

MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL  
**MAIN LIBRARY**  
**FIRST FLOOR LARGE MEETING ROOM**  
**7711 GOODWOOD BOULEVARD**  
**BATON ROUGE, LA 70806**  
**SEPTEMBER 17, 2020**  
**4:00 P.M.**

**AGENDA**

CALL TO ORDER – Board President Jason Jacob (4:06 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Board Vice President Candace Temple

- I. ROLL CALL – Assistant to the Deputy Library Director Rosana Sotile  
Jason Jacob, Board President – Present  
Candace Temple, Board Vice President – Present  
Martha Guarisco, Board Treasurer – Present (arrived at 4:13 p.m.)  
Delores Watts – Present  
Donald Luther, Jr. – Present  
Kathy Wascom – Present  
Nicole Allmon-Learson – Present  
*A quorum was present*

STAFF PRESENT – Spencer Watts, Library Director; Kristen Edson, Deputy Library Director; Mary Stein, Assistant Library Director; Patricia Husband, Assistant Library Director; Rhonda Pinsonat, Library Business Manager; Ronnie Pierce, Library Assistant Business Manager; Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director; Jamaal Thompson, Network Technician I.

- II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF AUGUST 20, 2020 AND THE SPECIAL 2021 BUDGET WORK SESSION OF AUGUST 15, 2020 – A motion to approve was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Nicole Allmon-Learson. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

III. SPECIAL ORDERS – There were no items to cover under Special Orders.

IV. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Rhonda Pinsonat (4:07 p.m.)

- Operating expenditures through August 31<sup>st</sup> are 52.42% of the operating budget, and no more than 67% of the budget should be spent through August.
- Cash collections from property taxes are approximately \$1.57 million; 3.35% ahead of last year.

B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein (4:08 p.m.)

- “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of ongoing Library programs.
- Mid-City Micro-Con, held on August 29<sup>th</sup>, was first major virtual event; 22 presenters, 500 viewers and 7 hours of continuous live online sessions; may have a hybrid of online and in-person for future events.
- September is National Library Card Sign-Up Month; almost 75,000 active households as of September 14, 2020.
- September 18<sup>th</sup> is Read an EBook Day; on target to reach 1 million books downloaded on Overdrive.
- Garden Discoveries: Butterfly Gardening was first hybrid event; in-person and streaming live on Facebook; over 100 people viewed it online.
- The Author-Illustrator event will be in-person only, October 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>; also the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra “Bachtoberfest” will be in-person on October 16<sup>th</sup>.
- The Baton Rouge Mini Maker Faire will be 100% virtual on October 17<sup>th</sup>; also “Stir the Pot” with Jay Ducote will be virtual via Facebook Live on October 21<sup>st</sup>.

## C. OTHER REPORTS

### 1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson (4:22 p.m.)

- Work order report now shows preventative maintenance; facilities staff members are being reminded to update the status of their work orders when completed.
- Hurricane Laura preparations: Sandbags and Visqueen were delivered to branches; outdoor furniture at Main was moved; Facilities staff checked on branches after the storm passed; HVAC issues discovered at Bluebonnet, Baker and Central Branch Libraries, and trees were downed at Central and Baker Branch Libraries; the electrical vendor is working on quotes to install building surge protection equipment.
- The Main Library fuel tank will ship the week of October 5<sup>th</sup>, and a logistical meeting will be held October 1<sup>st</sup>; the rental company that is providing the temporary generator is also providing temporary fuel tanks for the fuel that needs to be pumped out of the generator; the entire process is expected to take three days to complete.
- A pre-quotation meeting was held on September 15<sup>th</sup> for Carver Branch Library repairs; the building repairs and roof repairs will be two separate quotations, but the work will occur simultaneously; a change order will be issued to provide additional bollards in the parking lot near Children's Services.
- Update on Outreach Services renovation: The new awning was installed on September 8<sup>th</sup>; old signage will also be replaced; the lightening protection system was reinstalled; new completion date is November 18<sup>th</sup> but both contractors are confident work will be finished before then; rooftop coping work, and flashings and sheet metal for rooftop replacement units have been completed; final punch-list is being generated.

### 2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Spencer Watts (4:34 p.m.)

- Covid-19 Update: Biggest request from patrons is opening the book stacks, but there is concern of how to maintain proper social distancing; a meeting was held on September 1<sup>st</sup> with Library Branch Heads and Division Heads to discuss possible changes in safety and protective protocols, and opening the stacks; most Library staff/managers are in favor of opening the stacks while monitoring occupancy levels; October 1<sup>st</sup> is projected date of opening the book stacks, but the Library will remain mindful of any external changes such as spikes of Covid-19 in the community; only books that are taken home and returned will be quarantined, not books that are browsed.
- Meeting Rooms Update: Most library branches are using their meeting rooms to quarantine items and store cleaning supplies and personal protection items, as well as surplus furniture removed for social distancing requirements; three or four branches have expressed interest in opening their meeting rooms, around October 1<sup>st</sup>, on a limited availability; larger meeting rooms could be used twice a day with a deep cleaning between the meetings and using air purifiers, or air filter units; the Library is also considering expanding the number of patron computer workstations but there are concerns for staff resources to clean the units after each use.
- Operational hours for the Library system will remain as is; Library staff are still experiencing pandemic related absences.
- River Center Branch Library is under consideration as a venue for the public to watch live Metro Council meetings; the in-person meetings would broadcast live to the large meeting room; members of the public could make comments from the podium in the library's large meeting room and they would be streamed back to members of the Council.
- South Branch Library Update: The architectural services contract was approved by the Metro Council on September 9<sup>th</sup>; a kick-off meeting will be held September 22<sup>nd</sup> to include representatives from the Library, the architect and Architectural Services, and will review TND requirements, the broader goals of the project, programmatic requirements, and a general exchange of information; discussion on having accessible ways for children to walk from the neighborhood school to the new library.
- Delmont Gardens Branch Library Update: The Library will begin to gauge the public's interest in future improvements of the branch and whether it would be best to renovate and repurpose the existing structure, or if it would be best to build a completely new facility; building a new facility would fit in well with the Plank Road revitalization project; Chris Tyson, head of Rebuild Baton Rouge, may attend the October or November Library Board Meeting to talk about the plans for Plank Road and how the library could be a part of that effort.
- Update on Computer Services: Post-occupancy work continues at River Center Branch Library; the VDI project is moving ahead; staff have started working with Microsoft Teams for project collaboration and file sharing; agreement with Round Tower is in place to begin the transition to Exchange Online for email; preliminary documentation is in place for the next stage of the intranet

project; free-standing credit and debit card payment units will be placed at each facility for patrons to make payments on a self-service basis; virtual meetings are becoming more common and staff are working on fine tuning the technology to enhance the process; the Library has agreed to assist Purchasing with creating templates for Requests for Proposals.

Board President Jason Jacob asked for public comments. No public comments were made.

V. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – There were no reports of committees.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. UPDATE ON RENOVATION OF GREENWELL SPRINGS ROAD REGIONAL BRANCH LIBRARY – Ms. Patricia Husband (5:14 p.m.)

- Irrigation lines have been capped to prevent any more water intrusion.
- Electrical outlets are now working properly.
- New furniture continues to arrive; an under-carpet electrical floor box will provide additional power.
- Slide show presentation of the new furniture.
- Replacement furniture should be arriving next week for the water-damaged furniture received in July.

B. UPDATE ON RENOVATION OF JONES CREEK REGIONAL BRANCH LIBRARY – Ms. Kristen Edson and Ms. Patricia Husband (5:18 p.m.)

- Slide show photos of completed work.
- Flooring is 100% installed, as well as rubber bases.
- A punch-list meeting will be held within the next few weeks.
- Corner guards and round column covers have been installed.
- The large meeting room has been divided into three rooms with assigned colors: blue, purple, green
- Decorative lighting has been installed in all study rooms and the atrium.
- Plumbing fixtures have been installed.
- Panels at the Children's Services TV wall have been installed.
- The parking lot has been restriped and two additional ADA parking spots were added.
- Some counter top details still need to be finished.
- Awaiting details on the metal shroud fabrication for the exterior intelligent return before scheduling installation of RFID equipment.
- A few electrical boxes need to be installed.
- The window mural in Teen Services has been installed.
- The rear sidewalk and ADA ramp for the emergency exit has been poured; retaining walls are steep and ground cover will be needed; awaiting a proposal for cost.
- Upgrade of the energy management system will be done outside of the contractor's contract, with a vendor already under contract with the Library; awaiting purchase order; the system will be tested and balanced again.
- Roof leaks update: Drains on the flat roof area are clogged by crepe myrtle trees too close to the building, so they will be removed and replaced by appropriate plants; additional degradation of roof shingles has occurred and an architect will put together a probable cost of work; the City-Parish roof contractor has applied patches in the meantime.
- Comment by Kathy Wascom on replacement of crepe myrtles: The trees absorb a lot of water, so it should be considered to use appropriate plants to take up the water to prevent flooding. Kristen Edson explained that the catch basins should work better when the trees are removed because their extensive root systems have been clogging the drains.
- Furniture update: Reusing as much shelving as possible; some shelves can be lowered but new frames may have to be purchased; contractor is currently moving shelves into their proper locations; the original probable cost of the furniture package was over budget so adjustments are being made for less expensive selections; still working on securing a contract with a moving company.

Board President Jason Jacob asked for public comments. No public comments were made.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

### A. APPOINTMENT OF EVALUATION COMMITTEE; ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF LIBRARY DIRECTOR – Mr. Jason Jacob (5:32 p.m.)

- Board President Jason Jacob asked Board member Martha Guarisco to distribute the instrument that is normally used and to form the committee; also asked Board member Nicole Allmon-Learson to assist. All were in agreement.

### B. DISCUSSION AND REVIEW REGARDING PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS TO FINES, FEES, AND CIRCULATION PRACTICES, INCLUDING THE CLAIM RETURNED PERIOD, FINES ON CHILDREN'S MATERIALS, THE AMOUNT OF ACCUMULATED CHARGES FOR BLOCKED STATUS, AND SIMILAR MATTERS – Mr. Spencer Watts and Ms. Mary Stein (5:33 p.m.)

- Claims Returned Status: Currently, patron's card remains unblocked while a library book is in "claims returned" status for up to six months; proposed extension of time to be one year; may also include a transitional waiver or forgiveness status, except for repeat instances.
- Lifting Card Block Level: Currently, if patron owes \$25 or more their card is blocked; proposed increase to \$35; lower limit is outdated; has been in place since 1990's.
  - Jason Jacob commented on possible implementation of re-evaluating cost of materials and adjusting fine payment numbers every few years; Spencer Watts agreed, the fine block level should perhaps be readjusted every five years due to inflation and rising costs of purchasing books; also investigate other ways to mitigate some of the Library's procedures to better serve its patrons.
  - Martha Guarisco commented that some libraries are fine-free and asked if it is something the East Baton Rouge Parish Library could implement; Spencer Watts responded that it's a possibility as we currently don't charge fines on children's materials or senior citizen cards, however fines do serve a purpose to encourage patrons to return materials in a timely manner; for now, he feels the Library should continue to collect fines.
- Fines and Fees on Children's Materials: Currently, no fines are incurred on children's cards when items are overdue; proposal to eliminate fines for all children's materials; would better serve grandparents and caregivers who check-out materials for children to use.
  - Jason Jacob asked how much material does the Library lose each year and does the Library recoup the loss; Mary Stein responded that the percentage of loss has been very consistent over the years; Spencer Watts responded that the number of patrons in Claims Returned status is around 486; Jason Jacob asked to be provided the data on amount of loss; Library staff were in agreement.
- Lifting the requirement for senior citizens to have to appear in person to renew their library card; there were many requests for this during the pandemic.
  - Martha Guarisco asked why this would not be extended to all patrons; Spencer Watts and Mary Stein explained that it is still important for patrons to appear in person and show their driver's license or other proof of address to verify residency and correct address for mailing fine payment letters; also cuts down on people falsely obtaining cards online for digital use only.
- New development of providing e-cards to all public school students in the parish; increased need for students to have access to virtual resources due to the pandemic; could be used as a bridge to encourage students to physically come in to the library and obtain a full-use library card.

Board President Jason Jacob asked for public comments. No public comments were made.

## VIII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

- Kathy Wascom commented that the hybrid events have been very great and are a new way of doing things to keep moving forward; would also like a class on how to use Zoom and Webex for virtual meetings, including online etiquette; could also use outdoor spaces around other library branches for more hybrid events and stream them online.

## IX. ADJOURNMENT – Board President Jason Jacob requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Martha Guarisco. **The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m. by unanimous vote.**

**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.**