

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**  
**FEBRUARY 20, 2020**  
**4:00 P.M.**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

I. ROLL CALL

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 16, 2020

III. SPECIAL ORDERS

IV. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

A. FINANCIAL REPORT

B. SYSTEM REPORTS

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS

2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

V. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. UPDATE ON RIVER CENTER BRANCH LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION – MR. SPENCER WATTS

B. UPDATE ON RENOVATION OF GREENWELL SPRINGS ROAD REGIONAL BRANCH LIBRARY – MS. PATRICIA HUSBAND

C. UPDATE ON RENOVATION OF JONES CREEK REGIONAL BRANCH LIBRARY – MS. KRISTEN EDSON

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. TO VOTE TO SEND COMMENTS TO CITY-PARISH ADMINISTRATION REGARDING 24 TAX ABATEMENT PROPOSALS – MR. SPENCER WATTS

VIII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

IX. ADJOURNMENT

**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

February 20, 2020

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, February 20, 2020. Mr. Jason Jacob, President of the Board called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Members of the Board present were Ms. Nicole Allmon-Learson, Mrs. Martha Guarisco, Mr. Donald Luther, Jr., Ms. Candace Temple, and Ms. Kathy Wascom, Absent from the meeting was Mrs. Delores Watts. Also in attendance were Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director; Ms. Kristen Edson, Deputy 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. Bryce Tomlin, Computer & Technical Services Coordinator; Mr. Ronnie Pierce, Assistant Library Business Manager; and Ms. Liz Zozulin, Executive Assistant to the Library Director. Also, present were Ms. Rosana Sotile, Library Technician I to the Library Deputy Director; Mr. Jamaal Thompson, Library Network Technician I; Captain Blair Nicholson of the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office; Mr. Frank Hillyard, videographer for Metro 21; and Mr. Johnston Von Springer, reporter with WBRZ-TV.

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

#### **I. Roll Call**

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

#### **II. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 16, 2020**

Mr. Jacob asked for the approval of the minutes of the regular Library Board meeting of January 16, 2020. Mr. Luther made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Temple, and approved unanimously.

#### **III Special Orders**

There were no items to cover under Special Orders.

#### **IV Reports by the Director**

##### **A. Financial Report**

Mr. Jacob asked Mr. Watts to present the reports. Mr. Watts asked Ms. Pinsonat to give the financial report. For 2019, operating expenditures rose to 82.54% of the operating budget. This

number is not final though, as adjustments and charges will continue to be recorded for another 1 – 2 months. For 2020, because of year-end work on 2019, very few expenditures have been recorded. As of January 31<sup>st</sup>, expenditures are \$2,463,028.07, or 5.34% of the operating budget. Through January, we should have spent no more than 8.34 % of the operating budget.

Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2020 are outperforming those collected last year, as we are \$3.1 million, and 7.15% ahead of 2019. Cash collections for 2019 will be finalized when 4<sup>th</sup> quarter interest earnings are posted, which again will take another 1 – 2 months.

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

Mrs. Guarisco arrived at 4:04 p.m.

## **B. System Reports**

Mr. Watts asked Ms. Stein to give the systems report. Ms. Stein then gave the *Around the Parish* report. She distributed to the Board a summary sheet of output measures for the Library in 2019, effective as of today. Most of the figures have remained constant since the last update except for the database and some of the circulation statistics which have continued to be reported. Database usage has increased by 1.7% which is very noteworthy. However, every output measure indicates very strong usage. The statistics are important, but even more importantly is how that usage has met patrons' needs.

- In January the Library asked the public to participate in a Community Assessment Survey of Library services. Over 1,700 people replied which is an excellent response. The Library staff are reading the comments to the survey in order to improve patron services.
- The River Center Branch Library construction barricades have been removed. Collections and furniture are moving in. Picture books are on shelves on the second floor in Children's Services. These shelves are on wheels which enables the staff to address the changing needs of patrons by reconfiguring the collection.
- A circuit board pattern enhances one wall in Children's Services at the new River Center Branch.
- On the first floor at the entrance to the facility is the servery window. A gate can be closed for access to the servery when the Library is closed.
- The renovation of the Jones Creek Regional Branch Library is progressing with visible work occurring in Children's Services.
- The renovation of the Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch Library continues in the new Teen and Children's Services areas. A toddler room has been created which is a first for our Library system.
- Also for the first time at Greenwell Springs, the teens will have their own discrete room and supporting program space.

- On February 5<sup>th</sup> the Library partnered with LPB for a panel discussion about the Georgetown University 272. Enslaved persons were sold by the Jesuits and transported to Louisiana in order for Georgetown University to pay its institutional debts. Over 90 people attended the program in spite of rain and hail.
- Many of the descendants of these enslaved people still live in Louisiana and attended this program. Mr. David Laatch, Library genealogist, served on the panel. The panel discussion aired on LPB on February 7<sup>th</sup>. Many visited the Genealogy Dept. to obtain information about their roots.
- Super Tax Day was again held at the Main Library on Saturday February 9<sup>th</sup> and sponsored by Entergy and the United Way. Approximately 300 tax returns were completed on that day. Programs and workshops were also conducted.
- The Kilted Man will return on February 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. to perform traditional Celtic music. That afternoon another musical performance will be held by the Constantinides New Music Ensemble.
- On March 18<sup>th</sup> Ms. Kathe Hambrick, Director of Interpretation at the West Baton Rouge Museum and the author of *Juke Joint Men* will discuss how juke joints and local musicians contributed to the evolution of the Blues.
- The Kickoff Party for the *One Book One Community* read of *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie will be held on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. The event will feature refreshments, prizes, games and a live performance by I Am I.
- On March 15<sup>th</sup> at the Main Library, Kumbuka, an African Drum and Dance Collective will perform as part of the *One Book* program. The Infoguide for Read One Book will list all of the programs for this series.
- On March 21<sup>st</sup> an Authors after Hours event for adults will be held at the Main Library at 7:00 p.m. National Book Award winner, Sarah M. Broom, (*The Yellow House*) and author Margaret Wilkerson Sexton, (*The Revisioners*) will interview each other.
- *Udemy*, a new database, is being offered in the Digital Library. It contains video instruction courses on-demand to provide life-long learning on over 4,000 topics covering life skills and leisure.

Ms. Stein asked if there were any questions. Mr. Luther asked how the Library renews active member library cards. Ms. Stein explained that every three years, a card expires so that the Library can update patron information. Patrons are asked to come to the Library with their identification which is confirmed in their record. Cards that are not renewed are eventually removed from the system. The Library does send a reminder 30 days before the expiration date so that people are aware that the card needs renewal. This process enables the Library to maintain an accurate, active database of users. Mr. Luther said he asked this question because the current patron statistic continues to increase. He wondered how this number is kept current.

Mr. Watts added that in the past libraries did not purge their records. However, it is best to establish a program that regularly maintains an active database of users, and our automatic systems can now do this for our staff. There is no reason not to do this and three years is the standard in public libraries.

Mr. Luther said notifying patrons before their cards expire is very helpful. Without this system many would not know their card is expired until they tried to check out an item. Ms. Stein said that 264,732 are current cardholders which represents 118,096 households. Within the last 12 months 190,337 cards have been used. This figure represents library usage requiring a card. This does not account for those who come to our facilities for programs and other services that do not require a card. Ms. Stein noted these numbers represent the liveliness of the engagement. Mr. Luther noted that the statistics confirm this engagement. Ms. Stein added that Mr. Bryce Tomlin, Computer & Technical Services Coordinator, purges the records on a yearly basis. Mr. Luther noted that there is no penalty for those who wish to return and get a new library card to which Mr. Watts added that we are happy to activate one's card even if it has been dormant for a time.

Mr. Jacob thanked Ms. Stein. He then read Item C, Other Reports.

## **C. Other Reports**

### **1. Maintenance Report and Additional Capital Projects**

Mr. Watts said that Ms. Edson would deliver the maintenance and capital projects report. Ms. Edson stated that February has been a busy month. A few more roof leaks have been discovered, and will be repaired at the Carver Branch Library. At the Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library, the LED pole lights were repaired under the warranty provided in the exterior restoration project. Exterior light fixtures were also repaired at the Outreach Services facility.

Ms. Edson reported that the cooling towers were cleaned at the Main Library, the Baker Branch, and Bluebonnet. Chiller inspections and maintenance have also been performed at the Carver and Fairwood Branches. At the Central Branch the boiler and the A/C chiller were reset after a power outage.

Exterior window washing was completed at all facilities except the Jones Creek Regional Branch and the Outreach Services building. In six months the interior and exterior windows will again be washed.

Ms. Edson noted that the Library Facilities staff painted the Teen Services study rooms and the study rooms on the second floor of the Main Library. The Eden Park Branch meeting room walls, the Delmont Gardens Branch break room, the Fairwood Branch study room walls, and the Scotlandville Branch Adult Services walls were also painted. She said the painting was done after Mr. Alvin Rattle, Library Facilities Manager, and she with the assistance of the Branch Managers conducted their annual inspection of the branches and noted areas that needed touch-ups.

Ms. Edson reported that they have also inspected the grounds at the branches, noting where outside work needs to be done in the spring.

In addition, a new DVR for the security system was installed at the Baker Branch Library. Damaged ceiling tiles were replaced at the Scotlandville Branch, and carpet tiles were re-glued at the Central Branch.

Ms. Edson explained that the Library Facilities staff have had many training sessions to learn how to use the various software programs which will assist them to maintain our generators, lighting controls, energy management system, and the security, camera and fire alarm systems. Yesterday they were trained on the new facilities management software system which will be used to issue and track tickets for all maintenance concerns. This system will also enable the Library to better manage all of our facilities systems. March 2<sup>nd</sup> is the tentative date for the implementation of the access and use of this software by the Library staff.

Mr. Rattle has received a quote for upgrading the Energy Management System at the Central Branch Library because the system is outdated causing the valves not to respond. Each time the system malfunctions, the Facilities staff must travel to the branch to manually adjust the system since they cannot determine the problem remotely with the current software. Several of the Energy Management Systems were upgraded last year, and Central was scheduled for this year. Ms. Edson said they will analyze the performance of the other older systems to determine if they need to be replaced next year.

She then discussed the elevators at the Main Library. The vendor contracted to maintain our elevators has been working tirelessly on activating the safety exit response for the public elevators. During power outages, this system should send the elevators to a floor and open the doors so passengers can exit. Ideally the cars would lower to the first floor. Unfortunately, the software system will only send the elevators to the third floor. This is preferable to being stuck in the elevator between floors.

Ms. Edson said several pre-bid meetings are scheduled over the next couple of weeks. The boiler preventive maintenance contract pre-bid meeting will occur tomorrow; the Outreach roof and A/C replacement on Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>; and the Main Library A/C server room upgrade on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. The boiler maintenance contract will include all facilities and will cover annual inspections, any remedial maintenance and improvements that are necessary.

Ms. Edson asked if there were any questions. Ms. Wascom asked if the awning at the Outreach Services building has been replaced. Ms. Edson replied that the vendor that Mr. Rattle wanted to use is not on the City-Parish approved list. This vendor was not interested in completing the paperwork in order to become approved. Therefore, Mr. Rattle will choose an approved vendor for the replacement of the awning.

Ms. Wascom asked if a solution has been found regarding the issues at the Main Library when the power goes out, and is then restored, but some of the systems do not automatically come back on. Ms. Edson said she believes this issue has almost been resolved. Mr. Watts added that they are working on the delay time from when the power goes off and the generator turns on. This delay

causes some of the systems to be disturbed. He said he did not think this problem has been resolved to which Ms. Edson agreed. She added that they are ordering a UPS which will be installed in the main electrical room.

There being no further comments or questions, Mr. Jacob thanked Ms. Edson, and then asked Mr. Watts to give the Miscellaneous Reports.

## **2. Miscellaneous Reports**

Mr. Watts said that last night he attended a meeting of the City-Parish Design Selection Committee regarding the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Architectural Services for the South Branch Library. One of the Committee's primary functions is to distribute the RFQ responses and an assessment tool for evaluating the responses. He said that there were eight well-qualified, experienced architectural firms that submitted a proposal. The Library staff and the Committee members will analyze the responses and grade them. The Committee is scheduled to rank the top three firms for this project in early March.

Mr. Watts explained that City-Parish Architectural Services meets with the top ranked firm to negotiate a contract. This process can take several weeks. Once the contract is finalized, it must be introduced by the Metropolitan Council, and then voted on by the Council. After the contract is signed, the design work can begin.

Mr. Watts then discussed the contract with Management Partners for an effectiveness study for the Library. He thanked the Board members for their participation during the interview process of key staff. Next week the Library will request the introduction of the approval of Phase II of this study by the Metropolitan Council. The second phase is much more complex and includes field observations, focus groups and analysis of the Library's organizational structure, and processes. They will then report their findings to Library management. However, efficiency is only a part of this process. The goal is to improve our operations, and make them more effective. This second phase will take 10 – 12 months to complete.

Mr. Watts then mentioned the Library's output measures which Ms. Stein discussed earlier. The two output measures with which most people are familiar and use to evaluate a library system are circulation and gate count. In our case these figures have trended upwards for many years. However, for many libraries for five or six years these figures declined. In our system we are starting from a base that is high which indicates a great amount of community engagement. This also represents how much of our content is connecting with the public, and how much the Library is connecting with them through our programs and services.

He noted that due to the extensive renovation work at two of our regional branches, there is the potential for a downward trend in these output measures. For example, at the Jones Creek Regional Branch which has a high circulation count, we are seeing a slight downward trend. This is to be expected as the renovation work continues for an extended period of time. Initially, patrons continue to visit a branch, but as time goes on, the inconvenience of the construction process and the limited size of the facility take their toll on patron usage. However, we need to keep in mind

that we are still at 85% of our patron base which is good. This downward trend could also occur when we begin renovating our community branches. For example, online use at the Scotlandville Branch is high, but could be impacted when renovation work begins there. Our statistics are even more impressive when we factor in the negative effects during renovation work.

Mr. Watts then talked about the Garden Story Stroll project. At the Independence Park garden area, twenty stanchions have been installed. Each one will contain two protected pages from a children's book. The purpose is to encourage families to stroll through the park garden and enjoy a book as they walk along. This wonderful addition to the garden will be available for the public in early March.

Mr. Watts discussed cybersecurity at the Library noting that we continue to take an active role in strengthening our security measures. Ms. Edson and Mr. Tomlin have arranged for an assessment to be conducted by CISA, the Cyber Security Division of Homeland Security. CISA will be on site on April 16<sup>th</sup> and will work with us to assess our cybersecurity practices and posture. They will also evaluate our management of risk from external dependencies, and issue a report of their findings.

He noted that he is pleased with the City-Parish Information Services (IS) Department and the Mayor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (MOHSEP) who have suggested that all City-Parish Departments participate in this evaluation.

Mr. Watts also said the Library continues with a robust program of policy review and training for staff, and are providing additional online video training regarding security practices. We are also continuing to use phishing campaigns and send regular newsletters to staff. City-Parish IS is also sending out newsletters on these topics. Mr. Tomlin and Ms. Edson presented a webinar on security awareness and network cyber threats earlier this month through an Urban Libraries Council (ULC) program.

Another library, the Contra Costa Public Library, has been the victim of a ransomware attack. We are reminded that individuals who attack hospitals and schools also attack libraries.

Mr. Watts told the Board that the VDI project is currently on hold until carry forward funding is approved and released, or until we can temporarily shift funds from other projects. This funding is needed to increase our server capacity to support the completion of the VDI work.

Good progress has been made on our Windows 10 conversion with the completion of the Delmont Gardens and Central Branches, bringing the total conversions to six facilities.

Mr. Watts told the Board members that self-check usage remains in the 20% range. We are considering moving some of the self-check kiosks to different areas of the building. We also ordered four new kiosks for use throughout the system in either Children's Services or Teen Services depending on where they are needed. The kiosks have also been ordered for the River Center Branch.

Mr. Watts said the Library staff has been using the Vault, a rough substitute for a staff intranet, for many years. This aging system is rapidly failing, making it difficult to share staff materials and documents. Mr. Watts asked Mr. Tomlin to discuss the new service that will be used to replace the Vault.

Mr. Tomlin said that the Library has engaged Rouge Services and Solutions in Baton Rouge to implement and manage a new intranet for the Library staff. The name of their intranet product is Hubley. It provides a single site for staff to collaborate and perform their job functions. Rouge Services will provide monthly managed services for the Library's intranet ensuring the software is up to date, new features are rolled out, bugs are fixed and security patches are applied in a timely manner. It is built using SharePoint Online which is licensed through our current Microsoft licensing agreement. The Library's intranet will be located on Microsoft's Cloud Server. Therefore, the Library will not need to purchase another costly physical server, or any other equipment. By overlaying on top of SharePoint, Hubley makes adding content, creating pages and navigation more intuitive for the staff. It features integrated workflows, the hierarchy is easy to understand, and it contains great search functions which will make it easier for staff to use in this new intranet platform. Hubley will enable staff to have a collaborative environment in which to work effectively across the system with their colleagues. Features such as policy management will assist in providing a consistent process for new hires, providing them with tools and engaging them immediately.

Mr. Watts discussed Library's Capital Improvement Plan. The Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch renovation should be completed in a few months. This project will enter Phase 3 very shortly. The Jones Creek Regional Branch renovation should be completed by the end of the year. He noted that the design work for the South Branch should begin soon. The River Center Branch is very close to completion. The Baker and Scotlandville Branch renovations are next on the schedule as outlined in the Library's Capital Improvement Plan. Some of the same changes and upgrades that were made in the Regionals are also be planned for these branches.

The Delmont Gardens Branch is also included in this plan, but renovations will require long range planning. The original building which is our oldest facility, has been renovated once, and expanded with an addition. The age of the original structure will need to be considered when plans for this branch are made. Because of the size of the lot, and the placement of the addition, it has not been as functional as was hoped it would be.

The Plank Road Revitalization Project will occur near the Delmont Gardens Branch. We should consider how the Library can connect with this project, and the community. This project will revitalize the area, and bring in new economic opportunities for the parish.

Mr. Watts discussed lessening the barriers to patron access of the Library in the area of fees and fines. He said the staff has reviewed these policies in other systems. He noted he will offer some suggestions for the Board's consideration in the coming months as we look for ways to encourage people to use the library.

Mr. Watts said that the number of printed copies of *The Source* newsletter has been adjusted. A question from a Metropolitan Council member prompted us to evaluate how many are distributed

each month. We ordered 700 fewer copies this month to determine if we could decrease our printing budget. We also checked some of the remote sites that have been receiving copies of the newsletter to determine if adjustments needed to be made. At two or three sites, the newsletters were not being distributed any longer, so we have removed these sites from the distribution. When our website is redesigned, we hope to have a more interactive newsletter which could replace many of the printed copies.

Mr. Watts mentioned other training that has been offered recently. Active shooter training was presented again by Captain Blair Nicholson of the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office. New information and concepts were part of this year's presentation. A mental health course was given, to discuss some of the social and psychological issues people might exhibit, and what the best approach might be. The Carnegie Children's Museum staff presented a maker class to our staff who design and put on programs. The Museum staff are very experienced and the session was quite lively.

Mr. Watts asked if there were any questions. There being none, Mr. Jacob asked if there were any public comments under Reports by the Director. There were none. Mr. Jacob thanked Mr. Watts, and then read Item V, Reports by Committees.

Ms. Allmon-Learson arrived at 4:58 p.m.

## **V. Reports by Committees**

There were no items to cover under Special Orders. Mr. Jacob read Item A under Unfinished Business.

## **VI. Unfinished Business**

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

Mr. Watts discussed the River Center Branch Library construction project. He stated that construction is nearing completion, but an exact date of completion cannot yet be determined. The proper documentation has been secured to permit partial occupancy. This is important because it allows Library staff to have access to the building to conduct the moving and transition process.

After a very thorough series of inspections, a punch list was generated and finalized on February 7<sup>th</sup>. It is very substantial, with several hundred items. Mr. Watts stated that this is attributed to the people who worked on the list, including Mr. Matthew Caillouet, the project manager with WHLC Architecture, who was very thorough and meticulous in his approach on the inspections. Library staff also participated in the inspections and contributed to the punch-list. Many of the punch-list items are small issues, such as a carpet seam that needs to be more evenly flushed or a section of a wall where the paint was not evenly applied. There were other more substantial issues, including a wall base that was not installed correctly, a space with a missing wall treatment, poorly applied coverings, and an unpainted section of a handrail.

Mr. Watts continued to explain that another significant issue noticed by Library staff was the high resistance on several doors that made them challenging to pull open. The pressure on the door openers needs to be adjusted so that the door pull effort will be made easier. He also stated that the contractor is typically given 30 to 45 days to complete the punch-list items. It is the Library's goal to focus on assuring that the building is going to be easy to use and navigate by the public.

Over the past two weeks, there have been quite a few issues related to bringing the operating systems online, Mr. Watts explained. The elevator telecom lines were successfully completed last month, which was critical to having the elevators pass inspection and be ready for use when moving furniture into the building. The lighting controls are being brought online, and training has been completed for the generator. There is a special situation with the HVAC controls, because the building is dependent on the central plant for the River Center Complex. The Library will work closely with the City-Parish to ensure the heating and air conditioning units perform correctly.

Mr. Watts said that the Library's Computer Services department deserves much credit for responding promptly and working diligently on installing connections, linking correct IP addresses, and ensuring the servers are performing correctly. These are important issues, because once the tables are set up for public and staff computers, Library staff will need to be able to install the internal systems and connect the computers.

Mr. Watts explained a problem that arose last week. The contractor informed the Library that the perimeter intrusion alarm system did not have an external link. It only had a local warning alarm, which would not alert anyone of an intrusion in the middle of the night. The electrical subcontractor did not understand the system, which is indeed designed for external communication. Mr. Watts stated that it is important for the contractor to be better organized in giving the Library operational information, especially operating and maintenance manuals, so that time is not wasted on solving unnecessary issues.

Another issue that has arisen is the changeover from the contractor's locks to the permanent hardware installation. A keying meeting was held, and a plan was established. The Library is working closely with the architectural project manager to get the issue resolved within the next few days.

Mr. Watts mentioned a few other items that need attention. The order for the glass boards is being finalized, and preparation has begun for the delivery and installation of computers.

He also explained that a new bid request has been issued for cleaning services for the building. This had to be done once the Library was in possession of the building, because the bidders need to walk through the building to assess the space for their work. The Library will continue to use a temporary cleaning service under state contract while waiting for the bid process to be completed.

Mr. Watts said the City-Parish Attorney has issued the Library guidance on how to proceed with finding a vendor to offer services for the small café area that is available in the building. This is also something that had to wait until the Library had possession of the building, because a

commercial appraisal was required by the City-Parish in order to establish a fair lease value. The space is very small, so the offerings will be light, such as coffee, tea and small food items.

Mr. Watts explained one of the biggest challenges for the project is the delivery of furniture. As previously mentioned, there was a major delay due to the cyber-attack on state computer systems. There are a number of items that are important to the operation of the building that will not arrive until the first week of April. Then these items will have to be installed and placed in correct locations, which can be time consuming. The Library is assessing and mapping what will be delivered and will confirm shipping dates. There are other items that won't arrive until the end of April and early May. Mr. Watts stated that the Library will not wait until after May to open the building. He explained that within the next week or two, the Library will have a more solid idea of the early April furniture shipments, and from there it will be reasonable to predict a date for a soft public opening. Every single piece of furniture may not be installed, but as long as there is enough of the most needed items in place, then the Library can begin to offer the bulk of its services to the public.

Mr. Watts stated that the building currently has a certain amount of furniture, especially shelving. He then showed the Board a photo of the third floor collaborative study room. The glass doors and walls provide views of both Teen Services and Adult Services, as well as shelving. There is a table installed, and Mr. Watts explained that someone made a decision to hardwire the tables. This is an issue because the Library does not want hardwired tables, but rather "plug and play" tables, to allow for moving or reconfiguring the tables as needed.

He showed another picture of mobile shelving installed in Teen Services and pointed out the wheels on the bottom of the shelves. This concept has worked well in the places that it's been used, as it gives more flexibility in space use and meets changing needs.

Mr. Watts displayed a photo of the first floor that contains the browsing shelves, the meandering river map on the back wall and another table. He explained there are also other pieces of furniture being installed in the photo, and progress is being made.

Next, he showed a photo of the fixed shelving in Adult Services on the third floor. He explained that the end panels are perforated with a circular pattern which reflects the theme used throughout the building in which circles and geometric shapes are being featured. This is to also reflect the idea of circuitry and technology. Although the shelves in the photo are empty, picture books have been shelved in Children Services. Moving services have been approved this week, which was another hurdle to overcome. There is still a plan for moving services to move furniture, and Library staff have been assisting with moving books.

Mr. Watts explained that Ms. Angela Hyatt, from Schwartz-Silver, will be on site on February 27<sup>th</sup> for post-delivery verification of the first several shipments of furniture. Mr. Jacobs asked for the date again, and Mr. Watts clarified February 27<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Watts stated that the Kress Building lease expires at the end of February, and the Library will vacate the building. There are also issues with parking, and the Library is working with City-Parish officials to reclaim the B1 parking spaces for Library staff. Additionally, the mediation session

related to construction issues is scheduled for March 9<sup>th</sup>. The legal team representing the Library is working diligently to prepare. They have been collecting data and verifying, and re-verifying, what they collect. Mr. Watts stated that the Library hopes this session will be taken seriously by all parties involved, with earnest participation, and that progress will be made. If the mediation is not successful, then the legal team is well prepared to take the next steps necessary.

Mr. Watts addressed the Board that as soon as Library staff is comfortable with furniture arrival and installation dates, he will let the Board know of a potential opening date for the building. However, before that date, there could be a preview date for the Board members to view the building.

Mr. Watts asked the Board if there were any questions. Ms. Allmon-Learson commented that during a recent event downtown, she walked past the River Center Branch Library and noticed how stunning of an attraction it is to the downtown area and how it appears to look like an art structure. Mr. Watts responded that it is the Library's intention for the building to be aesthetically appealing while providing an internal space that is engaging, welcoming, comfortable, and allows for patrons to be productive.

Ms. Wascom also commented that she has received concerns from patrons on whether the building will be safe and structurally sound. Mr. Watts responded that the building has had more inspections and scrutiny than almost any other building in the area, and he thinks it is one of the safest structures in the Greater Baton Rouge area because of the attention it has received. He elaborated that even though there was a serious problem, the basic structure of the building did an excellent job of sustaining itself when the problem arose. Given the amount of inspections and reports from numerous engineers, he thinks it is one of the safest buildings in Baton Rouge. Mr. Watts also stated that it is important to take the time to remind the public how much work has been done to ensure the safety of the structure.

Mr. Jacob asked the Board if there were any more questions. There being none, Mr. Jacob thanked Mr. Watts. He then read Item B under Unfinished Business.

**B. Update on Renovation of Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch Library – Ms. Patricia Husband**

Ms. Husband gave an update on the Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch Library renovation project. She showed the Board a photo of the conference room that is near Teen Services and a photo of a different conference room that is adjacent to Teen Services. She explained that it can be used by both adults and teens, and that a substantial amount of millwork has been completed.

Ms. Husband displayed a photo of Teen Services taken from a viewpoint in the front of the building. She made note of a set of large double doors that will allow for moving large items in and out of the space. There is also another door leading towards Children's Services.

Another photo featured the program room for Teen Services, which also has a door leading into Children's Services. This room will contain special doors that swing open sideways and that will contain a writable whiteboard surface.

Ms. Husband then showed a photo of the toddler area in Children's Services. A lot of colorful flooring has been installed, along with cubicle storage that will have colored glass covers. She stated that the area will be very colorful and will contain interactive pieces of furniture for children.

Next, she displayed a photo of the colorful overhead furr-downs in Children's Services. Floor tiles will be installed to mirror the pattern of colors. Additionally, she showed a photo of the vinyl plank flooring being installed in Children's Services, for the bulk of the area. She made note of a yellow wall in the photo that is part of the story time room, along with display cases and millwork for crafts.

Ms. Husband explained to the Board that mechanical and plumbing work has been completed in Phase II. There are a few lighting fixtures that need to be installed, and some of their parts that had to be ordered should be arriving next week.

Millwork installation is nearing completion, as depicted in the photos. Also, the storefront glass for the main entrance is on site. Ms. Husband explained that this type of entrance will be easier for Library staff to see patrons as they enter, and for patrons to see a full view of the open space.

Ms. Husband also stated that power and data have been installed in the area where the RFID gates will be placed. Thresholds for the side storefront doors were installed last week. Carpet has been installed in the conference room and in Teen Services.

Much of the sheetrock work has completed, and Ms. Husband expressed how she enjoys the bright, friendly colors in Children Services. There will also be colorful stools and furniture to match. There will be places for parents to sit with children, including small tables for young children, mid-sized tables for older children, and tables of regular height for everyone.

Ms. Husband stated that Phase II is nearing completion. A walk-through was scheduled for tomorrow to complete the punch-list, but the architect had to reschedule for a few weeks later. This was not unexpected, as these items can take longer than expected.

The rub rail has been installed in the meeting rooms, but there was a slight variation in color, and the contractor is addressing this issue. The storage room depicted in a photo from last month's Board meeting is now ready for use. Shades have also been installed in the meeting rooms instead of curtains, as they are harder to keep clean. Additionally, the new under-counter refrigerators have been installed in the hospitality areas.

Ms. Husband explained that for Phase I, the contractor is still working on the door locks for the study rooms. Previously, the locks could be locked from the inside, but this was not what was specified. Moving forward, she will make a note of ensuring that door locks are only locked from the outside.

She also stated that once the change order is signed, the diverters will be installed at the valleys near the emergency exit doors. Previously, rainwater had been splashing onto the exterior landing and seeping inside under the door. The new diverters will prevent this from happening.

Additionally, rub rail is being added to the rooms in which it was not previously installed. Ms. Husband reiterated how rub rail is also known as chair rail, and it is flat but wide. It blends well into the background, she explained.

She also explained that in the workroom and in one of the programming rooms, the water heater is missing an aerator. As a result, a loud thumping sound occurs every time the hot water is turned on. Replacement of the aerator should fix this.

The staff workroom experienced a small leak during a recent rain storm. Ms. Husband stated that the contractor's roofing subcontractor is addressing the issue.

She explained that there is a plan to move the computers, printers, Circulation desk, and the vending machines from what will be the Phase III area so that the contractor can begin work in that space.

Additionally, the project's architect is working with City-Parish Architectural Services to finalize the furniture package and to submit those items to City-Parish Purchasing. Ms. Husband stated that most of the items are on state contracts and do not need to be converted to a bid, as there are several open line items. However, there are still a few remaining items that will need to go through the bidding process.

Ms. Husband asked the Board if there were any questions. There being none, Mr. Jacob thanked Ms. Husband. He then read Item C under Unfinished Business.

### **C. Update on Renovation of Jones Creek Regional Branch Library – Ms. Kristen Edson**

Ms. Edson gave a brief update on the renovation of the Jones Creek Regional Branch Library. She showed the Board a photo of the canopy that was installed over the temporary entrance to protect patrons from inclement weather.

She displayed three photos of the demolition of walls in the Phase II area and noted that the work is complete. Also completed were the electrical rough-ins and the saw cutting of the concrete floor to install plumbing and electrical components. Duct work and other plumbing work has begun.

Ms. Edson stated that there are still decisions to be made regarding the signage packages. Once these decisions are made, the packages will be submitted to the architect.

Plywood has been removed from gallery walls to prepare for sheetrock work near the three meeting rooms. Also, concrete was poured to create the slab for the addition near the rear of the building, as construction has begun in that area. She stated that construction has also begun on the addition to Children's Services, including electrical rough-ins.

Ms. Edson explained that the contractor, the interior designer and the architect met with the vendor of the fabric canopy that is to be installed in the vaulted ceiling of Children's Services. They held a meeting to reconcile an issue with sprinkler heads that were not originally accounted for in the design of the canopy. Ms. Edson stated that by the next Board meeting there should be a solution to the issue.

Work has been halted on the concrete foundations for the addition to Children's Services and for the new emergency exit sidewalk because of recent rain storms.

Ms. Edson then showed the Board two photos of the electrical rough-ins and duct work, as well as three photos of the concrete saw cutting, and two photos of the plywood removal. She also displayed two photos of the new concrete slab that was poured for the addition to Children's Services.

Ms. Edson stated that there has been discussion between the Library and the architect regarding the columns that will be installed in Children's Services and Teen Services. The architect originally planned to wrap the columns in a similar fashion to the ones in Teen Services at the Main Library. However, the architect has been unable to resolve an issue related to the diameter and shape of the columns along with plates for electrical outlets that need to be installed. Ms. Edson explained that now, square columns with drywall will be constructed and new corner guards will be chosen.

The ceramic tile at the building's main entrance has been removed. It was originally installed slightly lower than the threshold, and the architect is working with the contractor to find a way to raise the threshold for the installation of new carpet.

Ms. Edson stated that the backflow preventer will be installed on Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> while the building is closed for the Mardi Gras holiday. Additionally, framework for wall studs has begun in Teen Services and Circulation.

The architect has been in contact with mk Solutions to discuss the new exterior intelligent book return and the new room for the sorting machine. There were questions regarding correct sizing, and the issue should be resolved by the next Board meeting.

Ms. Edson stated that a new project superintendent was assigned on February 7<sup>th</sup>. Library staff will meet him next week.

She explained that a few remaining items on the Phase I punch-list were completed today, some of which were artistic "twists" installations for the technology instruction area. Other items installed today were the remaining rub rails and glass whiteboards in the meeting rooms.

Ms. Edson asked the Board if there were any questions. Ms. Wascom asked if there is an anticipated date of completion for each of the Library construction projects. Mr. Watts responded that the Jones Creek Regional Branch Library is scheduled to be completed near the end of the year. However, recent work has been delayed due to rain and ground saturation. He stated that the Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch Library is projected to be completed by the middle of

the year, possibly in July. Ms. Edson commented that because of the recent rain, there have been attempts to pump water out of construction trenches, but the ground still needs to dry before work can continue.

Ms. Wascom expressed concern for the patrons of the Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch Library who may be eager for their library to be completed but that she understands how construction projects can take much time and attention. Mr. Watts responded that the building still has hundreds of patrons visiting each day and thousands each month.

Ms. Edson asked the Board if there were any more questions. There being no more questions, Mr. Jacob thanked Ms. Edson.

He asked if there were any public comments on Item VI of the agenda. There were none, so he read Item VII, New Business.

## **VII. New Business**

### **A. To Vote to Send Comments to City-Parish Administration regarding 24 Tax Abatement Proposals – Mr. Spencer Watts**

Mr. Watts said the Board received 24 proposals. He advised the Board, as they have done in the past, to take into account that the Metropolitan Council is in the best position to decide whether the tax abatements are worth the economic incentive. Mr. Luther made a motion to make no comment to the Council on the tax abatement request. Ms. Allmon-Learson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Jacob asked for any public comments. There being none, he read Item VIII.

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

Mr. Luther welcomed Ms. Wascom back as a voting member of the Library Board of Control. He said it is good to have Ms. Wascom on the Board again.

Mr. Luther said he wished to acknowledge his wife's birthday today.

Mrs. Wascom said that last year when the Kilted Man performed at the Library, he said that he travels all over the country to various libraries. He believes that the character of a city is reflected in its library, and that the East Baton Rouge Parish Library is a wonderful system.

Mr. Jacob read Item IX.

**IX. Adjournment**

Mr. Luther made a motion to adjourn and Ms. Temple seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m. by unanimous vote.

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Mr. Jason Jacob, President

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Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director