

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
DECEMBER 21, 2017
4:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

I. ROLL CALL

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 16, 2017

III. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

- A. FINANCIAL REPORT
- B. SYSTEM REPORTS

IV. OTHER REPORTS

- A. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS
- B. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. UPDATE ON MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS, RIVER CENTER, GREENWELL SPRINGS ROAD REGIONAL AND JONES CREEK REGIONAL BRANCH LIBRARIES – MR. SPENCER WATTS
- B. UPDATE ON SEARCH FOR A SITE FOR A SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY – MR. SPENCER WATTS

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

December 21, 2017

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, December 21, 2017. Mr. Jason Jacob, President of the Board called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Members of the Board present were Mrs. Martha Guarisco, Ms. Terrie Johnson, Mr. Logan Leger, Mr. Donald Luther, Jr., Ms. Candace Temple, and Ms. Kathy Wascom. 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; and Ms. Liz Zozulin, Executive Assistant to the Library Director. Also present were Mr. Bryan Foreman, Library Network Technician I; Captain Blair Nicholson of the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office; and Mr. Frank Hillyard, videographer for Metro 21. Absent from the meeting were Ms. Rhonda Pinsonat, Library Business Manager; and Mr. Ronnie Pierce, Assistant Library Business Manager.

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

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

Mr. Jacob asked for the approval of the minutes of the regular Library Board meeting of November 16, 2017. Ms. Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Luther, and approved unanimously.

III. Reports by the Director

A. Financial Reports

Mr. Jacob asked Mr. Watts to present the reports. Mr. Watts said that Ms. Husband volunteered to present the financial report in Ms. Pinsonat and Mr. Pierce's absence.

Ms. Husband said that for 2017, operating expenditures through November 30 are \$31,593,653.20 or 72.64% of the operating budget. Through November, we should have spent no more than 92% of the operating budget.

Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2017 remain ahead of last year, as we are approximately \$1,790,000, and 4.35%, ahead of 2016. Ms. Husband asked for questions. There being none, Mr. Jacob read Item B.

B. System Reports

Mr. Watts asked Ms. Stein to give the systems report. Ms. Stein noted that the East Baton Rouge Parish Library System has been named a Star Library by *Library Journal* for the sixth year in a row. We received a 5-star rating from among our peers for 2017. Approximately 4,000 libraries from across the nation were considered.

This award has been announced on TV, in *The Advocate* and online through social media such as Facebook, and Snapchat. This morning *The Advocate* online asked what makes Baton Rouge great. One of the responses was our Library. Through social media this recognition will be mentioned over and over causing a ripple effect. Ms. Stein noted that as Mr. Watts has commented, it's not that the Library has won the award, but that the community has won the award. The award is based on how the community uses the Library's services.

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

- The East Baton Rouge Parish Library has been named a Star Library for the sixth year in a row with a 5-star rating for 2017.
- *Food for Fines* is again producing wonderful results this year. Patrons are donating non-perishable food items even if they do not have fines on their records.
- The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank is collecting our filled boxes at all of our locations each week.
- Red Stick Revelry on December 31st will be our final event to close out Baton Rouge's bicentennial year.
- Red Stick Revelry will include two events; one from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for families, and a New Year's Eve event from 7:00 p.m. to midnight.
- The family friendly day time event will include the bookmobile, fiddle music by James Linden Hogg, and dancing by Of Moving Colors.
- Mayor Sharon Weston Broome will read a proclamation. The Red Stick Bicentennial Logo will ascend to the top of the Town Square beacon at 11:59 a.m. Cake will be served to those in attendance.
- The New Year's Eve celebration will begin at 7:00 p.m. with music by Bread Pudd'n.
- At 9:00 p.m. Phat Hat will perform. They will be joined by John Schneider of *The Dukes of Hazard* and Tyler Perry's *The Haves and The Have Nots*. At midnight the bicentennial logo will descend the Town Square beacon followed by fireworks over the Mississippi River.

Ms. Stein then asked for questions. There being none, Mr. Jacob thanked Ms. Stein. He asked for public comments. There were none. He then read Item A under Other Reports.

Mrs. Guarisco arrived at 4:10 p.m.

IV. Other Reports

A. Maintenance Report and Additional Capital Projects

Mr. Watts stated that Ms. Husband will report on maintenance and capital projects. Ms. Husband said that the Lighting Phase III project for the Baker, Delmont Gardens, Eden Park, Scotlandville, and Zachary Branch Libraries was approved for Final Acceptance by the Metropolitan Council on December 13th.

In regard to the completion of the Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library furniture installation, Ms. Husband said that we received the punch list from the architects for the items that have recently been delivered and installed, and we are waiting to schedule a final walkthrough to complete the project.

Ms. Husband asked if there were any questions. Ms. Johnson asked if there were any maintenance issues for the Library System from the snow storm on December 8th. Ms. Husband replied that there were a couple of issues. One of the energy management controllers in the large meeting room in the Main Library failed. A replacement part has been ordered. However, the temperature in that room is comfortable. She said we also lost electricity at the Main Library, but the generator came on.

Mr. Watts added that a relief valve pin failed in Children's Services at Main. This may have been involved in the power surge that occurred as electricity was being restored to the building. He noted that when the controller went out in the large meeting room, a cascading effect occurred with all of the controllers in the system. Initially we thought we did not have heat or air conditioning. However, the next morning we discovered that the HVAC system was working. Ms. Husband said some of the heaters in some of the branches had to be reset.

Mr. Jacob thanked Ms. Husband and asked Mr. Watts to give the Miscellaneous Reports under Item B.

B. Miscellaneous Reports

Mr. Watts reported that due to the snow and icy conditions, the re-opening of the Library on Saturday, December 9th was delayed until 10:00 a.m. The delayed opening gave most of our staff time to get to work safely. He said as he drove to the Library, he noticed one ramp was blocked off by the police because of the ice. Many traffic lights were also not working. By mid-day conditions had improved greatly.

Mr. Watts gave a brief status on some of the major projects. The vendor tagging our collection for the RFID system has tagged a total of 1,054,924 items. They will begin tagging the collection at the Central Branch Library in the next few days. We are expecting the final delivery of some additional equipment in the next week. The equipment includes sorting units and parts for the self-checking system. Throughout January and February we will work to get the equipment installed to coincide with the completion of the tagging project.

Mr. Watts discussed the Lagniappe Express for the Top Ten Bestsellers which is an experiment that we are trying out at the Main Library. We are offering additional copies of high demand titles that are on the New York Times Bestseller List. These titles are displayed in a special area and are available on a first-come, first-served basis. They have a one week checkout and cannot be renewed or reserved. When they are returned they go back on display. We are trying this approach because in many cases these high demand books cannot be found on our shelves for months because of the long list of holds. Some of our patrons think there is a lag time in getting the best sellers into our collection for checkout. This method gives the Library the opportunity to showcase these popular titles, and to demonstrate that we do get best sellers in a timely fashion. Many patrons are avid users of our reserve system, but there are many who are not. This gives these patrons the chance to check out these best sellers, and have a better experience during their visit to the Library. We hope to offer a better reading service to a larger number of our patrons with this method.

Mr. Watts then discussed the repeal of net neutrality by the FCC. He noted that this repeal could have a negative effect on libraries. This repeal will probably not have an immediate effect, but over time providers of internet service may begin to charge based on the level of service the content providers can obtain. Those that pay more will get faster speed. Some content providers may have issues regarding pricing. Some databases carried by libraries may be more difficult to use if the internet connection is slow. It is also possible that competition among Internet Service Providers (ISP) will result in favored content providers.

Mr. Watts mentioned the Sock It to Me Drive in November. The Children's Services Department spearheaded this project and collected 1,083 pairs of socks from across the 14 Library locations. This annual drive began several years ago when it was noted that clothing donations generally did not include socks causing a chronic shortage.

Mr. Watts asked if there were any questions on the Miscellaneous Reports. Ms. Guarisco asked if the Lagniappe Express for the Top Ten Bestsellers is for the adult collection only. Mr. Watts replied affirmatively. He added that we are trying this with adult books now, both fiction and non-fiction.

Mr. Leger said the Food for Fines project is one of his favorite Library projects. He asked how much food has been collected. Mr. Watts said over the years thousands of pounds of food have been collected at the Library. The Food Bank keeps a tally for us, and they will let us know in January how much was collected in 2017. We may know by the January Board meeting. Mr. Leger said he would like to know the results.

Mr. Leger also said that Mr. Watts made good comments on the net neutrality repeal. He noted that we should remain vigilant because internet access is one of the most important services the Library offers to patrons. Many of our branches are located in areas where they do not have broadband access. In today's modern society in order to be successful, it is so important that citizens have this access. He added that over the years he has seen that many ISPs tend to be anti-competitive. This is particularly an issue when the market is controlled by only three companies.

Mr. Watts agreed and thanked Mr. Leger for his comments. There may be some congressional solutions and also some other venues beside the FCC.

Ms. Wascom said if the Library needs to pay more for electronic service in the future that means we will need to increase our budget in this area. She added that the national organizations such as the American Library Association (ALA) will monitor this issue.

Mr. Watts noted that this repeal is under close scrutiny by a number of groups such as ALA, and academic groups that are concerned with the need that everyone has to access information in our knowledge based economy. He added that Mr. Leger pointed out that if one wants to participate in our economy today and enjoy some success, one must have access to the internet on a consistent and fair basis.

Mr. Leger said the Library needs to look at options in order to control our destiny and access to broadband. Some programs through E-Rate may give us some freedom and flexibility. Also whenever contract negotiations come up with our ISP, the Library needs to negotiate as a large organization and purchaser of the internet, taking advantage of this status. Mr. Watts replied that this is a good piece of advice to keep in mind.

Ms. Johnson asked if the Library will post on the Library's website the number of pounds of food collected in December and how successful the drive was. Mr. Watts replied affirmatively, and said it will also be good to publicize it on social media. He said it's great to see how many people want to help others, and bring in donations even if they do not have fines themselves.

Mr. Jacob asked for any public comments. There being none, Mr. Jacob asked Mr. Watts to move on to Item A under Old Business.

V. Old Business

A. Update on Major Capital Projects, River Center, Greenwell Springs Road Regional and Jones Creek Regional Branch Libraries – Mr. Spencer Watts

Mr. Watts discussed the River Center Branch project. He said good progress is being made on the project. With the recent snowy and wet weather, we'll see how that impacts the progress of the work. The switchgear and power modifications for the connections to the Central Plant were successfully completed during the Thanksgiving holiday period.

We had an extensive furniture review on December 6th. We also looked at finishes and at some adjustments to the furniture budget which cut it another \$30,000. On December 15th we had a line-by-line review of the technology schedule. We had some issues with the consultant being used by the architect. He used manufacturer's suggested retail prices. When bidding begins, one will get between 10 and 15% off. Some items may be discounted 20 to 25%. There was much uncertainty and many questions. We made some changes because in several areas we were getting more complex technology than we needed. We want to place more technology in critical places where we will need it the most such as in the large meeting room, the sound studio, or the maker space.

Good work is occurring at the site. The contractor is trying to enclose the building so that they will not be at the mercy of the weather and the humidity. Humidity can be a factor in preventing completion in several areas of construction.

Mr. Watts then discussed the Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch Library renovation. He said Ms. Husband and her staff have been reviewing dozens of items in the construction documents and have done a great job. They found several inconsistencies in the documents which need to be corrected. Making these corrections now will minimize the number of change orders required during the construction phase, or after construction is finished. Once the construction documents are finalized, the bid documents can be issued. We are hoping that a bid document could be ready by the end of January or the first week of February.

Mr. Watts said patrons at this branch are anxious for the renovation to begin especially in light of the damage from the flood. We are sensitive to their desire, but we also are happy that we did not spend more money in fixing the building after the flood. Much of that expense would have been wasted once the renovation begins. Instead this money is being applied to the renovation work. The renovated facility will be very inviting and will be a better functioning branch.

Mr. Watts then gave an update on the Jones Creek Regional Branch Library renovation. He noted that this project is lagging a bit because the Greenwell Springs Branch renovation took the highest priority due to the flood damage. Recently City-Parish Architectural Services asked the architects to redesign the front of the building near Children's Services so that it looks less boxy and has an extended sloped roof. The redesign integrates much better with the rest of the building giving more continuity. Due to some revisions in the design, we have lost about 120 linear feet of shelving which is acceptable. Within the next few weeks of the new year we will move to the next design phase of this renovation project.

Mr. Watts asked the Board if they had any questions about the three projects. Mr. Jacob replied that everything is moving along on these projects. Mr. Watts noted that he and his staff including Ms. Husband, Ms. Stein, our IT Department and our Facilities Management Division are doing their best. All of these employees deserve much credit because it is difficult to juggle three major projects at the same time.

Mr. Luther agreed that Mr. Watts and his staff are doing a great job. Mr. Watts has a great staff working with him. Ms. Husband and Ms. Stein do amazing work at different venues. It is no wonder we are a 5-star rated library. He thanked the Board members also for being so supportive of the Library.

Mr. Jacob read Item B under Old Business.

B. Update on Search for a Site for a South Branch Library – Mr. Spencer Watts

Mr. Watts said we know from prior years that there is a lag in commercial real estate business during November, December and into January. We have no new sites at this time. He said he has given the Board members a map showing the three current sites that have been under consideration. However, there are issues with each of them. Mr. Watts created a document which he distributed

to the Board members outlining the three sites and the problems with each. He said there will not be a clear answer today regarding what the next step to take in finding a site should be. He asked the Board members to review the map and document over the next few weeks and provide him with some suggestions on the next step to be taken. He would like to have the Board's perception of these sites as a possible branch library. He said he would welcome an email or call from the Board members.

Mr. Watts said he had thought we might have a site, but he learned that many of the residents in the service area may not wish to travel to the College Drive area. It is a little too far from their travel pattern. This site is right on the edge of our service area.

Mr. Watts said the owner of the Quail Drive site is still in a transitional state. They may not have finished their plans and are not ready to place the Quail Drive site on the market.

Ms. Johnson thanked Mr. Watts for the information. She said this is helpful.

Mr. Jacob asked the Board if there were any other comments.

Ms. Wascom said she will continue to drive around the service area looking for a site. Mr. Jacob said we have been searching for a site for some time and we are running out of options. He said he doesn't know if they will find a location and what to do next. Mr. Watts said from a historical perspective, Mr. John Richard, former Library Director, began looking for a site years ago. He talked to the owner of the Coastal Bridge site, to the Ford family regarding the purchase of a 2 to 3 acre parcel at the edge of their farm. This search has been going on for 20 years.

Ms. Wascom mentioned that if the building on the Quail Drive site is not able to be renovated, and needs to be demolished, it may be too expensive to pursue. Demolishing the building may be wiser than trying to renovate it for the Library's needs. Mr. Watts said that the building has worked well for the current owners because they needed small spaces. When we investigated the structure, we found that all those small walls were part of the support system for the ceiling. We would need to redesign the ceiling and add trusses and beams which will be expensive. It is an attractive building and has worked well for the owner, but there will be issues for us.

Mrs. Guarisco asked about LSU students using the public library. She wondered if we track the number of LSU students who use our resources. Mr. Watts replied that some students rent houses or apartments establishing residency in the parish and they get a library card as such. In these cases we may not know if they are students. Some work part-time and go to school part-time. They are like any other tax payer.

Mrs. Guarisco said she knows the LSU Library is woefully inadequate at this point. It seems like this segment of the community may be an underserved population. She said this demographic changes her thought about where the south branch should be located. Mr. Watts said the public library does serve them. He said some people do not think that students pay taxes, but if they rent an apartment, the property tax is included in that rental rate. He added that during the last two weeks of college exams, we were completely filled with students who were studying. Then the high school students came here to study and work on projects. We open our meeting spaces as

study halls for these students. He said if Middleton Library doubled in size and became a much better facility, it still would not have enough space to adequately meet the students' needs. We not only have LSU students coming to the Library, but Southern University students, Community College students, and Southeastern University students use our facilities. He noted that a 14,000 square foot branch will help, but it cannot absorb all of the students looking for study space. This is why we are adding more collaborative spaces in all of our buildings.

Mr. Jacob asked for any further comments from the Board. There being none, he asked for public comments. There were none, so he read Item VI.

VI. Comments by the Library Board of Control

Mr. Jacob asked for comments from the Board. Mr. Leger congratulated the staff for receiving the 5-star rating. It's a great testament to the work that we do here. Of course, it takes the entire staff, not just the leadership from the top, but all the hundreds of employees that we have to make this award possible. The staff does a great job of making every interaction with patrons joyful, useful, and empowering. These awards speak volumes about this Library. The citizens of this parish made a multi-decade commitment to building a world class library system. Achieving this 5-star rating is a benchmark of this commitment. Mr. Watts thanked Mr. Leger.

Ms. Wascom also congratulated the staff and the Library System on achieving the 5-star rating. She added that she wished we had a banner or a star that we could place on every branch in our system to publicize this award similar to the blue ribbon designation in the schools.

Ms. Johnson said ditto to everything that was said. She congratulated the staff and said it is a great achievement, and well deserved.

Mr. Jacob congratulated the staff and echoed what the Board members have already said. He added that for as long as he has lived in this parish, he remembers coming as a high school student to the old Main Library to study. He never imagined that one day we would have a new Main Library like this one. The dedication that the staff has shown in making this Library System the best cannot be understated. He thanked all of the staff for everything that they do.

Mr. Jacob said he wanted to make some comments to the Board members about next year. He said we will be electing Board officers for 2018. He said if anyone is interested in being President, it will not hurt his feelings if someone else wishes to run. If nobody else wishes to run, he said he would be willing to serve another year. It's something to think about over the holidays so that when we meet in January, we can elect our officers.

There being no other comments, Mr. Jacob asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Leger made the motion and Ms. Johnson seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m. by unanimous vote.

Mr. Jason Jacob, President

Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director