

**RAPIDES PARISH LIBRARY  
BOARD OF CONTROL  
MINUTES**

**September 21, 2010**

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, 430 St. James Street, Alexandria, Louisiana.

Board members present were Mr. Eddy Boddie, Mrs. Ann Heath, Mr. Glenn Rechs, Mrs. Susie Smith, and Mrs. Alice Story. Dr. Pat Barber, Mrs. Diane Lawton, Mrs. Linda McMahon, and Ms. Lee Moore were not present.

President Smith asked for a moment of silence. Mr. Rechs moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Boddie seconded. The motion was passed. Mrs. Smith asked members to add additions or corrections to the minutes of the regular June meeting, which they had received in the mail. She called for the motion to approve the minutes, which Mrs. Story made. Mr. Rechs seconded. The motion was carried. President Smith asked if there were any visitors who might want to address the Board, and no comments were made.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Business Manager Jimmy Holsomback reviewed August income and operating expenses. He said we received \$197,000 on the sale of the Fuhrer Branch Building. He reported that RPL operating expenses are normal. He pointed out a payment of \$29,000 on the interest of the bond issue loan and explained that we are required to make payments in March and August each year. The \$6,771 spent on building maintenance was largely due to the Boyce re-carpeting project. Mr. Holsomback stated that Laura-Ellen Ayres would explain more about that in her report. He noted an increase in janitorial expenses because we are now using an independent contractor to clean the Main, Robertson, Martin, McDonald, Hineston, King, and Huie-Dellmon buildings. But he pointed out that because we now use an independent contractor who doesn't receive benefits from RPL, the salary expenses have decreased. RPL has also made its first payment, \$44,671, on the Westside Regional parking lot project. Mr. Holsomback reported the 2010 budgeted income and operating expenses through July 31, 2010, were in order. Mrs. Story moved to approve the financial report. Mr. Rechs seconded, and the motion passed.

**PENDING PROJECTS: Westside Parking**

Mr. Holsomback said most of the concrete for the Westside Regional parking lot is poured, and the staff is already parking in the new section. Concrete for the curbs, sidewalk, and dumpster

enclosure will be poured next. The bricking of the dumpster enclosure and sealing of the joints will then occur. The striping should be done in about two weeks. Landscaping will complete the project after the striping.

Mr. Holsomback said RPL is still negotiating with the landscaping contractor concerning the Lake District's landscaping specifications on the Westside parking project. The architect's initial proposed estimate was \$12,000, which is twice the amount we have budgeted for this project. We are reducing the number of trees and other plantings. The second estimate was \$8,500, and Mr. Holsomback continues to try to work the total down closer to our budget allowance.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Rogge informed the Board that overall transaction statistics have increased 24.5% since August 2009. Customer use of the Internet and social networking sites has greatly contributed to that increase. The Boyce and King branches' transaction statistics are most affected by customer computer use.

Susie Smith's and Alice Story's terms were renewed by the Police Jury in August and September respectively. RPL is grateful they are both willing to continue their service on the Board.

Mr. Rogge told the Board that he has spoken to Melissa Whittington, our Martin family contact, about receiving money to improve the landscaping at the Martin Branch. Ms. Whittington asked about building a retaining wall and other improvements which weren't included in the initial grant proposal. Mr. Rogge revised the proposal and sent it to the Martin Foundation; Ms. Whittington agreed to support the grant even though she's not the legal administrator of the Martin family trust. Mr. Rechs volunteered to donate labor to the concrete repair of the facility.

### **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DIRECT SERVICES**

Laura-Ellen Ayres reported that the Boyce Branch was closed one week in August for re-carpeting. The branch was closed the following week as well, due to air conditioning problems. We resolved the problems by paying for the air conditioner and half the cost of carpeting, \$7,677 total, in exchange for free rent until October 2011. The Boyce building's rent is \$600 monthly.

Mrs. Ayres reported the Hineston and Gunter branches had new self-check stations installed to allow RPL customers to check out their own items. September will be the first month we collect statistics on this new service. She said the Huie-Dellmon House will be hosting a Social Security Disability workshop on September 27<sup>th</sup>, from 2-4 PM. Mrs. Ayres praised this workshop as a great example of creating partnerships with other government agencies to help

bring information to our customers. At the McDonald Branch, the base for the bust of Mr. McDonald has been installed. This base was designed and paid for by the McDonald Family.

### **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH SERVICES**

Kelly Kingrey-Edwards reported the RPL Bookmobile has approximately 75,000 miles on it and is a 1997 model that we bought used in 2006. We have put an estimated 12,000 miles per year on this vehicle. At this rate, Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards points out that we will reach 100,000 miles in late 2011 or early 2012. She has considered combining Bookmobile and Red Carpet routes, but that is not currently feasible because the two schedules have time and location conflicts throughout the month. In an effort to improve both the Bookmobile vehicle itself and the programming RPL offers, Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards has applied to the Central Louisiana Community Foundation for a \$100,000 grant. A sizable portion of that grant money would go toward purchasing a Bookmobile vehicle, preferably one that is ADA compliant and would better fit the needs of RPL customers.

Mrs. Alice Story commented on the value of outreach services, saying that it meets the needs of so many people who wouldn't otherwise be able to take advantage of the Library's services. She further suggested Board Members take a day to ride around with the Bookmobile, Red Carpet, or POP staff. Mrs. Smith asked how it would affect RPL's budgeted set asides since we're already using some of those funds for the Westside parking lot expansion. Mr. Holsomback agreed we did use some of the set-aside money for a couple of budgeted items in 2009 and 2010 like the Westside parking lot expansion. He further stated we have a little over \$500,000 remaining in the set-aside funds. Mrs. Smith said she's concerned about using some of the set-aside money in light of the current state of the economy. Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards replied that regardless of the economy, the Library would need to purchase a new Bookmobile in the next two or three years. Mrs. Smith said she understood the need for a new vehicle in two or two and a half years, but she's still concerned about the economy right now.

Mr. Holsomback said he would prefer to put the decision off until mid-October after he receives a report from the assessor on what our revenues will be for the next year. He further explained we haven't had many new homes or new buildings in this area in 2010; we've also lost the International Paper plant from our tax base. Their property tax contributed about \$100,000 of our \$4,000,000 revenue each year. Mr. Holsomback further stated he isn't sure whether the International Paper loss will affect us this year or next year. Mrs. Smith agreed we would know more after the 2011 budget is prepared. Mr. Rogge explained that if we get the grant, only half of the estimated \$85,000 for a used Bookmobile would need to come out of the set-asides. Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards explained she should hear back from the grant committee within the week of October 18<sup>th</sup>, the day she will make her presentation. She further said whether or not we received the grant, a new Bookmobile is necessary.

Mrs. Story said as she understood it, the grant would affect two things: a purchase of a new Bookmobile and a change in future programming. Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards said we may possibly change the Bookmobile schedule to better accommodate RPL customers. She further stated we are using the Bookmobile for more programming on the weekends, such as the Bike Rally in Pineville this weekend. They will invite the rally attendees to sign up for a library card in support of September's Library Card Sign-up Campaign.

Mr. Holsomback added that he takes a conservative stance and would feel more comfortable with waiting until we know more about the 2011 budget before we take on a large capital expense. We will also be able to make more accurate projections as to how the 2012 budget will look. He continued by saying he looks at the \$500,000 set aside from a financial standpoint. This money is our cushion. Our typical monthly operating expenses are \$350,000. So what we have set aside is about a month and a half of overhead, similar to a savings account. The Board approved using some of this fund for the Westside parking lot expansion, and we have most of the Main roofing project covered by the sale of the Fuhrer building. He encouraged the Board to proceed with caution, to take into account the things he mentioned in addition to the fact that purchasing a used vehicle could be problematic if it requires many repairs. He further pointed out that we put a \$24,000 satellite on it two years ago. Mrs. Ayres pointed out that the satellite could be transferred onto the new vehicle.

Mr. Rogge added that the Bookmobile circulation statistics have increased by 9% over the past year, which is comparable to the growth at some of the branches. He added that some branches even have a negative percentage of growth or one that is in the single digits. His point is that the Bookmobile service is increasingly appreciated. Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards is fairly new to the Outreach Services position and the Bookmobile Manager, Tammy Valenzuela, is new in that position also. We've seen increasing innovation in better routes and better ways to serve RPL customers, which show in these statistics.

Mr. Rogge further pointed out that outreach is always going to be more expensive than someone walking into a branch to receive library services. He said he has always been a big proponent of outreach, with his push to keep the Bookmobile and begin POP and Red Carpet, because he wanted RPL to reach the people who couldn't come to one of our branches. His underlying viewpoint has done more to not only bring RPL new customers but also to bring us more support at the polls. He explained there are a lot of people who wouldn't know RPL exists if we didn't get out and meet them halfway. However, Mr. Rogge agrees with Jimmy that the economy is not as stable as it has been in the recent past. In fact, he proposed to postpone the next Board meeting to the following week because we will then know whether we received the grant and what the ad velorem revenue will be for 2011.

Mr. Rogge listed some additional facts. He said we should view the possible \$45,000 that would come from our set-asides as only a tenth of the total set-aside fund. Even if we have some financial difficulties which we could counteract with the set asides, the economy will probably not be so bad that we'll need 90% of the set-aside fund to bail us out. He also explained Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards has developed a coalition of other local agencies that would partner with us on this grant. Backing out of the grant after receiving it because we were unwilling to purchase the vehicle would give RPL a negative reputation in the community. He said he's not asking for a vote today, but he would like the Board to consider all these factors. Mr. Rogge further pointed out the timing is not Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards's fault. The grant application date was set by the Central Louisiana Community Foundation, she took the application to Mr. Rogge for his approval, and he signed it. He said he thought that 2011 would probably be financially difficult, but that a \$45,000 commitment from RPL would not be excessive. Mr. Rogge explained that we would have a few months to get a vehicle if we get the grant. If we choose to get a new Bookmobile, it will have to be built according to our specifications; if we choose to purchase a used vehicle, we will have to wait until a suitable one is available for purchase. We do not have to buy a Bookmobile as soon as we get the grant; an implementation timeline is built into the application and requirements.

He said if we don't get the grant, we still have a decision to make about the Bookmobile in the foreseeable future. The vehicle Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards is considering has an extra-low floor (ELF) which provides easy accessibility for wheelchairs and walkers. This particular vehicle also has more space, better wiring, and other features that will greatly improve RPL's ability to bring programming to the people in Rapides Parish. Mrs. Smith assured Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards that the Bookmobile will be on the agenda for consideration. She further stated that if we get the grant, we will have to work more expeditiously. Mrs. Smith added that even if RPL doesn't receive the grant, the Board will still consider replacing the current Bookmobile. She expressed her appreciation to Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards for investing time and effort into applying for this grant because she understands it is a detailed process.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT**

Since Systems Manager Janie Primeaux was unable to attend, Mrs. Ayres read her report. She informed the Board of RPL's recent use of State Aid funds to purchase of a subscription to Overdrive, a distributor of ebooks, audio books, music and videos. Chester Mealer, Jana Fryday, Wesley Saunders, and Mrs. Primeaux have attended training sessions on how to use Overdrive. RPL has purchased about 90 titles for our customers to browse, check out, and download onto their devices. We should go live with this service around the beginning of October.

Mrs. Ayres reminded the Board that we will no longer be using Brainfuse as our online homework help program. We now have Tutor.com through the Louisiana State Library. This saved RPL about \$14,000, the amount Brainfuse cost us last year. A link for this service is on

the first page of the website and also on the Louisiana Library Connection Database page under Homework Help. She explained that the service has a blackboard feature where live tutors can help students figure out their problems. Our customers just need their library cards to access this service.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS AND FRIENDS**

Administrative Assistant Jana Fryday reported that because Karla Kirby got a spot on KALB's Jambalaya show and on two radio stations' morning shows, we had a great Annual Friends Book Sale. Last year we made \$3,800, but we had to spend \$575 to have it at the mall. This year we made \$3,600, but we brought in more customers who had never been to the Westside Regional Library before. Mr. Mike Wynne appraised books, historical documents, paintings, and photos; and that helped bring in some new faces as well.

Mrs. Fryday added that the Friends newsletter is ready to go out. She also said she sent out a press release for the *Town Talk* titled "Public Libraries Give Taxpayers the Biggest Bang for Their Bucks," and she got a call from the *Town Talk* that they want to run that story next week in the education section. A *Town Talk* reporter was at Westside Regional at 10:00 a.m. to take a picture that will accompany the article. She also mentioned she attended Records Retention training courses in Baton Rouge on Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Rogge explained that when he presented the Religious Accommodations policy last month he worked with other Library staff members on it, but unintentionally neglected to include Human Resources Manager Bev Lueder. When the policy was presented at the August Board Meeting, she saw some things that concerned her and informed Mr. Rogge of those concerns. With Steve's approval, she contacted Eve Masinter, an attorney we have previously contacted for help with issues involving personnel policies. He said Mrs. Masinter was also concerned with some things in the policy. As a result, Mr. Rogge asked Mrs. Masinter and Mrs. Lueder to work on another revision that would clear up those issues.

Mrs. Lueder said the first thing they cut was the paragraph regarding the federal guidelines on employees proselytizing each other in the workplace, praying at meetings, etc. She explained that while federal guidelines may permit those things, the guidelines don't forbid them or designate them as illegal. But if someone is doing one of those things and another employee complains, it becomes a case of harassment, which is a bigger problem for the employer. She said that though we don't really have that problem at RPL, she just thought it was better to leave it out because the wording was incorrect.

Mrs. Lueder also changed the part about employees speaking with their supervisors if they need religious accommodations made to their dress or work schedule, etc. The policy further stated that the supervisor would decide, and then human resources would get involved. She explained that since RPL has a lot of supervisors, a more consistent policy would direct employees to contact human resources manager about their religious accommodations first. Then the human resources manager would discuss the accommodation with the employee, make a decision, and share it with the supervisor and any other employees that might need to know. She said Mr. Rogge thought that was a good approach as well. He said he is very comfortable with the changes Mrs. Lueder has made.

Mrs. Smith asked whether they had voted on this policy in August, and Mr. Rogge informed her that the Board had approved it. They agreed another vote would be necessary to make the changes Mrs. Lueder discussed. Mrs. Smith said she wasn't sure what they had already voted on because the policy they approved was not in their current Board materials. Miss Fryday offered to print the policy out if they wanted to move to another point of business and vote on this after the meeting. Mr. Rogge suggested they postpone the vote until the October meeting. The Board agreed they would like to have the opportunity to read both the August revision and the September revision proposal of the religious accommodations policy Mrs. Lueder had recommended before approving another change.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Rogge presented the revised Collection Development Policy for Board approval. He explained the policy currently in place included a lot of superfluous information. This revision would remove the unnecessary portions while keeping the basics of the old policy. Mrs. Smith said she just tends to rely on RPL Administration for revising a policy like this. Mr. Rechs expressed a concern that RPL may be moving toward an emphasis on electronic media rather than print material. Mr. Rogge pointed out that one thing Miss Fryday didn't mention from her records retention training in Baton Rouge was that print is the preferred format for records that state agencies store. He explained that as technology advances, replacing electronically filed documents can be cost prohibitive. He also said the public demand for electronic media is so high that we have to include those items to meet their needs. Mr. Rogge said that while we include electronic media in our collections, he and most of the staff feel that print media will continue to stand the test of time. After the discussion, Mrs. Smith called for the motion, which Mrs. Story made. Mrs. Heath seconded, and the motion passed.

**The next meeting is scheduled for October 26, 2010, at the Huie-Dellmon House.**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Steve Rogge  
Secretary

Susie C. Smith  
President

September 2010