

REVISED AGENDA
FOR REGULAR MEETING OF THE
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL
MAIN LIBRARY
FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
7711 GOODWOOD BOULEVARD
BATON ROUGE, LA 70806
APRIL 16, 2015
4:00 P.M.

- I. ROLL CALL
- II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF MARCH 10, 2015 AND THE REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 19, 2015
- III. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR
 - A. FINANCIAL REPORT
 - B. SYSTEM REPORTS
- IV. OTHER REPORTS
 - A. MAIN LIBRARY AT GOODWOOD
 - B. RIVER CENTER BRANCH LIBRARY
 - C. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS
 - D. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS
- V. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. TO VOTE TO SEND COMMENTS TO CITY-PARISH ADMINISTRATION CONCERNING TAX ABATEMENT PROPOSAL - MR. SPENCER WATTS
- VI. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. REVIEW OF OPTIONS AND DISCUSSION REGARDING COURSE OF ACTION FOR A SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY – MR. SPENCER WATTS
 - B. UPDATE ON METROPOLITAN COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA ITEM FOR APPROVAL OF MILLAGE RATE FOR LIBRARY TAX RENEWAL ELECTION – MR. SPENCER WATTS
 - C. REVIEW OF INFORMATION ABOUT MEETING ROOM USAGE AND MEETING ROOM POLICY REVISIONS AND VOTE ON REVISIONS OF MEETING ROOM POLICY – MR. SPENCER WATTS AND MS. MARY STEIN
- VII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BOARD'S PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY, ALL ITEMS ON WHICH ACTION IS TO BE TAKEN ARE OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT, AND COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS MAY BE RECEIVED ON OTHER TOPICS REPORTED AT SUCH TIME AS THE OPPORTUNITY IS ANNOUNCED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OR THE PERSON CONDUCTING THE MEETING.

Minutes of the Meeting of the

East Baton Rouge Parish Library Board of Control

April 16, 2015

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, April 16, 2015. Ms. Tanya Freeman, President of the Board called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Members of the Board present were Mr. Stanford O. Bardwell, Jr., Mr. Logan Leger, Ms. Terrie Johnson, Mr. Jason Jacob and Mr. Travis Woodard. Absent from the meeting was Board member, Ms. Kizzy Payton. 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; Ms. Liz Zozulin, Executive Assistant to the Library Director; and Mr. Brian Thornhill, Library LAN Administrator. Absent from the meeting was Ms. Sonya Gordon, Library Public Relations Coordinator. Mr. Leo D'Aubin of the Parish Attorney's Office; Sgt. Patricia Carr of the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office; Mr. Dirk Graeser, videographer for Metro 21; Ms. Andrea Gallo, reporter with *The Advocate*, Mr. Quincy Hodges, reporter with *The Times-Picayune (NOLA)* and several members of the community also attended.

Ms. Freeman asked Ms. Zozulin to take the roll which she did. Ms. Freeman then asked for the approval of the minutes of the special Library Board meeting on March 10, 2015, and the regular Library Board meeting of March 19, 2015. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the minutes of the special Library Board meeting on March 10, 2015, seconded by Mr. Bardwell and approved unanimously. With one correction to the minutes, Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the revised minutes of the regular Library Board meeting on March 16, 2015, seconded by Mr. Woodard and approved unanimously.

Ms. Freeman then recognized the two newly appointed Board members whose terms begin on May 17, 2015. She asked Mr. Donald Luther, Jr. and Ms. Kathy Wascom to stand as she congratulated them on their appointments by the Metropolitan Council on April 8, 2015.

III. Reports by the Director

A. Financial Reports

Ms. Freeman asked Mr. Watts to present the reports. Mr. Watts asked Ms. Pinsonat to make the financial report. Ms. Pinsonat said that the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Encumbrances through March 31, 2015 show operating expenditures of \$7,099,436.23 or 16.82% of the operating budget. Through March, we should have spent no more than 25.0% of the operating budget. Operating expenditures for 2014 will be finalized next month after an additional \$266,000 in retirement costs for elected officials is recorded.

Cash Collections from Property Taxes for 2015 remain strong as we are approximately \$1,500,000 and 4.01% ahead of the same four months in 2014. A final Cash Collections from Property Taxes Statement for 2014 shows we finished nearly \$1,550,000 and 4.15% ahead of 2013.

Ms. Pinsonat asked if there were any questions. There being none, Ms. Freeman read Item B.

B. System Reports

Mr. Watts asked Ms. Stein to give her report. Ms. Stein noted that our statistical reports reflect good usage of Library resources with totals increasing from last year at this time. Part of that increase is attributed to the completed patron parking lot, the use of all of the meeting rooms, and the increase in programs at the Main Library. Also at some of the branches last year we had maintenance projects in progress which decreased the usage of the facilities at those locations.

Ms. Freeman asked Ms. Stein to address the facilities with the good increases. Ms. Stein referred to the Circulation report noting that this is only one indication of increased usage. She added that circulation at the Main Library is up 14.9% for the month, but up 39.8% for the year. Ms. Stein said that circulation at the Bluebonnet Regional Branch is fluctuating. Last year at this time the Genealogy Department was located there. Since that department has moved to the Main Library, some statistics have decreased at the regional, but have increased at Main. She also pointed out that Baker Branch Circulation is up by 19.2% for the month. She explained that the gate count has also increased in these locations.

Ms. Stein noted that the *1,000 Books before Kindergarten* campaign begun on March 15th has already signed up 1,000 children of pre-school age as young as 18 months and as old as 5 years. Many children have already completed their 250 book log for their first step in the program.

Ms. Stein also announced that the Library is having good success with the VOLUMEN project. This project involves the distribution of computer use only cards to school libraries for students who may not be able to come to a library. This card enables students to download at home, information from the Library's e-resources. They are downloading e-books, on-line magazines, and databases for homework help. What we had hoped would happen is happening with the VOLUMEN project.

Ms. Stein noted that this week is National Library Week. We are hosting some special activities. Our patrons are also posting comments such as one written yesterday by a man who has been seeking employment. He wrote that he "had been seeking gainful employment for longer than I wished to mention. My first visit to the Career Center convinced me that I was not going about my job searches efficiently, effectively, or using up-to-date methodology." Ms. Stein said he complimented the staff in the Career Center. He also said "as a result I have been hired by a national firm who has its main offices here in Baton Rouge." Ms. Stein added that the staff worked with him on his strategy, his résumé, writing and everything that a career coach should do.

Ms. Stein then said the Library was part of the French party this last week for our sister cities and foreign exchange students. We hosted some of the delegation at the Main Library. Our archivist, Ms. Melissa Eastin, presented information about old south Baton Rouge, and the Museum of Public Art which is an outdoor museum. The students then visited this museum.

Ms. Stein then gave the PowerPoint presentation *Around the Parish in 90 Seconds* which included the month of April 2015. Below are some of the highlights:

- The Library is continuing with the Community Strategic Planning conversations. On April 14th the staff was pleased to meet with 28 teenagers and adults at the Zachary Branch Library.
- *A Confederacy of Dunces*, the One Book/One Community read is continuing. The Library featured author, Cory MacLauchlin, for a Friday evening after-hours event.
- Something new for the Library is the Lego[®] Builders Workshops. Our Children's Services Department is active with the Association of Library Services.
- People who attended included former students of John Kennedy Toole. They viewed the documentary and talked about their reminiscences of Mr. Toole.
- For this project Children's Services staff read a story appropriate to the theme of the project.
- At the Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library a week ago, we had a red beans and rice cook-off. People in the audience were the tasters, and Copeland's Restaurant won the competition.
- Children ages 3-7 then receive a tub of Legos. Through structured play children create items utilizing principles related to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math).
- We held a contest in which people told us what they liked about the Library. They also answered questions about *A Confederacy of Dunces* to win a donated iPad.
- Children tell the story about their design, and write a summary about their creation.
- The 11th Annual *Author's Row* was held at the Jones Creek Regional Branch Library. The event featured Louisiana authors and their books.
- For the program *1,000 Books before Kindergarten*, over 1,000 children have signed up. Some have already completed 250 books. Parents are thanking the Library for this program which children enjoy.
- We have something new on our work horse database *OverDrive*. It now features a "screening room" offering streaming videos! It contains films for children, teens and adults.

Ms. Stein then mentioned that the 2015 Young Adult Literature Conference and Seminar will be held for the second year at LSU from May 31st –June 5th. The theme will be writings in African-American Literature. Authors Jacqueline Woodson, Coe Booth, Kwame Alexander, Sharon Draper, and Sharon Flake will teach classes at LSU during the day. Through our partnership with LSU, the students will come here to the Main Library at night to enjoy our free programs after attending workshops at LSU during the day.

Ms. Stein announced that we launched City Key 3.0 which works effectively and consistently. We have now begun to train people on how to use it. We are working with Open Data BR, the City-Parish's resource to share data between the two databases.

Ms. Stein said another technology update at the Library is a pilot program at the Main Library offering faxing for our patrons. Patrons have frequently requested this service. People can scan an item and e-mail that. However, there is still a need for faxing. We are trying out this service which is without cost to the Library, but with a charge to those patrons using it. This service instructs the user on what to do. Ms. Stein said if we have good results here, we will expand it to other branches.

Ms. Stein said the last announcement is that we just received our new Library cards which contain a key chain fob. Many patrons prefer the fob over the traditional card.

Ms. Stein asked if there were any questions. Mr. Bardwell asked if the library card application asks for the age of the applicant. Ms. Stein said yes and that the regular card is keyed to the age of the patron because as one ages, the permissions change. Mr. Bardwell said he has had people ask him about their fines. He then asks them their age because he knows based on age some do not accrue fines.

Ms. Freeman then read Item A under Other Reports.

IV. Other Reports

A. Main Library at Goodwood

Mr. Watts then presented the report on the Main Library at Goodwood. He said we are reviewing some issues in the parking lot and plaza. Patrons using walkers and wheelchairs have reported problems at the inclines in the sidewalks leading from the handicapped parking spaces. Patrons have also complained about the cobblestone type of texture provided by the plaza pavers. The paver surfaces meet code and ADA requirements, but the mobility issues are a problem for many of our patrons. Mr. Watts said he has asked the architects to investigate making smoother alternate paths through this area.

He also reported that we have received the plans and specifications for the suspended Modification Requests. The most critical one is that we need additional air conditioning in the main server room. When the building was being planned four years ago, the heat loads that were associated with the kinds of servers we had at that time are different from what they are now.

Our servers now have enhanced capabilities which provide a network that is improved and faster, but it also generates much more heat.

Mr. Watts noted that on April 9th we had a work session with BREC representatives to review the CEA. Now that we have the final pricing of services and maintenance that we share with BREC we need to finalize responsibilities and costs associated with the agreement.

He added that we have had some issues with staff parking, and the shared parking in the BREC Theatre lot. BREC is now adding 80 parking spaces at the soccer fields on the west side of the building. This was part of the original plan for Independence Park and will alleviate some of the problems we have experienced.

B. River Center Branch Library

Mr. Watts then discussed the River Center Branch project. He said the architects had requested an extension of the delivery date to April 17th for the construction documents. Today they requested an extension to sometime after April 23rd because there is a meeting scheduled to reconcile some of the door hardware, and entry security. This process takes time and the work is technical and detailed in nature. Mr. Watts added that he feels DPW will give the architects an extension to the end of April.

He noted the architects' time table allots only two weeks to review the construction documents. This is insufficient time to conduct a thorough review. It will take a minimum of four weeks since Library and DPW staff will need to go over the documents reviewing many items such as security, camera placement, reflective ceiling plans, and the telecommunications plans. We will depend on DPW to check items requiring an engineering and architectural background.

Mr. Watts explained that Library staff has completed the analysis of several fixtures and accessories throughout the building including faucets, sinks, and mirrors in the rest rooms. We have requested glass ports in doors for rooms that need occasional monitoring externally, and have adjusted the glazed area for the Quiet Reading Room and study areas for better visual control. Mr. Watts also said we have reviewed the security monitoring devices including the specifications for placements of these devices. He added that we are now reviewing door hardware.

He explained that DPW has decided that piping to the Central Plant must be placed underground.

A decision on the color (white or silver finish) of the exterior metal cladding will be made after mock-ups are erected during the early stages of construction. The staff is interested in the effects of exposure to the elements in regard to maintenance and appearance.

Mr. Watts added that a Phase II environmental study will need to be completed on the old building once we have vacated it. This will determine what type of remediation needs to be done prior to demolition.

He concluded his remarks about the River Center Branch by stating that we are looking for a small space to provide library services including a small collection of books during the construction of the new building.

C. Maintenance Report and Additional Capital Projects

Mr. Watts asked Ms. Husband to give a brief maintenance report. Ms. Husband said that the Facilities Management staff continues to perform routine preventive maintenance and repairs which are posted on the Library's website.

She then gave an update on the three major capital projects. The exterior lighting project for the, Central, Greenwell Springs Road Regional and the Pride-Chaneyville Branch Libraries has been completed. The lighting project is 70% completed at the Bluebonnet Regional Branch.

In regard to the Greenwell Springs Road Regional and the Scotlandville Branch Libraries flooring projects, the bid opening for this project was held on April 14th. Continental Flooring was the low bidder at \$440,556. If we choose not to do the entire project as identified by the alternates, we will have some deductions on the price. Purchasing and DPW will review the documentation and prepare the contracts. Once the contracts are signed, DPW will issue a notice to proceed.

In regard to the Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library renovation project, the bid opening for this project was held on April 7th. Charles Carter Construction Company, Inc. was the low bidder with the base bid and two alternates of \$1,009,400. DPW and Purchasing will review the documentation and prepare the contracts. Once the contracts are signed, DPW will issue a notice to proceed.

Ms. Husband asked the Board if there were any questions, and there were none.

Mr. John Berry, a member of the public, said he has questions. He asked about the Outreach building. Mr. Watts replied that he would address the Outreach building under the next agenda item.

Mr. Berry then said that at the last meeting he requested a line item breakdown of the final cost of the Main Library. He also said he requested detailed information about the cost of LEED certification. Mr. Berry said the line item breakdown was posted on the website. But he could not find a breakdown of the cost of the LEED certification. Mr. Watts replied that this breakdown does not include specific charges for LEED. He added that many of the items we chose in the construction of the building have a LEED component such as low flow toilets. However, on the detailed list those items will not be labelled as LEED. Mr. Berry said he sat through several meeting in which LEED was discussed in detail. Conversations about who would get the LEED contract occurred. He added that at meetings representatives would report on the LEED components of the project. This is what he is interested in.

D. Miscellaneous Reports

Mr. Watts said that following negotiations and discussions, the price of the proposed Outreach building at 3434 North Boulevard has been reduced by \$150,000. A revised purchase agreement has been written. The reason for the price reduction is that the roof is not in as good a condition as was originally presented, and will need to be replaced sooner than initially planned. Mr. Watts added that we think this is a good, sound building for our Outreach Service staff, and as a building for our back-up servers along with those for the City-Parish. The parking lot is large enough for staff parking and for parking our bookmobiles when not in use. He noted that DPW estimates if this building were constructed today it would cost about \$3.6 million; a pricing estimate that does not include the purchase of land or the construction of a parking lot.

Mr. Watts announced that the City-Parish has adopted a new salary plan for all City employees. The most promising aspect of this plan for us as an organization is that the new salary range incorporates the old longevity steps into the new pay scale. This should help us with turnover because employees will be able to advance at a better pace. Hopefully, it will encourage employees to remain with the Library and help reduce turnover rates.

Mr. Watts said we continue to hold the strategic planning sessions for the public. We changed the format of the sessions to provide for a discussion/dialogue type of event which is more interesting and enjoyable for everyone. He added that we had about 30 people present at the Zachary Branch this week. We had good participation and stayed longer than the scheduled amount of time.

Mr. Watts then gave an update on our outreach efforts at the Airport. We have established access to the Library's web resources and databases through the Airport's Business Center pc's. Selected Library events are also featured on the airport-owned monitors that list community and local events. Staff have been working with Clear Channel to determine if we can participate in the media distribution program through the monitors controlled by the company. He added that we wanted to install an e-book kiosk at the Airport, but that was dependent on our getting an upgrade to our V-Smart software. The request for an upgrade was submitted in November and the upgrade was approved last week. We are in the first stages of also installing the Iguana software that will enable us to use virtual servers. The new systems will allow on-line registration throughout our system, and permit us to place an e-book kiosk at the Airport.

Mr. Watts then said we had a request for a public comment about the Outreach building. Mr. Berry said he did not understand the response to his request for the charges for LEED certification at the Main Library. Mr. Berry asked if the Library was going to provide the LEED charges. Mr. Watts replied that we have obtained the information from DPW which is the total charge for the Main Library. Mr. Berry replied that the architect chosen for the LEED contract was Mr. Noman Chenevert, and Mr. Dyke Nelson was the principal on that project. Ms. Freeman asked Mr. Berry to submit his specific request in writing, and we will respond to it. Mr. Berry said he will make the request through e-mail.

Mr. Berry then said he has a question about the Outreach building. Mr. Berry asked if there is going to be a new building or one that is already constructed. Mr. Watts replied that we are

purchasing a building that is already on-site. Mr. Berry said this building has many issues and problems such as electrical. Mr. Watts replied that this is not the case. Mr. Berry asked what the total cost is to which Mr. Watts replied \$1 million. Ms. Freeman asked Mr. Watts to repeat what the cost would be for a new building to which Mr. Watts replied \$3.6 million.

Ms. Freeman asked for additional comments. There were none so she read Item A under New Business.

V. New Business

A. To Vote to Send Comments to City-Parish Administration Concerning Tax Abatement Proposal – Mr. Spencer Watts

Mr. Watts said the Board has before them one applicant (WN Tower LLC) requesting tax abatement for the property totaling \$ 14,553.00 each year for a span of five years in the amount of \$72,765.00. Mr. Leger made a motion that the Board takes no position on this applicant. The motion was seconded by Mr. Woodard. Ms. Freeman asked if there was any further discussion. There being none she asked for public comments. There were none. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Old Business

A. Review of Options and Discussion regarding Course of Action for a South Branch Library – Mr. Spencer Watts

Ms. Freeman read Item A under Old Business. Mr. Watts reported that after we realized that the property we had been looking at was not going to be a viable choice because of opposition from the residents of the neighborhood, our search for a suitable location came to a standstill. Mr. Watts noted that the report by LEO, LLC showed that after looking at many possibilities, their focus was in an area south of Burbank Drive where there are a large number of undeveloped tracts. However, that area does not seem to be the area that most Library users are interested in. He said we are at a point where we need to reassess our approach.

Mr. Watts added that the Library staff would like to suggest we refine our parameters, and accept that we will probably not be able to build a 15,000 square foot building. We can hope for a 10,000 square foot building on a lot that is accessible and more attractive to the majority of the patrons in the area. He noted this would be preferable to having a 15,000 square foot building in an area that people would rather not use.

Mr. Watts said if we find a small site, we would have a small footprint and perhaps build a second floor. Of course, a second floor would increase the cost of the construction and long-term maintenance. We would need to install elevators which would decrease the square footage of the building. But this smaller building might fit in better with the commuting patterns for recreational and business activities of our patrons.

Mr. Watts said he suggests we start a new search with a different methodology and talk with every realtor we can find and ask them about their properties. He added we do know from the site selection process last year that we have several realtors that have expressed an interest in locating property.

Mr. Watts noted that after speaking to the City-Parish, we can retain a realtor through a selection process. Mr. Leo D'Aubin from the Parish Attorney's Office is present at this meeting to guide us in the necessary steps of this process. Mr. Watts said we could elect to choose a realtor to be our buyer. This realtor agent would help us find sites listed by various realtors. This agent would split the commission with the realtors representing the seller if a sale occurs.

Mr. Watts also said we would need to establish a selection process which will take more time, but this will save time in the end because we would work with one agent.

Mr. Bardwell asked if we would need the approval of City-Parish Purchasing to retain a realtor since we would work with this realtor under a contract. Mr. Watts said yes, but first we would need to set up the criteria for the selection. Mr. Bardwell asked if we'd need Metropolitan Council approval for this contract. Mr. Watts answered this is where Mr. D'Aubin will assist since we will not know prior to the sale what the commission will be.

Mr. Woodard then said that in real estate transactions the seller rather than the buyer pays any real estate commissions. He added he did not understand why the Library would have any monetary obligations. Mr. Bardwell agreed that the selling agent pays the finding agent a commission. Mr. Watts replied that under the City-Parish guidelines we would not pay any money to anyone. However, he said there is a contractual relationship with this agent and this is why we would need to go through a selection process.

Ms. Freeman asked for public comments. Mr. Ben Skillman of Skill Real Estate said he has spoken to the Board in the past. He said in his opinion in regard to hiring an agent, the Board should hire only one person, and in a time period such as 90 days, the agent should investigate every possibility. He added that he was born and raised in Baton Rouge, and has lived in the area under consideration for all his life. He offered that a couple of lots will need to be assembled to provide three acres of land. This is a very desirable area along Perkins and Highland Roads. Mr. Skillman said there is a good possibility that adjacent properties can be found for sale. He asked what size property is needed. Mr. Watts replied we have discussed assembling some lots together. Mr. Skillman agreed that the broker who assists the Library in finding the property is paid by the seller. It would not be an expense to the Library. He added all that would be needed by the agent would be the boundaries of where the Library wants the site to be located.

Ms. Freeman thanked Mr. Skillman for coming and making his comments. Ms. Freeman asked if Mr. Watts had any more comments. He replied that he needs some direction from the Board about how they wish to proceed.

Ms. Freeman asked for comments from the Board. Mr. Jacob said he likes the idea of working with a realtor because it is proceeding in a positive direction so that we can move forward on this

project. Mr. Bardwell agreed, and said they are probably looking for 1½ acres.

Ms. Freeman said she has some questions about the size of the lot. She asked about the size of the lot for the Fairwood Branch Library. Mr. Watts replied that it is approximately 2.6 acres. She then asked the size of the building to which Ms. Husband replied 15,800 square feet. Ms. Freeman said her concern would be the 10,000 square foot building. Mr. Watts said we would ideally hope that we could find property to build a 12,000 square foot or larger branch. Ms. Freeman noted that a 10,000 square foot building is quite small.

Ms. Freeman asked for any other discussions by the Board. Mr. Woodard said that we have conducted an exhaustive search for properties that are listed and also those that are not listed. He does not think that ideal property exists to build a conventional branch like Fairwood. He noted that the Fairwood property is a very tight site in terms of parking. Mr. Woodard added if the land is not there hiring a realtor would not be fruitful. He added that as a Board we need to make some tough decisions on what we are willing to do and on what is possible with the circumstances we have.

Mr. Watts said he wanted to add that one of the options we would like to also consider is leasing a site. This approach has not been pursued very much. He did add that there are some issues with that choice including the small size of many leases in strip centers. We would become highly dependent on our immediate neighbor. What might be a wonderful set of retail establishments today could be an issue in the future.

Ms. Johnson asked if we have contracted with a realtor in the past to which Mr. Watts replied no. Ms. Johnson said if we hire a realtor who cannot find a site, then we should pursue another option for a branch library. She thought that the realtor should have 30 days to find a site. Ms. Freeman and Mr. Bardwell said we should give the realtor 90 days. Mr. Skillman agreed that 90 days is a good time frame and that the Board should choose one agent; not several. Choosing more than one agent would not give the Library the commitment from the agents to find a site.

Mr. Watts said if we contract with one realtor that would add at least another 30 days to the process. It would entail drawing up the criteria, announcing the search, obtaining responses from interested parties, and analyzing the responses against the criteria.

Ms. Freeman said she wanted to add that we have spent a lot of time looking for property in that area. But there is a reason we have been searching; and that is, it's a very highly populated area that is underserved. They have some special needs, and for that reason, we have made the extra effort. So we need to look at other sites and also other ways to serve this population.

Ms. Carol Anne Brown said she lives in Southdowns and is the President of the Southside Civic Association. She said their Board wants to say thank you to the Library Board for continuing to look for a site for a branch library in south Baton Rouge. She added that it's taken lots of time and patience. She stated that residents appreciate the Library's efforts and do not want to give up and don't want the Library to give up either.

Ms. Freeman asked for any other public comments. There being none, she asked for Board

comments. Mr. Bardwell said he'd make a motion. He moved that the Library Board institute the process to select a single realtor to locate an appropriate site for the construction of a branch library of a size no less than 10,000 square feet, and no more than 14,000 square feet. That realtor would expect to be paid by the seller or the seller's agent listed for that property. We would like a site of no less than 1½ acres and up to 3 acres which can be a combination of properties.

Mr. Watts asked that the Board be fluid on the site. Mr. Bardwell replied that we need to give the realtor some direction on what we want. Mr. Watts said we will, but we shouldn't set all of the parameters just yet. Ms. Freeman said what we need is a process for selection of a single realtor. She added that the Director and his staff will set the parameters. Mr. Bardwell agreed.

Mr. Jacob seconded the motion. Mr. Woodard said he wanted to add an amendment to the motion; that being, that the contract would be at no cost to the Library. Ms. Freeman agreed, and Mr. Bardwell accepted that. Ms. Freeman said a motion was made and seconded. She asked for a vote. Mr. Leger and Mr. Woodard were opposed; Mr. Bardwell, Ms. Freeman, Mr. Jacob, and Ms. Johnson voted for the motion. The motion passed.

B. Update on Metropolitan Council Meeting Agenda Item for Approval of Millage Rate for Library Tax Renewal Election – Mr. Spencer Watts

Ms. Freeman read Item B and asked Mr. Watts to report. He said on April 8th the announcement of the request for a tax election was read to the Metropolitan Council. The announcement included the Library Board's recommendation of an 11.1 millage rate which made at the last Board meeting. This announcement is a requirement of the State regarding the rules and regulations for calling a property tax election. The Metropolitan Council will make a decision on the millage rate at the May 27th Council meeting.

Mr. Watts added that we received some questions from the Council about the technical details of the election process. This led to some other questions about the millage rate. We will attempt to speak to Council members in the upcoming weeks.

Ms. Freeman asked for public comments. Mr. Berry asked when the Council would set a deadline to talk to the Library Board on an alternate millage figure. Mr. Watts replied that there is no answer to that question. Mr. Woodard said the only answer is that it will be placed on the May 27th Metropolitan Council agenda. At that time the Council will take any action they feel is appropriate. Mr. Berry asked for the date of the tax election. Mr. Watts replied October 24th. Mr. Berry noted that leaves several months between the Council vote and the public election. He said the Board set an 11.1 millage rate. He asked if the Board would change their mind on the rate. Ms. Freeman replied that the Library Board voted, and submitted that information to the Council. Now it is up to the Council to do what they need to do, whatever that might be.

Ms. Freeman asked if there was any further discussion by the Board. There were no further public comments, so Ms. Freeman read Item C.

C. Review of Information about Meeting Room Usage and Meeting Room Policy Revisions and Vote on Revisions of Meeting Room Policy – Mr. Spencer Watts and Ms. Mary Stein

Mr. Watts thanked the Board members who replied to the questionnaire about their preferences for meeting room usage. He noted what several terms implied. “Rare occasions” refers to after-hours bookings. We have indicated that after-hours bookings are dependent on staff availability. We cannot take two or three after-hours events in any given month because we do not have the staff resources. Also because of other commitments we might have, there could be two to three months when we could not have any after-hours bookings. Patrons would understand that they could ask us about a booking, but we might decline because we can only have eight to ten of these in a given year. Mr. Watts also said we want to be clear that we will charge the booking group for direct expenses when there is an after-hours event. These charges would include security, and extra cleaning personnel.

He added that in regard to “social events”, we would limit it to weddings. During our year of experimental events we found weddings usually have a professional or experienced planner. The hosts of other types of social events often underestimate the time they need to set-up and clean-up.

Mr. Watts said one board member felt no social events should be allowed because of concerns with staff time investment, and because other venues would be more suitable. Also there was another concern expressed that some commercial events should be closed to the public to avoid “leeching of the Library’s brand”. This is a legitimate concern. Mr. Watts added that most of the corporate events would refer back to workforce development. If there is a training issue or a seminar issue which would help economic or workforce development, we would want to cover those.

He said there was no opposition to the definition of non-profit status. If there were a question about non-profit status, the group would need to produce a copy of their Letter of Determination from the IRS. Also there was no opposition to other governmental groups using the meeting rooms. Mr. Watts noted that the fee schedule caused concern.

Mr. Watts then asked how the Board wished to make their choices for revisions of the policy. Ms. Freeman said she had some concerns. She said her major concern is overworking the staff. She said what we are proposing to do with the meeting rooms is great. But we have a shortage of staff who already work long hours. She also said we should limit the number of events per year. This would set parameters on what we would do. Mr. Watts agreed that we would not want, for example, eight weddings in May and June. Some events do have a seasonal component. Booking would be on a first come, first serve basis.

Ms. Freeman asked for any other comments from the Board. Mr. Woodard said the number of bookings is covered by the words on rare occasion. He added that the staff can determine what they can do, so he would not want to put an exact number in the policy. Mr. Watts agreed and added that we would address the number of events in the procedures, and that the policy should not contain the number of events allowed.

Ms. Freeman asked for other comments. Ms. Johnson asked if we should have a check point to see how well we are doing. We should possibly have an assessment to determine how well we are doing. Then we can review those items. Mr. Watts replied that we have already taken a year to try out some ideas. So we know what is working and what is not. We've already gone through an adjustment process. He said times, needs and resources change, and we would want to re-assess. Ms. Freeman asked about the frequency of the review. Mr. Watts said a yearly review would be sufficient.

Mr. Bardwell said we'd want to evaluate the costs, what we are charging, and whether we are losing money. Ms. Stein said we can do that procedurally and Mr. Watts agreed.

Ms. Freeman asked for public comments. Mr. Berry said it seems to him that the Library System is getting into a service that they should not be involved in. He said he's referring to weddings, quinceañeras, bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs. In the beginning the meeting rooms were used by civic associations, and other non-profits that wanted to meet, groups that wanted to hold classes for the public, and those offering tutoring. Mr. Berry said that these are good uses for the Library. He said when the Library allows celebrations, and music which can disturb library patrons, the Board needs to decide what the Library should do.

Ms. Freeman then said that she is torn. She said she sees the amount of work that will be required to allow these various activities. She said she has visited Boston Public Library, and they have these types of events, but they have a foundation and a staff to run these events. This foundation and staff are separate from the Library. Ms. Freeman added she is concerned about the overload of work that the staff already has here. Mr. Watts replied that this is where the evaluation process would be helpful.

He also stated that a number of libraries and museums have nice spaces, but with shorter hours of operation than we do. In these places patrons are not disturbed when a wedding is held at 7:00 p.m. But we have long hours of operation. If these types of events are successful here, in the future we may be able to establish a foundation or some type of organization with a hired person to run these events.

Ms. Freeman said the libraries that have these types of services and events, really charge for them. They generate money from these activities. She added that this is not going to be a money maker for us. Mr. Watts agreed, but that is very different from what we are proposing to do. We do not expect to lose money. We would generate some money to offset wear and tear on our facilities. Paid services will be fully covered with no loss of money.

Ms. Freeman said she looked at the gate count and we are already at 629,000. She is concerned about the wear and tear on our facilities.

Mr. Bardwell said his approach is a liberal one. He said we already have a policy in force and it was for our meeting rooms because that is all we thought the rooms would be used for. Patrons have been meeting here and in branches every day. That is a good thing because it provides a service to them. But these rooms also bring in people who might never come to the library. He added what most impressed him about the Boston Public and Seattle Public Libraries was that

they have many venues and spaces for celebratory types of events. We do not have that here. He noted that the celebratory events may be the ones that bring in people who are not regular library users, who are from out of town, or from out of our parish. This building is a flagship and offers opportunities for events that we may not be asked about at the Eden Park or Pride-Chaneyville Branches. This building is a spectacular venue. Mr. Bardwell said he is comfortable with whatever the staff is comfortable with. The staff can decide on what they think they can handle and that they should pace themselves. He added that we are talking about incremental changes. By doing this we will see an increase in gate count. Mr. Bardwell said he is supportive of the concepts.

Mr. Leger said he likes most of the changes the staff has made to the policy. But he said he still has reservations about allowing social events. He added that he does not think our facilities are suited to these types of activities. There are better venues in our City for those events. He added that the staff is also not able to handle these types of events. Mr. Leger stated he would be more comfortable if we did not host these types of events. He doesn't believe that hosting social events is beneficial to the Library's mission.

Ms. Freeman suggested the Board needs to decide if they want any changes. If so, then we can go through the list and decide what events we want. Mr. Watts said he would assume that we would allow our non-profits such as the Junior League to have after-hours events here on a Friday.

Mr. Leger made a motion that the Board accept all of the meeting room policy changes except for allowing social events. Mr. Woodard seconded the motion.

Ms. Freeman said she wanted to look over the changes. She said she does not feel comfortable about having no limits on the number of after-hours events. Ms. Johnson asked for a clarification. She said the motion accepts everything in the proposed revised policy except for allowing social events. Ms. Freeman said something needs to be in the policy to limit the number of after-hours events because the staff is overworked. Ms. Johnson suggested the staff offer the Board a staffing schedule, so that the Board is comfortable with the work load.

Ms. Freeman said we have a motion to accept all of the meeting room policy changes except for allowing social events. She added that she wants somewhere in the policy a limit stated on the number of after-hours events. She said that is her substitute motion. Ms. Johnson seconded the substitute motion. Mr. Woodard asked if Ms. Freeman wished her addition to the motion to be an amendment rather than a substitute motion. Ms. Freeman replied yes; an amendment not a substitute motion.

Mr. Jacob asked if we are accepting the revised policy and striking out the social events. Ms. Freeman said yes. Mr. Jacob then asked if Ms. Freeman's amendment is about social or after-hours events. Mr. Woodard answered it is about afterhours events.

Mr. Bardwell asked if the Board is voting on a certain number of after-hours events. That amendment is open-ended the way it is stated now. Ms. Freeman asked what types of after-hours events, are the staff considering. Ms. Stein replied groups such as the Junior League Planning

Retreat for which they would come at noon on a Sunday. The Osher Life Long Learning Institute would like to have something during the holidays on a Friday or Saturday night. SCORE or any other non-profit might want an after-hours event. Ms. Freeman then said we can omit limiting the number of after-hours events in the motion. Mr. Jacob asked if we can leave it to staff to decide how many after-hours events. Mr. Bardwell said if we are omitting social events, we are limiting a lot. Ms. Freeman said she withdrew her amendment.

Ms. Freeman asked for a vote on the motion. She asked for a vote on those opposed. There was no opposition. She asked for a vote in favor of the motion. Mr. Bardwell, Ms. Freeman, Mr. Jacob, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Leger and Mr. Woodard voted for the motion which passed unanimously.

There being no other comments, Ms. Freeman asked for Comments by the Board, Item VII.

VII. Comments by the Library Board of Control

Mr. Bardwell said he has greatly enjoyed his term on the Board. He found it frustrating and exhilarating. It has been eight years in which time he has met some wonderful people, and has been impressed with the caliber of the staff he has worked with. He wishes them luck in the future. He said this is part one.

Part two is about an article in today's paper. It's an internet newspaper brief. It stated that the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF) is holding its rollout meeting on the mental health issue in this Parish here at the Main Library on May 27th. He said he finds that very ironic. BRAAF recognizes the value of this Library and this System as a spot to attract people. To come to a meeting of this importance validates our place in the community. Mr. Bardwell said with that, he bid adieu to those present.

Ms. Freeman said it was an honor and privilege to serve on this Board for the last 7½ years. She said over these years she has become educated about the Library as a business. She said she attended conferences, and encouraged our Library staff to participate and conduct some of the sessions they attended. Ms. Freeman said at her very first conference when she attended some of the sessions she thought our staff does this better. Why aren't they teaching it? She totally encouraged the staff to participate.

Ms. Freeman added that we are one of the best libraries in the country, and one of the most respected in the nation. She said she hopes and prays that the Board will continue to make motions and take actions to keep it strong and vibrant. We have an opportunity to show our patrons and customers that we love them and we provide for them and we protect them through the services we offer. We also have a vision that is to empower them. Ms. Freeman said with that she said thank you.

There being no further comments, and with no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Woodard, seconded by Mr. Jacob.

Ms. Tanya Freeman, President

Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director