

Minutes of the Meeting of the
Lafayette Public Library Board of Control

February 15, 2023

Recordings of all meetings can be found on the Library Board of Control page of the Lafayette Public Library website.

The regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control was held in the meeting room on the 2nd floor of the Main Library at 301 West Congress Street on February 15, 2023. Robert Judge, President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 5:21 PM.

I. Roll Call and Invocation

Board Members Present: Robert Judge, Board President; James Thomas, Board Vice – President; Joan Wingate; Stephanie Armbruster; David Pitre; Erasto Padron; Daniel Kelly; Marquise Watson

Other Staff Present: Danny Gillane, Library Director; Larry Angelle, Library Operations Manager; Danielle Breaux, Director’s Executive Secretary

Marquise Watson introduced herself to the Board.

The invocation was led by David Pitre.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Robert Judge led the board in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Staff Recognition

Jordan Prejean was recognized by the Board for going above and beyond his job duties.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2023 Regular Board Meeting was made by James Thomas and seconded by Joan Wingate.

Lynette Mejia stated that the minutes do not reflect all members of the public who are in attendance. Mejia suggested a sign-in sheet, or a notation on minutes that these are members of the public that have signed in to speak. Mejia stated that leaving out the fact that a member of the public had been escorted out was a glaring oversight.

Hannah Guillory stated that the minutes from the January meeting do not accurately reflect what was said or done, and stated that the misrepresentation of rule number 8

on the Procedure for Interested Persons Wishing to be Heard on Matters Related to the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control. Guillory requested amendments to the January minutes to either include: video footage of the meeting that was taken by patrons, or the entirety of the statement provided by Melanie Brevis.

Melanie Brevis stated that it was not noted in the minutes that Brevis was asked to stop talking before her time was up, that Brevis was not making threatening comments, that Brevis was not using derogatory language, that Brevis was not approaching the Board or posing any physical threat, that Brevis was not yelling or in any way trying to illicit a reply from a Board member, and that Brevis was simply stating her opinion of how meetings were being conducted, and actions of Board members and Parish Council members. Brevis stated that the deputies that escorted her out could not provide reason as to her removal.

Cindi Fox stated that the January minutes need to be amended. Fox stated that as written, they state somewhat of what Brevis said but not that she was forcefully removed by deputies. She stated this needs to be included as part of the public record.

Joan Wingate asked to put forth a motion to amend the minutes

A motion to amend the minutes to include that Melanie Brevis, a member of the public, was speaking and ordered to stop talking even though she had time remaining on her three-minutes allotted, she was removed by two deputies at the request of the President, Robert Judge was made by Joan Wingate.

Stephanie Armbruster stated that audio record was available on the website and asked that this be reflected into the minutes.

Yeas: Judge, Thomas, Armbruster, Pitre, Padron, Kelly, Watson
Nays: Wingate
Abstained: None
Absent: None

V. Comments from the Library Board

The Friends of the Lafayette Public Library will be holding their Spring Book Sale from March 15-18. The mini sale held recently at the West Regional Library was very successful and brought with it the opportunity to introduce this branch to new faces. Joan Wingate thanked the public for their participation.

The Lafayette Public Library Foundation hosted le Bouquaniste for ArtWalk in January in front of Teche Drugs, trying to get books and those who love reading together in an artful way. The Foundation hopes to be a presence at ArtWalks in the future.

The Foundation is preparing for their annual event on April 20, 2023. “Somewhere Over the Bayou” will be held at Vermilionville and will be an evening of fun and recognition to supporters. While this is being planned, promotion is on-going, sponsorships are available and are being accepted. Deadline for sponsorship submissions is March 31, 2023. For more information, reach out to www.lplfoundation.org or info@lplfoundation.org.

New officers and possible new board members coming on for a three-year term of service will be announced as elections are held next month. To be a member of this group, reach out to www.lplfoundation.org or info@lplfoundation.org.

VI. Director’s Report and Comments

Library Administration has been negotiating with property owners for the Northeast Library.

Director spoke about the library’s periodical collection, staff trauma, and the Milton and Duson library branches. Director’s remarks can be found on the Library Board page of the Lafayette Public Library website.

VII. Assistant Director’s Report and Comments

There was no Assistant Director’s Report.

VIII. Facilities Update & Financial Report

Onsite construction meetings concerning the Main Library Roof Replacement Project occurred on January 27, February 1, and February 8. Those present were MBSB Architects, Partin Roofing, Public Works, and Library Operations Manager.

The designated staging area, parking lot traffic flow, construction process and access to the building were all finalized. Additional core samples at roof drains occurred to ensure the material type and application method was correct.

Temporary fencing was installed in the parking lot on January 28, 2023 and is to be used for roofing material storage and contractor staging.

Contractor has 120 calendar days to complete the project with a contract start date of February 14, 2023 and an ending date of June 14, 2023.

The first shipment of roofing materials occurred on February 6, 2023, with additional shipments pending.

Contractor will start setting up safety equipment and bringing materials to the rooftop.

Contractor plans to start the actual construction on Thursday, February 23 or Friday, February 24, pending weather conditions.

The library has received combined Schematic Design/Design Development documents on the South Regional Upgrades. This will be brought before the Board.

Design Development on the North Regional Library Upgrades should begin in March.

Preparations have been made in anticipation of Mardi Gras parades. Barricades and the ongoing roof project will have an impact on the Main Library. Parking will be greatly limited for the next few weeks.

The Main Library roof was replaced in 2001. During the renovation in 2014/2015, a coating was applied to preserve as long as possible. There is water in the system and the roof will be completely replaced.

In FY 22/23, the library has collected 11.1M and has spent 3.4M.

IX. New Business

A.

1. Collection Policy
2. Library Card Policy

Proposed changes to the Collection Policy and the Library Card Policy were presented to the Board. Changes presented were as follows:

Lafayette Public Library Card Policy:

Individuals.... The library offers several types of library cards:

Lafayette Parish.....

A) Full Service Adult Cards (adult is defined as those 18 years of age and older, in accordance with Louisiana State Law).

B) Children/Minors: (persons under 18 years of age, In accordance with Louisiana State Law)

1. Children's Collection

Sexually explicit materials shall not be included/shelved in the Children's Collection.

Collection Policy:

I.

Paragraph: 3

The library's goal is to provide a diverse Lafayette Parish community with materials that reflect a wide range of views, expressions, opinions and interests in accordance with community standards.

Paragraph: 4

Responsibility for a minor's use of library materials lies with his or her parent or guardian. To assist parents or guardians in this regard, the library restricts R, and NC-17 classified DVD/movies, and any sexually explicit material¹ to adult users only, to view or check out.

1. Definitions of Sexually Explicit Materials

Sexually Explicit Materials – includes textual, visual, or audio materials or material accessed via any other medium that depict or describe sexual conduct.

Sexual Conduct – any of the following:

(a) Masturbation or lewd exhibition, actual, simulated, or animated, of the genitals, pubic hair, anus, vulva, or female breast nipples;

(b) Sadomasochistic abuse, meaning actual, simulated or animated, flagellation, or torture by or upon a person who is nude or clad in undergarments or in a costume that reveals the pubic hair, anus, vulva, genitals, or female breast nipples, or in the condition of being fettered, bound, or otherwise physically restrained, on the part of one so clothed;

(c) Actual, simulated, or animated touching, caressing, or fondling of, or other similar physical contact with a pubic area, anus, female breast nipple, covered or exposed, whether alone or between humans, animals, or a human and an animal, of the same or opposite sex, in an act of apparent sexual stimulation or gratification;

(d) Actual, simulated, or animated stimulation of a human genital organ by any device whether or not the device is designed, manufactured, or marketed for such purpose; or

(e) Actual, simulated, or animated ultimate sexual acts, whether between human beings, animals, or an animal and a human being.

After discussion with the Board, a motion was made by Robert Judge to accept changes proposed, omitting changes to paragraph 3 in Section I of the Collection Policy and seconded by Stephanie Armbruster.

A motion to amend the changes to the card policy to change Children/Minors as an opt-in was made by Marquise Watson and seconded by James Thomas.

A motion to amend the original amendment to read opt-out instead of opt-in was made by Robert Judge. This was not seconded.

Tara Fogleman stated that a book that would need to be moved would be *The Illustrated Children's Bible* by Bill Farnsworth. Fogleman stated that one cannot always decide for everyone else what one should and should not read.

Cara Chance stated that responsible parents that are worried about what their children are reading need to accompany their children to the library and select what is appropriate for the individual child and their family values. Chance stated that if the Board is seeking to determine what material is appropriate for all children in the Parish, they are denying parents their right and engaging in censorship.

Kirk LeBlanc asked for clarification on what books will be in or out of the children's section. LeBlanc stated that he would err on the side of protecting the kids. LeBlanc stated that a parent could check out a book for a child.

Dr. Damon Cudihy referenced state legislation requiring age verification for access to pornography on the internet. Cudihy stated that these policies are bringing the same standard of protecting the children that is already required in the state. Cudihy recommended against any opt-in or opt-out provisions.

Dr. John Voltz stated it indefensible to allow explicit material in the Children's section or to allow them to check it out without parental consent.

Lessie LeBlanc stated that these policy changes were nothing short of censorship. LeBlanc listed books that could possibly be banned under this policy.

Moriah Luczak stated that she was vehemently being exposed to sexually explicit material in the Children's section of the library. Luczak stated the library should be a place to look for materials and study in safety without being bombarded with sexual information. Luczak referenced Dr. Cudihy's comments on state legislation.

Anthony Luczak spoke of concerns in regard to the detrimental effects of and the neurophysiological consequences of looking at pornography. Luczak spoke against an opt-in/opt-out provision and stated this may expose the library to future litigation. Melanie Brevis stated the policy does not take into account all in the community. Brevis spoke of the interference on parental rights. Brevis asked the Board to not put any restrictions.

Pablo Mejia urged the Board to vote against policy changes. Mejia stated that the Attorney General's published report that states that library collection materials fall

short of material prohibited by criminal laws. Mejia questioned the Board wanting to change the policies. Mejia stated his support for an opt-in policy.

The meeting was recessed for ten minutes.

Wayne Colvin stated his support for the policy changes. He spoke against an opt-in/opt-out amendment.

Andrew Duhon spoke against the policy changes. Duhon stated that everyone should be able to express their opinion on the issue in a civil way. Duhon spoke of the difference between the library and the internet. Duhon spoke of parental responsibility.

Quest Riggs stated that material that has been cited is not age-inappropriate for teens and young adults. Riggs spoke of parental responsibility.

Greg Ardoin stated that censorship is appropriate in appropriate circumstances. Ardoin stated the question is what should be censored, especially in regard to the Children's section, and how it should be done as a community.

Robert Voitier, Jr. questioned the meaning of censorship. Voitier stated that the law is the written expression of the morals of the people.

Nureaka Ross spoke of the qualifications of Board members.

Virginia McWhirter stated that rules are needed in a society. McWhirter spoke of the role of the Board.

Claire Delcambre spoke of the push for censorship. Delcambre spoke of community standards. Delcambre spoke of members of the public that attend meetings.

Roch Judice stated that laws are based on community standards. Judice stated that the Board is community standards for the library. Judice urged the board to not vote for an opt-in amendment.

Melany Champagne stated it unsettling that any parent was deemed not after the safety of their children. Champagne stated support for an opt-in option.

Carolyn Auld spoke against restricting access to materials. Auld spoke of the benefits of comprehensive sex education.

Matthew D. Mayer spoke in favor of censorship and a universal moral order. He spoke of *Brave New World* and stated its relevancy.

Amanda Anderson stated the policies were not democratic. Anderson stated that the policies were a tactic to stigmatize marginalized populations. Anderson that indoctrination does not occur when free thinking is allowed.

Lynette Mejia spoke of the reading lists of local Catholic schools. Mejia questioned implementation of policies. Mejia stated the policy changes unnecessary.

Hannah Guillory spoke of the harm of not teaching children sex education. Guillory stated that restriction would push kids to seek education from potentially harmful places and people. Guillory stated that she did not support the policy changes.

A motion to amend the changes to the card policy to change Children/Minors as an opt-out was made by Stephanie Armbruster. This was not seconded.

The vote on the motion and original amendment was as follows:

Yeas: Watson, Padron, Thomas, Pitre, Armbruster, Judge
Nays: Wingate, Kelly
Abstained: None
Absent: None

After consultation with Legal, it was decided that the vote needed to be on the amendment first, and then a vote needed to be held on whether the policy changes with the amendment passed.

The vote on the amendment as presented by Marquise Watson was as follows:

Yeas: Watson, Padron, Thomas, Pitre, Kelly, Judge
Nays: Wingate, Armbruster
Abstained: None
Absent: None

A motion was made by Stephanie Armbruster to approve the amended policy. This was seconded Daniel Kelly.

Tara Fogleman thanked the Board for their time.

Dr. Damon Cudihy reiterated concern that an opt-in policy does not give any protective benefit to the policy, and raised concerns on Louisiana State Legislature and the need for age verification.

Anthony Luczak thanked the Board for engaging with the public and reiterated his concerns for an opt-in card.

Melanie Brevis stated that materials are purchased by reputable publishers which have already been vetted by editors, publishers, and professional reviewers for age-appropriateness and then selected by qualified librarians.

Pablo Mejia thanked the Board for a reasonable compromise.

Wayne Colvin suggested amendments be displayed, and questioned how parents would be notified of the change.

Hannah Guillory stated opposition to the policy.

Quest Riggs spoke of the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ+ kids who may have restrictive parents.

Robert Voitier, Jr. spoke in support of the Board, particularly Robert Judge.

Nureaka Ross stated that the policy would restrict the Bible, and restrict books about childbirth and breastfeeding.

Virginia McWhirter spoke of the moral foundation of society.

Claire Delcambre stated that people need to find something in themselves that they can relate to for their mental health.

Melany Champagne questioned the concerns that led to the entire meeting being dedicated to this policy change.

Carolyn Auld reiterated concern for comprehensive sex education.

Matthew D. Mayer thanked the Board and spoke on a universal moral order.

Amanda Anderson spoke in opposition to the amendment and stated that there should be no restrictions.

Lynette Mejia stated that this was something brought up by politicians to garner votes.

Yeas: Pitre, Kelly, Armbruster, Thomas, Padron, Watson, Judge

Nays: Wingate

Abstained: None

Absent: None

B. Library Board Discards December – February

A motion for the library to discard 1,298 books having been out of used for over a year due to the books being superseded, obsolete, unused, or otherwise unnecessary was made by James Thomas and seconded by Joan Wingate.

Yeas: Judge, Thomas, Wingate, Pitre, Padron, Kelly, Watson

Nays: Armbruster

Abstained: None

Absent: None

C. Discard Policy

A motion to table this agenda item until the March 2023 meeting was made by Robert Judge and seconded by James Thomas.

Yeas: Judge, Thomas, Wingate, Armbruster, Pitre, Padron, Kelly, Watson

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None.

X. Announcements

A. Reminder that the next Library Board meeting will be Monday, March 20, 2023.

B. Reminder that yearly ethics training and sexual harassment training must be completed before December 31, 2023.

C. Reminder that Personal Financial Disclosure form due on or before May 15, 2023.

XI. Comments from the public on any other matter not on this agenda

Lynette Mejia questioned the amount of items on monthly agendas. Mejia stated that library staff were not happy with the Board and spoke on staff departure.

Ella Arsement stated that meetings have been disrespectful toward Board members. She stated that the Board and staff alike have done everything in their power to ensure the library continues to operate within library budget.

Lessie LeBlanc stated that members of the public had the right to be angry with the Board.

Melanie Brevis stated that everyone on the Board has failed the community and the library system.

Andrew Nash spoke of Director's directive prohibiting book displays focusing on specific populations. Nash stated this led to the banning of Black History Month displays. Nash stated disallowing displays is to attempt to stifle history.

Roch Judice thanked the Board for their service.

Earl Berry stated his disappointment in those leading the education of children in the future.

XII. Closing Prayer, Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danny Gillane, Secretary