

TENTATIVE 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  
AUGUST 18, 2016  
4:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

I. ROLL CALL

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING OF JULY 13, 2016 AND THE REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 21, 2016

III. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

- A. FINANCIAL REPORT
- B. SYSTEM REPORTS

IV. OTHER REPORTS

- A. RIVER CENTER BRANCH LIBRARY
- B. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS
- C. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. UPDATE ON DUE DILIGENCE REGARDING QUAIL DRIVE SITE FOR A SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY – MS. MARY STEIN

VI. 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

August 18, 2016

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, August 18, 2016. Ms. Kizzy Payton, President of the Board called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. Members of the Board present were Mrs. Martha Guarisco, Ms. Terrie Johnson, Mr. Logan Leger, Mr. Donald Luther, Jr., and Ms. Kathy Wascom. Mr. Jason Jacob was absent for the meeting. Also in attendance were Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director; Ms. Rhonda Pinsonat, Library Business Manager; Ms. Liz Zozulin, Executive Assistant to the Library Director; Mr. Michael Smith, Library Network Technician I; Mr. Dirk Graeser, videographer for Metro 21; and one member of the public. Ms. Patricia Husband, Assistant Library Director of Branch Services; Ms. Mary Stein, Assistant Library Director of Administration; Mr. Ronnie Pierce, Assistant Library Business Manager; and Ms. Sonya Gordon, Library Public Relations Coordinator were unable to attend the meeting.

Ms. Payton asked Ms. Johnson to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Ms. Payton asked Ms. Zozulin to take the roll which she did.

Ms. Payton asked for the approval of the minutes of the special budget meeting of July 13, 2016 and the regular Library Board meeting of July 21, 2016. Ms. Johnson made a motion to approve both of the minutes, seconded by Mr. Luther and approved unanimously.

### **III. Reports by the Director**

#### **A. Financial Reports**

Ms. Payton 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 July 31, 2016 show operating expenditures are \$21,524,016.57 or 48.68% of the operating budget. Through July we should have spent no more than 58.3% of the operating budget.

Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2016 continue to remain positive, as we are approximately \$930,000 and 2.35% ahead of the same 7 month period last year.

Ms. Pinsonat asked if there were any questions about the financial statements. There were none.

## **B. System Reports**

Mr. Watts said that Ms. Stein could not be present for this meeting and therefore, we could not finalize a report. He also said that when we discuss the maintenance report, we will also include the miscellaneous reports. We will discuss the flood and its impact on the Library system and on the public.

## **IV. Other Reports**

### **A. River Center Branch Library**

Mr. Watts discussed the River Center Branch project. He noted that we are occupying the Kress Building as a temporary branch location. Last week we experienced a drainage issue and sewer problem that occurred on the block. We have not had any problems within our leased space, but there is a noticeable odor. The leasing agent has been unable to reach their plumber to rectify the situation. Therefore, they are hoping to contract with a plumber from New Orleans who could make the repairs tomorrow. At this point we do not think that this situation was caused by the flooding.

The first meeting with the contractor for the new construction will be held on the first Thursday of next month. Mr. Watts announced that he did not know what impact the flood will have on the demolition of the River Center Branch, especially in regard to the contractor's staff.

Ms. Payton then read Item B and C.

### **B. Maintenance Report and Additional Capital Projects and C. Miscellaneous Reports**

Mr. Watts said Ms. Husband is not available for this meeting and therefore, he will give the maintenance report. He noted that most of the capital projects are progressing well. The contract for the Exterior Restoration Project for the Carver, Central, Delmont Gardens, Eden Park, Greenwell Springs Road Regional, Scotlandville and Zachary Branch Libraries was placed on the Metropolitan Council agenda for approval on August 10<sup>th</sup>. Due to the length of the meeting, this item has been carried forward for the next Council meeting on August 24<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Watts then discussed the Main Library paver replacement project. He noted that the project was awarded, but there will be a delay of several weeks before the first meeting can be scheduled due to the aftermath of the floods.

He also said that the staff has observed the bioswales at the Main Library. The horsetails are growing very fast and very tall. They do not appear to be self-maintaining and will need to be trimmed back which will require an amendment to our grounds maintenance contract. This is not a high priority request for the City at this time. Mr. Watts added that when the horsetails are

cut back, the pruned materials need to be removed so as not to fall into the bioswales and prevent proper drainage.

Mr. Watts noted that two bid responses were submitted to the City-Parish Purchasing Department for the RFID project. We have not had the opportunity to review the bids to determine if they meet the criteria in the Request for Quotations (RFQ). This project will also be delayed for several weeks due to the priority of flood recovery activities.

Mr. Watts then reported that nineteen firms submitted Statements of Qualification for the renovation of the Greenwell Springs Regional Branch and the Jones Creek Regional Branch Libraries. The City-Parish Architectural Selection Committee which will choose the firm they feel is most qualified for the projects was to meet today at 5:00 p.m. Yesterday it was announced that this meeting has been postponed due to the unprecedented flood. The Committee has re-scheduled the selection meeting for September 1, 2016. He added that we received the Statements of Qualification yesterday, but we have not had time to review these.

Mr. Watts reported that our Computer Services Department is making good progress on our responsive web page. He said the goal is to provide patrons with the cutting edge technology they need.

The Summer Reading Programs have ended. Due to the storms we have extended the deadline for turning in logs.

Mr. Watts said that at the next Board meeting we will devote more time for discussion of the 2016 City Stats report that was just published. The Library again has been highly ranked by the citizens of this parish. They have indicated a high level of satisfaction in regard to the services and materials we provide. We have also received positive feedback from patrons through our electronic surveys. The Library has received high marks when patrons have been asked if they would refer a friend to the Library.

Mr. Watts then said he wished to speak about the devastating effects of the floods. Many of our patrons and staff have been drastically affected by the storms which occurred last week. The Library was scheduled to be open on Friday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, but flooding was occurring on many streets and highways. Goodwood Boulevard near the Library's main entrance was blocked due to high water. Some employees had arrived at their facilities with considerable difficulties in route. Many news outlets announced erroneously that the City-Parish offices were closed. Therefore, many staff were told to go home, only to learn the City-Parish offices were open. The Mayor and City-Parish officials determined that due to this confusion, all employees scheduled to work would get paid for Friday.

This was only the beginning of our problems as the northern part of the parish experienced an unprecedented amount of rain causing high water on Friday and Saturday. At one point the amount of rain appeared to be lessening, but the flooding continued to increase and move toward the south and east. By Sunday the impact was startling. City-Parish offices, including the Library, were closed through Tuesday, August 16, 2016.

Mr. Watts said the Library opened on Wednesday, August 17<sup>th</sup> with reduced hours of operation from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Twelve of our fourteen branches were opened; excluding the Baker Branch and the Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch. We noted some issues at the Baker Branch which appear to be easily remedied. Unfortunately, Greenwell Springs Regional took in from 5 to 10 inches of water throughout the building. We will probably lose between 15,000 to 20,000 books on the bottom shelves of the book cases which were submerged in water. The good news is that the electricity came back on yesterday in the middle of the night. We discovered this because the alarms went off. Mr. Tim Bankston, our Facilities Manager, who sustained water in his home went to Greenwell Springs with some of his staff. They were able to work on the chiller and got it to operate today. The air conditioning is now working.

Mr. Watts noted that we are working through the City-Parish Purchasing Department to contract with some companies who can begin remediation work. We are working at removing the damaged books and also at protecting the rest of the collection to prevent the high moisture level in the building from damaging these materials. Our plan is to begin moving books by Monday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The prognosis of the cost of the damages to this facility is approximately \$180,000 to \$250,000. A large portion of the flooring will need to be removed. The new computer tables that were recently installed have metal legs, and so they have not sustained damage. The building could be closed for several months. Mr. Watts said we will work with City-Parish Architectural Services to determine if we can include some of the restoration in the scope of work for the renovation of the branch. Architectural planning will take several months. Therefore, in the next several weeks a decision will need to be made about how to approach the renovation project and the recovery project. He added that the electricity coming back on in the building will assist in preventing additional loss.

Mr. Watts then discussed the status of the Baker Branch Library. He noted that it is a miracle that the branch did not take on water. The extent of the flooding at Baker High School which is across the street from the branch was disheartening. One of the Baker staff members surveyed the building on Sunday and reported that the branch was in fairly good shape. The parking lot has a large quantity of debris from the high water intrusion. The number of staff at the Baker and Zachary Branches that have been impacted by the floods is large. He added that we hope to open the Baker Branch by the middle of next week.

Mr. Watts also noted we were concerned about the energy management system at the Zachary Branch Library. Mr. Ted Hernandez and others from the Library Facilities staff worked on the system and were able to make it function again. The Facilities staff and branch staff were able to evaluate some concerns which were minor, and were addressed quickly. Therefore, the Zachary Branch opened yesterday.

Mr. Watts reported that the number one issue for the Library and for other agencies and businesses in our community attempting to re-open, is employees. Senior Library staff met on Tuesday, August 16<sup>th</sup> to evaluate our issues and problems. We have as of yesterday, 147 employees who are not able to come to work because of flood losses to their homes, and/or vehicles. Many have had serious damage which will be an ongoing problem for an extended

time. In some cases vehicles were lost, making transportation a concern. Availability of gasoline was also a problem, but this has been resolved. Because of these factors, we devised the best hours of operation that we could reasonably manage which is currently 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday and 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday. The Sunday hours are typical for the branches except for the Main Library which is usually open until 10:00 p.m. We are hoping that our staffing ability will increase in the next few days so that we can extend our hours of service. He noted that we do not foresee a sudden change back to our regular hours of operation under these circumstances. He added that in some cases we have sufficient staff for some hours of operation, but not for others which makes it difficult to extend hours.

Mr. Watts said our patrons are happy we are open. We are being helpful to our citizens in many ways. We have the technology and the infoguides they can use. Patrons who can connect to us remotely can get information to assist them in communicating with FEMA and other agencies. We are also providing links to information about best practices for recovery. He also noted that the bookmobiles are in operation and are visiting shelters and other sites. We will visit the Greenwell Springs Road Regional area to provide service to these patrons.

Mr. Watts told the Board members that we are being very generous with circulation services in terms of waiving fines, giving everyone the benefit of the doubt. In regard to library cards and registrations, we do not want anyone who has lost a card to be unable to use our services. Therefore, we are waiving fees for replacement cards, and are also being as flexible as possible in regard to identification requirements. If there are concerns, we are able to give the patron some borrowing ability in the form of a guest card as we have always done for computer use in the library. He added that we are being helpful to patrons who need to print or need to charge their electronic devices.

Mr. Luther asked if the Library will be hosting FEMA or other agencies so that people can get access to information and assistance. He added of concern are those who do not have computers or the ability to use one. He mentioned that he was assisting a resident who had flooding. Her only way of looking up information was through phone books which were damaged by water. Mr. Watts replied that the staff are working on programs and on hosting groups who can help. He said an issue is finding a suitable space to meet the needs of the particular agency. If the agency can set up in the lobby of our branches, we can accommodate them. If the agency needs a more private space for confidentiality reasons, that is more difficult. He cited the Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Response team that requested a partitioned space for six weeks. Our local citizen groups need the meeting rooms and spaces, so we are trying to balance out their needs with these disaster relief agencies. In regard to the SBA Disaster Relief team we are offering them the large study room at the Bluebonnet Regional Branch.

Mr. Watts said one of the frequent concerns expressed by residents is the damage to photos and printed items and the desire to restore these. Our staff in the Baton Rouge Room are knowledgeable about preservation and they have information for the public. In this case if we present a program next week on this topic, and if the initial steps have not been taken to prevent further damage, the information given in a program will not help with the current loss. We have online resources and instructions, or if the staff is contacted they can provide information to assist people in taking those crucial initial steps to preserve these types of items.

In summary Mr. Watts said we are reaching out to agencies with expertise to assist our citizens. He noted that our gate count yesterday was 1,100. This number will increase as mobility issues become less of a challenge.

Mr. Luther commented that he wants citizens to be able to get accurate information because there is much misinformation on social media. Mr. Watts agreed that the amount of misinformation that is on the web warrants caution for those seeking answers.

Ms. Guarisco asked if residents from other parishes who are living here temporarily are able to get a library card from our Library. Mr. Watts replied that we are working with those who are displaced. We had much experience with that during Hurricane Katrina. People had to evacuate their homes with few possessions so we want to help in any way we can. He said for people with limited identification, we will allow them to borrow five items at a time. We need to maintain a balance between assisting people while responsibly protecting our collection. We may lose some items, but we don't want to miss the opportunity to help a person in need. Sometimes we listen to people telling their stories which is part of helping, and sometimes they just want a book as a means of escape.

We have had some concerns with our contract employees. Our vendors providing janitorial and delivery services are working, but also have staff who have sustained losses. Our deputies who provide Library security continue to work long hours having moved from a rescue to a recovery mode as officers in the community.

Mr. Watts said he wanted to acknowledge the response of our employees to this crisis. Many who experienced flooding in their homes and vehicles managed to come to work. Many of our employees have been responding in numerous good ways to help those in need.

Mr. Watts asked the Board if they had any other questions. Mr. Leger asked what our plan will be for providing service to patrons in the Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch service area since the facility will be closed for several months. He noted that Mr. Watts mentioned the bookmobiles, but he knows they already have a full schedule of regular visits around the parish. Mr. Watts replied that we will first assess the total amount of damage to the facility and the amount of time it will take to restore the building and furnishings. This branch is scheduled for a renovation beginning this fall. We may be able to combine the restoration with the renovation. However, our plans for the renovation did not include completely closing the building to patrons. The bookmobiles are great for short term service, but will not meet the needs of patrons on a long term basis because the collections are small. Mr. Watts said patrons could use the Fairwood, and Central Branches and the Main Library. He also thought that a book dispenser such as we discussed at the budget work session could be placed in that community to fill the need for materials. He added that he did not think it would be suitable to place the dispenser on the regional branch's property while repairs to the facility were underway. Mr. Watts noted that if a portion of the building can be reclaimed, we might be able to use that area of the structure as a mini-library. He said even if we had 4,000 square feet available, we could assemble a small collection of materials.

Mr. Leger suggested installing a temporary on-site structure on the property. He said he understands that there would be many details to consider and work out to accomplish this, but continuity of service is going to be important for patrons in that part of the parish. Mr. Luther said that possibly FEMA or SBA might have some type of structure or trailer that they could install in the parking lot for this purpose. There will be a great need for information and library services in that area. Mr. Watts said this suggestion is a good one. He added that the parking lot is in fairly good condition.

Ms. Payton asked if there were any more questions or comments. Mr. Watts stated that he appreciates the support of the Library Board. He also said that the staff has been great and will continue to be so. Difficult situations call for people to rise up to them, and our staff has done that. They are dedicated, not only working here, but they are helping people in their neighborhoods. There have been some issues with our human resources policies. The City must adhere to FEMA regulations when reporting employee work hours. Mr. Watts said he deeply appreciates the employees who checked the Library facilities. He noted he had checked several of our branches Saturday night and they were fine, but that was not the case on Sunday. The conditions had changed that quickly. He cited Mr. Joe Tolar, an employee at the Baker Branch, who went there to check the facility and report to Administration when we did not have access to that area. It was such a relief to get his good report. Mr. Watts commended all the staff who came in on Friday morning and worked. At the Main Library we had twelve patrons in the facility, and we were able to remain open until 11:00 a.m. These staff will not get special credit for their efforts, but they deserve special recognition, as do the ones who attempted to get to work, but could not because of the flooding. He concluded by saying he would like to use this forum to express his appreciation for the good work and efforts of the Library employees. He said he is very impressed by their activities this week. Ms. Payton agreed.

Ms. Payton asked for any questions from the Board or comments by the public on any of the reports. There were none, so Ms. Payton read Item A under Old Business, and asked Mr. Watts to report.

## **VI. Old Business**

### **A. Update on Due Diligence regarding Quail Drive Site for a South Branch Library – Ms. Mary Stein**

Mr. Watts said that Ms. Stein was going to report because originally he was not going to be at this meeting. He reported to the Board that not much progress has been made. There were some discussions last week that revealed that the Board for the Owner was going to meet today. There is hope that there will be some updated information on the sale of this property. Mr. Watts noted that under the circumstances, he did not know if their Board was going to meet today.

He reported that we have received information about a couple of other properties. He said he'd rather wait on reporting about these until we have more details.

He also said there were some additional discussions about the letter of intent among the realtors. He hasn't received any updates on their discussions and feels they may be dealing with flooding issues. He said he will try to speak with the realtors tomorrow or Monday.

Ms. Johnson asked if anyone has assessed the site in terms of the flooding. Mr. Watts said he has not been able to check the site himself. He added that someone had heard there was flooding on Quail Drive, but it might have been Quail Run. There was so much information given that it was hard to keep up with it all. He said when he was reviewing the initial information he saw that it was above the 500 year flood plain. There were many buildings throughout the parish that were above that flood plain and they still took on water.

Ms. Payton asked if there were any other comments or questions from the Board. There being none she asked for comments from the public. There were also none from the public.

## **VII. Comments by the Library Board of Control**

Ms. Payton asked for comments from the Board. Mr. Leger said he wanted to comment. He noted that last month at the Board meeting he acknowledged Mr. Watts and the staff for their hard work during what, at that point, was the first tragedy. He said he wishes to again note that it has been a very trying and difficult summer for our community, but the Library's continuous service, its presence, what it represents and provides was then and still is very important, and pivotal to our unity and ability to move forward together. Mr. Luther said he wishes to thank all of the staff members for their tireless efforts during what was a very difficult and will continue to be a difficult time. He also thanked Mr. Watts for his leadership and for the leadership of the senior staff for working to get the libraries opened as quickly and safely as possible. Ms. Payton agreed.

Ms. Johnson said that having the bookmobiles visit the shelters has been awesome. She said many people appreciate that. She expressed kudos to the staff for using the bookmobiles to give people the opportunity to read during these hard times.

Ms. Payton asked for additional comments. There being none, she asked for a motion to adjourn.

There being no further business, Ms. Johnson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Luther. The meeting was adjourned at 4:46 p.m. by unanimous vote.

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Ms. Kizzy A. Payton, President

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Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director