

**Rapides Parish Library
Board of Control
November 16, 2021**

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Rapides Parish Library (RPL) Board of Control was called to order at 3:45 p.m. at the Westside Regional Library, 4616 Provine Place, Alexandria by President Michael Fairbanks.

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

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

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

Agenda

Ms. Havens moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Jordan. On unanimous vote, the agenda was approved.

Board Member Report

Ms. Havens, Ms. Cox, and Ms. Arrington thanked library staff for a successful and enjoyable grand opening of the new Boyce Branch.

Minutes

Ms. Hobbs moved to approve the October minutes, seconded by Ms. Cox. On unanimous vote, the minutes were approved.

Financial Report

Business Manager Stacy Dubrock presented the October financial report, pointing out that the updated balance sheet format makes clear that a large portion of the checking account balance is meant as reserve funds for retirement and health insurance obligations and should not be considered for other uses. Due to population and property tax growth, ad valorem taxes have increased, which will help to offset the costs of HVAC repair. End of year budget analysis show a 1% deviation on the 2021 budget, and the Boyce branch is estimated to be \$600 over budget.

Ms. Havens motioned to accept the financial report, seconded by Ms. Arrington. On unanimous vote, the report was approved.

Director's Report

Library Director Celise Reech-Harper reported the following:

- Full operations of the Library have resumed.
- The Grand Opening of the Alfred L. Boyce Wettermark Branch Library was a success; in attendance were the Wettermark family, KALB news, and many local dignitaries.
- There are still some sewage system issues at Boyce that are in the process of being resolved.

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- Reflecting a return to in-person service at all branches, statistics for the third quarter of 2021 show increases in all services except ebooks and virtual programs.

Outreach and Youth Services Report

Ms. Reech-Harper informed the Board of the upcoming Rapides Reads event in December. The theme for this year will be *Beaucoup Bontemps*, a celebration of *Arna Bontemps* and the Harlem Renaissance. The Letters from Santa program will return this year. A new holiday event, Family Photo Day at Main Library, has proven popular and may become an annual event.

IT Report

Systems Manager Janie Primeaux shared that computer classes have resumed in the branches.

Public Relations Report

Public Relations Officer Jennifer Smarr was absent from the meeting but submitted a pre-recorded report listing currently promoted November programs and upcoming December events.

New Business

Long Range Plan Committee member Ms. June Arrington announced that the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan is complete. Director Reech-Harper led a review and discussion of the document.

The plan calls for a revised and simplified RPL Mission Statement. After reviewing the current and proposed statements, Ms. Cox motioned to approve the revised mission statement. Mr. Fairbanks seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Havens motioned to approve the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan. Ms. Cox seconded, and the motion passed on unanimous vote.

The Rapides Parish Library Families First Coronavirus Leave policy was reapproved in January 2021, but the expiration date of December 2020 was not updated at that time. After some discussion, Ms. Cox motioned to remove the expiration date from the policy, allowing it to be extended throughout the duration of the national health crisis, at Board discretion. Ms. Havens seconded the motion, which passed on unanimous vote.

A Nominating Committee was formed consisting of Committee Chair Lana Havens, Mr. Fairbanks, Ms. Jordan, and Ms. Hobbs. The committee will meet at 2:30 p.m. on December 14 to select candidates for 2022 Board of Control officers.

Ms. Reech-Harper presented an updated Travel Mileage Rate Policy, revised to clarify that Board members may not be legally reimbursed by the Library and that personal vehicles should not be used except when no Library vehicle is available.

Ms. Cox motioned to adopt the revised policy, seconded by Ms. Hobbs. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

The next meeting will be on December 14, 2021 at the Westside Regional Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Celise Reech-Harper
Secretary

Michael Fairbanks
President

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