

MINUTES FOR 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
AUGUST 19, 2021
4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER – Candace Temple, Board Vice President (4:03 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Donald Luther, Jr.

- I. ROLL CALL – Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director
Jason Jacob, Board President – Absent
Candace Temple, Board Vice President – Present
Martha Guarisco, Board Treasurer – Present
Delores Watts – Present
Donald Luther, Jr. – Present
Kathy Wascom – Present
Nicole Allmon-Learson – Present (4:32 p.m.)

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.

- II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 22, 2021 AND SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING OF JULY 15, 2021 – A motion to approve was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously.**
- III. SPECIAL ORDERS – Spencer Watts proposed an amendment to the agenda to include an additional tax abatement proposal. A motion to amend was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously.** (4:06 p.m.)
- IV. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR
- A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Rhonda Pinsonat (4:06 p.m.)
- For 2021, operating expenditures through July 31st are 47.08% of the operating budget. Through July, we should have spent no more than 58% of the budget.
 - Cash collections from property taxes for 2021 remain slightly ahead of those collected in 2020, as we are approximately 0.70% ahead of the same eight months last year.
- B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein (4:07 p.m.)
- “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of Library programs.
 - On August 1st, “Ziggy’s Arts Adventure” premiered live at the Main Library in the outdoor plaza; the series, created by Louisiana Public Broadcasting, uses local artists and different cultural assets in each episode.
 - Harpist Ginna Paraedes and Friends performed on August 18th at the Main Library; the Civic Orchestra of Baton Rouge will perform at the Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library on August 28th; the Baton Rouge Concert Band will perform on September 26th in the plaza at the Main Library.
 - The Main Library hosted the Mid-City Micro-Con on August 7th and 8th; some artists participated virtually and others in-person; events have been archived on the Library’s website and YouTube channel.
 - The Deep Dives series for September will include the Michelangelo art exhibit at the Raising Cane’s River Center; the Library is a collaborative partner and will feature programs, crafts and workshops related to the exhibit, Renaissance art, and Italian culture.

- The Library will also host programs to supplement the Smithsonian’s “The Negro Motorist Green Book” exhibition at the Louisiana State Museum, which runs through November 14, 2021.
- The summer reading program was completed last week; statistics for the program include the following:
 - 8,719 registered readers of all ages
 - 74,376 badges completed
 - 132,193 books read aloud to pre-school readers or logged by adult readers
 - 1,168,007 minutes read by school-aged students
- Raising Cane’s founder, Todd Graves, will be the next speaker for the Business Report’s Business Forum September webcast.
- The Baton Rouge Mini Maker Faire will be held October 18-23; small maker events will be held at each branch that can accommodate socially-distanced gatherings; enrollment for maker events will be limited; the Main Library will host a robot-building event and a robot fashion show; vendors will also set-up outside in the plaza.
- The Author-Illustrator program, featuring Salina Yoon, on October 7th-8th, will now be virtual; a virtual live stream will be available to every school in the parish, including home-schools and charter schools; the Library will also host a live stream.
- September 18, 2021 is International Read an eBook Day.
- Voter registration continues at every library branch.

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson (4:25 p.m.)

- Facility Services staff received additional training from the Library’s work-order software vendor on July 21st; training included inventorying the large systems at Pride-Chaneyville Branch Library and all assets at Central Branch Library.
- The security/perimeter alarm contract was renewed; contact information, passwords and codes for each location are being updated.
- The parking lots for Bluebonnet and Greenwell Springs Road Regional Libraries have been restriped.
- Filters for air handling units have arrived and are being installed; they were previously on backorder due to pandemic related delays.
- The Greenwell Springs Road Regional Library closed on July 29th, due to a disconnected feed to the chiller that caused extreme temperatures in the building, but it was repaired; the transducer was replaced on the chiller at Zachary Branch Library; the chiller at Pride-Chaneyville Branch Library was also out-of-service, but parts have arrived and will be repaired this week.
- Trees were trimmed at the rear of the building at the Main Library, as well as a magnolia tree near the front entrance; piping was replaced in a bioswale near the Garden Café and a concrete path was created for water drainage.
- Delmont Gardens Branch Library experienced water intrusion in the Teen Services work room; Library staff and the landscaping vendor are investigating possible causes of the intrusion; damaged carpet is being replaced; the drainage issue in the back parking lot is also being addressed.
- The Library is waiting for the Notice to Proceed on the Carver Branch Library roof repair project to schedule the kick-off meeting.
- An initial construction document review for the Outreach Services Phase II project was held August 4th with the project engineers and architect; a second meeting was scheduled for August 13th to assess the rear loading dock.
- Construction documents were received for the roof replacements of Jones Creek and Bluebonnet Regional Libraries, and Zachary and Delmont Gardens Branch Libraries; a meeting was held this week with the project architect; a bid for contractors is scheduled to go out next month.
- Discussion on the general bidding process and number of respondents; there is no required minimum for respondents.
- Discussion on the condition of the Delmont Gardens Branch Library building and the cost comparison of repairs versus replacement; repairs are necessary if the building were sold or allocated to a non-profit, and to protect the contents of the library; if it is decided to construct a new building, the project would not begin until three or four years from now; it would be

beneficial to build a new building instead of completely renovating, as the costs would be somewhat comparable.

2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Spencer Watts (4:42 p.m.)

- Covid-19 Update:
 - The Mayor issued a mask mandate for City-Parish buildings on July 30th; shortly thereafter, the Governor issued a state-wide mask mandate.
 - The Library offers alternatives for those who want/need to exercise a mask exemption, including drive-up or curbside delivery of materials and a quarantined computer workstation at the Main Library.
 - Organizations have canceled or altered events; the Louisiana Book Festival in-person events have been cancelled.
 - Over the past month, six library staff members at different locations tested positive for Covid-19; current staff shortage and quarantines; staff are helping out by volunteering to fill in at facilities experiencing temporary staffing shortages.
 - There is no requirement or monitoring of City-Parish staff vaccination; the Library encourages staff to receive the vaccine but does not require it.
 - On August 4th, the City-Parish issued new guidelines on workplace exposure; vaccinated employees exposed to the virus do not have to quarantine if they are asymptomatic; Library staff continue to follow protocols.
- Library staff members have expressed appreciation of the Library Board’s efforts to preserve the integrity of the millage system and active opposition of the millage rededication proposal that was not adopted during last month’s Metro Council meeting.
- Schematic renderings were received on August 17th for the Scotlandville Branch Library renovation project; a review meeting with the architects is scheduled for August 31st.
- Warranty issues continue, on their one-year warranty anniversary, at Greenwell Springs and Jones Creek Regional Libraries.
- A follow-up meeting with Build Baton Rouge was held on August 9th to discuss efforts of obtaining community engagement on the possibility of building a new Delmont Gardens Branch Library as part of the Plank Road Revitalization Plan; possible dates for open-house events include September 24th and 25th, and will feature concept drawings and information for the public to provide feedback.
- Computer Services update:
 - The Emergency Connectivity Fund 471 forms have been completed and certified with the Universal Service Access Corporation; the Library is applying for circulating hotspots, connectivity for community centers, several BREC parks, and eight housing developments.
 - The Library continues to work with consultants, City-Parish Purchasing and other City-Parish departments in formulating a Request for Proposals for standard internet connectivity, with provisions for a dark fiber/IRU alternative.
 - Library staff continue to make progress with the PCI compliance process; the assisting consultant concluded there should be fewer adjustments to achieve necessary objectives; the security self-assessment questionnaire should be received this week.
 - Migration of the VDI system from the old servers to the new servers is near completion.
- Personnel turnover rates are at extremely high levels; current pandemic issues and low wages set by the City-Parish make it difficult to attract and retain employees; Library staff are dissatisfied and fatigued with the new longer work week schedules; Library administration will work with the City-Parish to find new approaches to resolve some of these issues.
- Discussion on the Library’s limited control over adjusting pay rates and schedules; Library administration will find ways to work with the City-Parish.

Board Vice President Candace Temple 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 SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY – Spencer Watts and Patricia Husband (5:19 p.m.)

- The design documents were received just before today’s meeting began, and staff were not able to review them.
- A review session is scheduled for September 7th with the design team and architects.
- Library staff held a meeting with the technology consultant this morning; diagrams with power and data mark-ups were reviewed; new drawings and written specifications will be submitted later this week; Library staff will record videos of different branch buildings for the consultant to see how technology is used, as they are not able to attend in-person meetings at this time due to the pandemic.
- Discussion on a possible change to the TND for the Rouzan development; some of the residential space may be expanded by using previously designated commercial space; this should not affect the space dedicated to the new South Branch Library.

Board Vice President Candace Temple asked for public comments. No public comments were made.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. VOTE TO SEND COMMENTS TO CITY-PARISH ADMINISTRATION REGARDING TAX ABATEMENT PROPOSALS – Spencer Watts (5:23 p.m.)

- Discussion on the impact and benefits for the two tax abatement applications; the Library historically relies upon the Metro Council to assess the development benefit versus the cost of the abated taxes on the improved properties.
- A motion to forward the proposals to the Metro Council without comment was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

VIII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

- Donald Luther, Jr. commented on his recent tour of several Library locations and thanked the efforts of Library staff.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – Board Vice President Candace Temple requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Nicole Allmon-Learson. **The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 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.