

**Rapides Parish Library
Board of Control
January 23, 2024**

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, 5416 Provine Place, Alexandria by President Le'Anza Jordan.

Board members present were Ms. Jordan, Ms. June Arrington, Ms. Dana Cox, Ms. Lana Havens, Ms. Irene Hobbs, Ms. Suelynne Mickey, Mr. James Morgan, Mr. Ralph Roach, and Mr. Morris Taft Thomas.

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

Ms. Jordan led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

Agenda

Mr. Thomas motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Havens. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Minutes

Ms. Mickey motioned to approve the minutes of the November meeting, seconded by Ms. Cox. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Mr. Roach motioned to approve the minutes of the December special meeting, seconded by Ms. Cox. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Financial Report

Business Manager Stacy Dubrock presented the November financial report, which showed an increase in grounds maintenance and facilities repairs, and also reviewed with the Board a revised 2024 budget. Changes to the budget included an increase in maintenance funds to cover further expected projects and the reinstatement of a CreativeCon line item. Funding for a phone system upgrade was carried over from the 2023 budget.

Mr. Roach motioned to accept the revised 2024 budget, seconded by Ms. Arrington. Before the question was called, Mr. Morgan asserted that the Board should be given any such financial documentation in advance for review. Ms. Dubrock explained that, due to delays in receiving December invoices and year-end adjustments in preparation for the annual audit, the budget report was not completed in time to provide a review copy in advance.

Mr. Morgan put forth a substitute motion to table the vote on the 2024 budget revisions until the next meeting. Mr. Roach seconded, and a roll call vote was initiated:

Ayes: Arrington, Havens, Hobbs, Mickey, Morgan, Roach

Nays: Cox, Jordan, Thomas

Abstain: None

Absent: None

By majority vote, the substitute motion passed and the item was tabled.

Ms. Cox motioned to approve the November finance report, seconded by Ms. Arrington. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Director's Report

Ms. Reech-Harper reported on carpet replacement at the King Branch, a roof replacement at the IT Annex building downtown, and repairs at the Hineston and McDonald branches due to burst pipes during the recent freeze. The Huie-Dellmon Trust donated a parcel of land to the Police Jury for use by the library, which will be maintained until it is utilized in the future.

Direct Services Report

Direct Services Coordinator Lenna Mouton reported that Kimberly Willis Holt, author of *My Louisiana Sky*, will be at the McDonald Branch on January 25 to celebrate the book's 25th anniversary.

Human Resources Report

Human Resources Manager Jackie Brown presented Floating Circulation/Reference Clerk Maryna Brazell for ratification. Ms. Arrington motioned to ratify the appointment, seconded by Ms. Havens. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Programming & Outreach Report

Programming & Outreach Supervising Librarian Karla Kirby reported that the popular "As Young as You Feel" program was now being offered at almost all branches and that the library is partnering with LSUA for STEM/STEAM programming.

IT Report

Systems Manager Janie Primeaux shared the success of kids' coding classes and adult Google suite classes. New laptops have been ordered for in-house checkout at the McDonald Branch to assist with these classes. Two members of staff will attend the Innovative Users Group Conference this year.

Public Relations Report

Public Relations Manager Sandie Buller promoted the grand opening of the Central Louisiana African American Culture & Heritage Center at the King Branch on February 24. Thirteen portraits of notable local African American individuals painted by internationally known artists will be unveiled at the event. The library is grateful to Mr. Morris Taft Thomas for his invaluable help in facilitating this project.

New Business

Personnel Committee Chair James Morgan reported that the Director's evaluation results showed scores in the "Exceeds Expectations" range from the Board and the highest "Meets Expectation" score from staff. The committee recommended a contractually required 3% salary increase. Ms. Arrington

motioned to accept the committee's recommendation, seconded by Ms. Hobbs. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Ms. Reech-Harper presented a timeline and procedural guide for implementing new children's library cards in compliance with state law and the library's revised Collection Development and Materials Circulation Policies. Due to system-wide weather closures, some of the dates were adjusted forward. Ms. Arrington motioned to adopt the Implementation Guide with revised dates, seconded by Mr. Roach. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Last year, the library entered into a one-year contract to retain the Old Lecompte High School as the site of the Johnson Branch library. The usual contract length is three years but last year, citing the need for roof repairs and air quality assurance, the contract was shortened pending addressing of these issues. Ms. Reech-Harper reported that the remedies have now largely been completed, and the air quality tests conducted by a contractor at the behest of the LHS corporation/ landlord showed that the building is safe, so the contract may reasonably be extended for the remaining two years. Ms. Cox motioned to extend the Johnson Branch contract for an additional two years, seconded by Mr. Roach. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

2024 regular Board meeting dates were reviewed. After some discussion, the Board requested that meetings scheduled for the second Tuesday in November and December be rescheduled for the third Tuesday, which will allow more time for invoices and year-end financials to be received ahead of the meeting. Ms. Cox motioned to adopt the 2024 meeting dates as revised, seconded by Ms. Arrington. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

The next Library Board of Control meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at the Westside Regional Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Celise Reech-Harper
Secretary

Le'Anza Jordan
President