

**Rapides Parish Library
Board of Control
August 17, 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 Vice President Greg Walker.

Board members present were Mr. Walker, Ms. Le'Anza Jordan, Ms. Linda McMahon, Ms. Lana Havens, Mr. Morris Taft Thomas, Mr. Ralph Roach, and Ms. June Arrington. Also present were Director Celise Reece-Harper, Ms. Irene Hobbs, and nine members of staff.

President Michael Fairbanks attended virtually by phone. Ms. Dana Cox was absent.

Mr. Walker led the Pledge of Allegiance and invocation.

Agenda

Mr. Walker called for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Jordan moved, seconded by Ms. McMahon, and the agenda was unanimously approved.

Minutes

Mr. Walker called for a motion to approve the June minutes. Ms. Havens moved, seconded by Ms. Jordan, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Financial Report

Business Manager Stacy Dubrock presented the June 2021 financial report. 2020-2021 e-rate refunds continue to come in, and 2021-2022 refunds have been approved and will begin arriving in the next few months. Some grant funds, most notably from the American Relief Plan Act, have also been received.

Approval is pending for a new funding opportunity that will cover the Library's wifi hotspot usage, and allow additional hotspots to be purchased for circulation. COVID-19 supplies are included in the supplies budget, but are also being tracked separately.

Regarding the Boyce branch, changes made in the years since the budget was approved have resulted in higher architect fees than projected. The increasing cost of supplies may also affect the overall budget, but efforts are being made to keep the cost as close to the original projection as possible.

The July report is in process and will be presented at the September regular board meeting.

Mr. Walker called for a motion to approve the financial report. Ms. McMahon so moved and a vote was held. The report was unanimously approved.

Director's Report

Director Celise Reece-Harper reported the following:

- The Boyce branch opening has been moved to mid-November due to COVID and weather-related setbacks. The director is working with the architect and the city of Boyce to resolve an issue with water and sewage hookups.
- To support community endeavors and strengthen local partnerships, Ms. Reech-Harper has joined the CENLA Region 6 STEM Advisory Council, the Alexandria Junior League, the Children's Advocacy Network, and was recently sworn in as a CASA volunteer.
- Ms. Linda McMahon has served the board for over a decade, and will be leaving after completion of her second term in September. Ms. Reech-Harper applauded Ms. McMahon's dedication to the board and wished her well.
- Ms. Irene Hobbs, a long-time Rapides Parish educator, was introduced. Ms. Hobbs will be joining the RPL Board of Control in September as the new District F representative.
- The latest quarter of statistics shows that the decision to go fine free was a sound one, as there has been a sharp decrease in the number of items being invoiced for replacement.
- Staff Training Day is set for October 11, 2021.

Direct Services

Direct Services Coordinator Lenná Mouton informed the board that adjustments to branch hours that had been planned for the fall have been put on hold due to the surge in COVID-19 cases.

Human Resources

Human Resources Manager Jackie Brown reported that two interviews have been scheduled for the Systems Administrator position in IT. The position is currently filled by Bill Huffman who will be retiring in the fall.

Outreach and Youth Services

Outreach Services Coordinator Tammy DiBartolo was pleased with the participation numbers for this year's Summer Reading Program: 1,371 people across all age groups registered on Beanstack with 784 reaching enough minutes read to earn completion status. School supply giveaways, partnerships with local farmers markets, and outreach to summer camps have all been successful this season.

The Library has been designated as a drop-off point for gently used school uniforms, and will continue to take donations. Three large bags of uniforms were collected over the summer and given to the school board.

While in-person programming has been suspended due to the COVID surge, take and make kits and virtual events are still being planned.

IT

No report.

Public Relations

Public Relations Officer Jennifer Hughes confirmed that in-house programming has been temporarily suspended, but virtual events will continue.

September is Library Card Sign-up Month; new card patrons will be entered into a drawing for prizes. The Library will also be commemorating the 20th anniversary of 9/11 with exhibits and a blood drive at the Main Library on September 11.

RPL social media has gained just over 100 followers, despite Facebook's recent algorithm changes.

New Business

Ms. Reech-Harper presented a holiday and training schedule for 2022 to the board for review, which proposed the addition of Juneteenth and Veterans Day as permanent RPL closure holidays while retaining the current four floater days for personal or non-RPL holidays.

Mr. Walker called for any objections to voting immediately on the proposed calendar. Hearing none, he then called for a motion to approve the 2022 holiday and training schedule as presented. Ms. Arrington so moved, seconded by Ms. McMahon, and the schedule was unanimously approved.

Ms. Linda McMahon was then recognized for her service to the board from 2009 to 2021. Ms. Reech-Harper presented her with a plaque in appreciation of her dedication to the Rapides Parish Library. Ms. McMahon said though she majored in art, the library was always her second love. She has enjoyed her time on the board. She plans to continue her volunteer work and may return to future meetings as a member of the public.

Mr. Walker expressed his gratitude to Ms. McMahon for being an active and engaged board member and a pleasure to work with and wished her well. He welcomed Ms. Hobbs on behalf of the board and looks forward to working with her.

The next meeting will be on September 21, 2021 at the Westside Regional Library.

With no further business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Celise Reech-Harper
Secretary

Michael Fairbanks
President