

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
November 17, 2022
4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER – Jason Jacob, Board President (4:08 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Donald Luther, Jr.

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

Jason Jacob, Board President – Present

Candace Temple, Board Vice President – Present

Martha Stickle, Board Treasurer – Present

Delores Watts – Present (4:26 p.m.)

Donald Luther, Jr. – Present

Kathy Wascom – Present

Nicole Allmon-Learson – Present (5:28 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; Jason Salsbury, PC/LAN Specialist; Tara Dearing, Children Services Librarian IV; Patricia Arnold, Special Literacy Projects Librarian IV.

OTHERS PRESENT – Susan Gauthier, recipient of the 2022 Spaht Scholar Award

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

Board President Jason Jacob made a motion to move agenda item New Business to occur after Special Orders. The motion was seconded by Donald Luther, Jr. and was carried unanimously.

II. SPECIAL ORDERS

- A. PRESENTATION RECOGNIZING SPAHT SCHOLAR, SUSAN GAUTHIER – Mary Stein, Tara Dearing and Patricia Arnold

- This year's Spah Scholar recognition was awarded to Susan Gauthier, acknowledging her efforts to promote literacy and the love of reading to local students and within the community at large; the award was a surprise for Ms. Gauthier.
- Mary Stein commented that she has known Susan Gauthier since the 1980's and she has been a vital part of the Library community, collaborating on projects and initiatives, such as Prime Time Family Reading Time, the Summer Reading Program, the Conscious Kids project, the Covid-19 student library card project, and most recently the Home Library project.
- Tara Dearing further commented on the Home Library project and the many ways that Susan Gauthier contributed to making the project a success.
- Susan Gauthier was awarded an official certificate, and her name will be added to the Spaht Scholar award plaque; a collection of children's book will also be on display in commemoration of Ms. Gauthier receiving the award.
- Ms. Gauthier expressed her thanks and gratitude, and commented that the Library is her happy place.

III. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – UPDATE FROM THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE (4:17 p.m.)

- Board President Jason Jacob announced the committee has narrowed the selection down to three candidates.
- Spencer Watts explained that the consultants have provided suggestions on the next steps to take; a preliminary plan would have the remaining three candidates conduct library branch visits on December 15 and give presentations that evening in a public forum at the Main Library; another round of interviews with the Board would be conducted December 16.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. VOTE TO APPROVE UPDATED PATRON RULES OF BEHAVIOR – Spencer Watts and Mary Stein (4:23 p.m.)

- Board members were provided copies of the proposed changes; Spencer Watts reviewed the specific changes, which included eliminating some verbiage and adding details covering several problems the Library has encountered over the years.
- Suggestions were made by Library staff for a more complete revision of the rules; a second revision may take place later next year.
- The rules are posted publicly and kept at staff desks to provide to the public when requested.
- A motion to adopt the updated Patron Rules of Behavior was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Candace Temple. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

B. VOTE TO APPROVE UPDATED LIBRARY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK – Kristen Edson (4:31 p.m.)

- Board members were provided copies of the updated handbook; Kristen Edson asked if there were any questions or comments from the Board – there were none.
- A motion to approve the updated Library Employee Handbook was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Donald Luther, Jr. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

C. VOTE TO APPROVE PROPOSED 2023 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE – Spencer Watts (4:33 p.m.)

- The proposed holiday schedule is similar past years'; Mr. Watts proposed closing the library on December 23, 2023, since Christmas Eve will fall on a Sunday and the library will be closed; it is traditionally a slow day for customer activity; this will be an additional closed day in the schedule, but not a paid holiday; the library is only permitted to give employees the same number of holidays as allotted to City Parish employees.
- A motion to approve the Library's 2023 holiday schedule was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

D. LIBRARY OVERVIEW OF 2022 – Spencer Watts (4:35 p.m.)

- Currently, the library system has 335,078 cardholders; 74% of parish residents use their cards; and 138,684 of these patrons used specific databases, library computers or circulated materials within the last 12 weeks; Martha Stickle asked how these statistics compare with other library systems; Mr. Watts responded that this library is the top 4 or 5 libraries in this size range.
- The Library continues to expand its collection with new items, such as the 1950's Census, Wi-Fi hotspots, board games, family activity kits, and growing the "Library of Things"; new or enhanced digital resources have been extensive, and include the Wall Street Journal and Bloom's Literature.
- Highlights of the Library's programming includes the One Book One Community program, the Summer Reading program, the Mid City Micro-Con, the 45th Author-Illustrator program, and participation in the Louisiana Book Festival.
- The Library's focus on literacy was a hallmark of the past year; noteworthy accomplishments include the *Press Start: Ready, Set, Read!* Early Literacy Initiative, the Home Library pilot project, as well as continuing to work with the Mayor's Joint Task Force on Literacy, and remaining active in working with the local school system.
- This was the 4th year of the Library's program to promote Career and Small Business Services, including the Small Business Program led by the Reference department; the Library also works with community partners, such as the Business Forum, Employ BR, Pennington Biomedical Research, NASA & LaSpace, BRAF & BRAC, the Business Report, and The Advocate.
- Internally, the Library completed its updated Strategic Plan; progress continues with the director search; several apps were developed over the past year, including a budget app and a purchase request app; improvements were made in a multitude of staff training categories over the past year.
- Progress continues on designing the new South Branch library; a bid for contractors will soon be issued.
- A contractor bid will also be issued soon for the renovation and expansion of the Scotlandville Branch Library; the Baker Branch Library remains in its preliminary design phase.

- The Library’s capital improvements timeline includes current construction and renovation projects for the Scotlandville Branch, Baker Branch and South Branch Libraries; on the horizon are the Central Branch and Zachary Branch renovations; and preliminary planning includes the Delmont Gardens Branch site development; other major infrastructure projects within the Library system were also discussed, including the final testing stage for functionality of the new credit card payment system at self-service kiosks.
- Upcoming major initiatives include the website RFP, chiller replacements for five library locations, and hardware purchases for the Disaster Recovery Site located at Outreach Services.

E. ANNOUNCE THE RESULTS OF THE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF LIBRARY DIRECTOR – Jason Jacob

THE BOARD MAY GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE CHARACTER, PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY OR PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH OF MR. SPENCER WATTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH LA. R.S. 42:17(A)(1). MR. WATTS MAY REQUIRE THAT SUCH DISCUSSION BE HELD IN OPEN SESSION.

- A motion to go into executive session was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Donald Luther, Jr. The motion was carried unanimously. (4:57 p.m.)
- Discussion was held in the Library’s board room on the third floor.
- A motion to close executive session was made by Jason Jacob and seconded by Donald Luther, Jr. The motion was carried unanimously. (5:26 p.m.)
- Jason Jacob commented that Spencer Watts had a successful evaluation, and that Mr. Watts’ professionalism and guidance of the Library system has been appreciated and noted by many people in the community, and thanked him for making the Library the best in Louisiana and in the country.

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

III. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Ronnie Pierce (5:27 p.m.)

- For 2022, operating expenditures through October 31 are 68.55% of the operating budget. Through October, we should have spent no more than 83% of the budget.
- Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2022 remain ahead of those collected in 2021, as we are approximately 0.79% ahead of the same 11 months last year.

B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein (5:30 p.m.)

- “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of Library programs.
- Musical programs this past month included the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, the Civic Orchestra, Ed Perkins Jazz band, and the Talented Kids performance.
- The 2022 Louisiana Book Festival was held October 29; the Library hosted a booth with activities and information, as well as the interactive Bookmobile and Cuddles the Bear mascot; activities were tied to the Library’s updated strategic plan, which was made available at the booth.
- Over 200 people attended the *Meet the Breeds* program at the Main Library, which included over 28 different dog breeds that performed various tasks and skills; the event was hosted by the Louisiana Capital City Obedience Club.
- The Attic Treasures & Collectibles program returned to the River Center Branch Library, where it traditionally has been held.
- A donation from the American Society of Radiologic Technologist’s National Partnership Program was made upon a member’s retirement; books on the human body and skeleton mannequins were purchased.
- The St. James Episcopal Church outreach committee deployed We Care Bags at five library locations, to provide water and food to students who are experiencing food insecurity.
- Upcoming programs for December include *Food for Fines* and *the Sock It To Me* sock drive; early voting was held at various library locations, including Central Branch and Bluebonnet Regional Libraries.
- The next Business Forum webinar will feature Tim Knight, Founder and CEO of Focus 3; the virtual Author Talks program also continues next month.

- GIS Day was held November 16 at the River Center Branch Library; the Main Library displayed middle school student projects with Global Geospatial Institute and Clean Pelican.
- The Library's *Game On* event will be November 19 at the Main Library; will include board games, workshops, demos, and family activities.

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson (5:44 p.m.)

- Tree pruning is scheduled next week for Central Branch and Greenwell Springs Regional Libraries.
- Beta testing has begun for the new Flowpath work-order software; the full version is scheduled to be rolled out to all staff in early December.
- An HVAC issue at Outreach Services was repaired by the vendor; the Baker Branch cooling tower was drained in order to apply anti-corrosion coatings; two fan motors were replaced on the chiller at Scotlandville Branch Library; work progresses on the energy management systems at Scotlandville and Zachary Branches.
- A small roof leak continues at the River Center Branch Library; facilities staff are working with Architectural Services, the manufacturer and the installer to resolve the issue since it is still under warranty.
- Broken windows await repair at Central Branch, Eden Park Branch, Greenwell Springs Regional, and the Main Library; may switch to a new vendor due to extenuating circumstances with the current vendor.
- Work is almost complete on adding systems to the generator at the River Center Branch Library; once completed, the first and second floors will be able to generate HVAC, patron and staff computers, outlets, and lighting throughout the building; the system will not be able to run HVAC for the third and fourth floors; the lectern was delivered and installed for the video conferencing room.
- Filters were replaced on appliances at the Main Library; agave plants on the rooftop terrace were removed in preparation for the replanting project; repairs continue on elevator #3.
- The final details for the design package to repair the loading dock and pump room door at Jones Creek Regional Library are complete; the quotation meeting was rescheduled.
- A photo of the monumental sign design was shown to the Board; the design will first be used at Jones Creek and Greenwell Springs Regional libraries; will also be the design used for upcoming renovations and new construction projects.
- The Outreach Services renovation project is awaiting a fully executed contract and the Notice to Proceed.
- A design development meeting with the architects for the Bluebonnet Regional Library renovation project was held earlier this month to kick-start the project again; the architect will work with the MEP engineer to prepare a complete design package.
- A pre-bid meeting for the minor branch improvements was held October 25; the project includes painting, minor floor repairs, bathroom fixture replacements, lighting repairs, and sheet rock repairs at Carver, Delmont Gardens, Fairwood, Pride, and Zachary Branch Libraries.
- A photo of roof work on the Zachary Branch Library was shown to the Board; a construction continuation directive will be issued to cover additional time and materials needed; Delmont Gardens Branch is next on the list for roof replacement; a pre-mobilization meeting for the Bluebonnet Regional Library roof replacement will be held November 30.
- Question from Nicole Allmon-Learson regarding clarification on fixing the broken window at Main; Spencer Watts responded that the current window vendor is currently unable to operate the business, which has created a backlog of window repair needs; library staff are working diligently to secure a new vendor.

Board member Donald Luther, Jr. asked for public comments. No public comments were made.

2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Spencer Watts and Kristen Edson (5:58 p.m.)

- The Metro Council will hold a budget hearing on November 21; the Library will present its proposed budget.
- Library staff met with representatives from Build Baton Rouge on November 8 to discuss the proposed site for a branch at the corner of Mohican and Plank Road; the Library is consulting with the Parish Attorney's Office regarding the issuance of a non-binding letter of intent to assist with possible adjustments that may be required before moving forward with site development.
- Architectural Services has requested a meeting after Thanksgiving to continue working on gaining consensus on the concept design of the Baker Branch Library renovation project.
- Early voting was held at Central Branch Library; 551 voters were counted on the first day, and 4,698 total throughout the voting period.

- The Library may consider removing its security gates for the RFID tagging systems when they reach obsolescence; members of the Urban Libraries Council directors committee have discussed no substantial changes in their item loss rate when opting to not replace their security gates upon obsolescence.
- Board members were given a letter from the Supreme Court of Louisiana’s Office of Language Access expressing their satisfaction and appreciation for the meeting room services provided by the Library, as well as the professionalism and helpfulness of Library staff; particularly at Bluebonnet Regional and the Main Library.
- The Library is considering the procedure of closing a neighborhood branch when there is a large community event that would potentially cause difficulties for patrons attempting to utilize that library facility; Southern University recently held a parade that made it difficult for some patrons to access the Scotlandville Branch Library due to the overcrowded parking lot.
- A pre-proposal meeting was held for the Library’s website RFP; two companies were present in person and 12 companies attended virtually; library staff will meet on November 29 to gather responses to the respondents’ questions and submit the final answers to Purchasing.
- King Crow studios demonstrated the virtual reality makerspace training content for a recording studio on November 14; it will be delivered for public use by January 5, 2023.
- Preliminary discussions have begun regarding the roll out of redundant cellular based Wi-Fi hotspots at seven library locations; this service would provide continuous internet access even during power outages; would also be E-Rate eligible.
- The technology vendor is assessing problems with the Main Library’s large outdoor screen; waiting on the manufacturer to assist with remote troubleshooting.
- No major issues or roadblocks remain with the credit card payment systems for self-service kiosks; the Library plans to make the system available to patrons beginning December 1.

Board member Donald Luther, Jr. asked for public comments. No public comments were made.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. UPDATE ON SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY – Patricia Husband (6:11 p.m.)

- Library staff await the architect’s response to the value engineering list.
- A meeting was held October 26 with Architectural Services to review the latest set of value engineering estimates; changes proposed included changing the wood wall to battens on gypsum board, and changing the storefront interior entrances for Children’s and Teen’s Services to 10-feet high, which is in line with other windows in the courtyard.
- Library staff also requested additional pricing of certain items, such as acrylic dimensional letters.
- Architectural Services approved the use of flat panels; library staff requested samples in the proposed colors to assist with selecting a final choice.
- A meeting was held with the interior designer and a millwork designer to review service desk specifications; revisions were made to include smaller and height-adjustable desks; once the library receives the shop drawings and estimate, staff will determine whether to proceed with this option or find a turnkey system.
- Library staff selected the furniture option for laptop bars; will include two 6-foot bars, one at countertop height and one at table height; the vendor already has a state contract; library staff will review other options on state contract, as more become available, including a possible state contract for shelving.
- Library staff are still waiting on an updated furniture plan, a detailed list of proposed furniture selections and quantities of each, and an updated estimate of probable cost for the entire package; will also review finish samples and schedule another meeting with the interior designer.

B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY – Patricia Husband and Kristen Edson (6:15 p.m.)

- Library staff met with the architects on November 14 to review new flooring finishes; also approved the decorative base product and selected a color.
- The final updated construction documents should be delivered today.
- Bids will be advertised beginning December 2, and responses are due January 12, 2023.
- Library staff also met with the architects last month to review questions concerning the retractable stage; updated revisions and floorplans were sent for library staff to review.
- Also last month, a meeting with the architects and Architectural Services covered the following issues:
 - Changing the order of the add alternates
 - Discussion on implementing the PA system

- Discussion on blocking for large monitors
- Review of the electrical plans and elimination of some floor boxes
- Discussion of the access control system specifications
- Selection of using an interlocking flat metal panel as a substitute for fiber cement, in specific areas
- Discussion of miscellaneous items, such as revision of the temporary layout in Archives and reusing existing mechanical system components
- An updated estimate probable cost from the architect

Board member Donald Luther, Jr. asked for public comments. No public comments were made.

V. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

- Kathy Wascom thanked the Library for Saturday's free tutoring program; her grandson attended the event.

VI. ADJOURNMENT – Board member Donald Luther, Jr. requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Nicole Allmon-Learson and seconded by Donald Luther, Jr. **The meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m. by unanimous vote.**