

**Rapides Parish Library  
Board of Control  
November 21, 2017**

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Rapides Parish Library (RPL) Board of Control was called to order by President Michael Fairbanks at 3:30 p.m., in the meeting room of the Huie-Dellmon House, 430 St. James St., Alexandria, LA.

Board members present were: Ms. June Arrington, Dr. Pat Barber, Mr. Michael Fairbanks, Ms. Lana Havens, Ms. Le'Anza Jordan, Ms. Linda McMahan, Mr. Morris Taft Thomas, Mr. Gregory Walker, and Ms. Laura-Ellen Ayres. Mr. Ralph Roach was absent.

Mr. Fairbanks asked for public comments. There were none.

Mr. Fairbanks led the Pledge of Allegiance, and the Board observed a moment of silence.

**Agenda**

Mr. Thomas made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. McMahan seconded and the motion passed.

**Minutes**

Ms. Havens made a motion to approve the October minutes. Ms. McMahan seconded and the motion passed.

**Financial Report**

Business Manager Jimmy Holsomback presented the Financial Report. There was no income for October except for branch income and interest earned. Account No. 3070 Miscellaneous was income from the sale of two vehicles at the parish auction.

The expenses were the normal reoccurring operation expenses. Expenses noted: Account No. 5010 is the end of the year expenses for library materials. Account No. 5647, 5648 and 5741 will be paid from the contingency fund. Account No. 5783, 5784, 5785, 5787, 5788 and 5789 are the final expenses for the Libuse project. All the Libuse project expenses will be paid by the end of November. These expenses are reflected on the Libuse statement.

The City of Alexandria will issue credits for utility payments from 1994 to 2004. Credits due the Library amount to over \$9,600 for the Huie-Dellmon House, Main Library, the Fuhrer Branch and the former location of the King Branch on Third Street. The credits will probably be deducted from current utility bills.

The Balance Sheet reflects the Libuse Capital transfer of \$500,000. The Libuse cash flow report indicates the balance forwarded from the King project and the interest earned. Any funds left over from the Libuse project will be carried over to the next capital project. Mr. Holsomback reminded the board that shelving was purchased from Hastings Bookstore at a substantial savings. Ms. Ayres

said that bids are usually requested for shelving for new buildings, but was not for Libuse since good quality shelving was purchased for bargain prices.

The shelving and furniture that remains in the Gunter Branch is not useable at other locations and will stay in the building. The shelving and furniture in the portable building will be used at its new location. The property and building of the Gunter Branch will revert to the Gunter family. Carl Gunter Jr. and his wife Jessie Gunter donated the property to be used as a Library. When the location ceases to be used as a Library, it is to be returned to the Gunter family.

Dr. Barber made a motion to approve the Financial Report. Ms. Arrington seconded and the motion passed.

### **Director's Report**

Ms. Laura-Ellen Ayres presented the Statistical Reports for July, August and September. July was during the Summer Reading Program and the moving average was 0.09%. The moving average for the months of August and September were negative. This is the only occurrence during the time Ms. Ayres has been director that there have been negative numbers. Last year, the average increase was over 9%. Ms. Ayres will review these numbers with the administrative staff.

A grant from the Martin Foundation for \$10,000 has been received to purchase technology for Main Library.

Ms. Ayres thanked the board for attending the Grand Opening at the Libuse Branch and participating in the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration at all the branches. Each Board member attended a different branch on November 8<sup>th</sup> and shared historical facts about the Rapides Parish Library. Ms. Ayres invited the members to attend the Staff Christmas Party at the Diamond Grill on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Fairbanks said that he attended the Libuse Grand Opening. The community came out to show their support and enjoy the Buckeye High School band.

### **Direct Services**

Direct Services Coordinator Lennà Mouton reported that the Libuse Branch average circulation for October and November was about 15% above last year. This is comparable to the two largest branches in the Library system, Main Library and Westside Regional Library. Reservations for the meeting room at Libuse include two Girl Scout groups, three Book Clubs, a Bible study and the Libuse homeschool music and art class. Ms. Mouton reported that patrons are lingering and enjoying the library branch since there are more computers and space. Branch Manager Pam Martin is anticipating having activities outside during the next Summer Reading Program. An increase in programming participation is already being realized. Attendance for the *Fall Festival* in 2016 was thirteen children; in 2017 is was fifty-one children.

Ms. Mouton thanked everyone for attending the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. She reported that she attended Johnson Branch and the King Branch. The senior center in Lecompte brought residents to the Johnson Branch for the program.

Ms. Havens attended the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary program at Hineston Branch. A boy was concerned that Ms. Donna Crawford was leaving the Library but was relieved when Ms. Crawford told him that she was just “changing sides” of the desk.

### **Human Resources**

No Report.

### **Outreach and Youth Services**

Programming Manager Karla Kirby presented the Outreach and Youth Services report in the absence of Tammy DiBartolo.

A “*Reading to Rover*” in partnership with Pets and People, a therapy dog group from Cenla is anticipated for early in 2018. This is a program where children who are having difficulty with reading will come to the library, be paired with a therapy dog and read to them for a set time period. A pilot program will be done at Westside Regional where the kinks will be worked out so that the program can be replicated in other branches.

Since the Hispanic community responded so well to the recent *Prime Time* at McDonald, we are planning a family bi-lingual storytime at McDonald. There is a young lady who has worked in libraries in Texas who tells stories in Spanish. The trial program is set for December 14<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM at the McDonald Branch.

Plans are in motion to partner with GAEDA, Amerihealth Caritas, Central Louisiana Community College and several other groups who work with adults to help those wanting to get their HiSET, which was formerly the GED. This is set to take place in early 2018 at locations throughout Rapides Parish.

With the help of local author, Curt Iles, the Library plans to sponsor an event that highlights the Louisiana Maneuvers during World War II. Our hope is to have it at the Hotel Bentley where so much of the planning was done. If all goes as planned, the event will be held on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Ms. DiBartolo will have information about the event at later meetings. Dr. Barber is speaking at the event.

Staff Development Day was held on November 10<sup>th</sup>. It was a great day to learn new (and old) things, get to know our new staffers and spend time with those we have worked with over time. Thanks to the RPL Board of Control for allowing us to close the Library in order to attend this training.

### **IT**

Ms. Janie Primeaux has been sick and is unable to attend. Ms. Ayres explained that, as usual, no computer classes will be held in December. Classes will resume in January. IT has a very active 2018 planned with new hardware for the branches, upgrading Windows 10 and Outlook, and a new server for Sierra. Many of these items will be explained in the Long Range Plan which will be presented in December.

## **Public Relations**

Ms. Suzanne James announced that December 15<sup>th</sup> is Ugly Sweater Day. Patrons can pose with staff. The photos will be posted on Facebook and in the *Ripple*.

The Chamber of Commerce has a special promotion in December. The Elf on a Shelf will be visiting various businesses in the community. Charlie the Chamber Elf will visit Main Library and receive an honorary Library card.

## **Unfinished Business**

None.

## **New Business**

Finance Committee Chair Le'Anza Jordan explained that the committee met prior to the Board meeting. She asked Mr. Holsomback to present the 2018 Proposed Budget.

Mr. Holsomback acknowledged that the budget is a collaborative effort with many departments and staff members. The Ad Valorem Revenue is expected to increase by 3% in 2018. Salaries, retirement and health insurance is about 66% of the budget and there is a 2.4% increase from 2017. The salary expense includes a 3% increase for employees on their anniversary date. The debt for the King Branch will be paid off in 2023. The debt for the Robertson and Libuse Branches will be paid off in 2024.

By switching health insurance companies in 2017, the Library saved almost \$200,000. There is a 2.5% increase beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup> which is less than previous years. The budget contingency is \$58,000 as opposed to \$145,000 in 2017. A list of new budget items was provided.

Cash Reserves and Set Aside Accounts for 2018 was presented. Automation will received \$20,000. Vehicles and HVAC will each receive \$10,000. The report does not include interest earnings for 2017.

Mr. Holsomback presented the 2018 proposed budget. In addition to the increase in Ad Valorem taxes, State Revenue Sharing also will increase. State Revenue Sharing is a firm figure set by the legislature which returns part of the Homestead Exemption rate. Interest earned is up from last year.

The commitment has been received for the Martin Grant. The Huie Dellmon Grant is a reimbursement for work done during the year on the Huie Dellmon House.

Reimbursement for local, long distance or cell phone service is no longer part of E-Rate Refunds. Internet is the only item remaining as part of E-Rate.

The new items or those with significant changes are noted in red on the proposed budget. Salaries are based on the current employees with the 3% increase on their anniversary date. There are twenty-six pay periods in the year. Twelve and a half percent was paid in for retirement for 2017.

That amount has decreased to 11.5% for 2018. Health insurance is a realistic amount based on current increase and the number of participants.

Account No. 4183 and 4186 are the set aside amounts for vehicles and HVAC. A new janitorial/facilities position will be created due in part to the larger building at Libuse and more janitorial needs at Main Library. It will be a 40 hour position with 19 hours for janitorial and 21 hours for facilities. There are eleven building scattered throughout the parish that require maintenance and upkeep.

Account No. 4230 to 4259 are IT expenses. Automation Maintenance which includes equipment and software was increased by \$30,000 for 2018.

Random Drug Testing will be enforced twice a year with a total of twenty five employees require to submit to the testing. The Booklet Finisher is an attachment to the copier which will assist in bulk printing for employees. The Flexible Benefit Plan is a program to help employees with out-of-pocket medical expenses.

Account 4280 is the annual Retirement Statutory Fee. Beginning with Account No. 4271, programming expenses for Outreach Services and Main Library are listed. Outreach Services submitted an identical budget as 2017 with no increases. The Summer Science Camp was funded by CLECO last year and was wildly popular. The STEM Programs were funded by a Martin Grant with an agreement for the Library to continue the programs. The Library is the tech place for teens, tweens and adults. These programs include robotics and coding among other technological items and require highly qualified teachers which can be costly.

The security gate at Main Library will be replaced. The gate is fifteen to twenty years old and is outdated.

Mr. Walker expressed concern with the increase in salaries and insurance if the Ad Valorem tax does not continue to increase. Mr. Holsomback said that historically the tax has increased and he is confident that the increase will continue. Based on a report from the tax assessor's office, 70% of the tax collected is from commercial property. The tax rate is currently at 7 mill.

Discussion occurred about the contingency and expectations of increasing the amount to 2017 level. The contingency fund depends on the increase in healthcare and other areas. Mr. Holsomback reported that the contingency has been as low as \$15,000 in past years. The 2017 contingency was the largest of any budget. Ms. Ayres reminded the Board that the Library has a strong fund balance. In the last ten to twelve years, an increase of less than 3% was given to staff for a few years and one time no increase was given.

Discussion about replacing the library branch in Boyce occurred. Moving the portable building from Gunter to Boyce is a temporary solution which will allow more space for programming.

Ms. Jordan spoke on behalf of the Finance Committee and said that the committee feels that the Library is a good steward of its money by keeping expenses in check and is in good financial

standing. The contingency is lower than desired, but the committee recommends going forward with the budget as presented.

Mr. Fairbanks call for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

Mr. Fairbanks announced that the Nominating Committee would meet immediately following the end of this meeting.

The next regular meeting of the Rapides Parish Library Board of Control is scheduled for Tuesday, December 19, 2017, at 3:30 p.m., at the Huie-Dellmon House.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Laura-Ellen Ayres

Secretary

Michael Fairbanks

President