

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

March 20, 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 March 20, 2023. Robert Judge, President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 5:16 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 (arrived during Executive Session)

Board Members Absent: Marquise Watson

Other Staff Present: Danny Gillane, Library Director; Sarah Monroe, Assistant Director; Danielle Breaux, Director's Executive Secretary

The invocation was led by Robert Judge.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

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

III. Staff Recognition

Joel Chachere was recognized by the Board for going above and beyond his job duties.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Stephanie Armbruster asked that changes be made to properly reflect the record as well as be consistent.

At the end of the paragraph stating: 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, Armbruster asked that it be added that this motion was not seconded.

Armbruster asked that a statement above the tally of the votes be added to state that the votes on the original motion was as follows.

The proposal made by Stephanie Armbruster to change the minutes of the February 15, 2023 Regular Board Meeting was seconded by Joan Wingate.

Lynette Mejia asked that on page 7 between “Mejia stated his support for an opt-in policy” and “the meeting was recessed for ten minutes” that it be added: Board President Robert Judge ordered Operations Manager Larry Angelle to project images from *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe and *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel onto the screen at the front of the room, upsetting some members of the audience and disrupting the meeting.

Cindi Fox spoke in support of the changes suggested by Mejia. Fox stated that the minutes are a legal document and should be correct and inclusive. Fox stated that audio would not show what a member of the Board projected on the screen causing the need for a recess.

Melanie Brevis spoke in support of previous commenters. Brevis stated that it important to add under New Business A and B, that a Board member suggested that ideas from Board members could get thrown around or discussed outside of official meetings. Brevis wondered if this would violate open meeting laws. Brevis asked that it be noted that during discussion, Board members were doing research on their phones to find something to support their perspective and agenda. Brevis stated it important that the minutes reflect clarity and provide word for word what was voted on and what passed. Brevis asked that it be noted under the Director’s Report that there was no mention in the minutes of Cara Chance being recognized for a national level I Love My Librarian Award and that she was one of only 10 in the country to receive this.

Nureaka Ross stated the importance of accuracy in minutes. Ross stated it important that all events are included in the minutes because they serve as a historical record of the decisions and actions taken by the Board. Ross reiterated that the minutes should include the content displayed on the screen by Judge.

The motion made by Armbruster and seconded by Wingate was voted on as follows:

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

Joan Wingate made a motion that the minutes be amended to add the statement as suggested by Lynette Mejia.

Robert Judge made a motion to amend Wingate’s motion to only state Robert Judge projected images from *Gender Queer* and *Fun Home* on the screen.

James Thomas seconded the motion proposed by Joan Wingate.

The amendment made by Robert Judge was not seconded.

Melanie Brevis spoke in support of adding Mejia's comments verbatim.

The original amendment as proposed by Wingate was voted on as follows:

Yeas: Thomas, Wingate, Pitre, Padron

Nays: Judge, Armbruster

Abstained: None

Absent: Kelly, Watson

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 15, 2023 Regular Board Meeting as amended was made by David Pitre and seconded by Joan Wingate.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Kelly, Watson

V. Comments from the Library Board

The Lafayette Public Library Foundation is gearing up for the annual event slated for April 20, 2023 at Vermilionville themed "Somewhere Over the Rainbow". This event serves many purposes: the annual meeting of membership, to honor outstanding supporters of the library and to perhaps bring a bit of awareness to the library, what offerings the library brings and the need to continue those services to the parish. The library is one of those unsung heroes and once a year the LPLF likes to shout out to this award-winning library system that serves everyone with free and equal access to all media 24/7 at nine branches and online services, promoting literacy throughout Acadiana. For more information about the event, please visit info@lplfoundation.org.

Friends of the Lafayette Public Library held their annual book sale March 15 – March 18.

VI. Director's Report and Comments

The library is no longer considering the property next to Infinity College for the Northeast Library. There is another proposal and the library is discussing options with the Holy Rosary Group.

Opt-in restricted children's cards will be available in April.

Duson & Milton hours will be 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

VII. Assistant Director's Report and Comments

Staff changes and vacancies were announced to the Board.

There was a full house of readers of all ages for the 100 Book Club Awards Ceremony. Patrons can still sign up for the challenge to read 100 books before the end of this year.

East Regional Library patrons are keeping active with solid numbers showing up for Beginner Line Dancing, Fencing, and Zumba classes.

West Regional held Painting with a Purpose which had 17 attendees. The theme of this program was connected to the LRT book, Closer to Nowhere, in which one of the main characters exhibits resilience after a series of family tragedies. After a brief introduction to the mission and purpose of Faith House, each child painted a dandelion, which represents hope and new life. The representative from Faith House picked up the completed paintings, which will be used to decorate the Faith House facility or given to survivors.

South Regional's Homesteading in Acadiana series continues to be popular with 90 patrons attending 2 different programs last month.

46 teens enjoyed a Destress Doggo Day at the Main Library where they had a chance to cuddle and relax with dogs from Acadiana Animal Aid.

Snack Attack continues to be a big draw for Teens at North Regional with 13 teens showing up to make snacks and hang out.

The Outreach Services Department has been busy adding new and old stops back to the Bookmobile schedule, as well as 2 new Bibliobike stops. The Foundation generously donated funds to purchase a companion bike for the department back in January so it's easier for a second staff member to accompany the Bibliobike to events.

The library is in full planning mode for the 2023 Summer Reading Program. The theme this year is "Reading Brings Us Together" and the library is working on a new reading challenge for the community. Due to the ongoing roof replacement project, the kickoff will be held at South Regional on Saturday, June 3rd.

Assistant Director has scheduled a Librarian In-Service Day for Friday, August 25th.

Assistant Director attended the monthly Friends of the Library board meeting and the monthly Bayouland meeting.

VIII. Facilities Update & Financial Report

Main Library Roof Replacement project is progressing quickly with limited issues. The contractor, architect, Public Works, and Library Operations Manager meet weekly to discuss any issues and plans going forward.

Demolition of the upper roof and application of base sheet complete. Contractor will begin installing new roofing system on the upper roof. This phase should help reduce the stored material in the parking lot and increase parking and traffic flow in the near future.

First partial payment in the amount of \$269,646.95 was signed and sent for processing accounting for stored materials and work completed.

No change orders issued to date but rain/wind days will likely be accounted for at a later date. Original contract amount remains at \$612,900.

Combined Schematic Design/Design Development documents for the South Regional Upgrades project were received from the architect. Project estimates have increased again due to current markets. Project is still within budget.

Plans and specifications have been reviewed by Library Operations Manager with comments/edits drafted. The Library Maintenance Supervisor is currently reviewing for any additional comments/edits. Comments/edits will be recommended to the architect and Public Works. After any recommended changes are addressed, the Schematic Design/Design Development will be presented to the Library Board of Control for approval to move on to the Construction Documents phase of the project.

A project architect has been assigned to the North Regional Library Upgrades project by the architect firm. Library staff will meet with the architect team next week or the following week.

Design Development Phase typically takes up to 60 days. Documents will then be sent to the Library and Public Works staff for review. This will then be presented to the Board of Control to approve moving on to the Construction Document Phase.

Construction Documents are then reviewed by Library staff and Public Works. After review and editing, they will be presented to the Board of Control for review and approval and confirmation of budget.

If approved, the Construction Documents are sent to Purchasing and then will be sent out for bid.

The problematic flat roof area of the North Regional Library leaked in mid-February. Repairs were made and will be monitored. The entire roof will be replaced as part of the North Regional Library Upgrade project and the flat area will be redesigned and incorporated into the sloped roof system.

In FY 22/23, the library has collected 11.6M and has spent 4.3M.

IX. New Business

A. Discard Policy

After board discussion, a motion to was made by Robert Judge to postpone the matter indefinitely and seconded by Stephanie Armbruster.

John Mikell spoke of confusion on policy changes.

Mary Lib Guercio stated the policy not well thought out and that there was not concurrence among Board members.

Nureaka Ross asked that staff resume previous practices. Ross stated that micromanaging staff can have a negative impact on the library and the ability to function effectively.

M. Christian Green spoke in support of postponing the matter. Green suggested a disposition policy.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Kelly, Watson

It was noted that this policy was drafted by library staff.

B. Upgrading Library Positions

A motion to approve the upgrade of four Library Technical Assistant III positions to Library Associate I positions was made by Joan Wingate and seconded by James Thomas.

Wayne Colvin commented on the importance of knowing employee position trend data. He asked that the Board defer the issue.

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

C. Executive Session

A motion to enter into executive session to discuss litigation, Case 6:23-cv-00307-RRS, filed in UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA, LILLIAN LYNETTE MEJIA and MELANIE BREVIS, Plaintiffs v. LAFAYETTE CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT and ROBERT JUDGE, in his official and individual capacities as President of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control; Defendants, was made by David Pitre and seconded by James Thomas.

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

A motion to adjourn executive session to resume regular business was made by Joan Wingate and seconded by Stephanie Armbruster.

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

X. Announcements

- A. Reminder that the next Library Board meeting will be Monday, April 17, 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

Cara Chance spoke of the change to the Collection Development Policy.

John Rachal commented on the importance of not censoring public comments in Board meetings.

Lynette Mejia spoke of open meetings violations and policy confusion. Mejia asked that the Collection Development vote on February 15, 2023 be nullified. Mejia asked that the Board tell the Director to turn the ev charging stations back on.

Courtney Malagarie thanked the Board for policy changes.

Margaret West expressed thanks to citizens and librarians for leading through dark times surrounding the library system.

Melanie Brevis spoke of defending basic constitutional rights and saving democracy from fanaticism.

John Mikell spoke of appreciation of the library system and stated that rules have been ignored or changed to fit personal agendas.

Mitzi Maddox asked that the Board stand against first amendment violations that continue to happen at meetings.

Melany Champagne spoke of the lawsuit filed against LCG and Robert Judge. Champagne called for the resignation of Board members. Champagne called for the resignation of Robert Judge.

Anna Gauthier spoke as one of the two librarians on the Reconsideration Committee for *This Book is Gay*. Gauthier clarified that neither librarian felt compelled to push the book upon any patron. Gauthier stated that what was said was that they believed that the book had merit in the collection. Gauthier stated the library's job is to provide access to information, not to influence.

Mary Lib Guercio spoke of a Fentanyl Awareness Meeting that will be held March 22 from 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM at the Downtown Convention Center in Lafayette. This meeting is to inform community members on the dangers of this drug.

Claire Delcambre quoted a statement made by the ACLU and spoke of letters written to LCG Administration to uphold the LGBTQ+ community.

Wayne Colvin spoke of marketing studies and trend data needed for the Northeast Library. Colvin stated that some school libraries are open during summer hours.

Pablo Mejia spoke of rules being enforced haphazardly. Mejia asked the board to consider a change in the scheduling of Executive Sessions.

Ali Mejia spoke against the restriction of Board members from being able to speak freely. Mejia spoke of Robert's Rules of Order being used arbitrarily.

Ava Rose Hunley spoke of litigation and legal issues stemming from Board meetings.

Sarah Riggs spoke against censorship and in support of individual parental rights.

Nureaka Ross asked that the Board be trained on Robert's Rules of Order.

XII. Closing Prayer, Adjournment

Robert Judge led the Board in a closing prayer.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danny Gillane, Secretary