting libraries, perhaps because there aren't many places they can go to, and libraries seem to be a place of comfort.
 - Donald Luther, Jr. and Spencer Watts discussed the need for better preparation and awareness of the seemingly increasing number of people living on the streets and camping in vehicles.

- Nicole Allmon-Learson commented on her recent trip to the River Center Branch Library and how the security presence made her and her daughter feel safe, and the importance of that for other patrons as well.
- Question from Delores Watts if the new security guard company will provide security at all library locations; Spencer Watts responded that they have one security guard company but they also have East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's deputies; some branches have a mixture of security guards and deputies, depending on the time of day, as mornings are sometimes served by security guards and evenings by the deputies.
- Question from Martha Guarisco regarding the large amount of trash near the dumpster in the Main Library's parking lot and if the library is responsible for cleaning it or if it is BREC's responsibility; Spencer Watts responded that library staff will look into it and see what can be done; Mary Stein responded that it's not the library's dumpster but staff will communicate with BREC about the situation.

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

IV. SPECIAL ORDERS – VOTE TO ADOPT RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING APRIL 2022 AS PARLIAMENTARY LAW MONTH (5:24 p.m.)

- Board President Jason Jacob read aloud the resolution proclaiming April 2022 at Parliamentary Law Month; Board member and Parliamentarian Nicole Allmon-Learson thanked the Board for taking time to consider the resolution.
- A motion to adopt the resolution was made by Delores Watts and seconded by Nicole Allmon-Learson. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

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 (5:27 p.m.)

- It was discovered on the survey for the parcel switch that the required buffer on each side of the Library's drive was not enough footage; Rouzan agreed to allow the Library an additional 9 feet, 6 inches at the entrance at no cost; will allow the Library to retain its parking lot configuration without additional adjustment.
- A meeting was held with the interior designer and other members of the architectural team to discuss furniture and seating selections, as well as furniture with power and data options; a sun study was also conducted to determine amount of glare inside the building, especially on computers; the Library elected to have a film covering on the windows instead of shades, to minimize sunlight exposure on the computer areas.
- Patricia Husband and Mary Stein met with a shelving vendor and the interior designer to review different types of shelving for each department, and discussed the following:
 - Lower heights will be used throughout the building, ranging from 42 inches to 66 inches in height.
 - Shelving closer to the entrance will be on casters.
 - Shorter ranges of shelving will allow for easier moving.
 - Smaller lips at the back of shelving will be used to prevent books from falling between shelves.
 - The vendor cautioned that there might be a long wait time for raw materials due to the international supply chain shortage; there are currently two shelving vendors on state contract.
- Library staff also met with the technology consultants last week to determine how patrons and library staff will use technology, and how to create a technology package that is easy to replicate in other branches; would make it easier for patrons to utilize the same technology at each library location.
- Question from Donald Luther, Jr. if the Main Library has rolling shelving; Patricia Husband responded yes, the Main Library has shelving on casters, as well as Greenwell Springs Regional Branch and River Center Branch, and other locations; rolling shelves will also be included in the renovation of the Scotlandville Branch Library.

- Question from Kathy Wascom regarding if the oak tree on the lot will require a lot of maintenance; Spencer Watts replied that there is a contract already in place for preservation and maintenance of the tree, as well as caring for its root system.

B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY – Spencer Watts (5:40 p.m.)

- Architects continue to work on construction documents and will submit a new timeline once they have had a chance to finalize the changes.
- A meeting was held March 31st with Library staff, the architects and Architectural Services staff to discuss the following topics:
 - Major changes to the north, east and west exterior elevations; replacing the porte-cochere with lower canopies; will allow patrons to see into the building as they approach it; glass becomes more prominent and adds architectural interest.
 - Larger glass window at the Children’s Services area and meeting room wing; removal of smaller windows.
 - Increasing the ceiling height in the new Black Heritage addition; will include higher expanse of glass at the back of the addition.
 - Windows on the side of the building will complement the new entrance; will allow for natural sunlight during the day and light emitting out during the night.
 - Children’s Services area will be extended; better line of sight; relocation of the activity wall to an area near the story time space.
 - Teen Services will be a new addition; its service desk will be closer to the new entrance.
 - The new archival building will mirror some of the thematic elements of the main building and not look like a storage building.

VII. NEW BUSINESS – There was no new business to report.

VIII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

- Candace Temple congratulated Delores Watts on her reappointment to the Library Board of Control.
- Delores Watts thanked everyone for their support and welcoming her back to the Board.
- Kathy Wascom commented on design elements of libraries and how safety is incorporated, especially through diligent librarians and staff.
- Donald Luther, Jr. also congratulated Delores Watts on her reappointment and thanked the rest of the Board for giving their time to serve.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – Board President Jason Jacob requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Delores Watts. **The meeting was adjourned at 5:51 p.m. by unanimous vote.**

Mr. Jason Jacob, President

Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director