

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

March 21, 2016

The regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control was held in the Library Board Room on the 3rd floor of the Main Library at 301 W. Congress St. on Monday, March 21, 2016. Yung-Hsing Wu, President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

I. Roll Call

Board Members Present: Adele Blue, Suzanne Dardeau, Andrew Duhon, Amy Goode (arrived 5:45), Joseph Gordon-Wiltz, Jamal Taylor (arrived 5:19), Joan Wingate, Yung-Hsing Wu

Board Members Absent: none

Administrative Staff Present: Sona Dombourian, Director; Teresa Elberson, Assistant Director; Larry Angelle, Library Operations Manager

Members of the Public: ElRoy Broussard (School Board Member), Patrick "Pat" Lewis (City/Parish Councilman), MiA Arthur, Sherry T. Broussard (Author and Storyteller)

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 15, 2016 Meeting was made by Adele Blue and seconded by Andrew Duhon.

Yeas: Blue, Dardeau, Duhon, Gordon-Wiltz, Wingate, Wu

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Goode, Taylor

The motion to approve the minutes of February 15, 2016 was approved.

III. Director's Report and Comments

Ms. Dombourian reported that the financial report was in the packets. The statistics reports are still being compiled. This is due to the change from the old automation system to the new system and the staff continues to work with the vendor on the statistics reports.

Both the Main Library and East Regional Library architects have been awarded gold INDesign awards for 2016 and will be recognized at an upcoming luncheon.

Mr. Angelle reported that there were still some window leaks at East Regional. The contractor is working on a resolution as a warranty item.

Ms. Dombourian stated that her official letter of retirement is in the packets, with her last day being April 30th. She expressed that she was excited to see the library move forward under a new director.

IV. Construction and Facilities Update

West Regional – The architects have toured the other library facilities and talked with staff to see what works well with their facilities. They will soon be setting up meetings to discuss the schematic.

V. Comments from the Library Board

Lafayette Public Library Foundation Report

Mrs. Wingate reported that the Foundation's Awards Luncheon will have the theme *Allons à la Bibliothèque* and will be on April 15th at the City Club. The Foundation will pay for light refreshment at both the March 28th Public Forum and March 29th Finalist interviews meeting. The Foundation is also considering the possibility of reimbursing spousal travel expenses for candidates, since LCG's policy does not include this. Dr. Wu thanked Mr. Angelle for checking with LCG and providing her with the relevant information.

Public Comment Portion of the Agenda

Without objection, Dr. Wu added this discussion item that was received after the agenda had been posted. She recognized Mr. Gordon-Wiltz who said that he would like the Board to consider changing the agenda to allow for public comment on each portion of the agenda, rather than at the end of the agenda. This would allow the public to have influence on decisions before they were voted upon. Mr. Gordon-Wiltz expressed that once a motion was made and the Board had opportunity for discussion, the President would then call for public comment before a vote. After discussion, the consensus was that the stand-alone 'comments from the public' item will be changed to indicate that it is for items not on the agenda, before a vote on any action item, the President will ask for comments from the public, and a procedure regarding this will be taken up for action at the next meeting.

Board Visits to Libraries

Without objection, Dr. Wu added this discussion item that was received after the agenda had been posted. She recognized Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor asked Ms. Dombourian if an email had been sent to the staff with a picture of every board member, where the staff was asked to identify when board members came into the library. Ms. Dombourian stated that she had not sent such an email. Mr. Taylor asked if such an email had been sent and Ms. Dombourian said yes. Ms. Dombourian clarified that Mr. Taylor had sent her a public records request while she was out of town. She returned to the office this morning and began the process of replying to the request. In the course of that discovery, she was provided an email from December that was from a manager that was on point to Mr. Taylor's questioning, that included pictures of Board members, and that said it was for the purposes of informing the Main Library staff who the board members were in preparation for the upcoming visit by the Consultants. Ms. Dombourian said that also included in that email was a statement to please let the manager know if they had an encounter with a board member. She stated that the manager was not in the office and she had not yet had a chance to speak to the manager, but that she would be doing so.

Mr. Taylor asked for an item to be placed on the next agenda regarding this. He stated that several staff members had told him this and that he understood from them the tone of the email was very different than simply as preparation for a visit by the consultants. He stated that he had previously mentioned issues with customer service at the library. He stated that the work of the library does not stop when the director is away and that his expectation is that all items

should be considered for the agenda if in advance of the 24 hour public meeting notice requirement.

Mr. Duhon commented that he had concerns that this would be an administrative issue and concerns that the board would be overstepping its authority. Dr. Dardeau commented that the staff had been very helpful when she came in late to a recent meeting that had been held in the meeting room rather than the board room. Mr. Taylor responded that he had a different conversation than was being described. Mrs. Wingate asked for clarification if Mr. Taylor was reporting on three separate conversations about one email, to which he replied yes. Mrs. Blue expressed concern about asking for information from the Director without giving her specifics.

Ms. Dombourian stated that procedure for LCG is to go through a City/Parish attorney for public records requests and she is in the process of doing so. She stated that she needed clarification about procedures from LCG because, while the Board oversees and may discipline the Director, the library employees were Civil Service employees and that the Director, not the Board, was the appointing authority for the employees. She also repeated that she had not had the chance yet to discuss it with the manager in question and that the email did not originate from Ms. Dombourian's office, but said it sounded to her like the manager was trying to inform the staff rather than have the staff go on alert whenever a board member came in the building.

VI. Old Business

Library Director Position Finalists

Dr. Wu reported for the Search Committee. She stated that the Skype interviews were held last week during two Search Committee meetings and that many board and staff were in attendance. After the Search Committee completed the interviews, they and the consultants went into Executive Session, as allowed under law to discuss the character and professional competence of the candidates. When the Search Committee returned, it selected a top three – Adam Brooks, Paula Settoon, and Michael Golrick – and voted to recommend to the Board these three as finalists for the position of Director (with one Search Committee dissenting vote and one being absent). Since then, Ms. Settoon has withdrawn, citing a reconsideration of her personal and professional goals. Dr. Wu stated she had polled the Search Committee but there was not sufficient interest in holding another Search Committee meeting to consider a replacement candidate for Ms. Settoon. There are currently two finalists being recommended to the Board by the Search Committee – Adam Brooks and Michael Golrick. She reported that Consultant Karen Miller and Ms. Dombourian were in the process of finalizing details of those visits.

Dr. Wu, before she concluded the report of the Search Committee, made the following statement:

“I can't, in good conscience, assure the Board that the search proceeded in a consistently equitable and objective fashion. While I'm prohibited from mentioning specific details from Executive Session, I will say that discussion featured what I understand to be a covert racism that has troubled me since that time. I support the logic underlying Executive Session to protect an individual's privacy where needed and appropriate. In this case, however, I believe that Executive Session had a very different effect. It enabled certain expressions that moved the discussion in a problematic, because unjust, direction. For that reason, when it comes time for the Board to approve the Search Committee's recommendation which we will be moving on to do, when we vote on it, I as the chair of the Search Committee and the President of the Library Board, and a citizen of Lafayette Parish who wants Lafayette to be the best that it can be, I will be voting against that recommendation.”

Mr. Duhon asked Dr. Wu to clarify what she would be voting against. Dr. Wu said that

there will be a recommendation to approve these finalists from the committee to the Board and that she would not be voting in favor of that recommendation.

Mr. Gordon-Wiltz stated that he wanted to echo Dr. Wu's comments and that he felt her observations were correct. He expressed that he was also troubled by the Executive Session. He stated that he faulted himself, perhaps since he was a new Board Member, that he had not been more assertive in the Executive Session, as well as decisions relating to the Search Committee as a whole, and that he felt there were inappropriate things that occurred.

A motion was made by Joseph Gordon-Wiltz to add the application of Juliet Machie to the finalists. Before the motion was seconded, Dr. Dardeau stated that procedurally she had an issue with this motion and felt this should be a Search Committee decision. She stated that this should go back to the Search Committee and have them make that recommendation to the Board.

Mr. Gordon-Wiltz stated that he would not have a problem with that or with starting the search process over again, spending unnecessary thousands of dollars to get it right. He expressed that this is a very emotional situation for him. He stated "in my 34 years of life, I've never experienced racism as a Black man, and to be on the front lines of that, it stung me to my core. I'm so serious and I hope you take these comments with the seriousness that we are charged that we are to do as this Board. It was completely unacceptable and my option, I think we have the authority as the Board, the power as the Board to add someone to the finalists rather than going back to the Search Committee."

Dr. Dardeau stated that she was not uncomfortable adding someone to the finalists, but she was uncomfortable doing it as the Board. She did not support re-starting the search, but that she felt this should go back to the Search Committee for the addition. She stated that she also felt very emotional about that decision and whether it was a racial decision, and she felt it was not. She said that she was not aware that Mr. Gordon-Wiltz had felt that in the meeting and was sorry for that.

Discussion continued on whether it was appropriate for the Board to add to the finalists or if the Search Committee should revisit this. Mr. Duhon stated he was not at that Search Committee meeting but would be fine with the Board adding names to the finalists.

Ms. Dombourian concurred with this assessment procedurally, saying that the Search Committee recommended three names to the Board. One of those candidates has since withdrawn. She suggested that at this point, the Board can accept the recommendation, can discard the recommendation, or can amend the recommendation. She reminded the Chair that there was currently a motion on the floor and suggested that the motion should clarify that Ms. Machie would be added to replace the candidate who withdrew. Mr. Duhon said he would support revisiting all the semi-finalist candidates if the Board so chose, but that he was also supportive of adding Ms. Machie to replace Ms. Settoon. Mr. Taylor stated that he concurred with Mr. Duhon since two of the Search Committee members expressed that they were uncomfortable with the Search Committee recommendation. He suggested if there was a question of the actions of the Search Committee, the Board could invite all six semi-finalists. Discussion continued on this possibility. Mrs. Blue stated that she felt that the Board established a procedure for the search and that the Board should not recreate the actions of the committee. Mr. Gordon-Wiltz said the Board would not be recreating the actions, but rather responding to one candidate withdrawing. He asked for support of his motion stating that this would allow inclusion and diversity, whereas keeping the finalist pool at the two remaining candidates offers no diversity.

The motion, restated by Joseph Gordon-Wiltz is to add Juliet Machie to the finalists to replace Paula Settoon and to invite Adam Brooks, Michael Golrick, and Juliet Machie as finalist

candidates for the on-site visits next week. The motion was seconded by Andrew Duhon.

The following comments were made by members of the public. Mr. ElRoy Broussard questioned if this motion passed, would the added candidate be appropriately considered or would she be set up for failure. Board discussion continued on the timeline, the candidate pool, and how many semi-finalists should be interviewed as finalists. Councilman Lewis asked about the Search Committee's charge and procedures and wanted to clarify that this was the fourth candidate on the list and, if added, would be given equal consideration as the other finalist candidates. Ms. Mia Arthur commended Mr. Gordon-Wiltz for taking action when he felt something was unjust. Ms. Sherry Broussard stated she felt the Board would be 100% fair in making a decision.

There was no additional discussion or public comment.

Yeas: Blue, Duhon, Goode, Gordon-Wiltz, Taylor, Wingate, Wu

Nays: Dardeau

Abstain: none

Absent: none

The motion to invite three finalists, Mr. Brooks, Mr. Golrick, and Ms. Machie to Lafayette for on-site interviews carried. The vote was seven in favor and one against.

Director's Search and Finalists Visit

Dr. Wu said that the Consultant - Karen Miller and Ms. Dombourian were working on the schedule. Dr. Wu said that questions were submitted to the Board by Ms. Miller for review and asked that the Board Members respond with any changes or suggestions to Ms. Miller by the end of the week. Ms. Dombourian reported that the schedule will be revised for the three candidates, and that the candidates would start at 9 a.m. on Monday, March 28th. The candidates will each meet with library managers, direct reports, staff groups (other than managers), and, should the Board choose, the Friends/Foundation. There will be a Public Forum – presentation by each candidate followed by Q&A, moderated by Bradbury Associates at South Regional on Monday evening. On Tuesday, March 29th, the Board Meeting will begin at 5:30 in the Meeting Room. Interviews will begin at 6:00 and will be approximately 55 minutes each. Following the last interview, the Board would begin deliberations. The Board concurred that the schedule as described sounded appropriate, including offering the opportunity for Friends and Foundation Board members to meet with the candidates. Discussion about hospitality for the candidates took place, including the possibility of guided tours, meals, and allowing downtime for the candidates. The consensus was to provide information about Lafayette to each candidate, but to allow self-guided tour time and downtime rather than organized meals and tours. The Library Foundation will provide refreshments for the Public Forum and Interviews.

Mrs. Wingate asked for clarification about reimbursing for spousal travel now that there are three candidates. It is not LCG's policy to reimburse for this, so the Library Foundation had agreed to consider this. Discussion took place regarding this. The Foundation will be asked to reimburse for \$300 to \$350 for spousal travel, possibly to be split among the candidates with spouses traveling with them, with the understanding that that it might not cover all of a spouse's travel. If the Foundation is unable to support this reimbursement request, then no spousal travel would be reimbursed.

VII. New Business

Records Retention Policy

Ms. Dombourian reported that the staff is working on a revision to the existing Records Retention Policy, using the template that the State now requires. She thanked Mr. Gordon-Wiltz for sending the Council's official retention schedule, which includes retention of minutes and related items that the regular LCG schedule does not include. There are still some items pending that are being discussed with and reviewed with LCG, and once the revision is ready it will be brought before the Board for consideration.

VIII. Announcements

The Board was reminded of the Finalist visits March 28th and 29th. The Public Forum is scheduled at South Regional Library on March 28th. The Finalist Interviews will be in public meeting on March 29th, beginning at 5:30 in the Main Library Meeting Room.

The Board was reminded about the annual Financial Disclosure Filing that is required of all current board members by May 15, 2016.

The Board was reminded about the 2016 annual one hour of ethics training that is required of all public servants by December 31st. Library Board Members are considered public servants for this purpose.

The Board was reminded of the upcoming American Library Association conference in Orlando, June 23-28, 2016. Mr. Taylor plans to attend this conference. Anyone else interested in attending a conference was asked to contact Mrs. Elberson to discuss.

Mrs. Elberson reported that she was elected Secretary for the Public Library Section of the Louisiana Library Association. She was congratulated by those present.

IX. Comments from the public

There were no comments from the public.

X. Adjournment:

Before entertaining a motion to adjourn, Dr. Wu expressed her appreciation to Ms. Dombourian for her service to the Library and assistance during Dr. Wu's presidency. Mr. Duhon said he had the pleasure of working with Ms. Dombourian for many years in government and how appreciative he was of all Ms. Dombourian has done to further the library system in Lafayette. Dr. Dardeau expressed appreciation for the legacy being left and Mrs. Blue stated that the new director would have big shoes to fill. Ms. Dombourian expressed her thanks to the Board.

Jamal Taylor made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Joan Wingate. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sona J. Dombourian, Secretary