

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
March 20, 2025
4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Candace Temple, Board President (4:09 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Donald Luther, Jr.(4:09 p.m.)

I. ROLL CALL – Ms. Antoinette Poland, Executive Assistant (4:10 p.m.)

Candace Temple, Board President – Present
Donald Luther, Jr., Board Vice President - Present
Kathy Wascom, Board Treasurer – Present
Delores Watts, Board Member– Absent
Nicole Allmon-Learson, Board Member – Present
Darryl Hurst, Board Member - Present
Ronnie Pierce, Board Member - Present

A quorum was present

STAFF PRESENT – Mary Stein, Assistant Library Director; Lori Juge, Assistant Library Director; Antoinette Poland, Executive Assistant to the Library Director.

OTHERS PRESENT – Deputy Blair Nicholson, EBRPSO; Frank Hillyard, Videographer; Mr. Keith Bergseid, Advocate and Patron

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF –**The motion carried unanimously (4:10 p.m.).**

III. SPECIAL ORDERS – There were no items to cover under Special Orders.

IV. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR – (4:10 p.m.)

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Mrs. Lori Juge

- Operating expenditures through December 31st is 86.98% of the operating budget.
- 2024 closed on March 14th. No more adjustments were expected to be made to the expenditures for last year.
- 2025 operating expenditures through February 28th were 12.05% of the operating budget.
- Through February, the library should have spent no more than 16.67% of the operating budget.

- Cash Collections from Property taxes for 2025 started out strong and ahead of those collected in 2024; the Library is approximately 4.82% ahead of the same period last year.

B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Ms. Mary Stein

“Around the Parish” – Ms. Mary Stein discussed and described slideshows of library programs and events.

- Events from February included a collaboration with an LPB documentary screening, Super Tax Day, music events, included storyteller Mama Saba, a performance on the 21-stringed West African harp, Madame Dulcimer and Lady Chops.
- As a goal to celebrate local music makers, and highlight the library’s related resources, including streaming and instrument rental, the Library featured Red Stick Rhythms, a musical platform for local musicians with concerts playing in and outside of the library.
- The Library’s Community Connection with EBR Schools continues with student exhibits of gifted and talented high school art.
- Professor Bob Mann presented “Biography of a Song,” discussing the history of,” a recording of the song called, “You Are My Sunshine,” recorded over one hundred years ago.
- Train Day attracted almost one hundred people; the event included trains, battleships, millennium falcons and activities for kids that got them excited about how things move and work; train day has been scheduled for next year.
- On Friday, March 14, Jefferey Marks, author of “Season of Life,” was present at the One Book One Community Tailgate party; the event included tailgate treats, spirit bracelets, button making, music from the Florida Street Blowhards, and a performance for the Baton Rouge Magnet High Sigma Phi Alpha Step Team.
- Matt Moscona of ESPN will be interviewing Jefferey Marks on Sunday, April 27, 2025 at 3 p.m., at the Main Library on Goodwood. For more information visit ReadOneBook.org
- Additional activities and events included Mascots-To-Go, a program that teaches patrons to make your own cardstock; activities included, face painting, balloons, games, and shakes were served.
- On March 19th, the One Book One Community series featured Ronnie Rance, who spoke about his life in sports and on March 23rd, author Jill Garner discussed her new book, “Strong Heart.”
- On March 29th, the Pride-Chaneyville Branch Library hosted their 15th Annual Community History Festival; there was music, games, food, and crafts for everyone.
- In exhibits and festivals, the Library is helping to promote Little Golden Books: Golden Legacy: Original Art of Eighty Years with display of the book through May 25, 2025 at the LSU Museum of Art: Shaw Center for the Arts.
- During National Library Week, the Library will be hosting The Edible Book Fest on Sunday, April 6th at 3 p.m., where families will compete in a competition creating edible representation of their book title or wordplay on its title.
- On April 12, from 1-3 p.m., in partnership with the Library’s Special Collections Department, (LDAR) Louisiana Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution will be celebrating their 80-year birthday.
- Money Moves Baton Rouge featured Super Tax Day; for help with tax preparation by appointment only, call [225-382-3380](tel:225-382-3380) or visit ebrpl.co/VitaTax or ebrpl.co/moneymovesbr.org
- For the business community and those with staff, Strictly Business featured CEO E. J. Kuiper with Lady of the Lake, discussing healthcare growth and regulatory changes. Archived shows are available at www.ebrpl.com/DigitalLibrary

- Libraries Change Lives: Regina Bergeron is featured, bringing attention to assistance she received from the Library's Genealogy Department. For more information visit www.ebrpl.com
- Library Board President Candace Temple encouraged tagging, posting, reposting, and sharing online to magnify the messages.
- The Patrons of the Public Library (PoPL) helped bring One Book One Community to the library.
- The new library website (ebrpl.org) is still being updated and corrected.

Mary Stein invited questions. There were no questions under System Reports.

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Mrs. Lori Juge

Maintenance Report for February

Main Library: Cooling tower repairs have been done.

All Branches: Facilities staff are working on obtaining a quote for painting the curbs at all locations

Facilities staff are also looking at obtaining a new service contract for all automated sliding doors at all locations.

Miscellaneous Improvement Projects

1. Outreach
 - a. Final acceptance is still pending.
2. Multibranch Project
 - a. Final acceptance is still pending.
3. Roofing Project
 - a. There is currently nothing new to report.
4. Boilers for Eden Park and Greenwell Springs Branch Libraries
 - a. Architectural Services is reviewing the construction document.
5. Bluebonnet Branch Library Renovations
 - a. There is currently nothing new to report.
6. Chiller Project
 - a. Final inspections to compile the punch list for each location are being made this week. Final acceptance is anticipated for next month.

7. Baker Branch Renovation
 - a. Library Staff and Architectural Services are in discussions. Staff are waiting for the preliminary cost estimate from the Facilities Master Plan, which should be available at the end of March, before they proceed with the project.

5. Facilities Master Plan
 - a. Mechanical and Electric engineers visited each branch to evaluate existing facilities and help with cost estimates. Preliminary drawings were presented to staff earlier this month. Mr. Babcock will return in April to present concept drawings to the Library Board.

Lori Juge asked for questions. There were no questions under Miscellaneous Improvements.

2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Ms. Mary Stein

- Mary Stein discusses the need to move the April board meeting to Wednesday April 16, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. due to a mandatory staff training day scheduled on the regular board meeting date of Thursday April 17, 2025.
- Candace Temple requested to move the board meeting to Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. The motion was made by Nicole Allmon-Learson seconded by Delores Watts.
- Discussion to defer Item C under Unfinished Business to April due to the Director’s absence.
- Donald Luther Jr. and Candace Temple shared expressions for the Library director.

V. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – There were no Reports of Committees.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – (4:21 p.m.)

A. UPDATE ON SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY – Ms. Lori Juge and Ms. Mary Stein

- We are still waiting for completion of the punch list and final acceptance.
- The Library is excited about the plan to have a soft opening for the new South Branch location.
- That date will be Monday, March 24th.
- While we are waiting for the staff to be hired and trained , we will be operating on modified hours. (Monday-Thursday: 10-7; Friday: 9-6; Saturday: 10-2).
- Most of the furniture has been installed , except for the service desk, a few end tables, and other items. The service desks are expected to arrive mid-April, but we are hoping they arrive sooner.
- An official dedication will take place once the branch is complete.

Donald Luther Jr. commented on the opening and address for South Branch

Lori Juge commented that the branch will be opening at 10 a.m. located at 2210 Glasgow.

Kathy Watts confirmed the time of opening.

Donald Luther Jr. commented on the beauty of the branch.

Candace Temple asked for additional questions for South Branch

Nicole Allmon-Learson inquired about the anticipated opening of South Branch; how the dip in circulation will affect other branches, and statistics.

Mary Stein replied about the increase in circulation at the nearest branch, which is the Bluebonnet Branch and the attraction of 1/3 new patrons; the excitement from the parents and local schools, and how the local schools art installations are currently on display at the new library.

Donald Luther Jr., commented on the project and bond cost.

Mary Stein responded that is a pay-as-you-go project.

B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY

- The metro council approved the low bid for the phase two Scotlandville project. The Library is waiting on approval from Purchasing to proceed with this project.

Donald Luther Jr., thanks the Metro Council

Mary Stein commented the low bid came in under budget.

C. TO CONDUCT THE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE NEW LIBRARY

DIRECTOR – Ms. Candace Temple requested a motion to defer the performance evaluation to the April board meeting due to the absence of the Director.

VII. NEW BUSINESS – There was no New Business to Report.

VIII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL (4:27 p.m.)

Ronnie Pierce inquired about the public reaction since the compromise was announced.

Mary Stein discussed:

- Mentioned public engagement throughout the process.
- Shared the public's appreciation of the board and library staff for being transparent
- Commented on the public's confusion about the process.
- Shared the that the public continue to be engaged because they care very much and want everyone to be accountable.
- Mentioned website is being updated with information about the millage with superseded information removed.
- Thanked members of the library board for talking to concerned citizens and patrons.

Delores Watts commented on support from her neighbors and the increase in resurrected yard signs throughout her neighborhood.

Mary Stein discussed:

- The library's connection to city parish by using an analogy of a bad leg to explain the library's relationship with other departments.
- The library depends on other department's function.

Nicole Allmon-Learson thanked the staff for their commitment and for going above and beyond during the process.

Kathy Wascom inquired about a resolution.

Mary Stein responded as of noon, no resolution has been added to the agenda

Darryl Hurst discussed:

- Mentioned a deal had not been finalized due to Mosquito Abatement and Rodent Control had not committed to solid numbers.
- Discussed Mosquito Abatement and Rodent Control proposed budget and operating expenses.
- Mentioned the March 12th Metro Council board meeting was deferred to the next meeting, because no decisions were made on a resolution.
- Expressed gratitude for the collaboration between the Library and Metro Council board members for their shared goals and support for the Library.

Mary Stein noted that other libraries were watching and supporting the library's efforts.

Darryl Hurst expressed concerns for two legislative bills affecting BREC's millage, CATS general fund; and that North Baton Rouge and Baker will not be included in CATS discussions.

Darryl Hurst urged everyone to support and protect BREC and CATS from legislative actions; in addition, acknowledged concern for disinvested and already marginalized populations if Zachary and St. George do not invest into CATS.

Kathy Watts commented on legislation of BREC's general and dedicated fund.

Mary Stein identified two House Bills:

- House Bill 86 affects the commissioners
- House Bill 87 will bring them back into City Parish.
- The bills were put forward by State Representative Dixon McMakin

Nicole Allmon-Learson commented about the Legislative Session starting April 14th.

Candace Temple expressed appreciation for the staff's hard work and team efforts.

Donald Luther Jr. thanked Candace Temple for her leadership; recognized the board for their efforts and hard work in keeping everyone updated and acknowledged Mr. Keith Bergseid for being a great patron.

Public Comments were made by Mr. Keith Bergseid, Patron and Supporter:

- Introduced himself as the newest advocate for the library system.
- Thanked the Library Board of Control for their hard work; acknowledged the great work from the library staff.
- Expressed being impressed by the tenacity of the Library Board of Control; and acknowledged Councilman Darryl Hurst and the Metro Council for partnering with the library.
- Commented on the mayor's deliverance of the resolution.
- Acknowledged the parish's outstanding support and heartfelt belief in the library system, which is a reflection of the library's effort.

Ronnie Pierce discussed travel for the American Library Association (ALA) Conference.

- Acknowledged the approval of two board members.
- The conference is in Philadelphia, PA., from June 26 – 30 of this year.
- Encouraged early sign up to get a good rate on conference rooms.

XI. ADJOURNMENT – Ms. Candace Temple requested a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m. by a unanimous vote.**