

**Rapides Parish Library
Board of Control
October 20, 2020**

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Rapides Parish Library (RPL) Board of Control was called to order by Board President Linda McMahon at 3:30 p.m., Westside Regional Library, 4616 Provine Place, Alexandria.

Board members present were Mr. Michael Fairbanks, Ms. Lana Havens, Ms. Linda McMahon, Ms. Le'Anza Jordan, Mr. Ralph Roach, Mr. Greg Walker, Ms. June Arrington, and Ms. Celise Reech-Harper.

Ms. Dana Cox and Mr. Morris Taft Thomas were absent.

President Linda McMahon led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda

Ms. Havens made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Fairbanks seconded, and the motion passed.

Minutes

Mr. Fairbanks made a motion to approve the September minutes. Ms. Jordan seconded, and the motion passed.

Financial Report

Business Manager Stacy Dubrock reported that spending is on track with the budget, and we have received almost all of the money budgeted. A data entry error regarding state revenue sharing and ad valorem taxes received has been corrected. Bills for hurricane damage repair are starting to come in, but damages were less than expected. Payments are being submitted from companies that were closed due to COVID and are now reopening.

Mr. Fairbanks motioned to accept the financial report as presented. Mr. Roach seconded, and the motion passed.

Director's Report

Ms. Celise Reech-Harper reported on the following:

- **Hurricane Delta**
All branches of the Rapides Parish Library closed at noon on Thursday, October 8, 2020, and remained closed for October 9-10, 2020 due to Hurricane Delta. No branches sustained significant damage. Some water intrusion occurred at the Martin Branch, but it was quickly remedied. Flooding did temporarily block streets leading to some branches, but all were ready for reopening on Monday, October 12 or Tuesday, October 13, 2020.
- **Policy Changes**
We have two permanent changes to RPL policy which will be discussed in new business. These policies will make the temporary alterations that were made for 2020 permanent policy.

The Dress Code will be further explained to staff members, emphasizing that clean, wrinkle-free and appropriate items are to be worn. There will be procedural guidelines with exclusions including leisure wear, athletic wear, and unsafe footwear.

- **Boyce Groundbreaking Photo**

We are tentatively scheduled to take the groundbreaking photo at the Boyce branch on November 5, 2020 at 9 a.m. Police Juror Rusty Wilder, Mayor Alma Moore, representatives from the architectural firm and contractor as well as Branch Manager Deborah Boerboom and Direct Services Coordinator Lenna Mouton will be invited as will all Library Board members.

- **Proposed Closures**

Due to the cancellation of this year's staff training days, the administration would like to close all branches on Election Day, November 3, 2020, and the day after Thanksgiving, November 27. These two closures would provide opportunity for employees to, respectively,

- safely perform their civic duties and keep our facilities that are used as polling locations adequately sanitized and safe for our patrons since the public health and safety requirements at polling places are not as stringent as those we are employing—and—
- have some additional time for family and stress reduction. These closures are not part of policy alteration

Ms. Reech-Harper requested an informal vote on the proposed closures, and both dates were approved unanimously.

Direct Services

Direct Services Coordinator Lenna Mouton reported that customers are happy with our current fines free policy and are grateful that we currently offer up to 20 pages of faxing and printing for free. Some patrons have even given donations to show their appreciation. Ms. Mouton reminded everyone of the current operational hours for all branches and said these hours may be in effect through December.

Human Resources

No report.

Outreach and Youth Services

Youth Programming Manager Karla Kirby presented the Outreach and Youth Services Report:

We are very excited about our first virtual version of Tales Along the Bayou. Of course, it won't be the same as being there in person, but it will be great anyway. The event can be accessed through the RPL Facebook page or YouTube. This year's performers are Sylvia Davis (not so scary stories), Judy Caplan Ginsburgh (musical entertainment), and Mike Anderson (scary stories). Please join us for this popular event.

We were again able to work with the Food Bank of Central Louisiana to get some snacks for the students that hang out in the rural branches after school. We hope to continue this throughout the year, and we appreciate the partnership with the Food Bank.

Our Hope For Cenla event was a success. It was a great partnership with Central Louisiana Human Services District. If you haven't had a chance to watch it please take the time to do so. It contains a lot of really important information and offers a look into substance use disorder.

Finally, we applied for a grant and received \$7000.00 from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities to help with our Rapides Reads program that will be held in spring of 2021. We will be reading the works of Arna Bontemps and his connection to the Harlem Renaissance. It is going to be an educational and fun project and it will highlight Alexandria!

Public Relations

Public Relations Officer Jennifer Hughes continues to promote Tales Along the Bayou for October, and will be promoting Homebound Deliveries in November. We only need a few more subscribers to the RPL Youtube channel in order to be eligible for a custom URL. Everyone is encouraged to subscribe and spread the word.

IT

ILS Administrator Trina Kirk reported:

We had to replace the power supplies in 14 of the public computers at Libuse. They were damaged during hurricane Laura. We replaced five of the older public computers at Main. Next, we will get new laptops ready for Westside (10) and add five more for King.

New hardware and software - Since staff has been doing more virtual programs, we purchased additional equipment like the recording equipment used today, cameras for PR and the children's department. Also, software for screen casting to make how-to videos.

We ordered a new Drobo (external storage) for our backup system. We backup all servers every morning and store the backup drives offsite in the IT building.

Some of our vendors have given us more access since April:

- Freegal has given us unlimited streaming.
- Ancestry Library Edition – now available at home through December 31.
- Hoopla – allowing 12 titles each month instead of 10.
- RB Digital – opened up their entire magazine collection.

Old Business

None

New Business

Ms. Reech-Harper proposed a permanent revision to the employee dress code policy, emphasizing comfort, safety, and approachability in a modern public library setting. After some discussion, the proposed policy was edited for brevity and clarity.

Ms. Jordan made a motion to approve the revised policy. Mr. Fairbanks seconded, and the motion passed.

Ms. Reech-Harper proposed making permanent the fines free policy currently in place. She presented data that shows billed items were noticeably reduced after implementation of this policy. It was discussed that many libraries are successfully adopting this model. After further discussion, the proposed policy was edited for clarity.

Ms. Arrington made a motion to approve the revised policy. Ms. Havens seconded, and the motion passed.

Due to Mr. Thomas's absence, it was agreed to table his reappointment until the next meeting.

Ms. Reech-Harper again invited all board members to attend the Boyce groundbreaking event on November 5.

Ms. Reech-Harper announced recent personnel changes in Administration, introducing new Administrative Assistant, Kendra Bertrand, and informing the board that Jennifer Quebodeaux is now serving as Payroll and Benefits Specialist, and Stacy Dubrock is the new Business Manager.

Ms. McMahon announced that the next meeting will be on November 17th at the Westside Regional Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Celise Reech-Harper
Secretary

Linda McMahon
President