

**Rapides Parish Library
Board of Control
April 20, 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 Board President Michael Fairbanks.

Board members physically present were Mr. Fairbanks, Mr. Ralph Roach, Ms. Dana Cox, Ms. June Arrington, Mr. Greg Walker, and Ms. Lana Havens. Ms. Le'Anza Jordan, Ms. Linda McMahon, and Mr. Morris Taft Thomas were absent.

Also present were Director Celise Reech-Harper and eleven members of staff.

Mr. Fairbanks led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda

Mr. Roach motioned to approve the agenda. Ms. Cox seconded and the motion passed.

Minutes

Ms. Havens motioned to approve the March minutes. Mr. Roach seconded and the motion passed.

Financial Report

Business Manager Stacy Dubrock presented the March financial report. Ad valorem revenue appears to be higher than expected, but some of it will be refunded back later in the year. The Endowment for the Humanities grant check for the Who Gets to Vote? program was received and expenditures of those funds are detailed in the report. Utility expenses have gone up across the state as electric companies adjust pricing to cover the surge of fuel use during February's winter storm; those rates are expected to even back out over time. Internet costs for the Library also shows increases, but e-rate credits will be applied when they are received.

A long overdue software upgrade has been applied to the Business office computer. The cost of the upgrade is built into the program's maintenance fee.

The annual audit is scheduled to begin on Friday, April 23.

Ms. Havens motioned to approve the financial report. Ms. Cox seconded and the motion passed.

Director's Report

Director Celise Reech-Harper reported on the following:

- Board members are reminded to complete their mandatory annual ethics training.
- The Strategic Planning Committee is creating targeted surveys to gather information on community library needs that will help guide future progress. The surveys will be made available in multiple formats and distributed across multiple platforms to reach as many people as possible.

- The Friends of the Rapides Parish Library Book Sale is being planned for May. It will be a bag sale in which RPL branded bags can be purchased for \$10 each and filled. Masks and social distancing will be utilized.
- State Librarian Rebecca Hamilton has agreed to offer a tailored board training day to the RPL Board of Control on September 21, 2021 at Westside Regional Library. RPL Board Day will begin with a staff meet-and-greet at 10:00 a.m. and will include lunch. Board members are asked to submit training topic requests by the June board meeting.

Direct Services

Direct Services Coordinator Lenná Mouton reports that patrons are excited and appreciative that the Library is open to the public again.

Two new branch managers have been appointed: Sophia Pierre-Louis to Johnson branch and Suzanne Bosarge to Martin Library. Both managers will attend the May board meeting.

Two substitute clerks have been promoted to full-time positions: Raven Brister to Libuse Branch and Lorin Rayburn to Johnson Branch.

The Library is currently accepting applications for Substitute Clerks to start training on June 7. We are also planning to partner with the Louisiana Workforce Commission's Youth Workforce program to fill personnel needs at Johnson Branch.

Programming at the branches will tentatively resume beginning this week with socially distanced outdoor events, such as King Branch's outdoor art classes.

Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Jackie Brown presented three staff members for ratification:

- Anna Lee, Circulation/Reference Clerk at King Branch
- Lorin Rayburn, Circulation/Reference Clerk at Johnson Branch
- Kendra Bertrand, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Roach moved to approve Ms. Lee, Ms. Rayburn, and Ms. Bertrand for ratification. Ms. Arrington seconded and the motion passed.

Outreach and Youth Services

Outreach Services Coordinator Tammy DiBartolo was pleased to announce that outreach programming has resumed with safely distanced outdoor activities. Outreach and the Bookmobile have recently partnered with the Junior League for a literacy event and the Touch a Truck event for children.

The Library has partnered with the Alexandria Zoo for the "Tales and Tails" Summer Reading program. Outreach and Public Relations were able to spend a day at the zoo recording story-time videos for release throughout the summer.

Healthy Blue will once again sponsor the school supply giveaway at the Main Library. Aetna will also donate this year toward school supplies for Pineville and the rural branches.

This fall, the Rapides Reads event will focus on Arna Bontemps. RPL will partner with the City of Alexandria and the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities to bring attention to Mr. Bontemps and the Arna Bontemps Museum.

IT

No report.

Public Relations

Public Relations Officer Jennifer Hughes reported 90 new followers to RPL social media accounts. Over the last two years, social media has grown from just under 2,000 to over 10,000 followers.

In April, National Library week was heavily promoted, with posters, bookmarks and a staff diorama contest on social media. The Police Jury proclamation remains available online.

May's public relations focal points will be the Bookmobile, which begins making stops again on May 1, and the upcoming Summer Reading Program.

Upon conclusion of reports, Mr. Fairbanks called for any old or new business to be presented. With no further business being brought forward, he announced that the next meeting will be on May 18 at the Westside Regional Library.

On request to adjourn, Ms. Arrington so moved, Ms. Cox seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Celise Reech-Harper
Secretary

Michael Fairbanks
President