

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**  
**JUNE 16, 2022**  
**4:00 P.M.**

**AGENDA**

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Kathy Wascom

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 (4:18 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, Assistant Library Business Manager; Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director; Timothy Martin, Network Technician I.

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 21, 2022 – A motion to approve was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

II. SPECIAL ORDERS – There were no Special Orders.

III. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Ronnie Pierce (4:04 p.m.)

- For 2022, operating expenditures through May 31st are 30.09% of the operating budget. Through May, we should have spent no more than 42% of the budget.
- Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2022 remain slightly ahead of those collected in 2021, as we are approximately 0.57% ahead of the same six months last year.

B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein (4:05 p.m.)

- “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of Library programs.
- Last week, the Library launched its new circulating hotspots, “Wi-Fi 2 Geaux”; within two days, 50 of the 500 hotspots were circulated; board games and activity packs will also begin circulating.
- Master Naturalists of Baton Rouge hosted the Garden Discoveries program at the Main Library, utilizing the One Book One Community theme; the Library is part of the Mayor-president’s task force on litter and plans to host more programs focused on beautification and appreciation of neighborhoods.
- The East Baton Rouge Parish Library joined the Library Speakers Consortium, to virtually present author talks; the well-known authors include Alka Joshi, David Allen and Simon Winchester, and more.
- Jon Gordon, bestselling author and keynote speaker, will be next month’s guest for the Business Report’s virtual Business Forum; Chris Tuff was the guest for this month.
- Author Mary Manhein will be at the Main Library on Sunday, June 26<sup>th</sup> to present her new book, *Cities of the Dead*.
- Throughout the summer, the Library remains active in the community by hosting public meetings, providing its bookmobile to community events, and providing children’s books for community events; the Library also hosted the CATS 2022 Open House.

- The Ed Perkins Jazz Band performed yesterday in the Plaza at the Main Library; the Library hosted the Hip Hops & Arts Festival on the first Sunday of June and will return next year; the Baton Rouge Concert Band will perform patriotic music on July 4<sup>th</sup> at the Main Library's plaza at 7:30 p.m.
- Over 1,100 patrons attended the STEM kickoff event for the summer reading program at the Main Library; local businesses participated with STEM and STEAM activities for all ages; the summer reading program will feature both in-person and virtual events; the theme this year is "Oceans of Possibilities".
- Movies on the Plaza will continue throughout the month, each Friday night in June.

## C. OTHER REPORTS

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

- Spring mulching was completed at the Main Library, as well as Eden Park Branch Library and Bluebonnet and Jones Creek Regional Libraries.
- Quarterly maintenance on air handler units continues, which includes replacing filters and motor belts; the Library received a six-month supply of air filters; will also pilot a new air purifying service in some of the makerspaces.
- A roof leak occurred at Jones Creek Regional Library during a recent rainstorm; the leaking portion of the roof is covered under a 2-year warranty.
- New landscaping was installed at the front entrance of the Main Library; the backflow preventer for the splash pad arrived today and will be installed by next week.
- The River Center Branch Library was without hot water over the weekend due to work on the boilers; work continues on the boilers at the central plant.
- The Library received the civil engineer's report for the main water line rupture at Jones Creek Regional Library; the concrete on the loading dock was lifted due to the pressure in the water line, which also caused damage to the door; the engineer also submitted recommendations for backfill, cement thickness and rebar for the new foundation slab; the Library will obtain quotes for repair.
- Comments from Architectural Services for phase two of the Outreach Services building renovation were sent to the architect on June 9<sup>th</sup> for review and comments; the construction project should be ready for bidding in about two months.
- A kickoff meeting is scheduled next week for the roofing and exterior restoration project for four library locations.
- The executed contract for chiller replacements at four library locations should appear on the next Metro Council meeting agenda for approval.
- The server room at the Main Library continues to experience problems with temperature regulation; Library staff met with the mechanical engineers to determine possible solutions, including the installation of two additional Liebert units that will assist with maintaining a larger capacity of servers.

### 2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Spencer Watts (4:31 p.m.)

- All parties involved in the River Center Branch Library litigation have reached an agreement, and a settlement will be achieved; a statement by the City Parity Attorney's office will be released at a future date.
- The owner of one of the Library's janitorial services companies passed away unexpectedly last week; Library business office staff worked with Purchasing to obtain an emergency contractor so that janitorial staff could remain working and receiving paychecks; the original contract will eventually have to be re-bid.
- There has been a recent surge of Covid-19 infections in the area, mostly due to the new highly-transmissible sub-variants; over twenty Library staff have been infected and over twenty exposed; staff are encouraged to wear masks if they feel the need; staff will continue to follow proper measures when exposed or infected.
- The City-Parish proclaimed Juneteenth an official holiday, to be observed on Friday, June 17; the Library will remain open on the 17<sup>th</sup> but will close on Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup> in observance of the holiday.
- Library administrative staff continue to work on issues regarding staff scheduling and extended work weeks; most of the solutions presented may involve hiring more floating staff; the Library also continues to encounter difficulties with recruiting regular workers.
- Library staff have been diligently working on the proposed 2023 budget; a redline meeting was held June 13<sup>th</sup>, and a second redline meeting will be held June 22<sup>nd</sup> for senior staff.
- Library staff discovered procedural issues involved in the job application process provided by the City-Parish Human Resources Department; Susann Williams of the library's Business Office worked with Patricia Husband, Chi Ling Liu and Melinda Newman of Branch Services to outline the correct procedural steps to assist job applicants.

- The architect for the Baker Branch renovation meeting requested additional information to assist him in developing the initial schematics; the architect had also delayed reporting the kick off meeting minutes, and once reported, library staff noted twenty items that needed clarification.
- Computer Services update: the Wi-Fi hotspots arrived and were quickly processed for circulation; all library branches, except for Delmont Gardens and Pride-Chaneyville Branches, have transitioned to VDI workstations; the Library reached an agreement with a robust network security service to assist in monitoring and defending against malicious attacks; Kristen Edson engaged in consultations for a website design vendor and discovered a contractor who already has a state contract to provide this service, and could do so much sooner than others.
- The Library continues to discuss and review active shooter training for its staff.
- Donald Luther, Jr. commented on the litigation settlement, the revision of staff scheduling, the HR review, and the current economic issue of inflation.
- Martha Guarisco commented on her appreciation of Library staff working to solve the payroll issues and dedication to other projects.
- Nicole Allmon-Learson discussed the potential of hiring student workers or interns; Spencer Watts responded that the substitute worker category would cover those positions; the hiring processes is very lengthy for internship requirements.

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

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

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. UPDATE ON SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY – Spencer Watts and Patricia Husband (5:00 p.m.)

- Library staff and Architectural Services met with one of the lead project architects on May 31<sup>st</sup>; the meeting covered the following topics and the Board was shown a slide of the floor plan:
  - Location of an additional emergency exit on the north side of the building
  - The glass wall west of the conference room will remain; reduction of the laptop bar by one unit and slight reduction of shelving capacity
  - Additional row of shelving added south of the information desk
  - Two exit-only gates in the courtyard, with delayed egress features for emergency egress; a pull box may also be required
  - Courtyard grading with 5% or less slope; handrails are not needed; four drain inlets to be located in the corners
  - Discussion on plants and landscaping
  - Courtyard lighting to include uplights for the oak tree; design team will review emergency lighting in the courtyard; also discussed string light infrastructure, pole placement and commitment to avoiding light pollution
  - Confirmed data drops and power outlets for intelligent returns; recommended reserving space for a future dual return system
  - A photo of the updated design of the circulation desk was shown to the Board; reviewed functionality of the staff side of the desk, as well as heights and depths of counters, overlaps, rear shelf drop, a lowered section for additional access, and solid surface material to be used
  - Discussions on card access, additional sidewalk extension, and a possible isolated grass space
  - The design team is working through issues with the structural engineer and MEP documents; asked for a new deadline of July 17<sup>th</sup> to deliver construction documents.
- Question by Kathy Wascom regarding the parking lot plan and if it's available for viewing at the next meeting; Spencer Watts responded that it should be included in the construction documents.

B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY – Spencer Watts (5:03 p.m.)

- The Board was shown photos of exterior elevation renderings.
- A lower overhang will replace the current porte-cochere.
- The windows and design of the Teen Services area will reflect common elements with the Children's Services area, as well as the front entrance; creates a cohesive design theme.
- A landscaping meeting was held on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and covered the following topics:
  - Plant selection; including color, flowering plants, locations, and types of plants
  - Possibly reusing pavers from a previous project as a border accent

- Discussion regarding the detention pond on the south side of the archive building; may contain plantings; will be designed to hold water as it drains away from the building
- Mapping the original irrigation system for possible decommission

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

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

### A. SETTING OF DATE FOR SPECIAL 2023 BUDGET WORK SESSION – Candace Temple (5:22)

- According to the results of the poll, the majority of the Board members chose June 30<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. as the best option for availability.
- A motion to set the date of the special 2023 budget work session to June 30, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Martha Guarisco. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

### B. LIBRARY OVERVIEW OF 2022 – Spencer Watts (5:24 p.m.)

- A slideshow of report content was shown to the Board.
- Year-to-date noteworthy projects and reports include the following:
  - The Library Community Assessment Survey ran from April 18 – May 10, 2022; results will assist with updating the Library’s Strategic Plan.
  - 2022 has been an increasingly active year compared to this time last year; increases are being seen in card holder count, gate count, circulation, YouTube sessions, PC reservation use, and Wi-Fi use.
  - Personal engagement statistics also have seen an increase in numbers; includes Outreach Services visits, programming events, AWE (advanced workstation) use, meeting room and study room use, and smart table use.
  - Literacy initiatives so far this year have included the “Press Start! Ready, Set, Read!” immersive 3-year curriculum; the Home Library Pilot Project; 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten; Reading is Elementary; 1,000 Books After Kindergarten; garden story walks at three library locations; literacy calendars in English and Spanish; Heal the Block Initiative; and Making Spaces at Delmont Gardens Branch Library.
  - The One Book One Community this year was deeply rooted in Louisiana culture, as the chosen book was *Atchafalaya Houseboat*; various programs centered around nature, ecology and gardening.
  - The Library received a new bookmobile to replace the previous Elf unit; a fourth bookmobile is currently in production.
  - The Library is growing its circulation of “things”, which are non-book items; this includes the AWE stations, artwork, a telescope, Arduino kits, museum kits, Wi-Fi hot spots, board games, family activity kits, bi-folkal kits, interactive kits, and badges for maker space use; the library is developing tele-health kits.
  - Ongoing and future projects include small and large capital projects; new technology platforms and updates of existing technology; a new website and integrated library system (ILS); library staff development to ease work week challenges and improve job satisfaction; updating the strategic plan; and the search for a new Library Director.
  - Question by Delores Watts if there will be periodic updates on the many ongoing projects; Spencer Watts responded that some projects will be ongoing over an extended period of time, but the ones that will have systemized outcomes will be reported and updated.
  - Question by Kathy Wascom regarding library staff training for problem patrons or patrons calling with difficult problems; Spencer Watts responded that there are specific staff training programs offered on a continuing basis for customer service and phone etiquette, as well as diffusing in-person situations.

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

## VII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

- Donald Luther, Jr. thanked the library staff for everything they do.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Board Vice President Candace Temple requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m. by unanimous vote.**

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Mr. Jason Jacob, President

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Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director