

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**  
**February 17, 2022**  
**4:00 P.M.**

**AGENDA**

CALL TO ORDER – Jason Jacob, Board President (4:01 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Candace Temple, Board Vice President

ROLL CALL – Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director

Jason Jacob, Board President – Present

Candace Temple, Board Vice President – Present

Martha Guarisco, Board Treasurer – Absent

Delores Watts – Present (4:03 p.m.)

Donald Luther, Jr. – Present

Kathy Wascom – Present

Nicole Allmon-Learson – Present (4:13 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; Autumn Rice, Library Technician I; Jason Salsbury, PC/LAN Specialist; Daniel Dearing, Network Technician I.

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 20, 2022 – A motion to approve was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Candace Temple. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

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

III. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Rhonda Pinsonat (4:02 p.m.)

- For 2021, operating expenditures rose to 88.43% 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 2022, because of year-end work on 2021, very few expenditures have been recorded. As of January 31<sup>st</sup>, expenditures are 2.55% 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 2022 are slightly ahead of those collected last year, as we are roughly 1.69% ahead of 2021. As was the case last month, while we are hopeful, it is again too early to predict if this small increase will continue throughout the year. Cash collections for 2021 will be finalized when 4th quarter interest earnings are posted, which again will take another 1 – 2 months.

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

- “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of Library programs.
- Steve Beauchamp, CEO of Paylocity, will be the guest speaker for the March 9<sup>th</sup> Business Forum interview; it will be archived for 30 days.
- The Library now has access to the Wall Street Journal as part of its digital newspaper collection; access is in-house only; the Library still receives the physical copy of the Wall Street Journal.
- The Career Center recently shared Tweets of success stories from patrons who utilized the center’s services, which includes coaching, workshops and online videos.
- Saturday Science has returned in-person for monthly offerings on Saturdays.

- Board Member Candace Temple posted on social media her recent visit to the River Center Branch Library's children services department.
- Other programs for children include the return of Harvey Rabbit, and animal displays with letters and numbers as part of the "Press Start! Ready, Set, Read!" initiative.
- In celebration of Arbor Day, Bofinger's Tree Service and Baton Rouge Green provided 400 trees to giveaway at the Main Library; the trees will be tracked through an app to locate where the trees are planted.
- The River Center Branch Library hosted Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome's civic engagement with community members and federal partners to discuss reducing violence in Baton Rouge; Delmont Gardens Branch Library will host service providers who will aid individuals with criminal records in reintegration.
- The rescheduled Martin Luther King, Jr. events from January will be held this month; the Library's bookmobile will be present at the literacy and community fair on February 19<sup>th</sup> at BREC's Hartley/Vey Park.
- The Main Library will host its kickoff party for One Book One Community on March 5<sup>th</sup>; RJ & Kreole Smoove will perform; jambalaya will be served by the Cortana Kiwanis organization; Atchafalaya Houseboat is the selected book for this year.
- The founder of the Library's Career Center, Ursula Carmena, passed away last week; members of the public are suggesting donations in her name; she was a major change agent for the community.

### C. OTHER REPORTS

#### 1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson (4:23 p.m.)

- A roof leak occurred at Jones Creek Regional Branch Library.
- Carpet shampooing for the Main Library is scheduled for this weekend, February 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>; once completed, an assessment will be made to determine if any carpet tiles need to be replaced.
- New bid specifications for the window washing contract are being drafted to include more items in the scope of work, such as all interior glass cleaning and the monumental staircase at the Main Library.
- The exterior of Delmont Gardens Branch Library was pressure washed.
- Issues arose with the boiler controls at Baker Branch Library; staff with Computer Services are working to fix issues with the upgraded Energy Management System.
- Graffiti was washed off the side of the building at River Center Branch Library; after a recent power outage, it was discovered not many systems are connected to the generator; awaiting quote for connecting more systems, especially HVAC.
- Updates on small capital improvements:
  - Interior painting has begun at Carver Branch Library; accent colors have been chosen to give more visual interest; painting will continue to coincide with the roof replacement project.
  - Bid specifications for the multi-branch roofing and exterior restorations were submitted to Purchasing on Monday; the release date should follow soon, pending review and processing.
  - A metal screen was installed around the exhaust stack at the Main Library last Friday; it was delayed from last month due to rain; a photo of the large crane in the parking lot was shown to the Board.
- Question from Jason Jacob regarding the location of the roof leak at Jones Creek Regional Library; Kristen Edson responded that it occurred in the existing shingle roof, not the new roofing section.
- Question from Donald Luther, Jr. regarding if the systems connected to the generator at River Center Branch Library included everything that was expected to be connected; Spencer Watts responded that Library staff were informed that the generator didn't have the capacity to maintain more connections that what it currently has, which was not made known during the initial installation of the generator; research is underway to determine the generator's actual capacity; the Library aims to provide not only lighting during emergencies, but also heating and cooling, and working elevators.
- Question from Donald Luther, Jr. regarding if the new construction and renovation projects will include checking the capacity of generators; Spencer Watts responded that there won't be actual generators at all locations, but will provide generator hook-up connections for future units; Kristen Edson responded that Scotlandville Branch Library will have a generator for the archival space and a hook-up connection for the actual building, as will the new South Branch Library.

## 2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Spencer Watts and Kristen Edson (4:33 p.m.)

- Last summer, a seven-person committee began working on updating the employee handbook and have now completed the first draft; includes updated existing employee policies, procedures, and forms; the Board was given the policies section as a general overview; the handbook will help employees better understand the Library’s expectations during employment, as well as help front line managers when they need to address personnel issues; the document will be sent to the City Parish attorney for legal review.
  - Question from Candace Temple regarding if there is an original handbook containing the older policies; Mary Stein and Kristen Edson responded that the Board members already have the older policies, but they were not combined into an official handbook.
- Update on the E-Rate and Dark Fiber project: The Purchasing department did not release the RFP in time to meet all USAC requirements; the Library is most interested in applying for the Dark Fiber and/or Dark Fiber with irrefutable right of use, which has the potential to bring additional broadband capacity into the neighborhoods of all library locations, which the RFP was designed to achieve; the Library will now pivot and seek to expand its regular E-rate contract for one year and work with consultants to meet USAC guidelines and possibly exercise an annual extension on its telecom contract.
- The Library’s security guard contract will have to go through a bidding process, according to Purchasing, because the department cannot commit to any additional RFP’s this year; it was desired to have Purchasing assist the Library in providing an RFP for the contract that would result in a more rigorous selection process and allow for improvements in specifications and enhanced vendor assessment protocol; the Library will continue to work on publishing a bid that will serve to meet its needs.
- Update on Wi-Fi hotspots: The Library is finalizing its pilot project with remote and circulating Wi-Fi devices; originally it was an endeavor to be sponsored with an ECF grant, however, this proved to be impractical; it will now be funded with Library funds; using a state contract, the Library will provide 500 hotspots to lend to the public and 10 larger hotspots that will allow up to 30 devices to connect; the larger devices will be checked out to community centers, public housing units and a park; the individual hotspots can be checked out for three weeks at a time, and renewed four times; will begin in areas that have limited connectivity; could possibly apply for an ECF grant in the future; Board members discussed use of hotspots and connectivity for local families and students in their homes.
- The Library occasionally has issues of individuals filming in public spaces and wanting access to non-public spaces; the Library maintains the safety and security of all individuals in its buildings.
  - Question from Nicole Allmon-Learson regarding what accounts for the rise of these types of issues; Spencer Watts responded that it’s a general social issue and some individuals seek alternative ways to deal with life’s challenges.
- Covid-19 Update: The mask requirement was suspended by the governor and City-Parish on February 15<sup>th</sup>; new infections and hospitalization rates have been declining; Library staff infections and exposures have also decreased; social distancing remains in place at public work stations, as well as disinfecting air systems after hours.
- Meetings will be held next week with BREC to discuss the shipping yard gate and security; the State Library Association Conference that was scheduled to be held in March was rescheduled for July; the Public Library Association conference will be held in Portland, OR, in March, and the American Library Association conference will be held in June; the asset inventory project has included inputting tangible inventory into the new application by a third-party company and migrating existing inventory from spreadsheets; new processes have been put into place for verification of record keeping protocols to match invoices received from service providers and vendors for the Library; the Library continues to require card renewals to be done in-person in order to obtain updated patron information and residency documentation.

Board President Jason Jacob 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 (5:11 p.m.)

- The project is entering into the construction document phase; won’t have as much to report until construction documents are released, most likely in June; documents will be reviewed to make sure all features of the

design plans, including changes or refinements, are included; the lot reconfiguration was approved by the Metro Council; a design team meeting was held on February 1<sup>st</sup> and members discussed the following:

- The architect submitted the site plan package to Rouzan for review; hoping approval will be issued soon
- A corner guard review was held; a few were removed and a small number were added
- The architect wanted to eliminate smaller windows on the north and south side of the meeting room complex for aesthetic and practical reasons; the Library and Architectural Services were in agreement
- Library staff asked for a larger kick plate on the interior of the staff workroom door
- A designer had inserted millwork service desks in the reference area; the Library would like something more flexible, less bulky and preferably portable and height-adjustable
- Library staff also met with the technology consultants and reviewed the following items:
  - RFID gates, including the power and data sources
  - Location of intelligent returns, interior and possible exterior
  - Installation of monitors in meeting rooms
  - Location of OPACs, AWEs and computers
  - Location of visitor counters
- Discussion on timeline of document review, notice to proceed and beginning of construction; it is possible that construction may begin late fall of this year; construction completion is predicted to be between 14-16 months; may also depend on supply chain issues.

B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY – Spencer Watts and Patricia Husband (5:20 p.m.)

- A meeting was held with Councilwoman Chauna Banks on February 1<sup>st</sup> to review design documents and elevation drawings; some of her ideas on construction phasing will be discussed with the design team.
- An updated topographic survey proposal has been received and authorized; will include work locating drainage and sewer structures, including piping details, above ground and underground utilities; will also include elevations and CAD files.
- Based on recommendations from the architect and Architectural Services, a proposal was approved to survey and record the existing fire suppression system in the building; should help avoid unpleasant surprises and calculate costs upfront.
- The location of the hot water heaters is being discussed.
- The architect has been concerned regarding price estimates; prices have continued to rise due to supply chain issues and inflationary pressures; the idea to reduce the size of some of the new areas and a metal cladding for the archival building have been rejected; the Library will continue to look for ways to work with or adjust the budget and maintain the integrity of the project.

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

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

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

## VII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

- Kathy Wascom commented that she enjoys reading the detailed maintenance work order summary reports and details of interesting occurrences.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Board President Jason Jacob requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The meeting was adjourned at 5:31 p.m. by unanimous vote.**

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Mr. Jason Jacob, President

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Mr. Spencer Watts, Library Director