

**Rapides Parish Library
Board of Control
February 23, 2021**

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Rapides Parish Library (RPL) Board of Control was called to order at 3:30 p.m. at the Westside Regional Library, 4616 Provine Place, Alexandria by Library Director Celise Reech-Harper acting as proxy with permission of Board President Michael Fairbanks due to the physical absence of both the President and Vice President of the Board.

Board members physically present were Ms. June Arrington and Ms. Lana Havens.

Present by phone were Mr. Fairbanks, Ms. Le'Anza Jordan, Ms. Linda McMahon, and Mr. Ralph Roach.

Ms. Dana Cox, Mr. Greg Walker, and Mr. Morris Taft Thomas were absent.

Ms. Reech-Harper led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda

Ms. Havens moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Fairbanks seconded, and the motion passed on unanimous vote.

Minutes

Ms. Jordan moved to approve the January minutes. Mr. Fairbanks seconded, and the motion passed on unanimous vote.

Service Award

Direct Services Coordinator Lenna Mouton presented McDonald Branch Manager Gail Goldberg with an award for 30 years of service. Ms. Goldberg was thanked for her deep involvement in not only the Library but also the entire community of Glenmora. She spoke about her love for her work and her community, and thanked the Board for their appreciation.

Financial Report

Business Manager Stacy Dubrock presented reports for December 2020 and January 2021. Beginning with the December report, Ms. Dubrock drew attention to line items indicating areas where the Library went more than 5% over budget in 2020. These areas included unemployment benefits, hotspots, insurance, and automation. The State Library databases were paid early, so although they show up as 2020 expenses, they cover service through 2021. Money saved due to closures helped to balance out the unanticipated expenditures.

Ms. Havens motioned to approve the December financial report. Ms. Arrington seconded, and the report was unanimously approved.

Moving on to the January 2021 financial report, Ms. Dubrock pointed out that the first ad valorem check of the year was received. Discounts, interest, and receipt of some grants have also helped get the year off to a strong financial start. Boyce branch expenses are still on track.

Ms. Havens moved to approve the January financial report with Ms. McMahon seconding. The report was approved on unanimous vote.

Director's Report

Library Director Celise Reech-Harper began by reporting that all branches of the Library were closed February 15-22 due to winter storms of heavy precipitation and unusually low temperatures. This weather led to a pipe bursting at the Hineston branch where water covered the floor and had to be suctioned and drained. Blowers were placed to dry the carpeted areas, and bookshelves are being treated with a mold and mildew preventative. At this time, it does not appear the carpets will have to be replaced. The damage seems to be less than the insurance deductible of \$5,000.

Other storm damage includes a collapsed external overhang above the patio at the McDonald branch and multiple water damaged ceiling tiles at Libuse. In both cases, damaged items will be replaced.

Administrative staff are working to replace the defunct Sharepoint staff site. In its place, each staff member will have an RPL Outlook email address with calendar function so information can be more efficiently delivered and shared. They are also in the process of assigning a unique door access code to each employee and resetting codes that were shared.

The Business Manager and Director have been working on reinvesting funds from a matured certificate of deposit that, when it was created many years ago, was not issued in the appropriate category. The financial institution that created it does not offer a compliant version, so rate shopping has begun for a new place to re-invest this CD.

The Staff Association now has its own tax classification number, making it compliant with all current regulations. Wesley Saunders is listed as the contact for this account since it is now formally a separate entity.

With COVID-19 numbers falling, RPL is preparing to cautiously reopen in mid-March with all safety protocols in place including the required use of masks and distancing. Sanitation procedures will be as they were during the Fall 2020 opening.

The Library provided crafting kits and informational flyers for 200 participants at the "Love is a Work of Art" Giveaway Participation event which was the effort of numerous local non-profits and spearheaded by the Strong Neighborhood Project. Jennifer Hughes and Celise Reech-Harper assisted with distribution of the items during the event on the afternoon of February 12, 2021 and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

A second fully anonymous feedback survey was sent to all RPL staff in January; the first such survey was collected in June of 2020. In a comparison of the two surveys, all categories showed an increase in employee satisfaction in their work environment and confidence in their leadership and organization overall. A version of this survey will likely be sent at least once per year.

Direct Services

Ms. Celise Reech-Harper presented the report for Direct Services Coordinator Lenná Mouton who was called from the meeting early. Ms. Mouton's report stated that manager evaluations have been completed and revised with 2021 standards, including monthly professional development, monthly staff meetings, and increased circulation. Managers are currently working on inventory, shelf reading, and preparations for opening.

The Library is currently open for curbside services, faxing, and copying. Patrons continue to express their thanks to the Library for offering curbside and drive through services. Ms. Reech-Harper indicated that these services have been so popular that they will likely continue even after all branches are physically open again.

The Johnson branch has partnered with the LSU Ag Center to produce a StoryWalk in the LHS ballpark field. The story featured is *Words of Love* by Rick Warren.

Outreach and Youth Services

Outreach Services Coordinator Tammy DiBartolo was pleased to announce that LSUA's Dr. Chris Stacey will facilitate the upcoming "Who Gets to Vote" virtual book discussion series, a program made possible through a grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. Dates and times for the virtual programs will be shared as soon as they are available.

The Library continues its work with the Strong Neighborhoods Project and My Community Cares. 200 Valentine Make and Take kits were distributed at their "Love is a Work of Art" event on February 12.

RPL's Black History Month virtual storytime events from Rosa Metoyer, Sylvia Davis, and Mayor Fields of Pineville have been very popular and have gotten a lot of hits. Ms. DiBartolo expressed her appreciation for all of the guest storytellers for their partnership with the Library.

It is time to plan for the Summer Reading Program by attending virtual training sessions and looking for ways to reach everyone as the program will likely be virtual again this year.

IT

Systems Manager Janie Primeaux confirmed that rpl.org email addresses will be given to all staff members; this will mostly affect branch clerks who share a branch email address and had not previously had their own. Some Outlook training will be provided to new users.

The new firewall should be installed soon. Once installed at all branches, routers at each branch can be removed.

Sierra has been upgraded to Sierra 5.2; there were only minor changes in this update. Public computers at all branches are also being updated in anticipation of reopening.

RB Digital Magazine has moved to the Libby application. Patrons have until March 31, 2021 to switch over to Libby.

Public Relations

Public Relations Officer Jennifer Hughes reported that RPL gained almost 200 new followers in the last month on social media but lost some newsletter subscriptions.

The closed captioning project is ongoing. Currently, closed captioning for virtual programs will only be available on videos that are under 2 gigabytes in size.

New Business

It is necessary to annually reconfirm the Library's commitment to the ALA Bill of Rights, which can be found on ALA's website. A copy was provided to all in attendance, and Ms. Reech-Harper read aloud the full text of the Bill of Rights for the benefit of those attending virtually by phone.

Ms. Arrington moved to reconfirm the Rapides Parish Library's commitment to the ALA Bill of Rights. Ms. Jordan seconded, and the motion passed on unanimous vote.

Ms. Reech-Harper then asked the Board to consider adopting the day after Thanksgiving as a permanent paid staff holiday. She pointed out that the Library is traditionally not heavily used on that day, as most people are with family or taking advantage of retail sales. She requested that RPL staff be given the opportunity to do those things as well, especially as it would save operating expense to be closed on a day when not much business is done.

Upon opening the floor to discussion, Ms. Havens said it was an excellent idea, and all present Board members agreed. Mr. Fairbanks motioned to adopt the day after Thanksgiving as a permanent paid holiday for Library staff. Ms. Havens seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Reech-Harper announced that the next meeting will be on March 16th at the Westside Regional Library.

With no further business at hand, Ms. Reech-Harper asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Havens so moved, Ms. Arrington seconded, and the motion unanimously passed. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Celise Reech-Harper
Secretary

Michael Fairbanks
President