

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 15, 2023**  
**4:00 P.M.**

**AGENDA**

CALL TO ORDER – Jason Jacob, Board President (4:03 pm)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Candace Temple

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

Donald Luther, Jr. – Present

Kathy Wascom – Present

Nicole Allmon-Learson – Present (4:08 pm)

***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; Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director; Bryce Tomlin, Technical Services Coordinator; Jason Salsbury, PC/LAN Specialist

OTHERS PRESENT: J. Daniels, CEO East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority; Jasmin Barnes, Forum 225 Service Chair; Leland Moss, Forum 225 VP of Service; Darryl Hurst, Metro Council Member, District 5.

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 18, 2023 – A motion to approve was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Martha Stickle. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

II. SPECIAL ORDERS

A. PRESENTATION OF THE EARL K. LONG HOSPITAL SITE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

- CEO of the East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority, J. Daniels, presented a slideshow to the Board regarding site redevelopment of the former Earl K. Long Hospital in north Baton Rouge.
- The conceptual development plan will include a START (Strategically Targeted Access for Resources and Technology) Library Branch, as well as other community resources and organizations, including greenspaces, a teacher's village, a YWCA early learning center, a health clinic, a food outlet, a transportation hub, mixed income housing, and other economic and retail anchors.
- Discussion and questions from the Board included maintenance and security for the development, as well as cost and construction phasing.

B. FORUM 225 PRESENTATION ON THE PROPOSED COMMUNITY REFRIGERATOR

- Forum 225 Service Chair, Jasmin Barnes, presented a slideshow to the Board regarding the proposed community refrigerator to be located at the Delmont Gardens Branch Library.
- The refrigerator is part of a national initiative to provide free food in underserved communities; Baton Rouge already has two others, and more are located in New Orleans and Lafayette.
- Food will be provided by donations and anyone is allowed to take items from the refrigerator.
- The Library will provide the cement pad, electricity and plumbing; Library staff will alert Forum 225 of any noted issues; a member of Forum 225 will visit the site once a month for monitoring.
- Discussion and questions from the Board included community need for fresh food sources; branding of the refrigerator; cost of utilities; and donation guidelines and regulations.

### III. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

#### A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Rhonda Pinsonat (4:43 pm)

- For 2023, operating expenditures through May 31 are 33.39% of the operating budget. Through May, we should have spent no more than 42% of the budget.
- Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2023 remain ahead of those collected in 2022, as we are approximately 5.1% ahead of the same period last year.

#### B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein (4:44 pm)

- “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of Library programs.
- Mary Stein showed the Board a display of the “Get Down and Clean Up” litter kits, provided by a state funded program for patrons to check out and use for picking up litter; the large tote kits contain safety vests, plastic bags, canvas totes, extension grabber tools, and instructions.
- Ms. Stein also showed the Board a recent patron feedback form that elicited praise for Library staff and their positive experiences at the Zachary Branch Library; the Library has also received a handwritten letter in the mail from a patron who expressed gratitude for the Library system; local minister, Rev. Alexis Anderson, also mentioned praise for the EBRP Library in her Rising Tides award ceremony, designating the Library system as an instrumental organization in growing and uniting the community.
- The Summer Reading Program has begun; this year’s theme is “All Together Now”; the program is available to everyone, not just children; over 1,500 patrons attended the STEM summer kickoff event on June 1 at the Main Library.
- The River Center Branch Library will participate in the Juneteenth Unity Fest tomorrow night, with a literacy and author showcase, as well as other programs and offerings.
- Summer programs for teens have included Escape Rooms and Egg Drops.
- The Library’s Career Center is hosting the Cool Careers program, for teens or anyone interested in different career industries; careers in NASA was the first presentation.
- The Greenwell Springs Regional Library will host the FUNDamentals STEAM program, for early education teachers and providers; in partnership with Dow and the Knock Knock Children’s Museum.
- The River Center Branch Library will host the Spark Your Summer program for single moms to learn about household and auto repair; there will also be STEM activities for attendee’s children.
- Other programs at the Main Library have included free child safety seat installation and the summer feeding program that provides a free meal for school-aged children; the Movies in the Plaza also continues this summer at the Main Library.
- The Greenwell Springs Regional Library is displaying an art exhibit by folk artist Judith Braggs that celebrates the life of the late Sadie Roberts-Joseph, who was a supporter and volunteer for the EBRP Library system.
- The Library system hosted numerous gardening programs this past month.
- The Main Library is hosting LPB’s Southern Storytellers programs on July 15 at 3:00 pm.
- The Virtual Author Talks continues to be a popular series; the Strictly Business webcast also continues this summer, and past episodes can be found in the archives on the Business Report’s website.
- Mary Stein showed the Board an article from The Advocate newspaper regarding the Library’s genealogy services; she also explained to the Board new learning platforms and services the Library will soon be providing for patrons.

Donald Luther, Jr. commented that he would like to acknowledge Metro Council Member Darryl Hurst for attending the Board meeting; he does not recount any Metro Council Member attending a Library Board meeting during the past eight years he has served.

#### C. OTHER REPORTS

##### 1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson (5:07 pm)

- The upgraded LED lights for Zachary Branch Library have been ordered.
- Hardware replacement for the Brivo card access system has been completed at Fairwood, Jones Creek, Central and River Center Library locations; new key cards will be printed, and staff enrollment into the system is underway.
- Exterior window washing has begun, for all library branches; work has been completed at Main and River Center Library locations.
- A new chiller was installed at Zachary branch library; a leaking valve was repaired on the chiller at Carver branch library.

- Bad bearings were discovered on other air handling units at the Main Library; the units are 10 years old; parts have been ordered for replacement.
- Leaks have been repaired at River Center branch library; work was completed under the manufacturer's warranty.
- The Library has received the door hardware and louvers for the Jones Creek Library water main repair project; installation will be soon be completed.
- A revised budget was received for the chiller replacement project; the first advertisement for bids will be next week, with a pre-bid meeting scheduled for June 27.
- Cement pouring was completed for Phase 2 of the Outreach Services renovation project; a new island is being formed in the front parking lot; new stairs in the rear are also being formed; placement of the new shorelines was finalized; revised pocket park drawings are 60% complete, but waiting on input from MOVEBR; duct cleaning is scheduled to begin today and continue tomorrow while staff are not working in the building.
- Roof fascia painting was completed at Bluebonnet Regional; gutter installation is now ongoing.
- A new fence was installed at Delmont Gardens branch library; a new roof leak has also been discovered, and the architects are working with the contractor for a solution.
- A project meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday for the roof replacement project at Jones Creek Regional; still no word on the copula work.
- Painting was completed at Fairwood branch library for the miscellaneous repair package project; painting also was completed at Delmont Gardens, and flooring replacement will begin there next week; still waiting on an updated schedule; pressure washing was completed at Carver branch library, along with sealing of the masonry; there was a delay on bathroom materials for Carver branch.
- The library is waiting on revised mechanical drawings for the Bluebonnet Regional Library renovation project.

## 2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Kristen Edson and Bryce Tomlin (5:21 pm)

- Computer Services Update: the resolution for the Library's new website has passed approval by the Metro Council and waiting on contract signing; the Library replaced its PC and print management software; additional Wi-Fi hotspots have been received for distribution to branch libraries; a licensing issue has been resolved for patron VDI terminals at Zachary and Scotlandville branch libraries; the network security vendor has been successful in flagging and alerting potential malicious links and programs on staff computers; access control through the City's Brivo system is being updated at all libraries with fob access; year-to-date statistics include the following:
  - Kiosks: As of May 31, 30% of checked out items were checked out at a kiosk this year, representing 130,219 items
  - Credit Cards: As of May 31, there have been 769 credit card payments made this year by 717 patrons for a total of \$12,053.21; \$153.80 of this amount was convenience fees; 13.67% of all payments made have been credit card payments
  - Hotspots: As of May 31, hotspots have circulated 1,961 times by 573 patrons this year
  - Tickets: In the month of May, 241 tickets were created, and 199 tickets were resolved
- Discussion on the network security and timeline for the new website development.
- A kickoff meeting for the Facilities Master Plan Community Engagement was held May 31; the Steering committee discussed the formation and needs of members for a Community Advisory Committee and Staff Engagement Committee; the consultant will be touring library buildings the third week of July.
- The organizational review report was made available by the consultant and was shared with Library staff, the Mayor-President, City-Parish Human Resources, and the Library Board; a new library organizational chart will be posted to the library's website for more public transparency.
- Library administrative staff have met with several Metro Council members to update them on various topics, including facility projects, and the Library's staff vacancy rate and low salary concerns, and how that has an impact on the search for the new Library Director.
- The internal communications contract has been executed with the selected vendor; they will assist in establishing an internal communications plan with library staff.
- All Library Board members will be registered for the upcoming Louisiana Library Association conference and trustee luncheon, on July 7; the Patrons of the Public Library will provide a luncheon for employee service milestone recognition and a pin ceremony.
- Library administrative staff met with the Mayor-President last week to discuss the possibility of altering unclassified positions in the City-Parish pay scale in attempt to assist with the search and hiring of a new Library Director; it was suggested to raise the Library Director entry-level salary range to step 10 through

16 to attract more national candidates; city officials and Metro Council members are also working on a solution on how to improve the City-Parish pay scale overall; Library staff will meet with them again next month to continue collaborating on finding a solution; the updated Library Director job description and entry pay was sent to the hiring consultant for restarting the candidate search.

- Board members discussed possible retention issues and the higher entry-level pay for a new Library Director, as well as altering requirements for other entry-level library positions.

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 (5:45 pm)

- Construction bids were received May 18 and all were over budget; Library staff met with Architectural Services, the architects, and the lowest responsive bidder to value engineer the project; still waiting on final numbers and other discussions on how to lower the costs.
- Discussion on other ways to adjust the budget and manage rising construction and material costs.

##### B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY – Patricia Husband (5:57 pm)

- A pre-bid meeting was held May 25; options for replacing the crepe myrtle trees was discussed.
- The bid opening was held today at 2:00 p.m.; waiting on Architectural Services to evaluate the bids and give the opinion of the lowest responsive bidder.

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

#### VI. NEW BUSINESS

##### A. VOTE TO APPROVE UPDATED MAKERSPACE USER AGREEMENT – Kristen Edson (5:59 p.m.)

- Changes to the original agreement include re-wording of two patron rules and responsibilities when using a library makerspace.
- A motion to approve the updated user agreement was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Martha Stickle. **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 expressed gratitude for Library staff and other Board members who are actively monitoring and participating in current legislative changes that will affect public libraries in Louisiana.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Board President Jason Jacob requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Martha Stickle. **The meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m. by unanimous vote.**

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Mr. Jason Jacob, President

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Ms. Kristen Edson, Interim Library Director