

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 16, 2025
4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER – Ms. Candace Temple, Board President (4:00 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Mr. Ronnie Pierce (4:00 p.m.)

I. ROLL CALL – Antoinette Poland, Executive Assistant (4:00 p.m.)

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

A quorum was not present during roll call.

At 4:12 p.m., a quorum was present.

STAFF PRESENT – Katrina Stokes, Library Director; Mary Stein, Assistant Library Director; Lori Juge, Assistant Library Director; Rhonda Pinsonat, Library Business Manager; Tanya Allison, Library Assistant Business Manager; Antoinette Poland, Executive Assistant to the Library Director; Leila Reilly, Branch Services Coordinator; Jaleesa Delavallade, Branch Services Community Branch Coordinator

OTHERS PRESENT – Deputy Blair Nicholson, EBRPSO; Frank Hillyard, Videographer; Aaron Babcock of Hillar Associates; Jason Suiter of Stantec.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 20, 2025 – MS. CANDACE TEMPLE. **The motion was not approved because a quorum was not met (4:01 p.m.). At 5:14 p.m. Candace Temple requested a second motion to approve the minutes; the motion was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Ronnie Pierce.**

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

IV. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR – (4:01 p.m.)

A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Mrs. Rhonda Pinsonat

- For 2025 operating expenditures through March 31 is 19.92% of the operating expenditure.
- Through March the library should have spent no more than 25% of the budget.
- Cash collection for property taxes for 2025 remain strong and are ahead of those collected in 2024 as we are 5.04% ahead of the same period last year.

B. SYSTEM REPORTS

1. AROUND THE PARISH - Ms. Mary Stein

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

programs and events.

- March events included: One Book One Community Tailgate Kick-Off Party; Pride-Chaneyville Branch 15th Annual Community History Festival; Tain Day at the Library; Celtic concerts with Madame Dulcimer and Lady Chops; and a Red Stick Rhythms Launch Party.
- During National Library Week, the Newsletter featured “love letters” from patrons.
- On April 12, in Special Collections, the Library celebrated the Annie Laura Moody Library with cake.
- On April 6, the Library hosted the Edible Book Festival where patrons voted on their favorite entry such as director’s choice, runner up, most appetizing, best in show, etc.
- Seed Library is expanding due to patron demand on social media, they called the Jim Easter Show and WBRZ, “2 Make a Difference,” with Sylvia Weatherspoon.
- Tuesdays-Red Stick Farmer’s Market is back at the library for the spring market, every Tuesday 3-6 p.m. from April to June.
- On April 11th, the Virtual Author talk series continued with Book Face Friday,” with a post of a staff member posing with this month’s featured book “By Any Other Name” by Jodi Picoult. To view more post visit [instagram.com/ebrpl](https://www.instagram.com/ebrpl).
- On April 16, the Main Library on Goodwood, Special Collections featured “Home of the Happy,” A Murder on the Cajun Prairie with Jordan Lahaye Fontenot.
- On May 21, 2025, at 6 p.m., Special Collections will feature The History of Last Island and its Destruction by John Singleton.
- On April 27, the library featured, “The I’m So Super “Autism Awareness Event 2025 with guest speakers and over 25 vendors.
- On Saturday and Sunday, May 17-18 from 11 a.m.-8 p.m., the 8th Annual Baton Rouge Soul Food Festival will be at the Main Library at Goodwood; there will be live music, southern food, vendor’s village, and a soul food cooking competition. For more information or to enter the soul food cooking competition, call [\(225\)802-9681](tel:2258029681) or visit www.brsoulfoodfest.com
- Matt Moscona of ESPN interviewed and discussed the book “Season of Life” by author, Pulitzer-Prize winning journalist, Jefferey Marx; they discussed topics from his book such as teamwork, mentoring, and coaching. For more information visit ReadOneBook.org
- The Virtual Author Talk event continues with live discussions with best-selling authors, like Jodi Picoult, By Any Other Name; Matthew Fleming, The Tree Book; and Gregg Hurwitz, Orphan X Series: Nemesis. For more information visit libraryc.org/ebrpl
- 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
- Strictly Business monthly webcast continued with an episode and discussion on The AI Revolution: Insights for the C-Suite with LSU Executive Vice President and Provost, Roy Haggerty. For more information on archived episodes visit www.ebrpl.com. For webinars register for free at strictlybusiness.businessreport.com
- On Open Data Day, the City Parishes’ IS and GIS Department was at the library sharing ways to access data. For more information visit <https://brla.gov/opendataday/registration> to visit Open Data Academy [visit www.ebrpl.com](http://www.ebrpl.com)
- On May 24, 2025, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Author’s Row will be at the Jones Creek Regional Branch Library; books will be available to purchase with a meet-and-greet and a book signing.
- Summer Reading Program Kick-Off Party is Thursday, May 29 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., with Lady Chops and Tim the Magician, with the theme: “Color Our World.”
- This year’s reading challenge, The Linder Family Challenge was inspired by the Linder Family who blitz all 14 branch locations the same day.

- There will be prizes for those who visit all branches in one day; passports will be stamped, certificates of achievement with an alternate challenge for those with transportation issues.
- For addresses to participate in the Linder Family challenge to blitz all 15 locations, including the New South Branch location, visit www.ebrpl.com
- Libraries Change Lives features the Linder Family who in the last year visited all 14 branch locations in one day, where they highlighted their journey by documenting their checkouts, picking up grab and go crafts at the Baker Branch, making a duct tape lanyard at Pride-Chaneyville Branch; and returned a read book to the Greenwell Springs Branch.
- Red Stick Rhythms launch was a success, resulting in several news articles and media coverage, including an article in The Advocate by John Wirt, a mention on the radio, and an invitation to the Press Club.
- The library is working with the State Library and other library systems to become a beta test for an E-Pass program, a plan started to create a virtual pass to visit local museums.
- Business Report Magazine Annual Report edition focused on the new South Branch Library. Parts of the article were featured throughout the media and print outlets.

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. **FACILITIES MASTER PLAN ASSESSMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW** – Mr. Aaron Babcock of Hillar Associates and Mr. Jason Suiter of Stantec presentation covered the assessment of library system's processes, needs determination, proposed transformations, and estimated cost.

Mr. Aaron Babcock discussed the specific library renovation plans:

Baker Branch: Needs reorganization to improve flow and patron experience.

- Reorganization of its entry with a driveway connecting to Jefferson Street with two entry points.
- Repurpose the old courtyard into public commuting space and relocation of the browsing collection to the front.

Bluebonnet Branch:

- Key priorities include updating lighting, public restrooms, repairing courtyard, and expanding digital areas, completing meeting rooms configurations.
- Secondary priorities include creating a children's activity zone and improving the meeting room configuration.
- Expanding the meeting, maker space and upgrading the children's area.

Central Branch: Need to rework the meeting rooms.

- Rework the meeting room to accommodate early voting needs and its capacity.
- Expand the building toward the main entry to create public restrooms and a space for early voting.
- Revamp the children's area, add a teen area, maker space, conference rooms and study rooms.

Zachary Branch: Needs improved flow, expanded meeting rooms and updating the acoustics.

- The repurposed courtyard will be turned into two large meeting rooms.
- Consolidate restrooms, add a teen hangout area and maker space.

Recycled Reads: Serves as a location for backup servers, an unarchived system, and the bookmobile.

- Need to create a covered drive-up area for the bookmobile to load and unload efficiently.

- A long-term solution will be created to rework staff areas to meet staffing needs.

Starter Branches: Version of a traditional branch about 8,000 square feet, offering access to library services on a smaller scale. Two start branches are being considered, one in the north and one in the south.

Delmont Gardens Branch: Will be replaced with a traditional branch of 22–25,000 square feet. The existing Delmont Gardens will be repurposed into a business business.

Main Library Branch: Changes are planned for all three floors.

- Additional handicap parking, updated meeting rooms.
- Addition of a digital maker lab and expansion of the career center.
- Staff lounge repurposed into a staff work area.

Carver Branch: Needs more study room and meeting room space, maker space, and conference room space.

- Create a centralized location for the circulation desk.
- Repurpose the courtyard to create a teen area, and to expand the food pantry.
- Rework the children's area to create a space for people to meet and socialize

Pride-Chaneyville Branch: Changes need to be made to rework the front door and desk area, including the addition of furniture, adding workspace, enlarging, and centralizing the staff location.

Eden Park Branch: Create space for staff privacy and concentration.

Fairwood Branch: add more study rooms, expanded children's area, and a digital maker space.

Minor changes needed for recently completed libraries like Scotlandville, South Branch, River Center Branch, Greenwell Springs Road Branch and Jones Creek Road Branch.

- **Mr. Jason Suiter and Mr. Aaron Babcock discussed cost estimates:**

Mr. Jason Suiter discussed:

- The renovation cost per square foot is less than adding on.
- Furniture and upgrade lines are standalone.
- Construction cost includes a 10% contingency, contractor fees, and professional fees.
- The scope of work is different from what was proposed in 2014.

Mr. Jason Suiter asked for question.

Mr. Aaron Babcock commented on:

- Technology upgrade timeline and renovation.
- The budget regarding cost.
- How funding will be prioritized.

Mr. Aaron Babcock asked for questions.

Mr. Darryl Hurst commented on the land purchase

Ms. Mary Stein stated that the library is budgeting for the land purchase. Ms. Candace Temple moved to Item II to approve the minutes.

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

Maintenance Report for April 2025

Main Library:

- The cooling tower repairs were completed in early April, with work including the replacement of four hot water basins along with new covers, nozzles, and the required hardware.
- Repairs are currently being made to the water features outside. This includes the reflecting pools and the splash pad. New pumps were installed, with new electrical control panels. Filters are being replaced, and slate tiles have been cleaned. Additional parts were ordered for the repairs to the splash pad, and final repairs will be completed by next week.
- In addition, the trees have been trimmed in the courtyard.
- The stripping of the Main Library's parking lot is being completed and should be done by the end of April.

All Branches:

The contract work for painting the curbs at all locations has begun. This work has been completed Jones Creek, Pride and Central Branches.

Bluebonnet: Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library closed on April 1 to rebuild a chill water pump and replace a chill water valve for the chill water system.

Eden Park: Eden Park Branch Library closed until 3:30 p.m. on April 3 to repair a leak at the water meter.

Jones Creek: Work -Study Rooms were repainted in the Teen and Childres's Areas

River Center: River Center Branch Library closed on April 7 until 3 p.m. for maintenance following unintentional damage to an outdoor hose bib, which flooded portions of the 1st floor and occurred during cleanup for an outdoor event on April 6.

Staff discovered the issue the morning of April 7 and worked quickly to mitigate damages. Facilities staff quickly enlisted outside vendors' assistance to help with emergency repairs and mitigation. The final work to be done includes replacement of the rubber baseboards, which should have been completed the week of April 14 if the materials were obtained. If not, then the work may be done the following week.

Miscellaneous Improvement Projects

1. Outreach
 - a. Final acceptance is still pending.
2. Multibranch Project
 - a. Final acceptance is still pending.
3. Roofing Project
 - a. Architectural Services will be going to the branches soon to determine the status of the project.
4. Boilers for Eden Park and Greenwell Springs Branch Libraries
 - a. Facilities staff received the drawings from Architectural Services. They are currently reviewing the drawings to make sure everything is specified.

5. Bluebonnet Branch Library Renovations
 - a. There is currently nothing new to report.
6. Chiller Project
 - a. The Contractor is working on the punch list items. We anticipate final acceptance within the next few weeks.
7. Baker Branch Renovation
 - a. Facilities staff are still waiting to hear from Architectural Services
3. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Ms. Katrina Stokes
 - The director attended the Louisiana Library Association Conference
 - The millage item will go on the November ballot.
 - The Metro Council will hear and vote on the millage item along with separate item for other partners on the Thrive BR plan on Wednesday, May 14.
 - A new political action committee is being formed by members of the public, Generations United Pac, to help advocate for the Thrive BR plan.
 - Donna Collins-Lewis is the chairperson for Generations United Pac and joined by other community members such as Dr. James Gilmore and Dr. Crystal Slaughter, which is separate from East Baton Rouge Library’s Pac, which is an extension of Patron of the Public Library (POPL) and chaired by Emily Smart.
 - Budget projections for 2026 are being examined along with projections from next year to determine what cuts can and should be made to establish a successfully balanced budget for January 2026, including when changes can be implemented.
 - The library chose not to approve certain databases when they come up for annual renewal because of low usage by patrons or if the State Library has purchased a shared database for the whole library system to use.
 - Unfilled positions will be frozen; the library is working with Finance for projections to avoid a shortage in January 2026.
 - Expect an email from Antoinette Poland to set up a date for the Annual Budget Workshop in June.
 - Ms. Katrina Stokes discussed that the library will be indirectly affected by budget cuts and freezes to the Institute of Museums and Library Services and the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities.
 - The State Library receives funding from IMLS for professional training classes and databases made available statewide.
 - Commented that most organizations who partner with the library seek LEH Grants for funding.
 - The State Legislature is going into session, and the library is monitoring for any action regarding the railroad tax; the library will update everyone as they receive information.
 - The Library Business Office and other Staff has attended a training session for the Procurement Card.
 - The library is working on a NARCAN initiative.
 - Announced Staff Training Day scheduled for Thursday April 17, 2025.
 - Update on the parcel of land adjacent to the South Branch Library, (owned by Kenneth Brown) and have the numbers from the appraisal and currently working with the Parish Attorney’s Office for the Bill of Sale.
 - Waiting for number on the EKL site; the library will bring you the land purchase item for South Branch to vote on in May.

Ms. Stokes asked for questions.

Mr. Darryl Hurst commented on:

- The library settling on number for Mosquito Abatement and Rodent Control that allows them to move forward.
- How the library can use technology to enhance communication with the community through emails and signage.
- How can the local government assess millage taxes that fund the library which provides a return on investment? How important it is to communicate effectively to gain support for the library initiatives.

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

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – (5:27 p.m.)

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

South Branch Update - 2025

- On March 26, the South Branch was closed for part of the day due to a broken sewer line. The issue was promptly resolved by the contractor at their expense, and we were able to reopen that evening.
- Will increase the hours of operation of the branch. We hope to be able to open with full community branch hours next month.
- Still hiring and training new staff for the branch.
- Still waiting for a few pieces of furniture to be delivered. The service desks should be in within the next couple of weeks.
- There are still punch list items to be completed for final acceptance to take place.
- Hopeful we will be able to officially open with a dedication ceremony in June.

Ms. Lori Juge asked for questions.

Mr. Donald Luther Jr. commented on challenges with application processes and testing.

Mr. Darryl Hurst commented that applications may not be processed correctly and challenges with applicants receiving notification about tests.

Mrs. Tanya Allison discussed requisition communication processes

Mr. Darryl Hurst requested to invite Mrs. LaToya Pierson, Human Resources Director, to discuss the issues and find solutions.

Ms. Antoinette Poland commented on application processes and the importance of detailing duties and equipment used under task specifications in job announcements.

Mrs. Tanya Allison commented on the library's computer availability for testing and mentioned job fair ideas.

Ms. Mary Stein commented on the challenges of an Executime 11-day work cycle and mentioned changes to the work cycle from Saturday to Sunday.

Mr. Darryl Hurst stressed the importance of having HR present during the job fair to ensure qualified applicants.

B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY – MRS. LORI JUGE

Scotlandville Branch Update-2025

- The Scotlandville Branch Library Phase II Pre-Construction meeting will be held next week. After the meeting, a date will be set for a groundbreaking/kickoff ceremony.

VII. NEW BUSINESS – MS. MARY STEIN (5:39 P.M.)

A. TO APPROVE SEX OFFENDER POLICY UPDATES

- Library is required by the statue to post signage about sex offender, regarding where they are welcome and not welcome to visit within the libraries.

- This is a Louisiana Revised Statute 14, Column 91.2.
- Motion is to add the words “South Branch” to the policy.
- South Branch is not within the prescribed linear feet from Glasgow.
- Explained the policy regarding people who were convicted of sex offenses where the victim was under 13 years old.
 - If the children’s area is discreet, they can be in the adult area.
 - The only time they could not come into the actual library was if the children’s area were the first thing that happened in the library and was not a discreet area.

Ms. Candace Temple, Board President requested a vote to approve the Sex Offender policy updates. The motion to approve the Sex Offender Policy was approved.

B. TO APPROVE BULLETIN BOARD POLICY UPDATES

- Updates to memorialize the common practice and restrict using the bulletin board to for commercial advertisement endeavors unless they are specifically related to a library program.
- The space was an original issue
- The proposed change is to allow advertisements or announcements of events related to commercial endeavors to be posted if space is available.

Candace Temple, Board President requested a vote to approve updates to the Bulletin Board. The motion to approve the Bulletin Board Policy was approved.

VIII. COMMENTS BY THE LIBRARY BOARD OF CONTROL (5:46 p.m.)

- Mr. Donald Luther, Jr., thanked and commented on his support for the library.
- Mr. Darryl Hurst announced a free event at the corner of North Sherwood Forest at Big Ben in the Park Forest area with crawfish and easter eggs.
- Mrs. Delores Watts thanked Mr. Aaron Babcock and Mr. Jason Suiter for the detailed Facilities Master Plan Presentation.
- Candace Temple commented on the support at the council meeting next week for her reappointment for another 4 years.

- XI. ADJOURNMENT – Ms. Candace Temple requested a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Delores Watts and seconded by Donald Luther, Jr. **The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m. by a unanimous vote.**

Ms. Candace Temple, Board President

Ms. Katrina Stokes, Library Director