

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
August 17, 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 (4:05 pm)

Nicole Allmon-Learson – Present (4:35 pm)

A quorum was present

STAFF PRESENT – Kristen Edson, Interim Library Director; Patricia Husband, Assistant Library Director; Rhonda Pinsonat, Library Business Manager; Tanya Allison, Assistant Library Business Manager; Rosana Sotile, Assistant to the Deputy Library Director; Bryce Tomlin, Technical Services Coordinator; William Decker, Network Technician I.

OTHERS PRESENT: John Costonis, member of the public

- I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 20, 2023 AND THE SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING OF JUNE 12, 2023 – A motion to approve the July 20 minutes was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Delores Watts. **The motion was carried unanimously.** A motion to approve the June 12 minutes was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Martha Stickle. **The motion was carried unanimously**
- II. SPECIAL ORDERS – There were no Special Orders.
- III. REPORTS BY THE DIRECTOR
 - A. FINANCIAL REPORT – Rhonda Pinsonat (4:05 pm)
 - For 2023, operating expenditures through July 31 are 46.42% of the operating budget. Through July, we should have spent no more than 58% of the budget.
 - Cash collections from Property Taxes for 2023 remain ahead of those collected in 2022, as we are approximately 5.6% ahead of the same period last year.
 - B. SYSTEM REPORTS – Kristen Edson (4:06 pm)
 - “Around the Parish” slideshow and descriptions of Library programs.
 - The final summer reading statistics include the following: Total number registered is 7,280; total badges earned is 42,135; total literacy logging badges is 28, 132; total books read is 94,416; total individual completed activities is 5,692; and total challenge completions is 3,797. Summer reading parties included inflatables, games and magicians.
 - The Library Community Survey for Facilities Services has been released; over 1,800 responses received as of August 17; available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese; goal is to collect 4,000 responses.
 - On August 1, the Library went fine-free; no longer collecting fines for overdue items; fees will still be charged for the cost of lost or unreturned books.
 - Over 125 people attended the Library’s Genealogy Symposium: Hidden No More; discussions were held surrounding the book, *The 272*, by Rachel L. Swarns.
 - The 6th Annual Mid City Micro-Con was held last weekend; over 3,100 people attended; over 75 participants in the cosplay contest; over 129 for the Teen film contest.

- The Main Library hosted a Digital Arts Premiere event, and Symphony Week with the Baton Rouge Symphony.
- Upcoming events include the Get Organized program with Alyssa Trosclair, at the Main Library, every Sunday through September 17; also the East Baton Rouge Parish Registrar's Office will visit Library locations through the of August to provide citizens the opportunity to register to vote.
- The Exxon Mobil Job Fair will be held August 31; the Career Center hosted the company's seminar on their process operator positions; more job fairs and career exploration programs are scheduled for the fall.
- The Black Business Month Block Party will be held at the Main Library on August 19; the Jones Creek Area Business Association is holding a Business Community Expo also on August 19, at the Jones Creek Regional Library.
- Library staff and Board member Donald Luther, Jr. attended Councilmember Cleve Dunn's District 6 open house; discussion including upcoming initiatives in the district, including a potential community center.
- The Library system is providing back-to-school resources, such as free tutoring; Library staff will continue school visits; the Home Library Pilot Project will resume to give third grade students free books at six local elementary schools.
- Library display collections and social media posts include current social trends, such as the new Barbie movie and singer/songwriter Taylor Swift.
- The next Author Talks series will feature Cassandra Clare, of *Mortal Instruments* series.
- The recent Strictly Business webinar featured Chris Meyer, President & CEO of Baton Rouge Area Foundation.
- Upcoming events this fall include the annual Baton Rouge Maker Faire on October 7; and the 46th annual Author Illustrator series with author/poet Carole Boston Weatherford and her son, illustrator/poet Jeffery Boston Weatherford, on September 28 & 29.

C. OTHER REPORTS

1. MAINTENANCE AND ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS – Kristen Edson and Bryce Tomlin (4:19 pm)

- Over 100 work order tickets were submitted over the past month, with 28 corrected orders.
- The Main Library's roof terrace has been closed to the public this week for renovation; work is 90% complete; photos of the terrace were shown to the Board; more sustainable plants are being installed; a new pump was ordered for the roof top cistern.
- Chiller issues across the library system: waiting for a fan motor at Zachary Branch, but building remains cool; phase monitor installation was completed at Bluebonnet Regional on August 10; an expansion valve, a sensor, a plenum, and the fan must be replaced on the old chiller at Jones Creek Regional.
- Tree trimming is complete at the Main Library, along the east side of the Goodwood Blvd. parking lot.
- System-wide fire extinguisher inspections begin tomorrow.
- Question from Kathy Wascom regarding solar panels possibly being installed at the Main Library; Patricia Husband responded that the original plan included very lightweight panels, not the heavier standard ones, and it is believed that the lightweight ones are no longer manufactured; she continues to monitor the market for a possibility of lighter panels.
- The water main repair project at Jones Creek Regional is still waiting on door hardware; an update indicated installation to begin in several weeks.
- The Library is still waiting on the contract for the multi-branch chiller replacement project; the low bid has been accepted.
- The final area of the parking lot at Outreach Services has been demolished, as part of Phase 2 of the renovation project; still waiting on concrete to be poured; staff are still utilizing the Recycled Reads area, but should be moving next week back into the workroom; it is possible a book sale will be held in September; Library Computer Services will move equipment next week for the final flooring installation in the server room.
- Multi-branch roof replacement project is at a standstill; no update on the copula work at Jones Creek Regional; Architectural Services is waiting on submittals for all remaining work; liquidated damages are being accrued on the contractor's payment schedule.
- Update on the Miscellaneous repair package:
 - Pride-Chaneyville branch: waiting on light fixtures; gutter installation; crash rails and corner guard installation
 - Keying system for all locations
 - Zachary Branch: near completion; waiting on keying system
 - Delmont Gardens Branch: review of flooring and slab moisture

- Carver Branch: waiting on countertop material
- Fairwood Branch: demolish and install flooring.
- No update for Bluebonnet Regional
- Question from Kathy Wascom regarding credit card payments at the library; Kristen Edson clarified that patrons can pay online with a credit card but not in-person; it may be possible later in the future, but would require new RFID equipment and terminals; Kathy Wascom asked what do patrons pay for at the circulation desk using cash or checks, since the library is now fine-free; Kristen Edson responded they can pay for their lost books.
- Computer Services update:
 - Library staff are finalizing the website contract to send to the selected vendor.
 - The City's financial and payroll systems were updated; Stephen Solomon, Library Server Analyst, worked with IS to ensure the Library's access and fixed the issue for accessing MetroNet.
 - Stephen Solomon is also working on upgrades to networking equipment to achieve higher speeds; will get a quote for professional services in support of the Library's network equipment and assist with deployment.
 - Amanda Dial, Systems Librarian, completed tasks required by the ILS vendor to ensure the Library's new fine-free initiative.
 - Library staff are coordinating with the vendor to add additional Wi-Fi hotspots to all Library locations.
 - Regarding a question from Kathy Wascom during last month's meeting, only 15 hotspots, out of the original 500, have been returned damaged beyond repair; the hotspots have been circulated over 5,000 times.
 - Statistics include the following:
 - Kiosks: as of July 31, 30% of checked out items were checked out at a kiosk this year, representing 200,018 items
 - Credit Cards: as of July 31, there have been 1,111 credit card payments made this year by 1,016 patrons for a total of \$17,021.46; \$222.20 of this amount was convenience fees; 14.95% of all payments made have been credit card payments
 - Hotspots: as of July 31, hotspots have circulated 3,041 times by 871 patrons this year
 - Tickets: in the month of July, 152 tickets were created, and 159 tickets were resolved

2. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS – Kristen Edson (4:44 pm)

- Board members received the updated appraisal of the property for the new Delmont Gardens Branch Library located on Plank Road; it appraised for \$355,000; the Library continues to collaborate with Build Baton Rouge on the project; question from Kathy Wascom regarding what would be done with the current library building; Kristen Edson responded it could possibly be a small business incubator, an offsite storage for collections, or an expanded makerspace.
- Board members also received the updated version of the Library's letter to the Parish Attorney's office regarding incentive pay for unclassified positions; the Parish Attorney's office responded with a list of objectives that would need to be met for the incentive pay; the Library suggested edits to the performance objectives; Martha Stickle asked for clarification on one of the objectives; Kristen Edson responded that it would apply system-wide, not individually; the Board discussed changing the wording on several objectives; a motion to accept the amended objectives and send to the Parish Attorney's office was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Nicole Allmon-Learson. **The motion was carried unanimously**
- Library administration met with the Parish Attorney's office on Wednesday to discuss the background of the Home Charter Rule and other Civil Service rules as they relate to the Louisiana State Constitution; the Library will send a letter requesting an official opinion from the Attorney General regarding the ability of the Library Board of Control to set the salaries of the Library Director and Deputy Library Director.
- Discussion regarding the Mayor's and the Metro Council's understandings of the Library's intentions with the request for opinion.

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

IV. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES – UPDATE FROM DIRECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE (5:17 pm)

- Jason Jacob commented that there are eight applicants at this time.
- Kristen Edson explained that once the application window closes, the first round of screening will begin.

- Question from Jason Jacob regarding if any of the current applicants are the same applicants from the previous search; Kristen Edson responded that the consultant has not yet indicated if any are the same, except for the one active applicant from the first round.

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

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. UPDATE ON SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY – Patricia Husband (5:18 pm)
- A pre-construction meeting was held August 8; Architectural Services will issue a Letter of Intent to allow the contractor to begin securing the subcontractors.
 - Library staff continue working with the interior designer to finalize furniture selections for estimating probable cause; will assemble bid packets for early next year; typical lead-time is 10 to 12 weeks for furniture.
 - Mary Stein is coordinating a day and time for the groundbreaking ceremony.
- B. UPDATE ON SCOTLANDVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY – Patricia Husband (5:21 pm)
- The Metro Council approved the low bid on August 9 for Ratcliff Construction.
 - Architectural Services will schedule a pre-construction meeting in the upcoming weeks; a Letter of Intent was issued to the architect.

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. VOTE TO SEND COMMENTS TO CITY-PARISH ADMINISTRATION REGARDING TAX ABATEMENT PROPOSAL – Kristen Edson (5:22 p.m.)
- A motion to forward the abatements without comment was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Candace Temple. **The motion was carried unanimously.**
- B. VOTE TO APPOINT MARY STEIN AND PATRICIA HUSBAND AS CO-INTERIM LIBRARY DIRECTOR EFFECTIVE AUGUST 28, 2023 – Jason Jacob (5:23 pm)
- A motion to approve was made by Donald Luther, Jr. and seconded by Candace Temple. **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

- Board members thanked Kristen Edson for her service at the Library, as this is her final meeting; Ms. Edson also expressed her appreciation for the experience EBRPL has given her and the people that she has met.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Board President Jason Jacob requested a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Candace Temple and seconded by Donald Luther, Jr. **The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m. by unanimous vote.**

Mr. Jason Jacob, President

Mary Stein, Co-Interim Library Director