

Minutes of the Meeting of the
East Baton Rouge Parish Library Board of Control

May 17, 2018

The regular meeting of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library Board of Control was held in the first floor Conference Room of the Main Library at Goodwood at 7711 Goodwood Boulevard on Thursday, May 17, 2018. Mr. Jason Jacob, President of the Board called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. Members of the Board present were Ms. Nicole Allmon-Learson, Mrs. Martha Guarisco, Mr. Donald Luther, Jr., Ms. Candace Temple, Ms. Kathy Wascom and Mrs. Delores Watts. Also in attendance were Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director; Ms. Patricia Husband, Assistant Library Director of Branch Services; Ms. Mary Stein, Assistant Library Director of Administration; Ms. Rhonda Pinsonat, Library Business Manager; Mr. Ronnie Pierce, Assistant Library Business Manager. and Ms. Liz Zozulin, Executive Assistant to the Library Director. Also present were Mr. Brian Thornhill, Library LAN Administrator; Mr. Stew Craig, Library Network Technician I; Ms. Kayla Perkins, Library Public Relations Coordinator; and Captain Blair Nicholson of the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office. Also in attendance were Mr. Frank Hillyard, videographer for Metro 21; Ms. Andrea Gallo, reporter with *The Advocate*; Ms. Hilary Scheinuk, photographer with *The Advocate*; Mr. Mark Armstrong and Ms. Brandi Harris, reporters with WBRZ-TV, Channel 2.

Mr. Jacob asked Ms. Temple to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mr. Jacob asked Ms. Zozulin to take the roll which she did.

Mr. Jacob asked for the approval of the minutes of the regular Library Board meeting of April 19, 2018. Ms. Temple made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Luther, and approved unanimously.

Mr. Jacob read Item A under Reports by the Director.

III. Reports by the Director

A. Financial Reports

Mr. Jacob asked Mr. Watts to present the reports. Mr. Watts asked Ms. Pinsonat to give the financial report.

For 2018, operating expenditures through April 30th are \$8,300,556.13, or 19.07% of the operating budget. Through April, we should have spent no more than 33% of the budget.

Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2018 remain ahead of those collected in 2017, as we are approximately \$2.7 million dollars, and 6.47% ahead of the same date last year.

Ms. Pinsonat asked if there were any questions. There being none, Mr. Jacob thanked Ms. Pinsonat and then read Item B under System Reports.

B. System Reports

Mr. Watts asked Ms. Stein to give the systems report. Ms. Stein said the Summer Meals program is returning for the second year starting May 24th. The Library is partnering with the East Baton Rouge Parish School System and the U.S.D.A. through the U.S. Dairy Alliance to provide healthy meals during the week to children in East Baton Rouge Parish. Because many children in the parish depend on their school breakfast and lunch for nutrition, this program will address this need. Program staff will visit several of the Library branches including the Main Library, Bluebonnet Regional, Carver, Delmont Gardens, Eden Park, Fairwood, Greenwell Springs Road Regional, Jones Creek Regional and the Scotlandville Branch Libraries. The program is open not only to school children, but to anyone between the ages of 0-18. No questions are asked, and there is no paperwork involved. Every child who comes gets a meal. The Library simply provides a space for the food distribution. The Library staff does not prepare the food, distribute it or store it.

Ms. Stein then mentioned the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library held on Saturday, May 12th from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. Our BREC partners opened the Bluebonnet Swamp gate allowing free admission to the swamp. Approximately 150 people came to the Library from the swamp, and 150 came directly to the Library. All ages were represented and activities included seeing reptiles brought by BREC volunteers, music by the Lagniappe Dulcimer Society and birthday cake. Tours of the Library were given so that patrons could see the new furniture, the renovations and the maker space in Teen Services called the innovation space.

Ms. Stein noted that there has been great media coverage of Library activities. In the *225 Magazine* the Main Library green roof was one of the 225 things to do; take a selfie on the roof. We were also featured in the *Baton Rouge Christian Life Magazine*. The East Baton Rouge Parish Library has made the news this week due to our participation in the Urban Libraries Council national program on entrepreneurship. The Library is one of 12 nationally selected to engage and support the creation and exposure of small local businesses.

Ms. Stein then gave the *Around the Parish* report.

- An important new collection is being added to the Baton Rouge Room. “Buckskin Bill” Black’s family is donating paper ephemera, scrapbooks, and some show tapes. It’s an important part of our local history and will be safely archived for future generations.
- Our *Bookface Friday* posts on social media are now in a Pinterest file, and have been tagged by the *New York Times*.
- The Jones Creek Regional Branch Library was the site for the annual Author’s Row event. Local authors are invited to participate. The authors network with each other and patrons have the opportunity to meet and discuss their favorite books.

- The 4th annual All Paws on Deck event was held at the Main Library. The event featured information on pet adoption, and cancer in pets. The highlight was the walk by canine cancer survivors to raise awareness of pet cancer.
- One of the last events for the One Book/One Community read of *Hidden Figures* was held at the Main Library. “100 Years of Flight” featured former ABC News correspondent, Jim Slade. Katherine Wright, the sister of Orville and Wilber Wright, was portrayed by a Chautauquan actress as she described “The First Family of Aviation”.
- The closing event for *Hidden Figures*, the Red Stick International Digital Festival 18, was held at the Main Library. Episcopal High students from the robotics program demonstrated their creations.
- The Knock Knock Children’s Museum staff visited Children’s Services with hands-on activities for all.
- On May 12th BREC held the Grand Opening of the Independence Botanical Gardens, and their Library partners assisted in the celebration. The Botanical Gardens have undergone a major renovation which has attracted many Library patrons. Plein Air painting artists will create in the gardens on May 24th.
- Self-check of Library materials is now possible. Patrons can place all the items for check out at the kiosk. After scanning a library card, all of the items are automatically checked out. Since mid-April 10,000 books have been checked out at the kiosks.

Ms. Stein noted that the Summer Reading Program will begin shortly. It will run from the end of May through the end of July. There is a program for children including babies, one for teens and one for adults. For the adult program the Library will partner with Louisiana Public Broadcasting to encourage participation in The Great American Read. Patrons will be able to vote for their favorite book out of the list of 100 books. The goal is to get people to fall in love with reading again.

Ms. Stein asked for questions from the Board. Mrs. Watts asked about the Summer Meals program. She asked if the meals will be prepared elsewhere and then transported to the Library to which Ms. Stein replied affirmatively. Health inspections were conducted at the various libraries to be sure that we have facilities for washing hands and discarding trash. She added that the distribution is extremely easy for the Library staff.

Ms. Allmon-Learson said she wanted to make a comment about the self-checking kiosks. She noted the self-check option at the end of April when she visited the Library, a staff member encouraged her to try one of the stations. He gave her a full explanation of what it is, and how easy it is to use. He even showed her how to use it. She said the staff is to be commended for this excellent demonstration and customer assistance. Ms. Stein replied that change is difficult, but this is a good change.

Mr. Jacob thanked Ms. Stein. He asked for comments by the Board, and any public comments. There were none. He then read Item A under Other Reports.

IV. Other Reports

A. Maintenance Report and Additional Capital Projects

Mr. Watts stated that Ms. Husband was unexpectedly called away, so he will report on maintenance and capital projects. He said regular maintenance is ongoing. At this time of the year HVAC systems are checked in order to prepare for the increased demand on these systems as temperatures rise in the summer.

In regard to the major projects, a purchase order has been issued for the end panel replacement for the adult and children's areas at the Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library. This is the last item to be completed for the major renovation of this branch. The Branch Services staff have been selecting the images that will be used for the end panels.

Mr. Watts noted that Ms. Husband has just arrived to this meeting. He asked Ms. Husband to assist him in the discussion of the RFID project. He said that she and Mr. Bryce Tomlin, Librarian Coordinator of Technical Services have been in contact with mk Solutions to ensure that equipment was available and installed in a timely manner. He explained, for example, that a conveyor belt in the Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch needed to be replaced. At the Main Library and the Fairwood Branch an issue developed with the security gates. The older gates should be RFID compatible, but after testing them with the equipment, it was necessary to replace them with new gates.

Ms. Husband agreed with Mr. Watts' summary of the RFID project. Whenever we experience a slight issue, we log on to a trouble shooting site. The company has been responsive. We still need to conduct some additional training for staff.

Ms. Husband again thanked our Facilities staff and Computer Services staff for their tireless work and patience on this major project. She also thanked the Branch staff for their enthusiasm and willingness to embrace this change.

Mr. Watts said he was glad to hear the positive comments by Ms. Allmon-Learson regarding the assistance the staff gave regarding the use of the RFID kiosk. When new technology is introduced, it is very important to explain how to use it. The goal is for people to use the self-check system on a natural basis without feeling pressured or forced. The staff will still be available for checkout and to answer questions. However, when there are busy periods with lines of people at checkout, the kiosks will be a quick and easy alternative.

Mr. Watts asked if there were any questions. There being none, Mr. Jacob thanked Mr. Watts and asked him to give the Miscellaneous Reports under Item B.

B. Miscellaneous Reports

Mr. Watts reported that the Library staff is working on the proposed Library budget for 2019. Ms. Pinsonat and Mr. Pierce will gather the budget requests in order to produce the documents which

the senior Library staff will review. We will then prepare a rough draft of the proposed budget. Once this is completed, the Business Office will produce a large budget binder in late June for each Board member. These binders will be given to the Board members for review before the special budget work session. At this work session the proposed budget will be reviewed, and the Board members can ask questions, make comments, give direction, and offer suggestions. A budget work session usually lasts about 2-3 hours. Mr. Watts said we will need to set a time for this work session several days prior to the regular Board meeting on July 19th. During the July meeting, the Library Board will need to vote on adopting the proposed 2019 budget. A budget request will then be submitted to the Mayor-President. After a review by the City, the finalized proposed 2019 budget is presented to the Metropolitan Council for their approval.

Mr. Watts said that Ms. Zozulin can poll Board members for their availability as we have done in the past. We have held these sessions either in the late afternoon or evening during the week, or on a Saturday morning. Once the poll is taken, the Board President will review the dates. It is sometimes difficult to get a date when all Board members can attend, so the Board President will make a determination regarding the date.

Mr. Watts then discussed the Library's fund balance. He said that recently a number of people have heard about how high our fund balance is, and have asked about it. It is difficult to understand because it is complicated. Our fund balance is between \$50 - \$60 million dollars. It is viewed by some as a stockpile of money. However, in reality it includes our anticipated revenue which we will collect from property taxes. It also includes the money for capital projects that have been approved, and any money that has been carried forward for a project such as a boiler replacement. The way the accounting system that was set up when the first Library millage passed over 30 years ago, stipulates that we anticipate the money we will collect from one year into the next year. The fund balance is similar to one's checking account plus all the money one will receive for a salary during the year which will be drawn down as one pays bills. It also contains some of one's savings account to be used for projects.

Mr. Watts said the Library does not have a great amount of excess cash, but rather, money that is being expended for projects as the year progresses. He noted that we budget \$2 million for our casualty loss deductible, and also \$500,000 for emergency expenditures that may be needed as a result of storm or disaster damage.

Mr. Luther asked if we had an historic flood, and if one of our branches was under water, we would have money set aside to see us through that event. Mr. Watts replied affirmatively that this reserve would help us through this disaster. Mr. Luther then asked if revenues were down due to the destruction of residences in the area, we would have funds to continue providing library services during a very trying time. Mr. Watts said we would like to have \$500,000 to meet any challenges that would occur from a disaster. He noted having a reserve of money helps one to provide services after an unexpected loss. Mr. Luther commented that this is actually a novel approach to being prepared for the unexpected, and that he supports this approach. Mr. Watts added that we will not need this reserve money in some years, but it is important to be prudent and cautious. The total for the unexpected event is only \$2.5 million out of the total fund balance. The remainder of the balance represents money that is coming in through the millage. We do need to maintain our costs within our income.

Ms. Wascom said whenever she is asked about the Library's fund balance, she explains that the Library operates differently from other government agencies. The Library does not ask for a bond to fund projects. We actually save the money before we start a project, similar to an individual who saves money to buy a car or house. Saving the money before building a library is a very conservative method. She noted that people understand that analogy. Mr. Watts said the pay-as-you-go system that the Library operates under explains where the taxes collected are being used. The Library does not borrow money or issue bonds. He added because of our 10-year millage cycle, we would only be able to have a 10-year bond, and that would be very expensive. Mr. Watts agreed that the Library's funding system is very conservative and prudent. We only commit to a project when we have the money saved.

Mr. Luther thanked Ms. Wascom for her explanation of the fund balance. Mr. Watts said all that was just discussed are important elements illustrating how well this method has worked for the Library over the last 30 years. It has allowed us to construct attractive buildings, provide new technology, and to have great collections, programs, and services for our patrons. The conclusion from all of this discussion about the fund balance is that we do not have an excess of \$50 - \$60 million set aside in a special account.

Mr. Watts said that Ms. Stein mentioned the Independence Botanical Gardens Expansion. He said he hopes that the Board will have the opportunity to walk through that area. The beautiful new gardens and walks inter-connect very attractively with the plaza. The partnership that the Library has with BREC and their Garden Foundation is wonderful. He said he remembers when the Main Library opened, and some of the staff and patrons used the BREC parking lot, it was delightful to walk past the gardens twice a day. Many of our patrons did not realize how pretty the gardens were. Phase I has just been completed, with Phases II and III to follow. All of this benefits the Library because we are planning programs together.

Mr. Watts said the end of the school year is always an interesting time for the Library. For approximately two weeks we have a large number of students using the Library facilities to study for finals and to complete projects. It begins with college students, followed by middle school and high school students. It is an intense time, but the staff loves to see how well the study spaces are used by these students. As we expand and renovate the branches, we hope to have more of the group study spaces because students use them when completing a group project. These rooms are also used during the day by adults who are working on various business and personal projects. It is good to see so many that look at the Library as the third place which is not work, school or home. It is a place where they can come to achieve their goals.

Mr. Watts noted that the Library staff continues to work on various models for the work week transition which will occur in October. The work week change which will begin on a Saturday and end on a Friday is part of the new financial system for the City-Parish. We have a system that was developed many years ago which works very well with our hours of operation, seven days a week, and with our part-time staff. Several of our schedulers are running models under the new work week over several months. It will be a huge adjustment for the Library since we are open seven days per week. Because we also employ part-time workers, we have a process for scheduling weekend workers. If we shift when staff work, the result is that we will have more coverage on a

day which has traditionally been our least busy day in terms of service demand. We would also need to give employees days off on our busiest days, or have them work more than five days in a row. Hopefully, we will find a satisfactory solution that works for our employees and our patrons.

Mr. Watts told the Board that the job specification for the Deputy Library Director has been revised and is being reviewed by the City-Parish Department of Human Resources. He hopes the final approval will be given in the next couple of weeks so that we can recruit at the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference in New Orleans in June.

Mr. Watts mentioned that our Library staff is excited to be involved in the Entrepreneurial Cohort program with 11 other Urban Library Council (ULC) libraries. This program will provide a great learning experience as we share ideas and consider different ways to offer access to people wishing to become entrepreneurs who have not been able to raise capital or are not well versed in how to write a business plan. The kind of outreach we will develop in the business community to assist those desiring to start a business will benefit our citizens. We already have a good relationship with SCORE, but we will be able to expand our reach to other agencies. We will be able to help individuals who have a great idea, but lack the tools and knowledge to turn that idea into a profitable business.

Mr. Watts said that he mentioned in a previous meeting, that a patron expressed concern about the entrance to the Main Library parking lot, stating that as a vehicle enters at the monumental street sign, the view of the pedestrian walk is blocked by the sign. Both the motorist and any pedestrian on the sidewalk cannot see each other creating a potential hazard. No reported incidents have occurred, but there is a slight blind spot. The Library had asked for a crosswalk and extra signage. He announced that the new pedestrian warning signs have been installed. We are going to request that the pedestrian crosswalk be repainted in yellow as the white cross-hatching has worn out over time.

Mr. Watts told the Board that the staff will be able to get some exhibit passes for June 23rd and June 24th for the ALA Conference in New Orleans at the Convention Center. The exhibit space is large with many activities and many vendors. The exhibits encompass library technology, all of the major publishers, the small, independent publishers, and many demos of products and technology. Walking through the exhibits gives one an idea of what the Conference offers to librarians. He asked any Board member who would like to attend, to let him know today or tomorrow.

Ms. Wascom asked in regard to assisting those wishing to start a business, if the Library has a relationship with the LSU incubator program to which Mr. Watts replied affirmatively. He said we were discussing co-worker spaces today. The spaces we have at the Library can become co-worker spaces.

Ms. Temple asked for an update on the inventory list of items under \$5,000 that the Library is compiling. Mr. Watts said we are doing well and have made good progress. We had many departmental lists, so it is a matter of gathering them together. Currently we have 22,000 items.

Mr. Jacob asked if there were any other comments from the Board. There being none, he asked for any public comments. There were none. Mr. Jacob thanked Mr. Watts, and then read Item A under New Business.

V. New Business

A. Introduction of Ms. Nicole Allmon-Learson and Mrs. Delores Watts, New Members of Library Board of Control – Mr. Jason Jacob

Mr. Jacob said we have two new Library Board members, Ms. Nicole Allmon-Learson and Mrs. Delores Watts. He welcomed them and said he looks forward to working with them. He asked if they would like to make some comments. Ms. Watts said she is glad that she has been given the opportunity to serve on the Library Board. She added that she will be able and ready to do whatever she can for the Library once her son graduates from high school tomorrow and he is enrolled and moved to the University of Alabama next week.

Ms. Allmon-Learson said she is very honored to be a part of the Library Board, and to serve. She said she is looking forward to working with the other Board members, and the wonderful staff.

Ms. Allmon-Learson thanked the staff as did Mrs. Watts for the welcome given to them.

Mr. Jacob thanked them for volunteering their time to perform this civic duty. He then asked for any other Board comments. The other Board members welcomed them. Ms. Wascom thanked them for applying to become Library Board members. She said they will enjoy their service because the staff is wonderful, as is the experience of serving.

Mr. Jacob then read Item B under New Business.

B. To Vote to Elect a Vice President and Treasurer for the Library Board of Control for 2018 – Mr. Jason Jacob

Mr. Jacob asked for nominations for Vice President of the Board. Ms. Temple nominated Ms. Kathy Wascom, seconded by Mr. Luther. Mr. Jacob asked for any other nominations. There being none, the Board voted unanimously for Ms. Wascom for Vice President of the Board. Mr. Jacob congratulated her.

Mr. Jacob asked for nominations for Treasurer. Ms. Wascom nominated Mrs. Martha Guarisco for Treasurer. The motion was seconded by Ms. Temple. Mr. Jacob asked for any other nominations. There being none, a vote was taken and Mrs. Guarisco was elected Treasurer unanimously. Mr. Jacob congratulated her.

Mr. Jacob read Item C.

C. Library Overview of 2018– Mr. Spencer Watts

Mr. Watts said this presentation is part of the mid-year review and evaluation process for the Library Director. He added the year-end review occurs in October. He noted that he planned to be brief so as to avoid an excessive repeat of information in October. A copy of the presentation is appended to these minutes.

Mr. Watts discussed the very successful One Book/One Community Read of the book *Hidden Figures*. He noted that the book has been in constant demand, and we have been pleased with the circulation statistics for it. The movie based on the book generated high interest which also contributed to the success of our events. Our kick-off program featured our local astronaut-in-training, but we also planned other activities with engineers and scientists working in the space program. We emphasized STEM and STEAM events, and provided opportunities for patrons of all ages to participate throughout our system. One program focused on the history of flight starting with the Wright brothers.

Mr. Watts then talked about the Library's recognition nationally. We were asked to participate along with several other libraries across the country in the Digital Learn Pilot Project created by the Public Library Association (PLA). This pilot project studied ways to close the digital divide experienced by patrons who lack access to technology so critical to success in today's world. We are also excited to have been chosen to participate in the Entrepreneurial Cohort program with 11 other Urban Library Council (ULC) libraries.

Our Library will make a presentation for a *Booklist* webinar topic of "Improve Comprehension and Avoid Summer Slide". This is the purpose of our Summer Reading Program. Educators know that children who do not read over the summer, lose three to four months of their reading comprehension level when they return to school in the fall. This results in the need for remedial work to gain what was lost. The summer reading programs help children retain what they have learned, and in some cases to increase their comprehension and vocabulary. We value these summer programs because they emphasize the fun part of reading which develops the habit of reading.

At the Personal Digital Archiving Conference we made a presentation on archiving. It is interesting to note that a new ALA guide on archives has used many findings based on the work of one of our East Baton Rouge Parish Library staff. We were featured in *Guideposts Magazine* for our Volunteers of America (VOA) case workers who assist patrons with special needs, connecting them with community support and services. The Mid City Micro-Con was mentioned in national podcasts and blogs leading to follow-up publicity for the Library as one of the best Micro-Cons in the country.

Mr. Watts noted that Mayor Sharon Weston Broome's Cradle 2 K program features unique peer engagement on social media. Parents help and re-enforce parents, and work together on issues and solutions. Parents feel encouraged to step forward when other parents also have the same concerns. We are assisting by providing deposit collections at WIC centers, and by coordinating reading volunteers. We are also supporting parent peer events. This is an important initiative for

increasing the capacity of community learning, and for the development of the importance of reading in our children.

Mr. Watts then discussed the new databases offered in the digital library. We joined the Louisiana Digital Library Consortium. Through our Archive-It Project we are archiving local websites. We are developing software for improving the scheduling of the Library meeting rooms. We are also involved in an update for the Baton Rouge City Key software, the data collection site. The Library has been involved with the development of this resource since its inception. We are offering new databases such as AutoMate, A to Z World Food, and Weiss Financial Literacy. We continue to provide databases such as the *NY Times* online subscription, the full page display of *The Advocate*, and Hoonuit which was formerly Atomic Learning for technology and software training. Other databases include Freegal and RB Digital which contains magazines and online audiobooks. RB Digital has improved its accessibility for patrons. Kurzweil now includes speech-to-text and bibliography tools. Homework Louisiana which is a subscription through Tutor.com now offers expanded hours for assistance until midnight.

In regard to maintenance and operations of Library facilities Mr. Watts mentioned the harsh weather this winter that caused several challenges at multiple locations. The Delmont Gardens Branch experienced the worst problem because of the broken boiler, pipes and gas line. We had frozen water lines at places where we had never had issues. It was very challenging, but our Facilities staff worked through the repairs very well. Our new Facilities Manager had just started working for the Library four days before the severe weather began. He was on-site here in the middle of the night working on stopping the flow of water in the building.

The Facilities staff were also involved in the RFID infrastructure preparation which included carpentry, masonry, electrical and data work. Much work was involved in preparing for the installation of the intelligent return equipment, and for making space for the sorting devices.

In regard to back of the house activities, the Library provided training for all staff on workplace violence. We expanded the deployment of the VOA case workers. The background check rules have changed for those who go to day care centers and schools which include many of our staff. These checks must be completed every five years.

The Library as a Department of the City-Parish, is using the new MUNIS software for purchasing and invoicing. This new system has necessitated workflow changes, and continued education to become proficient with this program. One of the upcoming changes involving the work week schedule was previously discussed.

Mr. Watts noted that the Library also has new professional services contracts for the fire alarm monitoring system, the security guards, and grounds maintenance. A contract for a new courier service is in transition. All of these types of contracts are ongoing, routine activities.

Mr. Watts discussed patron-facing technology which includes the comprehensive RFID tagging project completed in April 2018. Intelligent returns and the self-check kiosks have been installed and are operational. The self-check kiosks are what RFID means to the public. There are many benefits in having the RFID system in terms of sorting, monitoring of materials, and inventory

control. Our collection contains 2 million items that need to be controlled. They are constantly being borrowed and relocated. In regard to credit card processing, we are close to implementing this service which will please many of our patrons. They will be able to take care of fines and fees without cash.

Mr. Watts mentioned back-of-the-house technology. Installing virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) is underway which allows us to replace PCs with thin clients which results in more efficient and economical software updates and upgrades for the entire system, both staff and patrons. The RFID automated materials handling sortation equipment was installed and is operational. Training for IT and circulation staff was provided.

Our building projects will be discussed later in this meeting. The Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch will be the next renovation project, followed by the Jones Creek Regional Branch Library. The River Center Branch construction project is under review, and an update will also be discussed later in this meeting. The proposed site in Rouzan for a south branch library is under consideration and is currently in the appraisal phase.

Mr. Watts pointed out some of the Library's programs, outreach and relationships in the community. Children's Services displayed the Maurice Sendak Exhibition. *Where the Wild Things Are* is a special book to many patrons. The 1000 Books before Kindergarten program is developing good relationships with the community. The Empty Bowls event this year occurred on a cold blustery day. We were happy to provide the site for this event to benefit such a worthwhile organization, The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. All Paws on Deck, NOVAC, Forward Arts and DeBose Visual Arts are some of our partners. The Library has had long-standing relationships with some of our partners, some are new and some are just a one-time event. All of them illustrate the many ways that the Library tries to engage people, and provide different types of opportunities to look at something differently, or to learn something new.

The Library has emphasized messaging and engagement with our patrons. We track how many card holders are staying active all of the time. We also consider our two and three year records, and how many households are active. We are sending out messages about special events to patrons who are interested in a given topic, and messages about new items in the collection. We used the Net Promoter Survey which provides an independent "bill of health" or checkup, and alerts staff to issues related to customers' user experience. In answering the survey question, "Would you recommend the Library to someone?", 91% answered yes. Google, Apple and retailers across the country use similar surveys.

Mr. Watts concluded the overview and asked if there were any questions. Mr. Jacob said keep up the good work. Mr. Watts replied that we will provide another update in October.

Mr. Jacob asked for any comments from the Board. He then asked for any public comments on any item under New Business. There being none, he read Item A under Old Business.

VI. Old Business

A. Update on River Center Branch Library Construction – Mr. Spencer Watts

Mr. Watts discussed the River Center Branch project. He said we know slightly more at this meeting than at our April meeting regarding the construction issue at the site. Data is currently being collected and studied by the engineers and the design team. More information will become available once these professionals have the opportunity to gather all the data and carefully analyze it. They want to be very methodical and exacting, and have a full understanding of all the factors before issuing any assessments. We have no schedule regarding the issuing of the assessment results other than the general sequence of steps that were announced on May 3rd regarding a phased approach. The data collected will drive how long it will take for the results of the analysis to be announced. He noted in terms of the phased approach, they are in Phase II which is the collection of data.

Mr. Watts summarized the information we have at this time stating that there are two compromised connections. These are beam to column connections that support part of the building on the north side. SCA Consulting Engineers, after completing their initial review, recommended shoring for the cantilevered portion of the trusses. Shoring was completed over the weekend of April 28th through the 29th. On May 3rd a status outline was released designating the shoring as Phase I. Phase II which is in progress now included a letter to the contractor that the building can be accessed. The design team and SCA are conducting field observations, testing, and analysis. Part of this work involves removal of finishes such as wall board, at select points to permit needed observations.

Mr. Watts noted that the City-Parish has taken the step of procuring Exponent, a third party engineering firm. This firm is a highly qualified one, that will provide a very thorough independent engineering analysis. The third party engineer is actively participating in the observational and field work. An agreement with the firm was announced on April 27th.

Based on the completion of the structural analysis, SCA will recommend a plan of action for corrective measures. The City-Parish's third party engineering consultant will review SCA's work and recommendations, and provide their assessment.

Mr. Watts explained that on April 23rd, the contractor, Buquet & LeBlanc issued a letter stating in part, "Based on the information that is available to us as of this date, it is our position that the failure resulted solely from a deficiency in the structural design, and not from any defect in materials or workmanship supplied by Buquet & LeBlanc." Mr. Watts noted there is some qualifying language in the statement. Buquet & LeBlanc staff are working on the site at this time.

The City-Parish has made it clear that the City-Parish does not take ownership of the building until it is completed and accepted. Mr. Watts stated that at the last meeting we discussed that the Owner of the building is the City-Parish, and they hold the contract. It is important to also note when these types of projects are underway, the architect and the contractor are responsible for the building and project until it is completed. Two parties are involved in the construction of the River

Center Branch Library. WHCL Architecture-Schwartz/Silver (A Joint Venture) is the architect of record responsible for the design and construction administration, and Buquet & LeBlanc is the contractor responsible for building the structure. Both companies are bonded and insured as a condition of their contracts with the City-Parish. Any deficiencies or issues would fall on the parties responsible as defined by their contracts.

Mr. Watts further stated that there is a strong desire to have answers, and to know the exact nature and degree of the problem, the corrective actions that will need to be taken, timelines for all activities including final completion of the project, the assignment of responsibilities and the costs involved. We are still in the stage where it is too early to answer these questions, and it is counter-productive to speculate. We must allow time for the proper and complete collection of information, and be just as patient to allow time for meticulous, thorough analysis. The Library does have the active involvement and support of the City-Parish which is committed to safeguarding the interest of the taxpayer's investments, and helping us to bring this to a good conclusion.

Mr. Watts asked if there were any questions from the Board. Ms. Wascom asked if the contractor is still working on parts of the library to which Mr. Watts said yes. He added that they have been working actively field testing and doing some other work on the site.

Mr. Luther asked if anyone from Buquet & LeBlanc or WHLC Architecture-Schwartz/Silver is here to answer anything for us today. Mr. Watts replied no, that they wish to work on their data collection and analysis before they make any additional statements. Mr. Luther questioned that they did not see fit to send someone to state that themselves. Mr. Watts said he thought they might feel it would be frustrating for all. Mr. Luther agreed that it is frustrating, and that they put Mr. Watts in a very uncomfortable situation having to speak for them, and be their whipping boy. Mr. Watts said he does not feel that he is speaking for them, nor can he speak for them. He added he cannot speak for any of the parties involved. He said he wants to give them every opportunity to work together to determine what the problem is, and to decide on a course of action that can help get the problem corrected. He added he does not want to do anything that will divert their attention, or their energies from that. He wants them to concentrate solely on that. He said further that the City-Parish made a wise decision in hiring a third party, and it is his understanding that all of the parties involved are happy with that decision. It will give us an independent observer who can review all of the work being done, be involved in that process, and ensure that this is being done as thoroughly and completely as possible. This also safeguards the Library's, and the City-Parish's interests.

Mr. Luther said Mr. Watts and members of the Board have been in the news, and he is present at this meeting. He would hope that they would have taken time to come to this meeting even if it were to tell the Board that they do not have any information at this time. Mr. Luther said he is very disappointed that they did not come to this meeting. Mr. Watts replied that he believes there will be a day when they will have an opportunity to give us much information.

Mr. Jacob said to be clear, is it correct that at some point they will produce a final report stating this is the problem and this is who is responsible? He asked if this is how this process is going to end. Mr. Watts replied as he understands it, that is correct. There will be a full report explaining

what exactly is the problem, and it should be clear at that point, who is going to be responsible along with a corrective action plan. SCA has promised to provide an action plan, and that will be reviewed carefully by everyone. However, the third party structural engineering firm will review it, and interpret it.

Mr. Jacob asked if there is a time table for the conclusion of the analysis of the problem, and the issuance of the report. Mr. Watts said at this point they are actively looking at everything very carefully and thoroughly. He said he would rather they be thorough, complete and meticulous in all regards than fast.

Ms. Allmon-Learson asked Mr. Watts if after the thorough and complete report is issued, can he ask a representative from SCA to come to a Board meeting to answer questions they may have. This would be helpful in reassuring everyone that they are willing to work with the Board, and would be a good faith effort on their part. Mr. Watts replied that he would expect that once they get to a certain stage, there will be a presentation. He noted it might not be a representative from SCA, but someone from WHLC Architecture-Schwartz/Silver.

Ms. Temple asked Mr. Watts if he would ask them to come to a Board meeting after the report is completed. Mr. Watts said he will ask and he expects that they will come to a meeting. Ms. Temple said it is one thing to expect them to come, but the Board wants them to be asked to attend a meeting. She said she would like a request to be made. Mr. Watts again said he will request that they attend and he believes they will be looking forward to speaking once they have the full report and the knowledge to speak.

Mrs. Watts said if they cannot be present, could they create a PowerPoint presentation with details and facts that would give the Board something tangible to review. Mr. Watts said he believes they will have a final report, but he is not sure if it will be a document or a PowerPoint. He added he would expect that there will be a discussion or a verbal presentation along with written reports. He added that since the City-Parish hired a third party engineer, that firm will also provide information and be available to speak. Mrs. Watts thanked Mr. Watts.

Mr. Luther said that Buquet & LeBlanc made the statement on April 23rd that said, "Based on the information that is available to us as of this date, it is our position that the failure resulted solely from a deficiency in the structural design, and not from any defect in materials or workmanship supplied by Buquet & LeBlanc." Mr. Luther asked if Buquet & LeBlanc know something that is not being shared with the Board. Mr. Watts said that is a statement that they made at that time based on their opinion. He does not have any further information than that.

Mr. Luther asked if their bonding and insurance coverage has been verified because details are very important. Mr. Watts said those were confirmed by the City-Parish. They will not award a contract without confirmation of those requirements. Mr. Luther thanked Mr. Watts.

Mr. Watts asked if there were any other questions. There were none. Mr. Jacob asked if there were any other comments by the Board. There were none. Mr. Jacob thanked Mr. Watts.

Mr. Jacob then read Item B under Old Business.

B. Update on Renovation of Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch Library - Mr. Spencer Watts and Ms. Patricia Husband

Mr. Watts discussed the Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch Library renovation project. He said we are pleased that the construction bids for the project were received on April 19th. The low bidder was Faulk & Meek General Contractors at \$4.3 million. The contract was recommended to be awarded, and was accepted last week by the Metropolitan Council. The City-Parish and the contractor are processing the necessary paperwork. We hope to have a pre-bid conference in the next couple of weeks. At that time, we will have information on the time table.

Mr. Watts said the staff is working on moving items within the branch. This project will be large as we will be adding to the square footage, and correcting the flood damage to the facility. A new exciting teen space will also be added with a redesigned Children's Services area. We will also add some group study rooms and a quiet reading room. These amenities will be similar to those found at the Main Library and the Fairwood Branch Library. Mr. Watts said these changes will be wonderful for the patrons of the Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch. The work will take time as we are going to attempt to keep the branch open through most of the renovation. When we need to close, it will only be for a limited few days.

The facility will be opened during the construction work. We have discovered that people are more understanding when they can actually see what is happening. We might be able to save some time if we completely close the branch for a time, but patrons get impatient and tired when they cannot see what is happening.

Ms. Husband said they are looking forward to the renovation. Mr. Watts asked if the Board had any questions. Mr. Luther asked which contractor was awarded the contract. Mr. Watts answered Faulk & Meek General Contractors. Mr. Luther thanked Mr. Watts.

Mr. Jacob asked for any additional comments. There being none, he read Item C under Old Business.

C. Update on Renovation of Jones Creek Regional Branch Library - Mr. Spencer Watts and Ms. Patricia Husband

Mr. Watts discussed the Jones Creek Regional Branch Library renovation project. He said Ms. Husband has done a great deal of work reviewing the design documents for the project. She was ahead of the projected time frame, and in April had already been reviewing the basic floor plan as well as some of the finish schedules. Due to the RFID implementation and some other work issues, however, some of the rest of the staff are somewhat behind going through the design documents. In the last couple of weeks, Mr. Watts said he has caught up on his review. He noted that he and Ms. Husband have reviewed some design elements, and noted some areas that need more clarity in the demolition notes. We will need to talk to the architect about these. We also have questions about several elements in the building, and the supporting documentation. We looked at the

reflective ceiling plan, and we need more information. This review will enable us to move toward the construction document phase.

Mr. Watts said most of what they reviewed are minor issues. In several rooms and spaces we can eliminate or reduce the wood base because the impact would be limited. We can substitute with a cove or similar base. We will also discuss the use of store front glass framing as opposed to framed glass. Mr. Watts noted that the framed version may provide better durability.

The review also revealed that a telecom backboard is located in the janitorial closet which needs to be moved to the IT closet. He told the Board that the staff with more knowledge about our electrical, mechanical, and computer infrastructure requirements will review the plans, so that they can point out major issues. The finer points can be resolved in the construction document phase.

Mr. Watts asked Ms. Husband if she had any further comments. She said she has completed a markup of the power and data portions of the floor plans. She will review these with our IT Department, and also with the Library Facilities Manager and with Mr. Watts. We are overlaying furniture with data and power to determine the best proximity for these. She added that we are also reviewing some of the specifications, and have noted questions. She said this review is typical in a renovation project. The architects issue the document which we review, and make our comments. The architects then look at the proposed changes. A further discussion occurs and then the final document is produced.

Mr. Watts explained that many times the staff has ideas which the architects point out may not work as intended. He said we are making progress on this project.

Mr. Jacob asked the Board if there were any other comments. Mr. Luther thanked Mr. Watts and Ms. Husband for the information. There being no further comments, Mr. Jacob read Item D under Old Business.

D. Update on South Branch Property Acquisition – Mr. Spencer Watts

Mr. Watts said that the contract for conducting the appraisal of the property is being finalized. He said we hope that it will be completed this week. He noted that the staff has called for updates on the status of the contract.

Ms. Wascom asked how long does it take for an appraisal to be completed. She wondered if they would have the results of the appraisal for the next Board meeting. Mr. Watts replied that perhaps it could be finished before the next meeting because initially the appraiser estimated three to four weeks. He said if their work load has increased since they were first contacted, that time frame may be longer. Ms. Wascom then said if we don't get an appraisal in time for the June meeting, we can expect one for the July meeting. Mr. Watts said we might have the results shortly after the June meeting.

Mr. Jacob asked if there were any comments from the Board on the Rouzan property appraisal. There were none. Mr. Jacob thanked Mr. Watts.

Mr. Jacob asked for any public comments on any items under Old Business. There being none, Mr. Jacob read Item VII.

VII. Comments by the Library Board of Control

Mr. Jacob asked for any comments by the Board. Mr. Luther welcomed Ms. Allmon-Learson and Mrs. Watts to the Library Board. He thanked them for being willing to serve, especially at this interesting time for the Library. We have a few very vocal opponents, but we are a wonderful system, and we offer many wonderful services to the community. He added that we have the best staff that any system can have. He said he looks forward to working with them. Ms. Allmon-Learson and Mrs. Watts thanked Mr. Luther and said they looked forward to working with him also.

Ms. Temple agreed with Mr. Luther's comments and welcomed the new members.

Mr. Jacob said he wanted to comment on the discussion about the fund balance. He said he appreciated that conversation, and noted that we need to explain what the fund balance is periodically to let people know what it really is. He appreciated Mr. Watts' explanation.

There being no other comments, Mr. Jacob asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Luther made the motion and Ms. Temple seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 5:36 p.m. by unanimous vote.

Mr. Jason Jacob, President

Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director



EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH

LIBRARY

Library Overview | Year To Date

May 2018



OBOC Reads *Hidden Figures*



- One Book One Community Series for Spring 2018
- Dozens of Library Programs Offered System-wide
 - Programs For All Ages and Interests
 - Heavy on STEM and STEAM
- Books and Other Materials Flew Off the Shelves



Under The National Spotlight

- Digital Learn Pilot Project Wrap Up at PLA
- ULC Entrepreneurs Cohort Selection
- “Improve Comprehension and Avoid Summer Slide” Presentation at *Booklist* Webinar
- Archive-it Presentations at Personal Digital Archiving Conference and Texas Conference of Digital Libraries
- ALA Guide for the Busy Librarian: *Creating a Local History Archive at Your Public Library*
- VOA Case Worker Story Featured in *Guideposts*
- Mid City Micro-Con on National Podcasts and Blogs

Cradle 2 K: Building Community & Engaging Families



Serving Head Start and Beyond

Creating opportunities for parents to share and learn from people in their own communities ...

Setting a high bar for what parenting can look like in EBR

Community Partnerships Lead to Multiple Initiatives:

- Peer Engagement on Social Media
- Parent Podcasts on Facebook
- Deposit Collections at WIC Centers
- Volunteer Readers
- Parent Club Peer Events





New Databases & Discovery

Internal:

- EBRPL joined Louisiana Digital Library Consortium, which will allow us to highlight the unique collections of our Baton Rouge Digital Archive
- Archive-it Project to archive local websites is currently in progress
- Meeting Room Scheduler software currently in development
- Refresh in progress for the Baton Rouge City Key

New Database Subscriptions & Updates in the Digital Library:

- AutoMate
- A to Z World Food
- Weiss Financial Literacy
- NY Times Online Subscription
- Full Page Display for *The Advocate*
- Atomic Training changed to Hoonuit
- Usability updates for Freegal and RB Digital
- Kurzweil now includes Speech-to-text and Bibliography Tools
- Homework Louisiana / Tutor.com now offers Expanded Hours



Maintenance & Operations

Facilities:

- **Harsh Weather Created a Host of Challenges at Multiple Facilities for Operations and Maintenance**
 - Closures
 - Frozen pipes, water line breaks, leaks and water damage, VAV Boxes, boilers, chillers, controllers, and overall heating repairs
- **RFID Infrastructure Preparation**
 - Included carpentry, masonry, electrical and data
- **New Facilities Manager on Board**

Back of House:

- **Workplace Violence Training for Staff**
- **Expanded Deployment of Case Workers**
- **Background Check Rules Changed**
- **Workflow Changes Due to New MUNIS Purchasing/Finance System**
- **New Forms and Procedures in Response to Audit**
- **New Professional Services Contracts**
 - Fire Alarm Monitoring System, Security, Grounds ...
 - Courier Service still in transition

Patron-Facing Technology



Comprehensive RFID Project

- Tagging of collection completed in April 2018
- Intelligent Returns installed and operational
- Self-Check Kiosks installed and operational
- Credit Card process in development

Back-of-the-House Technology



- VDI Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (underway)
- RFID Automated Materials Handling Sortation Equipment Installed and Operational
- RFID Training for IT and Circulation Staff

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH
LIBRARY
BRANCH LIBRARY ASSESSMENT PLAN

Presented to the Library Board of Control at its regular monthly Board meeting on
February 19, 2015.

This study shows
It is designed to
for the future at
These are conce

**Greenwell Springs
Road Regional:
Construction Bids Are In!**

REVISED LAYOUT

KEY FACILITY COMPONENT
ADJACENCIES



**Jones Creek
Regional is next**

PREPARED BY BRADLEY-BLEWSTER/HIDELL ARCHITECTS 2017

River Center Branch Construction Project Under Review



Proposed Rouzan Branch for South



- Currently in the Appraisal Phase
- Site would accommodate the neighborhood branch library plus parking

Messaging & Engagement



Net Promoter Survey provides an independent “bill of health” or checkup and alert staff to issues related to their User Experience

145,035 Cardholders have used their library card within the last 12 months

