

**RAPIDES PARISH LIBRARY
BOARD OF CONTROL
MINUTES**

October 19, 2010

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

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

Vice President Rechs asked for a moment of silence. The agenda was amended to move Item 13-d, Extension of Boyce Branch Hours, to just prior to the Report of the Assistant Director of Direct Services to allow Boyce Branch Manager Margie Mealer to be in attendance. Mrs. Lawton moved to approve the amended agenda. Mrs. Story seconded. The motion was passed. Mr. Rechs asked members for additions or corrections to the minutes of the regular September meeting, which they had received in the mail. He called for the motion to approve the minutes, which Mrs. Story made. Mr. Boddie seconded. The motion was carried. Vice President Rechs 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 September income and operating expenses. He said we received \$115,848 in Telephone Expense Refunds. He reported that RPL operating expenses are normal at \$3,657,000 as of the end of September. He pointed out that we will not have any money to add to our set-aside funds in next year's budget. Mr. Holsomback reported the 2010 budgeted income and operating expenses through September 30, 2010, were in order. Mrs. Story moved to approve the financial report. Mr. Rechs seconded, and the motion passed.

PENDING PROJECTS: Westside Parking and Main Roofing

Mr. Holsomback said the Westside Regional parking lot is complete. The final inspection was done last week, and that location now has 71 parking spaces, almost double what they had prior to this expansion.

Mr. Holsomback said the construction company has delivered materials for the Main Library roofing project, and they put up a fence to enclose their staging area. They hope to begin next week.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Rogge informed the Board that overall transaction statistics have increased 20.9% since September 2010, but overall circulation has decreased by 9.32% since 2009. Mr. Rogge told the Board that although he has spoken to Melissa Whittington about receiving money to improve the landscaping at the Martin Branch, he has not yet spoken to Natalie Monroe, the President of the Martin Foundation. We do not yet have the prices from the contractor Margaret Waring Braun consulted.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DIRECT SERVICES

Laura-Ellen Ayres introduced Boyce Branch Manager, Margie Mealer, and explained that Mrs. Mealer has requested to extend the Boyce Branch's hours for one additional hour to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. These extra hours would come from the hours when their staff is doing clerical work while the library is closed. They would like to do this to give Boyce customers who work in Alexandria and Pineville an opportunity to stop by the library on their way home. Mrs. Story asked whether this change should be made on a temporary or on a permanent basis. Mrs. Ayres replied that when library hours were changed in the past, the change was always made on a temporary basis first. Mrs. Story moved the Boyce Branch's open hours be extended to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays on a three-month trial basis. Mrs. Barber seconded, and the motion was carried.

Mrs. Ayres reported that assistant managers of Westside, Gunter, and Robertson were transferred to new locations a few weeks ago. This was done as part of a plan Mrs. Ayres has had in mind to develop new leadership within the RPL staff. Moving these assistant managers to new branches will give them opportunities to compare and contrast different locations, to develop a more global outlook, and to learn new communities. She plans to move them to the third location at some point in the future.

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. There will be a reception to dedicate the bust on Sunday, November 14th, from two to four p.m. She invited all Board members to attend.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF OUTREACH SERVICES

Kelly Kingrey-Edwards pointed out that each Board member had a copy of *All the King's Men* and a schedule of activities for Rapides Reads, RPL's community-wide reading initiative. Rapides Reads would kick off Saturday, November 23, at the Main Library and will last until mid-November. She asked the Board members to attend some of the activities and said she thought it would be really interesting.

Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards reported that we just finished the Readings in Literature and Culture Program at Westside Regional Library; these lectures were well-attended. She added that most of the adult programming events from now until the end of the year are listed on the calendars she provided. She turned over the remainder of her time to her staff.

Youth Services Coordinator Karla Kirby reported that Tales Along the Bayou, the annual Halloween storytelling event, was a success. About 700 people attended, and that's great because the Rapides Parish Fair and the Art Walk were occurring at the same time as Tales. We're excited about a new partnership with Chick-Fil-A, who provided the food.

Youth Services Manager Tammy DiBartolo and Preschool Outreach Service Manager Susan Baker informed the Board about Playaways, books in MP3 audio format. They passed out brochures that explain how Playaways work. Findaway World, the company that distributes Playaways, has had a contest running for the past couple of months. The contest is for the best picture of marketing Playaways in a library. Mrs. DiBartolo said RPL is a finalist in the top ten of the competition; we could win \$10,000 for the library.

Mrs. Baker said several of the Youth Services staff went to the Association of Rural Small Libraries (ARSL) and the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services (ABOS) Conference in Denver, Colorado. Mrs. Baker was asked to present RPL's Preschool Outreach Plus (POP) program at the conference. This was the fourth time she was asked to do this, and her presentation was very well received. Several libraries across the United States have adopted our POP program.

Also at this joint conference, Mrs. Baker learned that the American Library Association (ALA) has developed a certification program for library support staff, wherein they provide an opportunity to be certified in library services as a way for library support staff who do not have a Master of Library Science (MLS) to increase the value and respect for their job-specific knowledge and skills. Mrs. Story asked what the procedure was to receive this certification. Mrs. Baker explained there is an initial fee applicants pay, and then they have four years to take six of the ten classes offered. The classes are available at state libraries, local colleges, and online. There is an alternative option to prepare a portfolio that demonstrates the applicant's knowledge and experience if that applicant has worked in libraries for a substantial number of

years. Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards added that this portfolio option pairs the applicant with a professional mentor; she further stated that RPL has plenty of staff members with professional degrees to support this option. Mrs. Baker said many staff members are excited to enroll in this program.

Dr. Barber commended Mrs. Baker for her interest in this program but wondered whether they needed some support from the Board. Mrs. Story said she thought RPL paying the certification fees was a wonderful idea. Mrs. Baker said the initial registration fee is \$325. Then the applicant would pay for the courses as well; or for those who do the portfolio option, there would be no course fees. Ms. Moore said she too would support the idea of the Library reimbursing staff members for even the coursework or a percentage of it. She further asked how many RPL staff members would be interested in this program. Mrs. Baker said they could do some research and present the Board with a more formal report at a later date. Mrs. Story asked that the person in charge of this program at the Library prepare an information sheet for the Board.

Mr. Holsomback asked where the POP grandchildren were located. Mrs. Baker listed the St. Louis Public Library; the Atlanta, Texas, Public Library; several Louisiana parish libraries; and other public libraries in Illinois and Indiana. She further said staff members from Ouachita Parish Library came to tour our facility last week, and a man from the Utah State Library asked Mrs. Baker to give her presentation at their state library conference.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Systems Manager Janie Primeaux explained that although she didn't prepare a report, she did include information on our new digital collection, administered by OverDrive. She reported that service would go live on Monday, October 25, around 9 a.m. This timeline will allow the IT Department to answer many questions from customers. She encouraged Board members to explore the digital collection and perhaps download some titles. She said we have about 120 titles, and Assistant Director for Support Services Wesley Saunders has done a great job choosing those titles. She explained we did limit the number of items customers can check out to three at a time; we did this because we are not starting out with a great number of titles.

Dr. Barber asked how copywriting fits in with this service. Most of the files, such as an eBook, the file will go away when the due date occurs. She further explained one of the great things about this digital library is that we don't have to wait for customers to return the item to us. The item will in effect return itself. Dr. Barber said this is probably a strong trend. Mrs. Primeaux agreed that digital formats are a popular trend, and that's why we've wanted to do this for quite some time.

Mr. Rogge recommended the Board members read over the information Mrs. Primeaux provided and we could answer any follow-up questions they had at another time. Mr. Rechs asked about plans to publicize our digital collection on any of the local TV stations. Mrs. Primeaux said Chester has been in contact with one of the local TV stations and the *Town Talk* on promoting this service.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Manager Beverlee Lueder presented Tammy Valenzuela, the Bookmobile Manager, for ratification. Mrs. Story moved to approve the ratification, and Ms. Moore seconded the motion. The motion passed.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND FRIENDS

Administrative Assistant Jana Fryday reported the Friends newsletter had gone out, and membership renewals and new memberships are coming in steadily. She also said the *Town Talk* ran an article titled “More Than Books: Public Libraries Give Taxpayers the Biggest Bang for Their Bucks.” This highlighted the many things available at Rapides Parish Library and promoted Library Card Sign-up Month. KALB ran a similar story, but their take was not as positive. The version posted on their website was more positive and included good quotes from an RPL customer. Ms. Fryday also reported that she attended more records retention training classes in Baton Rouge last week where she learned about Louisiana’s regulations on storing images of records and on storing paper records.

OLD BUSINESS

Mrs. Lawton moved to accept the changes in the Religious Accommodations Policy. Mrs. Story seconded, and the motion passed. Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards presented her community outreach proposal for the Central Louisiana Community Foundation Impact Award Grant committee. The Rapides Children’s Advocacy Center was grant recipient. Since we were not selected, Mrs. Kingrey-Edwards will continue to look at ways to economize outreach services wherever possible, but we are still going to need to look at ways to fund another bookmobile in the next two or three years. Discussion ensued concerning the bookmobile’s current condition and anticipated life expectancy. Also discussed were the likely replacement costs for new and used vehicles.

NEW BUSINESS

In regard to the proposed retiree health benefits change, Mrs. Lueder said the Personnel Committee met on August 30, 2010, and looked at the projected expense for retiree health

benefits that Mr. Holsomback estimated. The retiree health benefits would be very expensive for us to continue the way they are currently administered. The committee looked at several options, and chose one to recommend to the Board. Our health insurance rates for 2011 are increasing by eight percent. Mr. Holsomback put together another projection package using the 2011 rates.

Mr. Holsomback said he would like to make some points leading up to the discussion of retiree health insurance. He said there are four major areas in the Library's budget: salaries, retirement benefits, health insurance, and books. He said he went back five years to look at each of those categories. We have about the same number of people we had five years ago, but this budget category has shown a 36% increase, totally driven by the new wage and salary schedule, which helps us attract and retain good employees. Ms. Moore asked whether the minimum wage increase affected that salary increase. Mr. Holsomback agreed the minimum wage increase drove the change, but the Library was in the process of changing their wage and salary schedule anyway. He further explained we control that salary number because we don't create many new jobs; we're doing a lot more with the same number of people we had five years ago. And we have only increased our hours in a very few cases.

Under retirement expense, Mr. Holsomback explained we do not control that number; it is completely driven by salary. He said we pay 15.75% to the state retirement system for the employees that choose to be enrolled in that system. So the retirement expense has increased by 74% over the last six years.

Mr. Holsomback said the health insurance benefits include payments for active employees and retired employees. This expense has increased by 41% over the last few years. He said the health insurance expense is influenced by who chooses to participate. He further stated that we allow all our employees, once they become eligible by working 30 hours per week, to enroll in health benefits. He said our expense is then determined by which category the employee fits into: employee coverage, employee and spouse coverage, or family coverage. Mr. Holsomback explained we could have an employee who makes nine dollars per hour, and they could cost us up to \$1,000 each month depending on the type of coverage they choose. He said we pay 70% of health insurance for all our active employees right now; last year it was 80%. He stated the other factor that influences the health insurance expense is the rates. Mr. Holsomback said right now they have greatly increased, due somewhat to the health care legislation that will go into effect in January. He explained that health care is our second largest expense in the budget.

The fourth expense, Mr. Holsomback said, is the materials budget, and it really has not changed over the past five years. He further stated that our administrative staff met a few months ago and discussed the cost of retiree insurance now and in the future. They then discussed this topic with the Personnel Committee. The committee studied what kind of impact retiree health insurance would have on the Library budget and whether we could afford to continue to do what we're

currently doing. Mr. Holsomback said according to his projections, we will have a tremendous growth in the number of participating retirees in the next ten years simply because more of our staff members will be reaching retirement age.

Mr. Holsomback said he doesn't yet have the firm numbers of what our revenue will be for next year, but his conversations with the assessor's office indicate we will see a very small increase in revenue when compared to last year. He added that reflects what's going on in the economy here. The assessor also told him that in 2012 and beyond, we will see even more of a leveling off in those tax revenues because property values are going down. Mr. Holsomback admitted he was painting a gloomy picture, but that we are in a lot better shape than many other government agencies. He said we have a good, solid cash flow from our ad valorem taxes; those revenues are holding their own and not going down. But, he stated, we want to be sure that we don't do anything to jeopardize our financial stability now and in the next year or so. Mr. Holsomback said our main concern for the staff now is can we continue to afford to pay for the full package of retiree insurance.

Mr. Holsomback explained that we currently have six retired employees, two of whom just retired this year. He added that we will have as many as eighteen in the next few years. He reminded the Board that he thinks this is something we can manage in order to keep us strong and stable in the things we're trying to accomplish.

As the meeting proceeded, Mr. Holsomback asked Board members to look at the charts he had prepared. The second one showed the rates we currently pay for retiree. This chart showed both the 2010 and 2011 health insurance rates. He further explained whether the employee retires before or after they reach Medicare age greatly affects the insurance rates. Mr. Holsomback pointed out the next chart, which contained a list of potential retirees with various demographic information that would affect their health insurance rates and when they would be eligible to retire. He then said the fourth chart showed his projection of what we would pay in retiree benefits in ten years if we made no changes to the current plan.

Mrs. Lueder then discussed the current retiree health program and the three options for changing that program. She reminded the Board that whatever decision they made today would not affect the currently retired employees. She explained the current program (Option A) and the three options (Options B, C, and D); see attached chart. The personnel committee liked Option C while Mrs. Lueder, Mr. Holsomback, and the lawyer they consulted liked Option D because that plan would be simple to administer, fair, and cost less for the Library.

A discussion ensued regarding employees who elect to get health benefits other than through the Library. Ms. Moore said she agreed with the committee that Option C would be the best choice because it's the only incentive we have to offer potential employees, but Mrs. Lueder pointed out

that employees are not thinking about receiving benefits 30 years from the time they're hired. There was additional discussion about whether cutting retiree benefits would enable salary and wage increases for active employees. The Board also discussed the differences between Option C versus Option D. Mrs. Lueder pointed out that the change the Board chose would be announced at the November full staff meeting because they will be discussing health insurance benefits at that time; the change would be effective for employees who choose to retire on January 1, 2010, or later. Mr. Rechs explained the Board debated between Options C and D, but he preferred Option D because he wants to make sure the Library is around to provide the community with services and to pay its employees twenty years from now. Mrs. Lawton moved to accept Option D as the new retiree health insurance program for the Library. Mrs. Heath seconded, and the motion passed with five votes in the affirmative and two in the negative.

Mr. Rogge addressed the next point of business, a customer complaint regarding the temperature. This customer complained that the temperature at the Gunter Branch was too high and was uncomfortable for customers and staff. He explained to her that we set the temperatures a certain way to save money. She called several locations to see how their thermostats were set, and she received several different answers, which complicated the situation. Mr. Rogge reminded the Board of the policy regarding branch temperatures. This customer also complained that we built Westside Regional, a new building, instead of maintaining the buildings we already have. Mr. Rogge asked the Board whether they would like to change the policy. Dr. Barber suggested Mr. Rogge should write a letter explaining the same things he said on the phone; she then moved that he do so. No one seconded the motion. The Board discussed the possibility that writing a letter at this late date would bring the problem to the customer's attention again and would thus do more harm than good.

Mr. Rogge said the proposed Unattended and Disruptive Children Policy had been changed to remove some unnecessary phrases and to give managers the responsibility of handling those situations in their locations as they occur. Mrs. Story moved to approve the policy, and Dr. Barber seconded; the motion was carried.

Mr. Holsomback said Sabine Bank is our fiscal agent of record, and he has asked them to continue that for another year. Ms. Moore moved to approve that extension, and Mr. Boddie seconded. The motion passed.

Mr. Holsomback asked the Finance Committee to set a meeting date to discuss the proposed 2011 budget. He suggested Thursday, November 11 at 3:30 p.m., and the committee members agreed on that date.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2010, at the Huie-Dellmon House.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Steve Rogge
Secretary

Glenn Rechs
Vice President

October 2010