

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
January 18, 2024
4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER – Candace Temple, Board Interim President (4:08)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Delores Watts (4:09)

I. ROLL CALL – Antoinette Poland, Assistant to the Library Director (4:10)

Candace Temple – Board Interim Vice President

Darryl Hurst – Present

Delores Watts – Present

Donald Luther, Jr. – Present

Kathy Wascom – Present

Nicole Allmon-Learson – Present

Ronnie Pierce – Present

A quorum was present.

STAFF PRESENT – Patricia Husband, Co-Interim Library Director; Mary Stein, Co-Interim Library Director; Tanya Allison – Assistant Library Business Manager; Rhonda Pinsonat, Library Business Manager; Bryce Tomlin, Computer and Technical Services Coordinator; Ben Decker, Computer Services; Jason Salisbury, Computer Services, Stephen Solomon, Computer Services; Rosana Sotile, Assistant to Deputy Library Director; Antoinette Poland, Assistant to Library Director; Frank Hillyard, Videographer; Joseph McAllister, Media for Darryl Hurst.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 16, 2023 – A motion to approve was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously. (4:11)**

III. SPECIAL ORDERS – Board Interim President Candace Temple recognized and welcomed East Baton Rouge Parish Library’s new Director Katrina Stokes (4:12)

IV. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR – (4:13)

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Rhonda Pinsonat

- For 2023, operating expenditures through December 31, 2023, are 82.06% of the operating budget. Through December, we should have spent no more than 100% of the budget.
- Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2023 remain ahead of those collected in 2022, as we are approximately 8.7% ahead of the same period last year. This total will change in a few months once fourth-quarter interest is posted.

According to the Sheriff's Tax Office, tax bills were mailed out later than normal, so taxpayers have been given a grace period to pay their property taxes by January 16 without any penalties or interest. Next month's cash Collection report should look close to normal once several homeowners and large corporations have paid.

B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein (4:15)

- Around the Parish: included future programs and holiday events throughout the system, with special media attention from *inRegister* for The Kids Orchestra, and *The Advocate*, radio, and television for Special Collections.
 - In the Season's Readings promotion, the community and staff shared and discussed their favorite books. Books from the January cover of the newsletter included biographies, Colleen Hoover, John Grisham, kids' books by authors Mo Willems and Dr. Seuss. In 2023, over 1 million digital downloads and over a million physical items will be checked out.
 - Holidays were celebrated at all locations like Jones Creek, Christmas poinsettia were created by the community as a thank you; at Delmont Gardens kids enjoyed fun activities with Press Start, Ready, Set, Read; performances from Baton Rouge Pop-Up Orchestra at the River Center and Main Library; Madame Dulcimer & Lady Chops Holiday Concert performed at Pride; and Baton Rouge Early Childhood Collaborative brought Santa Clause to the Scotlandville Library.
 - The "Sock It to Me" sock drive collected 5,300 pairs of socks from all branches.
 - New Programs like Tai-Chi, Line Dancing, Urban Gardening, Henry Turner Listening Room Film Festival including live music, a Chautauqua performer presentation of "Lincoln at the Library."
 - In Special Collections, The Baton Rouge Room's archived materials were used to make the LPB show "A Tall Order: Louisiana State Capitol" and the Buckskin Bill Tribute Special which will be aired on Channel 9 WAFB.
 - New feature "Libraries Change Lives" will air on our television station, social media, and The Source newsletter.
 - In addition, the Author Talk series will continue, as well as the Business Report's "Strictly Business" series.
 - Library usage numbers have increased in circulation, gate count, new library cards, overall patron count, engagement activity counts, including participation in special literacy projects. Robust engagement speaks to our mission to provide information and access.
 - More than 300 patrons participated in the EBRPL Website Redesign Questionnaire, providing valuable feedback for the new website.
 - Circulation will begin to issue new cards after January 17, 2024, for children ages 0-17, using the new card tiers based on ACT 436.
 - Special Collections Lecture Series featured Author Victoria Edwards and her new book "the Life and Times of a Governor's Daughter."

Mary Stein asked for questions.

Board Interim President Candace Temple responded that she like the video created for the new video series.

Mary Stein replied that it is all about the individual stories and impacts that are replicated repeatedly throughout the system.

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

A. OTHER REPORTS – Patricia Husband (4:41):

A. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS

• Winter Update:

City Parish, schools, and state were closed on Tuesday, Jan 16. At the request of the mayor's office and Homeland Security, library locations were opened for regular operations. Libraries were considered as an Essential Service to serve the community as warming centers for those in need. We had dedicated staff who even came from Port Allen after the bridge opened. Library staff have been busy helping patron in any way they can.

Facilities staff have been working tirelessly to keep the buildings warm. Five of our locations experienced heating issues: Baker, Carver, Bluebonnet, Eden Park, Delmont, and Pride.

○ Carver:

Had to be closed around 10 a.m. The repairs were in progress, but incomplete; the portable heaters were not keeping the 12,000 square foot space warm and were also tripping the breakers. The building is still closed Wednesday and will remain closed Thursday. Staff will be working at other locations. Carver will reopen Monday, January 22.

○ Baker:

Facilities staff re-set the system twice, without success. Eventually the staff diagnosed the problem, bought the parts, and repaired the system. The building was closed at 5 p.m. because the temperature was dropping. The branch was re-opened on Wednesday and has remained open this week.

○ Delmont Gardens:

Facilities staff and a vendor worked most of the day to restore heat but were unsuccessful. They found that a circuit board needed to be replaced. Because the temperature was dropping the building was closed at 5 on Tuesday and did not open on Wednesday or Thursday. Staff worked at other locations. We have a quote, but the circuit board will have to be programmed before it can be shipped. To date there is no ETA for the board's arrival. The plan is to re-open on Sunday, January 21. For both Delmont and Carver, we will assess the situation based on the weather.

○ Eden Park:

Facilities staff were able to restore heat - we closed at their normal time of 8 p.m. They have been open all week.

○ Pride:

Facilities staff were able to restore heat by mid-afternoon, so the branch closed at their normal time, 8 p.m. Pride has been open all week.

Board Member Nicole Allmon-Learson shared her appreciation of the library being there for the community. She said that a constituent who had no electricity received help from the Eden Park Branch opening.

Patricia Husband asked Mary Stein to share an experience relayed at a breakfast she attended.

Mary Stein shared that two members of the public, who had no personal need for our resource as a warming center, thought it was outstanding that we were open to the public to aid local citizens and were very appreciative.

Patricia Husband said: We just wanted to share that progress and that the facility staff report to work at 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. in the morning, in the cold, to service the systems so we can be up and running.

Board Member Ronnie Pierce asked for staff members who were not able report to work due to the weather conditions; were they charged leave for Tuesday?

Patricia Husband responded: We are working on how to organize and adjust the payroll; everyone will be compensated.

Board Member Ronnie Pierce asked will those who did come to work receive compensatory time or time and a half.

Patricia Husband responded they are working on a way to compensate individuals who were able to make it in and work despite the City-Parish closures.

Board Member Ronnie Pierce asked for gate counts from Tuesday and how do they compare a typical Tuesday?

Mary Stein responded that the numbers were not available yet. Based on observation, it was not that busy of a day; most residents who could did stay home.

Patricia Husband replied that by the time Carver closed, the temperature inside was in the low fifties and the heaters were working at full capacity. One person visited Baker in the morning and a couple in the afternoon, and that we were available to those in need.

B. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

• **Roofing Replacement Update:**

- Jones Creek:
Delivery of the cupola windows for JCR has been delayed and we should get an update on the delivery at the January meeting later this month. The library provided dates when they will be closed to facilitate installation. Those dates are February 12-13 when the library is closed for Mardi Gras and Training Day.
- Some canopies still need to be installed.
- Flashing needs to be installed or replaced at several locations.
- The contractor is working on repairing leaks that staff have identified, either on the roofs or in the gutters.
- We are still waiting for handrails to be delivered to Bluebonnet.
- The gate at the Delmont Gardens branch still needs to be adjusted.
- We appreciate the help and guidance of Architectural Services as we attempt to complete this project.

• **Miscellaneous Multi-branch Improvements Update:**

- Carver:
The contractor has provided a cost to repair the damaged countertop. The estimate is in Architectural Services for review.
- Delmont Gardens:
Change order submittals regarding window repairs, meeting room flooring, and computer area flooring have been updated and sent to Architectural Services. The contractor will not be installing the weeps in the south wall of the building, so that change order will not be approved.

- **Pride:**
We have the cost breakdown for the lights. We will save approximately \$10,000 if the library purchases the lights outright and works with the City-Parish electrical contractor to have them installed. Following this course of action will also result in a small credit to the project, since one of the lights was in the contractor's scope of work.

- **Outreach Improvements:**

The Library and Architectural Services are working on the proposed change orders.

- The change order to add parking spaces has been rejected as being cost prohibitive.
- The change order for the storefront doors (new entrances to Outreach and Recycled Reads) has been approved. They have a 6–8-week lead time.
- We are still reviewing the costs to renovate the janitor's closet and providing power to the FM 200 System.

Architectural Services has compiled a change order log – the final costs have yet to be determined. Once it is ready, we will go to Council for approval.

Bluebonnet:

We had a contract amendment for the architect, and they are reviewing it.

Patricia Husband asked if anyone had questions.

Board Member Delores Watts asked does the \$10,000 dollars cover the full cost.

Patricia Husband replies that the \$10,000 is the difference if the contractor completed the work as opposed to EBRPL completing the work.

Board Member Ronnie Pierce asked about parking being relocated due to construction on the corner of Acadian.

Patricia Husband replied that a parklet was to be installed, and we had planned to address the several lost parking spaces, but due to the cost, Architectural Services advised us to place that project on hold.

Patricia Husband asked for questions.

Board Interim President Candace Temple asked for questions by the Board as well as any public comments.

There were no more questions by the board or public comments.

V. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – No reports of committees (4:54)

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Patricia Husband (4:54)

A. UPDATE ON SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY

- **South Branch Update:**

Through November, the contractor continued working on the spread footings.

They were also working on rough gratings and the MEP deep and shallow rough-ins.

The permit was issued on December 5.

In the interim, the contractor was waiting for the permit to be issued, so they could pour concrete. On December 4, just before the permit was issued to enable them to pour the concrete, the site experienced a significant rain event that washed out much of the dirt around the footings and filled the footing spaces with water. As a result, the footings had to be repaired; the repairs will be part of a change order that will include an extension of time and an increase in money. The contractor is working on the estimated cost to repair and restore the footings and the architect will review and submit his recommendations to Architectural Services.

A second rain on December 10 left water standing in some of the footings. They pumped the water out and continued to repair the footings.

Another rain the first week of January flooded the area.

Based on an assessment by the structural engineer, the footing reinforcements will need to be removed, the contractor will need to re-excavate down to concrete dry bottoms, and the testing agency will need to re-evaluate the dry bottoms and bearing conditions.

All the footing reinforcements will need to be stored on blocking to avoid lying in mud or standing water, and the reinforcement must be clean and free of mud or dirt prior to reinstallation. In all, only 17 of the 54 footings were able to be salvaged. As of January 9, all the damaged footings had been poured.

Other work that has been started:

- They have begun digging the grade beams.
- Work on domestic water and fire lines should begin soon; work was delayed due to weather conditions.
- Layouts of the Pavement and Mechanical yard.
- Installing the air chiller water lines.
- The structural steel has been delivered.
- The deep electrical rough-in was being routed to temporary power and 2" underground and ¾" conduit for exterior receptacles were installed. The electrician installed 4" conduit to extend to the data pedestal.

Additional Items:

- The water company has not removed the remaining sections of the water pipe that was abandoned. If necessary, Ratcliff will demo the rest of the pipe that is under the building.
- Bofinger's pruned the tree in the last week of November. We have a quote from them to maintain the tree for 2024 and I have requested that a requisition be started so we should have a PO soon.
- Library staff continue to work on the furniture package and are much closer to finalizing it.
- In preparation for laying conduit and pouring the slab, Library staff have verified locations of floor boxes and placement of conduit for future use.

Patricia Husband stated that at Fairwood and Main we planned for extra conduit for when physical media like AV, DVD, and Blu-ray go away. We want to be able to repurpose the area and not disrupt the structure with digging. In addition, we want to make sure the placement of the floor boxes conduit is correct, because that will be the permanent location.

New estimated completion date: December 2024.

Patricia Husband stated this new completion date is due to the weather event that caused setbacks. Board Member Kathy Wascom inquired if the Structural Engineer reviewed the site. Patricia Husband replied that yes, the Structural Engineer has been reviewing the site. There are footers that are important to the foundation; they support the building in which the grade beams will go, But these were damaged and are currently in repair.

Board Interim President Candace Temple asked for an update on the Scotlandville Library.

B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY

- **Scotlandville Branch Update:**

Over the past two months, the contractor has completed the following work:

- Removed grass from the archives future parking area
- Removed grass and started removing dirt from the detention pond area
- Installed the temporary fencing for the jobsite and installed the silt fence
- Removed trees from the jobsite
- Continued the site layout
- Removed existing drain boxes
- Building up the parking lot area and building pad to elevation
- Began underground rough-in to backflow area
- Installed conduit for new services
- Formed the building pad.

In the process of excavating the area where the new parking lot will be located, the contractor unearthed another concrete slab that was not initially noted on the site plan; the slab was approximately 12” thick. They provided an estimate to remove the additional concrete, and they subsequently removed 20 truckloads of concrete. As they were removing this concrete, they unearthed another concrete slab; this one was 8” deep. They estimate that removing all the concrete will require an additional 20 truckloads. The reason they need to remove the concrete is because they need 24” of packed soil in place, over which the parking lot will be poured. Removal of the concrete will result in a change order.

Tuesday, December 5, 2023 - Water line was hit by Ratcliff Construction. Part of the issue was that the water line had an undocumented bend in it, which is why the contractor hit it in the first place. The water was turned off, and the contractor contacted his plumber to resolve the issue. Fixing the issue took longer than anticipated, with the repair attempts extending into the following week. The water line had dirt and rocks in it, so the plumber had to clean the dirt and rock out of the lines. On December 13, the electrical contractor hit another area of the water line. With the exception of one stall in the women’s restroom, all the restrooms and the faucets were repaired. Because of the resulting low water pressure, we requested that the water be tested once the lines were fixed. The test revealed that the water was safe to drink. As of January 9, only one stall was still out of order and the contractor was working on repairing it.

Because of the water issues, we had to close early on December 5 (1/2 hour early), and 6 (3 hours early), and we opened late on December 7 (6 hours late).

Also, at the January 9 meeting, the contractor, architect, and engineer were working on relocating some of the storm drains to resolve a potential conflict with the new water lines.

- **Additional Items:**

The brick samples have arrived, and the Library and Architectural Services will review these with the metal panel covers to make a final selection for the exterior of the Archive Annex building.

We will be upsizing the two CRAC (Computer Room Air Conditioning) units. Since we reduced the quantity of units as part of the VE process, the two remaining units need to be slightly larger to provide enough cooling capacity. Therefore, we received credit for one CRAC unit and we will upsize the two remaining ones.

The new estimated completion date: September 2024.

Patricia Husband asked for questions.

Board Member Darryl Hurst asked how big is the detention pond, is it an acre or two or smaller?

Patricia Husband replied that she thinks it is smaller than an acre, but she will get him the information.

Board Member Darryl Hurst asked if it will be a water feature visible to the public once it fills with water or will it dry out.

Patricia Husband replied that it will be a swale designed to catch drainage from the Archive area and then dry out.

Board Member Darryl Hurst responded that some retain water for long periods, but they have levels where they grow maybe five feet in the event of a storm. They kind of double as a neighborhood pond. He wanted to see if there would be potential to partnership with Wildlife and Fisheries to create another resource at the library for the people of the community.

Patricia Husband replied that it is just a shallow swale.

Board Member Ronnie Pierce asked if when the storage facility is completed, will we vacate the rented space we have now.

Patricia Husband replied no, that space will still be used as a temporary library facility while renovating the current Scotlandville Branch Library building. We are constructing in phases so we can continue to operate a small library with a popular collection and some computers, to prevent interruption of service for local patrons.

Patricia Husband asked for questions.

VII. NEW BUSINESS – (5:11)

A. INTRODUCTION OF NEW LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL MEMBERS – CANDACE TEMPLE

B. VOTE TO ELECT OFFICERS FOR THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL FOR 2024 – DELORES WATTS motion to approve was made to elect Candace Temple for President; Donald Luther, Jr. for Vice President, and Kathy Wascom for Treasurer. A motion to approve was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Darryl Hurst.

The motion was carried unanimously. (5:11)

VIII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL – Board Member Delores Watts congratulated new board members Ronnie Pierce and Darryl Hurst and newly elected members President Candace Temple, Vice President Donald Luther, Jr., and Treasurer Kathy Wascom. Board President Candace Temple ask for any new additional comments under new business or any public comments. **No public comments were made (5:14).**

IX. ADJOURNMENT – President Candace Temple requested a motion to adjourn; Delores Watts made the motion to adjourn, and Donald Luther seconded it. **The meeting was adjourned at (5:20)**