

**Rapides Parish Library
Board of Control
December 8, 2020**

Minutes

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

Board members physically present were Mr. Michael Fairbanks, Ms. Lana Havens, Mr. Greg Walker, and Ms. Celise Reech-Harper.

Board President Linda McMahon, Mr. Ralph Roach, Ms. June Arrington, Ms. Le'Anza Jordan, Ms. Dana Cox, and Mr. Morris Taft Thomas were present by phone.

Vice President Michael Fairbanks led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda

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

Minutes

Ms. McMahon made a motion to approve the October minutes. Ms. Havens seconded, and the motion passed.

Financial Report

Ms. Celise Reech-Harper offered a brief overview of the 2021 budget as more detailed discussion was scheduled for later in the meeting. She stated that adjustments were necessary due to a significant increase in insurance costs. She stated that the November and December expenses report will be available in January. Business Manager Stacy Dubrock was unable to attend the meeting due to health concerns.

Director's Report

Ms. Celise Reech-Harper presented a 2020 Year in Review booklet which documents the Library's story during this historic year. She listed many accomplishments which illustrate the adaptability of RPL and the staff's ability to meet rapidly changing needs during uncertain times, including implementation and expansion of virtual services, WiFi options, homebound delivery, limited free printing and faxing, and fine-free services. Laptop and hotspot checkout has been particularly useful to the community as more people work and attend school from home, and social media and website use has increased.

Ms. Reech-Harper also mentioned that the Boyce groundbreaking went well, and the site now has an official address: 1177 Hayward B. Joyner Street, Boyce, Louisiana. Forms and plumbing are now up at the site, and concrete should be poured when the weather is drier. She is continuing to regularly meet with the architect and project manager.

Direct Services

Direct Services Coordinator Lenná Mouton reports that all RPL branches have reverted back to curbside and drive-through services only for the time being.

Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Jackie Brown announced that Debbie Jenkins recently retired from Libuse branch and that Facilities Manager Les Guidry and Technical Services' Judy Skluzacek will be retiring at the end of December.

Outreach and Youth Services

Outreach Services Coordinator Tammy DiBartolo reported that the Bookmobile team's Letters from Santa program has been very successful, with nearly 400 letter requests from all over the world – some as far away as Australia and the UK.

This month, there are Story walks planned for Alexandria and Pineville. Story walks encourage people to get out and walk around town as they look for pages of a storybook mounted in the windows of local businesses. Some of the businesses are offering discounted items to participants as well. Applications to the Rapides Foundation are in process to expand Story walks to the Glenmora and King branches.

IT

Systems Manager Janie Primeaux confirmed that laptop and hotspot circulation has been high. Hotspots, in particular, are in demand.

A recent update in Sierra has added a new feature to check-out receipts: patrons can now see how much money they've saved by using the library vs. buying materials directly.

An offsite exchange server is being set up to prevent future loss of email service. After a routine update in November, the email server did not come back online, and the Library was without email for two weeks. The cause is still unknown, but after working with a specialist, the system was successfully restored. With the offsite server installed, this should not happen again.

No critical data or personal information was compromised during the outage as it was a fully internal issue.

Public Relations

Celise Reech-Harper reported that the Cenla Broadcasting contract has been renewed for another six months, which ensures local media will continue to run commercials, web ads, and interviews to promote our services.

A recent change in newsletter communication services from Book Letters to Mail Chimp is proving to be a positive move as Mail Chimp is easier to operate and more cost effective.

All Library social media channels have seen growth, with the goal of 10,000 followers across all platforms in sight. Ms. Reech-Harper credits Public Relations Officer Jennifer Hughes' dedication and hard work for the Library's success in reaching high numbers of digital and social media users.

Old Business

Mr. Morris Taft Thomas has completed his oath of office at the Police Jury. The Board congratulated Mr. Thomas and welcomed him to his second term.

New Business

Ms. McMahon, Mr. Fairbanks, and Ms. Arrington will make up this year's Nominating Committee. They will present their nominations for 2021 Board of Control officers at the January meeting. Ms. Reech-Harper asked all Board members to also submit their committee preferences ahead of the January meeting.

Ms. Reech-Harper proposed signing the Libraries Southwest Reciprocal Borrowers (LSW) Agreement, which would allow users from Allen, Jefferson Davis, Cameron, Calcasieu, Beauregard, Vernon, and Rapides parishes to choose a LSW library card option usable at libraries across these parishes. This would be a separate library card, but patrons would retain the option of a regular Rapides Parish Library card as well. After a short discussion to clarify some of the borrowing terms, Ms. Jordan motioned to approve the signing of the LSW Agreement as presented. Ms. McMahon seconded, and the motion passed. The agreement will be signed at the next meeting of LSW Librarians.

Finance Committee Chair Ms. Le'Anza Jordan summarized the proposed 2021 Budget, stating that although there was a large increase in insurance costs and a decrease in revenue, she was confident in the budget adjustments.

Ms. Reech-Harper confirmed there was a 35% health insurance increase along with increases in all other insurances. The loss of revenue due to fines free and free copy/fax services had been expected, but an ad valorem increase of 1% was better news than anticipated. Staffing adjustments and consolidations are planned to help balance the budget.

Ms. Jordan called for the Board to vote on accepting the proposed budget, with the understanding that it can be adjusted later if more revenue becomes available. The motion passed unanimously, and the 2021 budget proposal was accepted.

On conclusion of business, Mr. Fairbanks announced that the next meeting will be on January 19th at the Westside Regional Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Celise Reech-Harper
Secretary

Linda McMahon
President