

**Rapides Parish Library
Board of Control
July 21, 2026**

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 Board President Suelynne Mickey.

Board members present were Ms. Mickey, Ms. June Arrington, Ms. Dana Cox, Ms. Donna Rivers Doyle, Ms. Irene Hobbs, Mr. James Morgan, Mr. Alfred Rachal, and Ms. Jackie Wilson. Dr. Christina Hurd was absent. Also present were Library Director Celise Reech-Harper, ten members of staff, and two members of the public.

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

Agenda

Ms. Arrington motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Doyle. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Minutes

Ms. Arrington motioned to approve the minutes of the May meeting, seconded by Ms. Wilson. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

1,000 Books Before Five Award Recognition

Programming & Outreach Supervising Librarian Karla Kirby and Youth Engagement & Literacy Manager Craig Jones presented the 1,000 Books Before Five Award to Colton H., who was present with his mother.

Financial Reports

Business Manager Stacy Dubrock presented the April financial report, explaining a new feature of the report that lists the percentages of line items processed each month, making it easier to track budget progress throughout the year. In April, 89% of anticipated revenue was received and 27% of planned expenditures were completed. Ms. Cox motioned to approve the report, seconded by Ms. Hobbs. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Ms. Dubrock presented the May financial report, which updated the percentages to 90% of revenue received and an expenditure rate of 32.6%. Ms. Arrington motioned to accept the report, seconded by Ms. Cox. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Director's Report

Library Director Celise Reech-Harper reported on library business, including upcoming staff trainings and programs. The Johnson Branch library has been closed due to storm damage to the building. The library is continuing to serve the community with a Bookmobile stop while working with the town of Lecompte on a more permanent solution. RPL has been selected to host two nationally recognized authors in partnership with the National Book Foundation. The program will be held on October 29 at the Westside Library, with LSUA's Dr. Elizabeth Beard moderating.

Direct Services Report

Association Director of Direct Services Lenna Mouton reported that Summer Reading entertainment previously scheduled at the Johnson Branch will be held at the Lecompte Town Hall. Back to School events at library branches will begin in August.

Programming & Outreach Report

Programming & Outreach Supervising Librarian Karla Kirby reported on Summer Reading statistics and local outreach events.

IT Report

Systems Manager Janie Primeaux announced an upcoming upgrade to Sierra's circulation system and planned upgrades to circulation staff PCs.

Public Relations Report

Public Relations Manager Sandie Buller shared that the library had a Summer Reading entertainment post on social media go viral with 2,500 views. Upcoming promotions include Back to School and Library Card Sign-Up initiatives.

New Business

On behalf of the Personnel Committee, Chair James Morgan presented the library's request to purchase two RPL logoed polo shirts for every library employee. While not part of a required daily uniform, the shirts would promote staff visibility and library branding during regular business and at outreach and public events. The cost of the shirts is estimated at \$2,080 when ordering in bulk, and Board member will be allowed to purchase their own at an estimated \$13-\$14 each. The Personnel Committee met prior to the meeting and voted unanimously to recommend the purchase. Mr. Morgan motioned to approve the purchase of the shirts, seconded by Ms. Wilson. On vote, the motion unanimously passed.

Ms. Arrington motioned to send an unserviceable 3D printer to auction, seconded by Ms. Cox. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Branch Manager Teri Sullivan shared news that the Libuse Branch is breaking ground on a community garden this summer. Supported by a donation of \$1,800 from the Rapides Soil & Water Conservation District, the garden will include four raised beds, two elevated accessibility beds, and a seed library. Volunteers from the Soil & Water Conservation District will assist in setup and maintenance of the garden.

Ms. Reech-Harper announced that library policies will be brought before the Board for review on a regular schedule beginning in January. Ms. Arrington motioned to approve the schedule of policy reviews, seconded by Mr. Rachal. On unanimous vote, the motion passed.

Mr. Morgan informed the Board that the Personnel Committee recommends a proposal from library administration regarding a salary scale adjustment for staff. With the goal of remaining competitive in the local job market and attracting and retaining quality employees, the new scale introduces a minimum entry-level pay rate of \$15.00 per hour. To ensure entry-level positions meet the new standards while protecting the value of pay for existing staff, a 10.25% increase across all employees except the Director is proposed. If adopted, the new salaries will take effect on August 10. The \$145,000 cost of the adjustment will be offset in the current budget with unspent funds from currently unfilled positions. Ms. Arrington motioned to adopt the new salary scale, seconded by Ms. Cox. On vote, the motion unanimously passed.

Mr. Morgan reported that the Personnel Committee also reviewed a proposal from library administration regarding staff compensatory time prior to the meeting. While employees are currently encouraged to use compensatory time as it is earned to prevent a build-up over time, past policies allowed staff to bank extra hours worked in addition to their normal schedule, creating some instances of significant overage that may pose a financial liability in the future when those hours must be paid out at higher rates of pay. Ms. Reech-Harper proposed a one-time payout now to employees who had earned over 20 hours of compensatory time, with the current policy enforced thereafter.

Mr. Morgan expressed that he was the dissenting vote on the committee based on his concern that, while the policy may have changed, it would be unfair to long-time employees to force a payout now without an option to be grandfathered in to the old policy. However, by majority vote, the committee chose to recommend the payout plan. Ms. Arrington motioned to adopt the plan, seconded by Ms. Cox. On vote, the motion passed with seven in favor (Arrington, Cox, Doyle, Hobbs, Mickey, Rachel, Wilson) and one opposed (Morgan).

Ms. Mickey announced the departure of Ms. June Arrington from the Board of Control. Ms. Arrington was recognized for her service by board members and staff.

The next Library Board of Control meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at the Westside Regional Library.

Ms. Arrington motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Cox. On unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Celise Reech-Harper
Secretary

Suelynne Mickey
President