

**Rapides Parish Library  
Board of Control  
May 18, 2021**

**Minutes**

The regular meeting of the Rapides Parish Library (RPL) Board of Control was called to order at 3:35 p.m. at the Westside Regional Library, 4616 Provine Place, Alexandria by Board President Michael Fairbanks.

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

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

Mr. Fairbanks led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

**Agenda**

Ms. McMahon motioned to approve the agenda. Ms. Havens seconded and the motion passed.

**Minutes**

Ms. McMahon motioned to approve the April minutes. Ms. Havens seconded and the motion passed.

**Financial Report**

Business Manager Stacy Dubrock presented the April financial report. Previously reported issues with e-rates on two AT&T accounts and one Century Link account have been corrected and credits will be issued; one of the AT&T accounts will result in a \$16,000 credit from refunded overcharges. The annual audit is nearly complete, and all RPL CD and bank accounts have been updated to show Ms. Reech-Harper and Ms. Dubrock as the authorized signers.

Line items of interest for April include an insurance credit and a necessary HVAC repair expense; there may be a second HVAC unit in need of attention in the near future. The Boyce branch project remains on budget. The current building's contract is still active and no move-out will be necessary before the new branch is finished. The lot next door was sold to the town of Boyce, but they have offered the Library a contract to continue renting as needed.

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

**Director's Report**

Director Celise Reech-Harper reported on the following:

The Library is partnering with the Alexandria Zoo for the Tales and Tails Summer Reading Program. As a lead-in to that event, Friends President Michelle Riggs Waller, on behalf of the Friends of the Rapides Library, gifted the otter family at the zoo some enrichment toys as well as books for the education center. Ms. Reech-Harper presented a ceremonial library card to the opossums and was recorded reading to them as part of a video series that will run throughout the summer. The series will feature library staff reading to zoo residents along with fun, educational animal facts.

The Library continues to support local businesses who were hard hit by the pandemic and economic challenges. When possible, purchases are made from local retailers and restaurants.

The Friends of the Library Fun in the Sun book sale will be held May 24<sup>th</sup> through May 29<sup>th</sup>. It will be a bag sale where each individual can pay \$10 for a Friends logoed bag to fill with books. The Friends will also be selling retro-inspired “Totally Booked” t-shirts for \$15.

Evaluation and repairs of roof issues at several branches are ongoing as we work towards long-term solutions.

The interior of the Boyce Building Project is nearing completion. Furniture and shelving options are being discussed, with moveable shelving under consideration. Completion of the building is currently projected for late August.

The Rapides Parish Library will be receiving \$47,064.84 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). These funds are part of the \$200 million allocated to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and will be dispersed through the State Library. Several technology upgrades and additions are being considered for the branches to utilize these funds.

The RPL Administration team will reinstate monthly meetings and will participate in an RPL Leads Book Club by reading and discussing “Leaders Eat Last” by Simon Sinek as part of the Library’s professional development program.

The Library will be partnering with the Interfaith Council, represented by Ben Peterson, to set up vaccination centers at the Boyce, Hineston, McDonald, Johnson, and King Branches. The vaccination sites will be coordinated by the Interfaith Council with the assistance of the National Guard. RPL will provide space for and promotion of this service.

### **Direct Services**

Direct Services Coordinator Lenná Mouton introduced Ms. Sophia Pierre-Louis to the Board as the new manager of the Johnson Branch library in Lecompte. Ms. Suzanne Bosarge, new manager of Pineville’s Martin Library, was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting.

The first Manager’s Meeting after reopening was held earlier in the month, with another meeting and training session planned for the fall.

### **Outreach and Youth Services**

Outreach Services Coordinator Tammy DiBartolo announced summer enrichment program partnerships with the Rapides Parish School Board, the City of Alexandria, and the T.R.E.E. House Children’s Museum. Plans are also underway to partner with the Louisiana Department of Health, Central Louisiana Human Services District, and C.L.A.S.S to hold a virtual “Community Conversations” series dealing with substance use disorder.

Youth Programming Manager Karla Kirby reported the library’s annual Summer Reading Program will run from June 1 through July 31 and be primarily virtual again this year. Some activities, such as logging books and picking up craft kits, can be done in person now that branches are open to the public. Prizes have been purchased from local vendors.

Rapides Parish Library, in partnership with the Louisiana Cattleman's Association, is proud to announce that Dr. Temple Grandin is scheduled to speak on July 16 at the Lagniappe Events Center in Alexandria. Dr. Grandin is well known for her research into the humane treatment of animals, particularly livestock. At 10:00 am, Dr. Grandin will give a speech addressing what it means to be on the autism spectrum. She will address the cattlemen later in the evening. The event is free and open to the public, but tickets are limited and are expected to be claimed quickly. Sign-up will go live a few weeks before the event.

### **Public Relations**

Public Relations Officer Jennifer Hughes confirmed that the save-the-date announcement for Dr. Grandin's speech has received over 4,000 views, and that RPL social media has gained 150 followers in the last month. RPL's Google My Business listing has also been successful at directing people to our locations and services.

Before moving on to new business, Mr. Fairbanks mentioned that the Bookmobile was currently set up at the Alexandria Farmer's Market on Jackson Street and encouraged everyone to visit the market. He reported that their previous visit to the Cabrini Farmer's Market in Pineville was successful, with their children's crafts in particular being very popular.

### **New Business**

In light of Ms. Arrington's absence, Mr. Fairbanks called for a motion that the Oath of Office for her second term reappointment to the Board of Control be postponed until the June regular meeting. Ms. McMahon so moved, seconded by Ms. Havens, and the motion passed.

Ms. Lana Havens agreed to renew her position to the Board of Control for a second term of five years. The Rapides Parish Police Jury has approved the reappointment. Ms. Havens recited aloud and signed the Oath of Office, which was notarized by Ms. Tara DeMarco Williamson.

Three Rapides Parish Library policies were presented for reapproval. Digital copies of the policies were provided prior to the meeting for Board review.

- **Display Case Policy** – motioned for renewal by Ms. McMahon. Seconded by Ms. Havens. With no objections, the motion was passed and the policy reapproved.
- **Display or Distribution of Non-Library Materials Policy** – motioned for renewal by Ms. Havens. Seconded by Ms. McMahon. With no objections, the motion was passed and the policy reapproved.
- **Wireless Access Policy** – motioned for renewal by Ms. McMahon. Seconded by Ms. Havens. With no objections, the motion was passed and the policy reapproved.

These policies are publically available to view on the Library's website.

Mr. Fairbanks announced the next meeting will be on June 15 at the Westside Regional Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Celise Reech-Harper  
Secretary

Michael Fairbanks  
President