

TENTATIVE AGENDA
FOR THE MEETING OF THE
SPECIAL AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL
FOR THE STUDY OF THE APPLICATION OF
A BOOKMOBILE FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH
BOARD ROOM OF THE MAIN LIBRARY
7711 GOODWOOD BOULEVARD
BATON ROUGE, LA 70806
MAY 13, 2009
9:00 A.M.

- I. ROLL CALL
- II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAY 5, 2009
- III. GENERAL DISCUSSION
 - A. EQUIPMENT CHOICES
 - B. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
 - C. BUDGET IMPACT
 - D. OTHER
- IV. CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS
- V. ADJOURN

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Revised Minutes of the Meeting of the Special Ad Hoc Committee of the
East Baton Rouge Parish Library Board of Control
for the Study of the Application of a Bookmobile for Community Outreach

May 13, 2009

The third meeting of the Special Ad Hoc Committee of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library Board of Control for the Study of the Application of a Bookmobile for Community Outreach was held in the Board Room of the Main Library on Tuesday, May 13, 2009. Mr. Stanford O. Bardwell, Jr., Chairman of the Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:25 a.m. Members of the Committee present were Ms. Tanya Freeman, Library Board member; Ms. Mary Stein, Assistant Library Director of Administration; Ms. Patricia Husband, Assistant Library Director of Branch Services, Mrs. Jenola Duke, Chair of the Education Team for the Children's Coalition of Greater Baton Rouge, and Ms. Patience Trivasos, Preschool Resource Coordinator for the East Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools. Also in attendance were Mr. David Farrar, Library Director; Ms. Pabby Arnold, Library Division Head of Children's Services, and Ms. Liz Zozulin, Executive Assistant to the Library Director. Also present were Mr. John Berry, Mr. Tom DuBos, and Mrs. Gayle Smith, members of the community.

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of May 5, 2009

The minutes of the meeting of May 5, 2009 were approved unanimously on a motion by Mrs. Duke and seconded by Ms. Trivasos with several changes noted.

Mr. Bardwell opened the discussion by saying that he wanted to discuss partnership opportunities first, then move to equipment choices and end with the budget impact.

General Discussion

Partnership Opportunities

At the last meeting Mr. Bardwell had asked Mrs. Duke to contact other agencies and groups with whom the Library could partner for outreach opportunities. He mentioned that Mrs. Duke is a rich resource for contact with potential partners. Mrs. Duke had contacted a diverse of people and groups who share an interest in the goals of the Children's Coalition of Greater Baton Rouge. She told her contacts that the Ad Hoc Committee of the Library Board was exploring the application of a bookmobile/vans to expand outreach services to children and parents in order to increase interest in reading and literacy and to facilitate an increased awareness of the services and programs of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library. She asked them for ideas on how this outreach might be used by their programs to further children's literacy and/or pre-reading skills. She also asked if their agencies would be interested in utilizing these services and if so, how. At this meeting, Mrs. Duke distributed a copy of several e-mails that she received in response to her questions.

The following is a summary of the e-mails which the committee discussed:

Dr. Roberta Vicari, Director, Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital, said that large numbers of children come to the hospital each day. The staff looks for material to read to children and to use to teach them about illness and life. She said that the families frequently need help with literacy also. She liked the idea of a bookmobile that could come to the hospital to issue library cards to these families and enable them to borrow materials from the Library. The Ad Hoc Committee saw the direct effect literacy has on children's health.

Ms. Renita Williams Thomas, from the Early Childhood Supports and Services (ECSS), Office of Mental Health, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, said that her organization would be interested in partnering with the Library to bring books and information to the Infant Mental Health Services Department. Ms. Travasos said that this program is run by the Tulane Medical School and is available in Baton Rouge. Children from ages one through six with mental health concerns who are on Medicaid are assisted by this program through a family counseling approach. Ms. Stein asked if they use bibliotherapy which is the use of books for treatment of certain issues. Ms. Stein added that these therapy sessions would be a prime place for such assistance. The committee discussed how the Library could help in various ways such as delivering books and providing programs for the parents.

Ms. Ronnie Edwards, Director of the Urban Restoration Enhancement Corporation (UREC) and Metropolitan Councilwoman from District 5 said that UREC which is a non-profit community based development corporation would be interested in a partnership. She said they serve a majority of single parent families raising children, and many of these families have transportation difficulties. She said a mobile outreach vehicle could visit their multi-family housing communities and bring books for children and adults. Ms. Edwards added that their program sites for the CDF Freedom School, Saturday Academy and North Baton Rouge 70805 Plus would be good partners for outreach. Mr. Bardwell noted that Ms. Edwards is logistically describing something like a bookmobile that would go to established sites.

Mr. Larry Galloway, an African-American community activist and retired employee of ExxonMobil said he remembers the bookmobiles in the 1960s and 1970s that stopped at schools, playgrounds, and BREC centers for children who could not get to a library location. He said there is still such a need for many children who are unable to visit a library branch and that a bookmobile is a great solution. Ms. Travasos added that in the past children could ride a bike, but that today in many cases this is not a possibility because of safety concerns.

Ms. Paula Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services, Area IV, East Baton Rouge Parish School System, said a bookmobile would support literacy opportunities in neighborhoods where children do not have easy access to a branch library.

Ms. Annie Morrison, Communications Director, RSD Charter Schools, Advance Baton Rouge said that Advance Baton Rouge would be interested in receiving services from a bookmobile. She said that they operate Glen Oaks and Prescott Middle Schools and in the fall will also operate Lanier and Dalton Elementary. These schools exist in neighborhoods where access to

educational resources outside of school is scarce and where current literacy rates at these schools is below fifty percent.

Ms. Sophie Gibson, of Gibson Consulting, and former principal of the Brighton School, works with dyslexic children. She said they should encourage reading in every way. The bookmobile could offer a reading hour for children and special readings for adults similar to the *Big Read: One Book/One Community* program.

Mr. Jeffery Fairley, of Hope Ministries, a non-profit agency which provides family mentoring to help families at risk of homelessness to become self-sufficient, said his organization would be interested in partnering with the Library. He cited special events such as their annual HOPE Fest as possibilities and also working with the community surrounding their location. Their office is on Winbourne Avenue at the former Winbourne United Methodist Church. Ms. Duke agreed that the Hope Ministries program of family mentoring is good and does change lives.

Ms. Leah Siefka, is Education Coordinator of Youth Oasis, which provides an emergency shelter for runaway and homeless youth aged 10-17. They also help youth aged 15-21 to transition to independent living through their Youth Passages program. Ms. Siefka said she would like to partner with the Library and make use of a bookmobile in both of their programs. She added that a bookmobile that would visit with a regular, consistent schedule would make it easier for them to accommodate the needs and curiosity of the youth in regards to literacy, reading and exploration. She said the bookmobile visits could be incorporated into their academic and life skills tutoring program. Mr. Bardwell commented that this would encourage literacy.

Mr. Doug Leyda, Joint Manager of the YWCA Early Head Start (EHS), said they would be interested in a collaborative effort. He said they serve young children from birth to age three, teen parents, adult parents, and grandparent-guardians. He said that a bookmobile to visit their Istrouma EHS on Winbourne Avenue at HOPE Ministries and their Glen Oaks EHS on the campus of Glen Oaks High School would be helpful.

Mrs. Duke noted that Ms. Debbie O'Connor, Director of the Greater Baton Rouge Literacy Coalition had forwarded Mrs. Duke's e-mail to her membership list. Mrs. Duke said she is waiting for the responses from this organization.

Ms. Freeman said that the committee is getting a collaborative effort started through these e-mail responses. She said these responses are their key arguments for a list to support why the Library needs a bookmobile in addition to the branch libraries in order to increase literacy in the community. She said the supporting data will be critical in their presentation to the Library Board. Ms. Duke added that they need to emphasize in their list that the Library has strong ties with diverse groups.

The committee members then brainstormed what should be included in their list of justifications. Ms. Freeman emphasized the need to document their arguments first so that people understand the need for this outreach effort. Mrs. Duke noted that they should be purposely redundant to make their case for this service. Ms. Stein said that fostering literacy is a collaborative effort. A bookmobile is an experience and the need for one can be based on the documentation of limited

access to branch libraries because of issues such as lack of transportation, the need for family literacy and the need for bibliotherapy. Ms. Arnold quoted the documented statistic that if a child cannot read by the third grade; the opportunity to become literate greatly diminishes. Illiteracy directly affects one's ability to complete a formal education which directly affects the ability to obtain gainful employment. In prison populations a large majority cannot read above a third grade level. Ms. Freeman said that they need to emphasize how this outreach effort fits in with the Library's strategic plan and with the mission statement of the Library. She also said that the list should show that the branch libraries alone are not reaching and meeting the needs of all in the community and that this outreach is a necessary part of the solution. Mrs. Gayle Smith, a member of the community a flow chart entitled *Building Success*. She created this chart to emphasize that the foundation to success in employment begins with the foundation established in children from birth to age three. If this early foundation is weak, then success at school and in employment is poor.

The committee members agreed that they would distribute a list of their justifications for an outreach program to foster literacy to the Library Board of Control at the regular Board meeting on May 21, 2009. Mr. Tom DuBos, a member of the community, said that the list should be concise. Mrs. Smith asked if the committee would cite their sources for the list so that the validity of the statements is clear. Mr. Farrar added that at the Board meeting, the committee members can provide the details behind each statement. Ms. Travasos asked if the Library Board is concerned that the bookmobile will replace branch libraries. Mr. Farrar answered that some think that since the Library had a bookmobile prior to building branch libraries, that re-introducing a bookmobile will be a step backward. Ms. Travasos noted that for some people the use of a bookmobile will serve as a gateway to using the branch libraries. Ms. Stein added that most residents in East Baton Rouge Parish are unaware that public libraries in the rest of the country are not like our system. The number of hours of operation and the number of branches in our system is atypical elsewhere. Mr. Farrar agreed and added that in many systems, branches are closing. Mr. Bardwell summarized that they can conclude from the partnership discussion that there is a need and a desire in this community for an outreach effort to foster childhood literacy.

Ms. Freeman said that the list they create needs to contain solutions to the issues of concern. Mr. Bardwell said that the canvassing of the stakeholders and potential partners for solutions provides specific solutions. Ms. Freeman suggested that the list contain the problems, issues and the community partners on one side of the document and the solutions on the other side.

Equipment Choices

Ms. Freeman questioned whether they were arguing for a bookmobile. Mr. Bardwell replied that at the last meeting they discussed two types of vehicles, a bookmobile and vans, as solutions in addressing literacy needs and outreach possibilities. Mr. Bardwell said that since the culture is responsive to entertainment, a bookmobile may be a more attractive solution than a branch library. He added that even though the Carver Branch and the Eden Park Branch Libraries won architectural awards, there is a population that is not benefiting from these buildings. Ms. Freeman replied that it is not about the buildings. She said this outreach effort can be a bridge to

the branches. Mr. Bardwell added that this outreach effort would be auto service coming to the patrons.

Ms. Husband distributed two documents containing information about a bookmobile and either a Dodge Grand Caravan, seven passenger van or a bookmobile and a Ford E350 seven passenger van. The documents itemized the features along with a list of materials and staffing requirements. A lift was indicated in each list for the vans. However, it was not certain if a lift could be installed on the Dodge Grand Caravan. Ms. Husband noted that the fuel cost is going to contain the widest variable. The committee reviewed maintenance estimates and the cost over the next five years for each vehicle. They studied the materials such as books, book trucks, Advanced Workstations in Education (AWE) computers and adult public computers required to stock each vehicle. Ms. Freeman asked if they felt that the vans were a good choice for this outreach effort. Ms. Stein said the vans would only be used to deliver materials. Ms. Arnold added that in areas where it is difficult to park that a van is a better choice over a bookmobile.

Ms. Freeman asked if they had decided to circulate materials or to just give them away. Ms. Stein said a combination of both a circulating collection and a home use collection would be used. Mr. Farrar said they have figured in the factor that bookmobile collections are not returned as well as collections at a branch. Ms. Freeman said she would like the figures for the cost of books to be accurate, based on actual return information.

Mr. Bardwell asked if this program would be most effective with one of each vehicle or two of the larger ones. Ms. Arnold replied that if they wish to get into the community, the smaller vehicle would be better on narrow streets. Ms. Stein noted that the vendor of the vehicles does not need to be local, but rather on the approved state contract list. Both Ms. Stein and Ms. Husband agreed that a lift is important to which Ms. Freeman then said they should recommend one.

Mr. Bardwell then quoted the statement of purpose drafted at the first meeting of this ad hoc committee as follows:

To explore the application of a bookmobile in furtherance of the mission of the Library. Such an application would have as its objective, increasing interest in reading and, facilitating an increased awareness of library services and programs.

Ms. Stein said in looking at the objectives in the statement, they need a small van, a large van and a bookmobile. Mr. Farrar agreed. Mrs. Duke asked if the number of staff listed in the two documents would be sufficient to meet the needs of running the three vehicles. Ms. Arnold said it would be sufficient because support staff at the Library could stock the vehicles for the staff members who would drive to the patrons. Mr. Bardwell asked Mr. Farrar to talk with The Library Design Collaborative, the architects who are designing the new Main Library, about including parking in the service yard for these vehicles.

Ms. Stein had updated a document for this meeting detailing the purpose or advantage to the Library of purchasing a van, an Elf wide-body or a 37-foot bookmobile. Mr. Bardwell asked Ms. Stein to revise this document, removing the wide-body vehicle. Ms. Freeman said that they

should incorporate Ms. Stein's document into the information they provide to the Library Board because it answers questions people may ask about the outreach program and the vehicles intended to carry out the program.

Budget Impact

Ms. Freeman asked if there are sufficient funds in the 2009 budget to begin the purchase of these outreach vehicles to which Mr. Farrar said they could do a budget amendment for the 2009 budget or add this request to the proposed 2010 budget. Ms. Stein noted that an obstacle for proceeding in 2009 will be that they will need to have the approval of the City-Parish Departments of Human Resources and Finance to add staff. Mr. Bardwell said that the 2009 budget year ends on December 31st. The proposed 2010 budget will be approved by the Metropolitan Council in November of 2009. He asked how long it would take to purchase the vans and the bookmobile to which Ms. Husband said ninety days for the vans and about a year for the bookmobile. Ms. Arnold noted that they will also need time to hire and train the staff which could cause a delay in the start date of the program. Mr. Bardwell said unless they amend the 2009 budget, they will need to wait until 2010. Mr. Bardwell asked the committee members if they recommend proceeding with ordering the vehicles before January to which they replied yes.

Mr. Bardwell asked Ms. Husband to revise her documents to reflect the following changes:

- Increase the fuel cost to \$100.00 per vehicle.
- Purchase collections for the vehicles to reflect one half circulating and one half home use materials.
- Personnel cost to add four additional Library Technician I positions.
- A computer for circulation for the bookmobile.
- A satellite or cellular connection for website access.
- One computer for each van for staff use.
- Cost of Internet access for the vans.

Mr. Bardwell asked that Mrs. Duke contact Ms. Debbie O'Connor to obtain any additional responses regarding partnership opportunities. He asked that any additional information be sent to Ms. Stein.

Mr. John Berry, a member of the community, asked about security for staff and patrons who will be involved in this outreach effort. Ms. Freeman replied that they can call upon the members of the Metropolitan Council and other City-Parish officials for their support. Ms. Stein said they will ensure that wherever they go, a person from the area they are visiting will be present. They will travel to organizations that have agreed to partner with the Library. Mr. Farrar added that the Library has a safety officer who works with the staff on security concerns.

Ms. Freeman asked that the committee refer to the first meeting to determine whether they have completed the work which they outlined for their study. Mr. Bardwell read from the minutes of the first meeting. The members agreed that they had accomplished their goals. Mr. Bardwell

thanked the committee members for their time and efforts. He made a motion to reflect the committee's recommendation as follows:

To present a report and recommendation to the Library Board of Control from the special Ad Hoc Committee of the Library Board regarding the acquisition of three distinct outreach vehicles, staff to provide this service and materials to operate within the 2009 budget to meet the mission and strategic plan of the Library throughout East Baton Rouge Parish.

The motion was approved by Ms. Freeman, seconded by Mrs. Duke and passed unanimously.

In preparation for the Library Board meeting, Mr. Bardwell asked Ms. Stein to complete an initial draft of the document, e-mail it to the committee and then to e-mail the final document to the Board prior to the meeting on May 21st.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Stanford O. Bardwell, Jr.,
Chairman of Ad Hoc Committee

David Farrar
Library Director