

**Rapides Parish Library  
Board of Control  
November 19, 2019**

**Minutes**

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

Board members present were: Ms. June Arrington, Ms. Dana Cox, Mr. Michael Fairbanks, Ms. Lana Havens, Ms. Le’Anza Jordan, Ms. Linda McMahon, Mr. Ralph Roach, Mr. Morris Taft Thomas, Greg Walker and Ms. Laura-Ellen Ayres.

President Greg Walker led the Pledge of Allegiance and offered an invocation.

**Agenda**

Mr. Fairbanks made a motion to amend the agenda by adding item “Nominating Committee” in new business. Mr. Roach seconded and the motion passed.

Ms. Havens made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Cox seconded and the motion passed.

**Minutes**

Mr. Fairbanks made a motion to approve the October minutes and the minutes from the Special Board Meeting on November 5, 2019. Ms. Cox seconded, and the motion passed.

**Financial Report**

Business Manager Jimmy Holsomback presented the financial report. Revenue was low, as expected for the end of the year. All major expenses are on track with the 2019 budget. The balance sheet indicates a strong cash position and lists the current assets and liabilities.

Ms. Cox made a motion to accept the financial report. Mr. Fairbanks seconded and the motion passed.

**Director’s Report**

Ms. Laura-Ellen Ayres said the Long Range Plan for 2020 had been submitted to the committee and will be presented at the December Board of Control meeting.

Ms. Ayres reported that Assistant District Attorney Tom Wells said that even though there would be no personal liability for employees who chose to carry Narcan, the Library would have some liability. Therefore, a policy and procedure should be drafted and implemented before the program starts at the Library.

The Properties Committee will meet on Friday at 4:00 pm with representatives of the Wettermark family, Tom Wells, Greg Jones and Mayor of Boyce Alma Moore to discuss the donation of

property in Boyce for a new library branch. A motion will be brought to Board at the December meeting.

All locations of the Library were closed on November 11<sup>th</sup> which is Veterans Day. The staff participated in Staff Development Day at Westside Regional Library on that day. All locations will be closed on Thanksgiving Day and Main Library will close at 4:00 on December 8<sup>th</sup> for the Staff Association Christmas Party.

Ms. Ayres invited the Board to attend the Annual Staff Association Christmas Party on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Direct Services**

Lennà Mouton reported that a *Table Talk*, which is a regular meeting for branch managers and assistant managers, was held recently. The group have been studying the book Trust Rules by Bob Lee, which focuses on sixteen rules on how to manage staff. Next year, managers will be participating together in areas to give back to the community such as heart walks. At future meetings, managers will discuss what worked this year and what can be improved upon as well as a “Managers’ Wish List.”

### **Human Resources**

The Personnel Committee will report later in the meeting.

### **IT**

No Report.

### **Public Relations**

Public Relations Officer Jennifer Hughes reported that the new website will launch on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. She provided a list of services and resources that were promoted in October. She said that the Publicity Committee is planning publicity for a MakerSpace ribbon cutting, Bookmobile campaign and *Creative Con*.

She expects social media growth to slow during the holiday season and pick up after the first of the year. Social media posts and events reached over 51,000 people in the community over the last twenty-eight days.

### **Outreach and Youth Services**

Youth Programming Manager, Karla Kirby, presented the Outreach and Youth Services Report.

- **Bookmobile and Homebound Service** - There are a few open spaces in the Bookmobile and Homebound Delivery schedules, so if you know anyone who might be interested in either service, please call Londa Price at (318) 442-2411 x1066.
- **Preschool Outreach Plus (POP)** – POP staff, Keisha White and Lauren Leistman, participated in the United Way’s *Season’s Readings* on November 9<sup>th</sup>. They set up a table with library information and had small incentives for the children who stopped by the table.

- **Outreach/YS** – Keisha White and Tammy Dibartolo attended *Reptile Day* at Kent House on October 19<sup>th</sup>. Kent House reports that there were over 1,200 people in attendance. They handed out library resource information and helped the kids to make a snake bracelet.
- Ms. Dibartolo attended the V.A. Hospital's *Whole Health and Wellness* program on November 5<sup>th</sup>. There were community partners there that focused on the various aspects of a veteran's health, both mental and physical. She shared library information with many veterans and their families. She also spoke with Kristi Bellard from the V.A. to do some Whole Health and Wellness programs at some of the library locations.
- Karla Kirby spent 3 days at Bolton High School promoting the *Louisiana Young Reader's Choice* program to 249 students. Suzanne Bosarge, Johnson Branch Manager, also promoted the program over two days at Bolton to 43 students.
- Ms. Kirby also spent a day at Tioga High School demonstrating some of the databases that RPL has to offer to 240 ninth graders.
- In all, the library made contact with over 500 students as well as several teachers over a four day period.
- Staff Development Day was a huge success. Trina Kirk, Karla Kirby and Tammy DiBartolo, planned the event over the last year. There were sessions on controlling anxiety, computer tips, the Five Languages of Love at Work, and a fun session with Christie Atwood! It was also a great time to get to know colleagues that you may not know well.
- The following is a copy of an email that Ms. Dibartolo received from Dennis Hays who visits Fort Polk as a part of his job. He has served as a United States Ambassador and has an impressive resume. He picked up a *Rapides Reads* flyer and thought that it might be something that he could replicate in Fairfax, Virginia at his local library.

*Hey Tammy - thank you again for taking the time to tell me about the Rapides Reads program. As discussed, I think this is a great initiative you and your colleagues have undertaken. I'm presenting to our Friends Board this evening to see if we can emulate your success up here in chilly Northern Virginia. One question - you mentioned an "Escape Room" that you have set up in the library. Was this done using your own people or did you hire an outside group to set everything up? If the former, was there a manual or guide you used?*

*Very best regards, Dennis  
Dennis K. Hays  
President, Reston Citizens Association  
Chairman, Fairfax Library Advocates*

### **Unfinished Business**

Mr. Walker said that the Director's Search Committee met earlier and decided to rescind the motion made at the last Board meeting to offer the position of director to Ms. Samantha Wallace.

Ms. McMahon made a motion to open the position to new applicants who wish to apply for the position of Library Director. Previous applicants can re-apply but will not be required to interview again.

Discussion followed about the pros and cons of opening the position again, the candidate whose score was the next highest score during the interview process and the information that led to the decision to rescind the previous motion.

A roll call vote was called for the motion presented by the Ms. McMahon on behalf of the committee. Those voting for the motion were Ms. McMahon, Ms. Arrington, Mr. Thomas and Ms. Jordan. Those voting against the motion were Mr. Walker, Mr. Fairbanks, Mr. Roach, Ms. Cox and Ms. Havens. The motion failed.

Mr. Fairbanks made a motion to offer the position of Library Director to Ms. Celise Reech-Harper. Mr. Roach seconded and a roll call vote was called. Those voting for the motion were Mr. Walker, Mr. Fairbanks, Mr. Roach, Ms. Cox, and Ms. Havens. Those voting against the motion were Ms. McMahon, Ms. Arrington, Mr. Thomas and Ms. Jordan. The motion passed.

Discussion followed regarding the salary of the new Library Director. Ms. McMahon made a motion to set the salary at \$67,500. Ms. Cox seconded and the motion passed.

### **New Business**

Mr. Holsomback presented the 2020 budget. He said that all managers had input in the budget. A 2.7% increase is expected in Ad Valorem Revenue for 2020. The interest rate on the bank accounts has dropped slightly to 1.95% therefore there is lower anticipated revenue from the Interest Income.

The major expenses are the salaries and benefits plan. Projected salaries includes recommendations for the new salary compensation plan.

Mr. Holsomback submitted reports showing the ad valorem tax history, the salary history, the healthcare rates for 2020 and cash reserves & set aside accounts. He said that the budget has a strong revenue base and managers control expenses by staying on budget.

Ms. Jordan, chair of the Finance Committee, presented the budget for board approval. She added the committee also approved a motion to have the projected balance of the 2019 budget deposited into an account for the future building of the Boyce Library Branch. Ms. Ayres explained that usually the balance after all budget items are paid would be deposited in the fund balance. The projected amount for 2019 is \$522,967 and would provide a good start. A grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development will require matching funds. Mr. Holsomback said that the fund balance is \$3.5 million.

Ms. McMahon made a motion to accept the 2020 budget and for the extra money to be set aside for the Boyce Branch Library. Mr. Fairbanks seconded and the motion passed.

On behalf of the Personnel Committee, Mr. Fairbanks presented the updated Compensation Policy. The documents were sent to the board before the meeting for their review. He said the salaries of the Rapides Parish Library was compared to other libraries in similar size and found that RPL was on the lower end. This Compensation Policy would put the RPL pay scale in line with other libraries of the same size and help to attract and retain employees. This plan, if passed, would go into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>. It was noted that the new plan has a stipulation to be reviewed every three to five years or early if needed.

Mr. Walker called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Walker appointed members to serve on the Nominating Committee. Mr. Roach will be the chair the committee. Ms. Cox and Ms. Havens will serve on the committee. At the December meeting, the Nominating Committee will nominate candidates for President, Vice President and Treasurer.

Mr. Walker announced that the next meeting will be on December 10<sup>th</sup> at the Huie-Dellmon House.

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

Respectfully submitted by

Laura-Ellen Ayres  
Secretary

Gregory Walker  
President