

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 16, 2023
4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER – Jason Jacob, Board President (4:06 p.m.)

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 – Absent

A quorum was present

STAFF PRESENT – 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; Daniel Dearing, Network Technician I; Bryce Tomlin, Librarian IV.

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 19, 2023 – A motion to approve was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously.**

II. SPECIAL ORDERS – There were no Special Orders.

III. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Rhonda Pinsonat (4:07 p.m.)

- For 2022, operating expenditures rose to 87.51% of the operating budget. This number is not final though, as adjustments and charges will continue to be recorded for another one to two months. As of January 31, 2023, expenditures are 6.30% 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 2023 are slightly ahead of those collected last year, as we are 4.43% ahead of 2022. Cash collections for 2022 will be finalized when 4th quarter interest earnings are posted, which again will take another one to two months.

B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Mary Stein (4:09 p.m.)

- “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of Library programs.
- Many local news outlets have published upcoming library programs, including a dinosaur program that begins this week.
- Actor and New Orleans native, Jimez Alexander, hosted “The Actor’s Lunch Break,” a children’s program held February 8 at the Main Library.
- The Kid’s Orchestra performed earlier this month at the Jones Creek Regional Library.
- The “Read Across America” program begins in March; this year will be a celebration of Dr. Seuss.
- On February 27, the executive producer at Louisiana Public Broadcasting, Linda Midgett, will host Jay Dardenne, the documentary host and creator of “Why Louisiana Ain’t Mississippi or Any Place Else!”, for a discussion on the making of the film.
- Sunday, March 19, the Main Library will host the kickoff party for the 2023 One Book, One Community series; this year’s book is *The Blues: The Authentic Narrative of my Music and Culture*, by Chris Thomas King; the kickoff party will include food, live music, crafts and community organizations.

- The recent Garden Discoveries event was held Saturday, February 11; the theme was “Color in the Garden”; the Library is also promoting spring gardening programs, such as, Master Gardeners, Hilltop Arboretum, Seed Swaps, and the Baton Rouge Spring Garden Show.
- The “Crochet for a Cause” group at the Main Library has donated many items to local organizations and charities, including hats for newborn babies and sleeping mats for those experiencing homelessness; they also crochet with plarn, which is yarn created from recycled plastic bags.
- The Main Library’s Career Center has created a self-development program based off the book, *The Artist’s Way*, by Julia Cameron; the 13-week program is being held on Tuesday nights at the Main Library.
- The Business Report’s monthly “Business Forum” webcast has been renamed “Strictly Business: Virtual Conversations”; Mike Wampold, a Baton Rouge developer, was this month’s guest; next month will feature Josh Descant, CEO of REV/REV.
- The Author Talk Series continues to be successful and impactful; genres include fiction, non-fiction, self-help, and biographies.
- The Sounds of Science series was rescheduled from January to February 26, and will continue through March; the series will conclude with a special daytime event at the Main Library.
- The Library will again collaborate with VITA and the United Way to host Super Tax Day, to bring free tax services to the public.
- New early literacy calendars are now available in both English and Spanish, designed for families with young children.
- On Tuesday, March 7, the Marriott Hotel will host a public meeting for the I-10 redesign project; the Library will provide updated information regarding the project.

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson (4:24 p.m.)

- Alvin Rattle and Kristen Edson completed their annual visits to all library branch locations; they gave general updates to each branch manager on either large or small capital improvements.
- The Notice to Proceed was issued February 15 for the Outreach Services building improvement project; library computer services staff assisted with preparations for the replacement of the server room floor.
- A design development meeting was held February 6 with the architects for the Bluebonnet Regional improvement project to review design changes, including an alternative design for the service desk in Circulation.
- Skylights were replaced on February 3 at Jones Creek Regional and February 6 at Bluebonnet libraries; “before” and “after” photos of the skylights at Jones Creek Regional were shown to the Board.
- A pre-construction meeting was held February 15 for the miscellaneous repair package at the Pride-Chaneyville Branch to review the project timeline; work will commence after review of the phasing plan and is intended to be complete by April 22 for the Community History Day event at the Pride-Chaneyville branch.

2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Kristen Edson and Mary Stein (4:31 p.m.)

- Board members were given a draft of the Library’s 2010-2022 Key Performance Indicators; tracking database usage allows the Library to determine how reference items are being used and what results are produced from searches; overall, library usage statistics are rising, and the collection remains around 2 million items.
- Jason Jacob asked why the cardholder number has decreased since 2011; Mary Stein responded that it is due to new procedures to verify residency and eligibility for active patrons within three years; the cardholder database is now purged each year.
- Kathy Wascom commented on the archival databases and suggested expanding the knowledge of the databases to the public; Mary Stein replied that school visits to the Library and librarian’s visits to schools have resumed as usual since Covid-19, and the library marketing for events and programs includes mention of its databases; the Library also provides links to the Niche Academy on the website homepage.
- A recent server outage caused patron computers to be unusable for three days, but the issue was resolved with assistance from an external vendor.
- The Library received 22 responses to its website redesign RFP; the library’s website RFP committee is beginning its review and grading period; the final choice will be presented to the Metro Council on April 12.
- Library staff released the E-Rate RFP for fiber services; those proposals will be reviewed once the website RFP proposal review period has concluded; the new contract for internet service will be awarded before July.

- The architects for the Baker Branch renovation project have asked the Library for an amicable dissolution of the design contract, due to the inability to make progress with the schematic design, as well as the lead architect's retirement; an RFQ will be issued in the near future for selection of a new project architect.
- Library administration met with the Mayor-President and the new Chief Administration Officer on Monday to discuss the Board's decision to pause the search for a new Library Director; the Mayor's office supports Library administration adopting a plan to request a salary increase for the Library Director position, as well as library employees system-wide; other discussions included the engagement of a scheduling consultant and a consultant to perform a salary study among other operational items; there was also a discussion regarding the Attorney General's report and the Library's current cardholder policy; and a discussion regarding members of the Mayor's Stormwater Task Force which has been formed to comprehensively review ways to pay for the work to be done.
- Current statistics include the following:
 - Kiosks: as of January 31, 30.2% of checked out items were checked out at a kiosk; represents 27,291 items
 - Credit Cards: As of January 31, there have been 194 credit card payments made this year by 189 patrons for a total of \$2,973.94; \$38.80 of this amount were convenience fees; 13.5% of all payments made have been credit card payments
 - Hotspots: As of January 31, hotspots have circulated 456 times by 339 patrons

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 (4:55 p.m.)

- On February 3, library staff met with the South Branch Architects and Architectural Services to review the door hardware options.
- Library staff also reviewed details of window shades for the Children's Services and Teen Services courtyard windows.
- Revised floor plans and specifications should be delivered to library staff next week; once received, staff will review the changes, in preparation for the bid release.
- The project does not have an updated timeline; depending on when the documents are received and how long it takes to review, the project may be able to stay on the time track discussed last month.
- Kathy Wascom asked if the project timeline for construction will be moved to the end of June, instead of the beginning of June; Patricia Husband responded that she is hopeful, as there will be documents to review but there is an efficient review system in place, but there are no guarantees.
- Martha Stickle commented that she has a deeper appreciation for building design and construction after hearing the Board construction project reports.

B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY – Patricia Husband (5:02 p.m.)

- The bids for the Scotlandville Branch renovation project came in over budget; Library staff consulted with Architectural Services and made the decision to cancel the bid to give time to value-engineer the building.
- Only two contractors submitted bids; it is possible others were hesitant to bid because of the length of time for the construction project, which includes building the archives building first, then renovating the library building; it is possible there was hesitancy in forecasting the rising costs of materials, as well as the reason for the submitted bids being over budget.
- The architect suggested dividing the project into two phases; each phase would bid separately; this might result in estimates closer to the budgeted amount, since each separate project would have a shorter timeline than the original, combined package.
- Library staff met with the architects and Architectural Services as part of the value engineering process, and separated the project into two phases; architects provided preliminary drawings to show how the project could be amended to meet budgetary requirements while preserving the integrity of the project.
- Proposed changes were reviewed on February 13, which included the following:
 - Relocate the detention pond; this eliminates the cost of having to relocate the gas line
 - Reduce some of the landscaping
 - Substitute concrete for pavers
 - Reduce the size of the archival building and reconfigure the square footage

- Other archival building changes: Reconfigure the facilities workrooms, storage, and mechanical rooms to accommodate the new shape; substitute metal panels on one wall, and perhaps part of a second wall, instead of using brick throughout; change fully concealed sprinkler heads to semi-recessed heads; and eliminating floor boxes in the shelving area, only relying on wall outlets
- For the library building: removal of the gabled glass wall bump-out at the meeting room and at the Children's and Teens areas; finding more economical lighting fixtures in some areas; removal of high glass on the north and south walls of the Black Heritage room; change the ceiling tiles from 1'x 4' to 2'x 2'; reduce the number of doors with access control; relocate chilled water pumps and accessories into the boiler room; change fully concealed sprinkler heads to semi-recessed heads; change wires greater than a #1 to aluminum; replace gypsum board ceilings in restrooms with acoustical ceiling tiles; change the cladding on the interior columns; and lower the height of the glass at the program rooms
- Alternate changes: use 6' high chain link fence instead of decorative fencing; eliminate the color banding on the glazing behind the interior signage
- The project plan includes completing the update of the archives building and ready it for bidding; once that portion of the project goes out to bid, the architects will update the documentation for reviewing and bidding.
- A revised timeline is not yet available; depending on cost saving estimates, some items eliminated in the value engineering process may be restored back into the project.
- The value engineering savings are estimated to be around \$900 thousand to \$1 million.
- Donald Luther, Jr. asked if any architectural features will be taken away for cost savings; Patricia Husband responded that the front façade will remain the same, which is a dramatic change; also, the window design of the archival building will still match the window design of the library building.
- Kathy Wascom asked if the detention pond is to prevent flooding and if there have been any issues with the pond silt; Patricia Husband responded that it's mostly a small, low swale that allows for water drainage to seep into the ground, not necessarily a large pond; it will be designed for low maintenance, not a full pond that holds water.
- Donald Luther, Jr. asked how has Sean Johnson, with Architectural Services, planned for rising construction costs; Patricia Husband responded that Mr. Johnson has already made recommendations for how much the library should add to the construction budgets; it's anticipated that some costs will come down or level-off.

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. VOTE TO APPOINT KRISTEN EDSON AS INTERIM LIBRARY DIRECTOR – Jason Jacob (5:19 p.m.)

- Jason Jacob explained that because of the pause in the search for the new Library Director, the position remains open and Kristen Edson would assume the interim designation.
- A motion was made by Jason Jacob to appoint Kristen Edson as the Interim Library Director and seconded by Donald Luther, Jr. **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 – No comments were made

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 adjourned at 5:21 p.m. by unanimous vote.**