

**Rapides Parish Library
Board of Control
September 17, 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. Dana Cox, Ms. Suelynne Mickey, Mr. James Morgan, and Mr. Ralph Roach.

Ms. June Arrington, Ms. Irene Hobbs, Ms. Donna Rivers Doyle, and Mr. Morris Taft Thomas were absent.

Also present were Library Director Celise Reech-Harper, nine members of library staff, and one member of the public.

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

Agenda

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

Minutes

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

Service Award

Martin Luther King, Jr. Branch Circulation/Reference Clerk Cynthia McGinnis was honored for forty years of service to the Library.

Financial Report

Ms. Reech-Harper presented the July and August financial reports, which reflected stabilization and preservation of the Huie-Dellmon House gazebo and ADA-compliant updates to the automatic doors at Main Library. The Library will continue to pursue state contracts for the purchase of new vehicles.

Mr. Morgan motioned to approve the July financial report, seconded by Ms. Cox. On unanimous vote, the motion passed. Ms. Mickey motioned to approve the August financial report, seconded by Ms. Cox. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Director's Report

Ms. Reech-Harper provided information on maintenance projects, grant opportunities, and upcoming staff training events. The State Library recently published an updated Orientation Manual for Louisiana Library Directors and Trustees; copies of the document were distributed to Board members. Committee

Request Forms were also distributed; committee assignments for 2025 will be announced at the December meeting.

Direct Services Report

Direct Services Coordinator Lenna Mouton reported that branches are promoting National Library Card Sign-up Month and voter registration.

Human Resources Report

Ms. Mouton presented four staff members for ratification: Grace Colson, Amber Hilton, Ethan Hirsch, and Christopher Vines.

- Mr. Roach motioned to ratify the employment of Floating Circulation/Reference Clerk Grace Colson. Ms. Cox seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.
- Mr. Morgan motioned to ratify the employment of Floating Circulation/Reference Clerk Amber Hilton. Ms. Mickey seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.
- Ms. Cox motioned to ratify the employment of Floating Circulation/Reference Clerk Ethan Hirsch. Mr. Roach seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.
- Ms. Mickey motioned to ratify the employment of Floating Circulation/Reference Clerk Christopher Vines. Mr. Morgan seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

Programming & Outreach Report

Programming & Outreach Supervising Librarian Karla Kirby highlighted recent and upcoming programs, including Creative Con, Tales Along the Bayou, and Letters from Santa.

IT Report

Systems Manager Janie Primeaux will attend a workshop on AI in libraries. Ongoing IT and ILS projects include STEM and computer classes as well as wifi software upgrades.

Public Relations Report

Ms. Reech-Harper promoted the "I Can..." initiative for National Library Card Sign-up Month, which is ongoing in branches and on social media.

New Business

The Board recognized Ms. Lana Havens for seven years of service to the Rapides Parish Library as an active and vital member of the Board of Control. Considering Ms. Havens' resignation, the Police Jury has appointed Ms. Donna Rivers Doyle to represent District H.

The Board recognized Mr. Ralph Roach, whose second five-year term of service to the Board of Control is ending. He was commended by the Board and library staff for his service and dedication.

Ms. Reech-Harper presented a list of proposed 2025 library closure dates for holiday observances and staff training days. Two incorrectly typed dates were edited before the vote was called. Ms. Mickey motioned to approve the amended closure dates schedule, seconded by Mr. Morgan. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

On behalf of Committee Chair Irene Hobbs, Ms. Jordan informed the Board that the Policies & Reconsideration of Materials Committee met on September 4 to discuss a request for reconsideration of the novel *A Court of Silver Flames* by Sarah J. Maas. The request expressed concern about the book's Teen Fiction classification in the library as well as its inclusion in the Accelerated Reading (AR) program. Because the book is part of a popular fantasy series, the Director suggested the entire series remain shelved together.

After reviewing the material, the committee recommended reclassifying and moving the full series to the Adult Fiction section of the library and designating *A Court of Silver Flames*, the fifth book in the series, with the "Sexually Explicit" label, which will prevent it being checked out by patrons with restricted minor library cards. It was noted that AR ratings are assigned by an outside organization and cannot be altered by library policy.

Ms. Cox motioned to accept the recommendation of the committee, seconded by Ms. Mickey. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

There was discussion of a disclaimer being placed on library shelves denoting that AR levels are not assigned by the Library and they do not correspond with content recommended for specific reading levels or ages.

Ms. Jordan announced the formation of the Nominating Committee consisting of Ms. Cox (Chair), Ms. Mickey, and Mr. Thomas to suggest nominees for 2025 Board officers.

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

Mr. Roach motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Cox. On unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Celise Reech-Harper
Secretary

Le'Anza Jordan
President