

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
April 20, 2023
4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER – Jason Jacob, Board President

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Delores Watts

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

Jason Jacob, Board President – Present

Candace Temple, Board Vice President – Absent

Martha Stickle, Board Treasurer – Absent

Delores Watts – Present

Donald Luther, Jr. – Present

Kathy Wascom – Present

Nicole Allmon-Learson – Present

A quorum was present

STAFF PRESENT – Kristen Edson, Interim Library Director; Mary Stein, Assistant Library Director; Patricia Husband, Assistant Library Director; Rhonda Pinsonat, Library Business Manager; Ronnie Pierce, Assistant Library Business Manager.

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 16, 2023 – A motion to approve was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Kathy Wascom. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

II. SPECIAL ORDERS – There were no Special Orders.

III. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Rhonda Pinsonat

- For 2023, operating expenditures through March 31 are 20.97% of the operating budget. Through March, we should have spent no more than 25% of the budget.
- Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2023 remain ahead of those collected in 2022, as we are approximately 4.45% ahead of the same date last year.

B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein

- “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of Library programs.
- Library administration and Baker Branch Manager, Ashley Broussard, attended a press conference hosted by AT&T, and included Governor John Bel Edwards, along with the Baton Rouge Mayor-President and the City of Baker Mayor, for the announcement of the broadband grant that will deliver broadband connectivity to 500,000 households throughout Louisiana.
- Library administration also met with Bluebonnet Regional Library Manager, Kelley Young, for a visioning exercise to assess the building’s facilities and revisit previous design ideas.
- The next Strictly Businesses webinar will feature CSRS President Tim Barfield; focus of talk will be on ensuring business success in an era of disruption.
- The Library has made appearances at many job and career fairs; the Country Roads Magazine produced its first podcast inside the River Center Branch’s recording studio.
- The Sounds of Science series concluded with an event at the Main Library; included hands-on learning, visual presentations of photos from the James Webb Space Telescope; and special musical performances composed by David Walters.
- The One Book One Community kick-off party was held at the Main Library; the Michael Foster Project performed; performances by Jonathan “Boogie” Long, and presentations by Johnny Palazzotto & *The Original*

King Bee, Lloyd “Teddy” Johnson of Teddy’s Juke Joint, and John Writ & Huey “Piano” Smith and the *Rocking Pneumonia Blues*.


- The Red Stick Farmers Market has returned to the Main Library; Tuesdays, 3:00pm-6:00pm.
- The Library hosted its second annual Edible Food Fest; the grand prize winner was an edible rendition of “The BUNderful Wizard of Oz, Follow the Jello Brick Road”.
- The Virtual Author Talks Series continues to be successful; the talks are archived on the Library’s website.
- The Pride-Chaneyville Branch Library will host the 13th Annual Community History Festival on April 22; Jones Creek Regional Library will host Authors Row on the same date; the Blues Festival will be held downtown Baton Rouge on April 22 as well.
- The Main Library will host an Open House on April 23 to kick-off National Library Week.
- The East Baton Rouge Parish School System will continue its summer nutrition program with the Library, providing free meals for students.

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson

- Preventative maintenance for door controls was completed at Baker, Carver, Central, Delmont Gardens, Eden Park, Fairwood, Pride-Chaneyville, River Center, and Zachary Branch Libraries, as well as Greenwell Springs, Bluebonnet, and Jones Creek Regional Libraries, and the Main Library.
- At the Main Library, the fabric ceiling tile in Children’s Services will be replaced next week; work continues to replace the plants on the public rooftop terrace.
- The Library will work with Forum 225 to host a community refrigerator at Delmont Gardens Branch; the Library will provide the space, electrical, concrete, and power utilities; quotes have been received and will be reviewed with Forum’s Vice President of Service.
- At Outreach Services, work continues for Phase II of the parking lot renovation; exterior work has also begun for the server room entrance; staff bathrooms have been demolished for renovation; a monthly progress meeting will be held tomorrow; a meeting with The Baton Rouge General and the Bernard Terrace Civic Association were held to discuss the renovation plans and collaboration.
- Construction documents for the Bluebonnet Regional Library renovation project were received on April 5, and comments were provided to the architect on April 18; still waiting for flooring samples for the Teen Services entrance; the architect estimates a bid date of mid-May, this is an ambitious timeline that may not be met.
- The contract work for the multi-branch roof replacement project is still not complete; the copula work at Jones Creek Regional still needs to be performed; the contractor has not proposed alternative dates of work for Library approval; another progress meeting will be held next Wednesday April 28th.
- Update on the Miscellaneous Repair Package: work began March 29 at Pride-Chaneyville Branch, and on April 6 at Zachary Branch Library; a walk-through meeting will be held next week for work performed at Pride-Chaneyville.
- Question from Donald Luther, Jr regarding if there are other community refrigerators; Kristen Edson responded that she knows of two others in Baton Rouge; it will be up to Forum 225 to provide management of the contents; there’s a criteria for types of food, and volunteers monitor the contents.
- Jason Jacob asked for clarification on what is a community refrigerator; Kristen Edson explained that there is a pantry area with shelves for non-perishable items, along with an actual refrigerator that usually contains prepackaged perishable food items; it is open to anyone who visits it.

2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Kristen Edson and Mary Stein

- Computer Services Update: an agreement has been reached with COX to increase bandwidth speeds; a new projector screen was installed in the large meeting room at the Main Library, as well as updating new outdoor terrace speakers; configuration work is complete for mobile printing and reservations.
- We received the Get Down & Clean up kits from Keep Louisiana Beautiful (KLB). They will eventually be available for library patrons to check-out. Waiting on more direction from KLB
- An implementation plan for finalizing the Strategic Plan has been distributed to Library staff. 
- The organizational review consultant has begun the salary research from which includes reaching out to 15 peer libraries; Library administration will present the final information to the Mayor-President, in late May; the staff survey deadline was yesterday, and the Board will receive copies of the final draft of the consultant’s report at the budget workshop.
- Library administration attended GOHSEP training for emergency management updates.

- The Metro Council approved the new janitorial contract, however the vendor decided not to sign the proposal; a contract is in place through the end of the month, and a new one should be in place by May 1.
- The Library's Staff Incident Reporting Committee continues to work on a new draft of patron policies; Library administration will review before sending to the Parish Attorney for suggestions or recommended changes before the Board votes on approval; several Library staff will attend the Public Library Safety Summit in Columbus, OH; Library staff are meeting with local law enforcements agencies to review safety procedures.
- Members of the Earl K. Long Redevelopment project will attend next month's Board meeting to share plans for the new S.T.A.R.T Library branch.
- The original site for the proposed relocation of Delmont Gardens Branch Library at Plank Rd., between Mohican and Weller, will not accommodate sufficient parking; Library staff will work with Build Baton Rouge to identify a different site.
- Setting of the Board budget workshop meeting date will be on next month's agenda.
- A meeting with the Parish Attorney regarding contract work status for the Library Director position was held today; at this time a contract for the Director is not possible; staff is still exploring other ways the Director position could be increased.

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 – Patricia Husband

- The architects sent final construction documents to Architectural Services on April 3.
- The project was advertised on April 14 and is scheduled to be advertised on April 21 and 28.
- Pre-bid meeting will be held April 25 on the site where South Branch will be built.
- Bids will be due May 11 in Purchasing.
- Library staff are hoping to award the project by the end of May and to break ground this summer.

B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY – Patricia Husband

- The Library received the revised Phase I construction documents at the end of March; completed the review of the floor plans and still finishing the specification review.
- Architectural Services has submitted the following tentative schedule for the project:
 - April 24: Send Library & Architectural Services comments on construction documents to the architect
 - May 8: Receive final construction documents from the architect
 - May 19: first advertisement for bids; May 26: second advertisement; May 30: pre-bid conference; June 2: third advertisement; June 15: bid opening
- Possible ground-breaking for the archival building is August 2023.

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. DISCUSSION OF OBTAINING NON-PROFIT LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR BOARD MEMBERS – Jason Jacob

- Jason Jacob explained that he had a prior conversation with former Library Director Spencer Watts regarding insurance for the Board and is interested to see if it could be placed in the upcoming budget.
- Kristen Edson responded that she received one quote for coverage today; she was informed by the Deputy State Librarian that most library boards carry insurance; staff will make an attempt to gather other quotes for comparison.
- Comment from Kathy Wascom regarding if it is possible to have direct D&O insurance, similar to other types of civic boards and commissions, and ask other entities what they recommend.
- Jason Jacob commented that the board's consensus is for Library staff to gather more information and plan to include the cost in the upcoming budget discussion.

B. DISCUSSION OF SUGGESTED LIBRARY BOARD RESOLUTION – Jason Jacob

- A copy of the proposed resolution was given to the Board members; it contains a response from the Library on upcoming legislative bills.
- Kristen Edson explained that the resolutions were suggested at a recent meeting of the Louisiana Library Association and were drafted by the Lincoln Parish Library Board of Control; includes language to support the bills as written only if the suggested language and changes are implemented; other Louisiana library boards have signed the resolution as well.
- The Board and Library staff discussed the proposed bills and the Library's current collection and patron policies, as well as possible political involvement of the Board; it was decided for the Board to appoint a committee to participate in communicating and working with the public, library organizations, and the legislature, to oppose the bills as currently written, but supportive of the bills if amended. ☐☐☐
- A motion was made by Donald Luther, Jr. to adopt the Library Board resolution and seconded by Nicole Allmon-Learson. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

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

VII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL

- Nicole Allmon-Learson commented on her appreciation of Library staff in all matters, and particularly the current legislative issues, and the value that the staff adds to the library system, allowing it to be what it is.
- Kathy Wascom commented she wants Library staff to know her appreciation for what the Library provides for children and teens.
- Donald Luther, Jr. also thanked Library staff for the work they do to make it a wonderful system.
- Delores Watts commented that from an educator's perspective, she hears positive feedback from community members on how grateful they are for children's services and programming.
- Jason Jacob shared praise on the Library's Garden Discoveries program and website.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Board President Jason Jacob requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Nicole Allmon-Learson. **The meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m. by unanimous vote.**

Mr. Jason Jacob, President

Ms. Kristen Edson, Interim Library Director