

**RAPIDES PARISH LIBRARY  
BOARD OF CONTROL  
November 19, 2013 Meeting Minutes**

The regular meeting of the Rapides Parish Library (RPL) Board of Control was called to order by President Susie Smith at 3:30 p.m. in the meeting room of the Huie-Dellmon House, 530 Saint James Avenue, Alexandria, Louisiana.

Board members present were Mrs. Ann Heath, Mrs. Linda McMahon, Mrs. Susie Smith, Mr. Gregory Walker, Mrs. Le'Anza Jordan, Mr. Eddy Boddie, Mr. Glenn Rechs and Mr. Michael Fairbanks. Mrs. Pat Barber was absent.

Mrs. Smith called the meeting to order, led in the Pledge of Allegiance and then asked for a moment of silence. Mrs. McMahon moved to approve the agenda. Mrs. Heath seconded, and the motion passed. Mrs. Smith asked if any guests had comments on any agenda item. No one responded, so the meeting moved forward. Mrs. Heath moved to approve the minutes from the October Board meeting. Mrs. McMahon seconded, and the motion passed.

Mrs. Smith asked if any Board Members had any reports. Mrs. Jordan said she attended the Louisiana Book Festival, and that she recommended everyone who could to go next year. She said she saw the Book Festival advertised on a bookmark at Westside Regional Library, and decided to attend. She said it was important that everyone realize that customers are influenced by bookmarks and other materials at the library.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Mr. Jimmy Holsomback, Business Manager, gave the financial report for both September and October, since the early meeting held in October did not allow time for the September Financial Report to be presented. Mr. Holsomback said both September and October were typical months with low revenue and expected expenses. He did note that AT&T did pay the Library the e-rate rebate, and that the accounts payable was now up to date. Mrs. McMahon moved to accept the Financial Report as presented and Mr. Fairbanks seconded. All voted and agreed. The motion passed for the report to be filed for audit.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Steve Rogge said he did not have a statistical report this month, due to vacation scheduling of various staff members that generate the report. He went on to speak about the Lafourche Parish Library tax conflict featured in national news media.

He explained that the president of the Lafourche Parish governing body brought forward a proposal for the parish to take money from the library to build a new jail. The proposed money for the jail made up

11% of the library's budget. 54% voted against the proposition, and the library kept their money. Mr. Rogge said the story was an important lesson for librarians to remind the police jury of all of the good things accomplished at the Library.

Mr. Rogge said he had some bad news in that Rachael Hartman, the Administrative and Public Relations Specialist gave her notice to the Library. Her last day will be December 10. Ms. Hartman said how much she appreciated her time with the Library and how positive her experience had been. Mr. Rogge added that he made a change in his own schedule to started coming in to work between 9 and 9:30 this semester in order to teach his son's Spanish homeschool curriculum. He said he will keep up with his Library duties via the Internet at home to make up for starting later in the day.

### **Direct Services Report**

Ms. Laura-Ellen Ayres reminded the Board that she was the Chair of the Public Section of the Louisiana Library Association. As such, she has joined an initiative with the Louisiana State Bar Association. The Legal Assistance and Education Committee is seeking to train public librarians to direct customers to legal assistance provided by the bar.

Mrs. Ayres reported that the new reference desk was set up at the Main Library, and that the new computer desks and circulation desk for the Johnson Branch Library will be set up soon. She said that Facilities Manager Les Guidry and his team built the new desk. She said it was cost effective and turned out very pretty.

Mrs. Ayres gave an update on the Staff Development Day held on Monday, November 11. She said most of the staff attended, including part-time and substitutes. The theme was Librarians are Everyday Heroes. Topics of the day included hands-only CPR, retirement, Word, Excel, Copyright Law, Louisiana Young Readers Choice (LYRC), encouraging library advocacy, and an IT Petting Zoo that featured Kindles, Nooks, iPads, and Squares. Mrs. Ayres thanked the Board for voting to allow the Library to offer the Staff Development Day annually, and said that she was looking forward to providing the training again next year.

### **Human Resources Report**

Mrs. Carolyn Colwell said the New Hire Training has been scheduled for December 2-6. There will be five new substitute clerks, and hopefully a new Administrative Assistant and Public Relations Specialist at the training.

### **Unfinished Business**

There was no unfinished business to address.

### **New Business**

Mr. Rogge informed the Board that the Johnson and Boyce branch leases are up for renewal. He said the Boyce Branch lease would remain at the same rate, but since the Board has been talking for a long time about how small the space is there, he proposed a two year lease instead of the regular ten year lease. At the end of two years the Board would be in a better position to know if they were ready to move forward with a new building project. The landlord is in agreement with this. Mr. Rechs moved that the Board approve to allow the lawyers to work up a new lease for two years at the same rate. Mrs. McMahon seconded, all voted and agreed, and the motion passed.

Mr. Rogge explained that the Johnson Branch lease situation was a bit more complicated. He said when he spoke to Ronnie Roberts, the president of the Lecompte High School Committee Board, which governs the school building the Johnson Branch Library leases, Mr. Roberts didn't realize the ten year cycle was about finish. The board met last week and came back with the proposal to raise the rent significantly. In 2007-2008, they raised the rent by \$300 to a total of \$950 per month. Now, they want to raise it another \$350 to make a total of \$1300 a month.

Mr. Rogge said he has been trying to obtain information from their Board on their overall fiscal picture. He said they don't have a formal budget, or a way to easily give him the information. He did learn that the board receives a ½ cent sales tax in support of the school overall, and before that was available they were borrowing money from the city. The sales tax and the Library rent are the school's only income. Mr. Rogge said he was not able to obtain an amount on what the school receives from the sales tax.

Mr. Rogge explained that the city handles the school's finances. They receive the tax revenue and pay the bills and salaries. When he asked for the information, Mr. Roberts asked him why the Library needed to know all of the information. Mr. Rogge said he asked Mr. Roberts how the board came up with the amount of \$350 for raising the rent. He said there had been a lot of issues in the past few months and upgrades to the building in order to pass the Fire Marshall's inspection.

Mr. Rogge explained to the Board that the upgrades and repairs had nothing to do with the space the Library rents. Our space is our space, he said. They clean it and supply the power, but the Library hasn't called on them to make repairs or do anything big. The Library's Facilities Department takes care of any issues. The utilities, however, are included as part of the rent.

Mr. Rogge said the school pays nearly \$1900 a month in utilities for the building, and that it's an old building and most of the building is not in use. There are no other renters other than the Library

Mrs. Jordan asked if there was another option for the library, another place to rent. Mr. Rogge said it would require a lot of money, and reminded the Board that the Johnson family spent \$70,000 designing the current space and providing shelving and furnishings for the Johnson Library. There are a lot of political and social ramifications to do anything else, he said.

Mrs. McMahon asked if the school's board had considered obtaining grants for their repairs since the school is on the historic list. Mrs. Smith asked if Mr. Rogge thought the board would be willing to negotiate. Mr. Rogge said that the Library can afford to pay the extra \$350 a month, but because he felt the Library was bailing the school out the first time the rent raised, he now it feels like they are price gouging. Mr. Walker asked how many square feet the Johnson Branch was. Mr. Rogge said it was 3,400 square feet.

Mr. Rechs said the Library is one of the nicest places in town, and that there are hundreds of children that need that space. He said it is worth the extra \$350 in his opinion. He then went on to say that whoever is in charge of the property should be ashamed. They have three floors, Rechs said. The museum must be a big tax write off, and if they are shrewd enough to write it off, they should be shrewd enough to bargain. He said he would rather go through the cumbersome process to let the board know that we can move if we need to. He thought we should at least try to negotiate. We gave in the last time, he said. Whoever it is that is in charge of that building should know that they could lose us.

Mr. Rogge said it would be a negative blow for the Library in the community if we left that building. He said he recommends some kind of negotiation which could take several months due to board meeting scheduling. In January, when the lease expires, we can still pay the \$950 per month while we negotiate, he said. He thinks raising the rent \$200 would be okay. He said he doesn't think the board has given too much thought as to how much money they actually need.

Ms. McMahon said they should be able to show why they need the money from the Library. Mr. Rechs asked why the Library does not pay their own utilities. Mr. Rogge asked if it was possible to put in a meter just for the Library's area. Mr. Rechs said the community is starved for things to do, and making the repairs to the building so that the children can use the gym as a community center is important, and they are just looking for a way to pay to fix it.

Mrs. McMahon said she would like to know how much money they are getting from the sales tax. Mr. Rogge said they don't even have a grasp of their own finances and they can't give numbers.

The Board asked Mr. Rogge to go back to their board, try to find out more information, and negotiate the raise in rent.

### **Search Committee Report**

Mr. Greg Walker said the Search Committee met on October 17. He said they would like to have someone hired for the Director position by the end of May. They plan to send out an announcement statewide at the beginning of March, and if need be again nationwide in April. The Committee plans for the Human Resources Manager Carolyn Colwell to screen applications for the minimum requirements. The Committee will then use a checklist to narrow down candidates for interviews. He said the salary for the Director's position will be between \$55,000 and \$95,000 depending on the candidate's experience. All board members will be invited to participate in the actual interviews of the candidates.

### **2014 Budget Presentation**

Mrs. Le'Anza Jordan, chair of the Finance Committee, said the Committee met with Mr. Rogge, Ms. Ayers, and Mr. Holsomback to review the proposed budget for the year. She asked Mr. Holsomback to present the budget information to the Board.

Mr. Holsomback said he feels the budget is solid. He said the budget doesn't include expenditures for the King Branch project. Mr. Holsomback reviewed the items on the budget proposal in the Board Member's packet. He said the Library's ad valorem tax revenue was up 8% from last year, and the total projected revenue was over \$5 million.

The budget proposal included a 3% increase in salary for all employees, which coordinates with the regular step increase for the year. Health insurance had a 17.5% increase on standard plan and a 5% increase on managed plan due to recent claims.

Mr. Walker asked how much the individual staff members pay in toward their retirement and if the percentage rate was fixed. Mr. Holsomback said staff members pay 9.5%

The budget included additional salary to increase the hours for staff at Boyce Branch, Martin Branch and King Branch, as well as new equipment to accept debit and credit cards from the branches for overdue fines and other fees on customers' accounts. The yearly automation maintenance for running programs such as Sierra, and the payroll, and accounting software were also included.

After Mr. Holsomback finished presenting the proposed budget, Ms. Jordan moved that the Board accept the budget proposal for 2014. Mrs. McMahon seconded, all voted and agreed, and the motion passed. The budget will be advertised and a final vote taken at the December meeting.

Mr. Rogge announced that the Rapides Parish Library Christmas Party would be Saturday, December 7 at Diamond Grill. Arrival time will be 6:30 p.m. and dinner would be served at 7 p.m. He invited the Board to attend. Tickets cost \$30 each.

**The next regular meeting of the Rapides Parish Library Board of Control is scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, at 3:30 p.m. at the Huie-Dellmon House.**

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

Respectfully submitted by

Steve Rogge  
Secretary

Susie Smith  
President