

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

March 29, 2016

A Special Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control was held in the 2nd floor meeting room of the Main Library at 301 W. Congress St. on Tuesday, March 29, 2016. Yung-Hsing Wu, President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 5:34p.m.

I. Roll Call

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

Consultants: Dan Bradbury, Jobeth Bradbury, Karen Miller of Bradbury Associates

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

Members of the Public: various library staff members, including Chuck Savoy, Adam Melancon, Amy Wander, Jason Gilbert, Benton St. Romain, Beth Chiasson, Lorita Brock, Becky Broussard, Daphne Boudreaux, Jackie Lopez, Nancy Hebert, Angie Hurling, Brenda Prejean were present during some or all of the meeting. Library Foundation President Bettie Sonnier and Foundation Board members Beth Finch and Vanessa Hill were present. Members of the public Sheldon Blue, Sherry Broussard, Gail Smith, and Susan Hamilton were also in attendance.

II. Introductory Comments

Dr. Wu called on Mr. Bradbury to explain the order of business for the evening. He stated that each candidate's interview would take 55 minutes, including time for questions from the candidate. There will be a short break between candidates. He distributed the questions for each candidate and suggested the Board divide up the 15 questions. There are 14 identical questions and a question that was customized for each candidate. The questions were divided by counting off. Questions 1 and 9 will be asked by Dr. Wu. Questions 2 and 10 will be asked by Mr. Gordon-Wiltz. Questions 3 and 11 will be asked by Ms. Goode. Questions 4 and 12 will be asked by Mr. Duhon. Questions 5 and 13 were will be asked by Mrs. Wingate. Questions 6 and 14 will be asked by Mr. Taylor. Question 14 is the one customized for each candidate. Questions 7 and 15 will be asked by Dr. Dardeau. Question 8 will be asked by Mrs. Blue.

Mr. Bradbury explained that the Board could use the questionnaire packet to make notes. He reminded the Board that these would be gathered at the close of the meeting and would become part of the public record.

He suggested the Board member introduce him/herself briefly before asking their first question. He said that follow-up questions were appropriate, but to make sure all were job related.

Dr. Wu announced to the audience that there were copies of the agenda, as well as public comment forms available for use and that she would be asking for public comment during Agenda Item IV and on Item VI, as well as on any action items.

Mr. Bradbury said that, following the interviews, before adjourning to Executive Session, if the Board concurred with this process, he would ask the Board to rank the candidates in open session to facilitate the discussion of the candidates. The process was reviewed. Mr. Taylor said he would prefer to hear what everyone has to say before a ranking, but that it would be up to the Board to decide on the process. Ms. Goode expressed that it wouldn't bias her opinion or thoughts. Dr. Wu stated that this would serve only as a springboard to the discussion in Executive Session.

The Board agreed to use the microphones when speaking. There was also a microphone provided for the candidate to use. As there was time before the first interview, Dr. Wu thanked the Foundation for the refreshments and encouraged people to partake.

III. Finalist Interviews for the Position of Library Director

- A. The interview with Michael Golrick began at 6:02 p.m. and ended at 6:54 p.m. He was asked, and responded to, the 15 questions. Question 14 for Mr. Golrick was *“There are some who might say, upon reviewing your application materials and seeing your moves from leadership roles in two different public libraries to a less responsible or leadership-driven role with the State Library of Louisiana, that it's possible that your skills and abilities are better suited in the role of Library Consultant rather than Director. What would be your response to someone who expressed this thought?”*

Following the questions from the Board, Mr. Golrick asked the Board what is the most important thing they wanted from their new library director.

- B. The interview with Juliet Machie began at 7:04 p.m. and ended at 7:54 p.m. She was asked, and responded to, the 15 questions. Question 14 for Ms. Machie was *“There are some who might say, upon reviewing your application materials and seeing your career path, that, while you have had the opportunity to be in a position of significant responsibility in your career, you haven't yet had the opportunity to sit in the Director's seat for a public library and may not be fully prepared for taking on the responsibility of a Library the size and scope of Lafayette Public Library. What would be your response to someone who expressed this thought?”*

Following the questions from the Board, Ms. Machie said that last evening at the forum, the candidates were asked to give their vision of the Lafayette Public Library of the future. She asked the Board to tell her what the Lafayette Public Library of tomorrow looks like to them?

- C. The interview with Adam Brooks began at 8:05 p.m. and ended at 8:45 p.m. He was asked, and responded to, the 15 questions. Question 14 for Mr. Brooks was *“There are some who might say, upon reviewing your resume and seeing the additional management responsibilities you have currently, that giving up your role as the Director of Community Services to direct the Lafayette Public Library could be viewed as taking a step down. What would be your response to someone who expressed this thought?”*

Following the questions from the Board, Mr. Brooks asked the Board what their ideal candidate looked like. He asked what the next Director could do to work more

effectively with the Board. He asked would be the most important change that the next Director could make.

IV. Comments from the Public about the Finalists

Beth Chiasson, Library staff member, stated that she would like the next Director to be involved in the community and community organizations, be the face of the Library, and get to know the staff and the area very quickly.

Susan Hamilton, speaking as a community member who has previously served on the Library Board, urged the Board to select the person who would work best with the staff, because none of the vision or other positive forward movement would occur unless the Director bonds with the staff

Sheldon Blue said that there were many things that the candidates said to put the library in the forefront of the community. He referenced using time on AOC to promote the library, holding genealogy programs and other activities that could occur in the Library, put on by the Library, not by other groups.

There were no other comments from the public.

V. Discussion of finalist candidates

Mr. Bradbury asked the Board to take a blink moment to rank the candidates as a catalyst for their discussion. He stated that none of the candidates have asked to have their character and professional competence discussed in open session. He said that they would be sharing comments and feedback from the group meetings and tour guides and references on the candidates.

The rankings are such that 3 points were given for 1st ranking, 2 points for 2nd ranking, and 1 point for 3rd. The results were:

Brooks – 22 points – 8 rated him
Machie – 13 points – 7 rated her
Golrick – 12 points – 8 rated him

Dr. Wu asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the character and professional competence of the applicants in accordance with La. R.S. 42:17(A)(1). Accordingly, any applicant may require that discussion of his/her character and professional competence be held in open session. As Mr. Bradbury previously stated, none of the applicants has required that discussion of his/her character and professional competence be held in open session.

A motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the character and professional competence of the semi-finalists in accordance with La. R.S. 42:17(A)(1) was made by Jamal Taylor. The motion was seconded by Amy Goode.

Yeas: Blue, Dardeau, Duhon, Goode, Gordon-Wiltz, Taylor, Wingate, Wu
Nays: none
Abstain: none
Absent: none

The motion to go into Executive Session was approved at 8:55 p.m. At that time, the Board and Bradbury Associates Consultants left the Meeting Room and met in Executive Session in the Library Board Room on the 3rd floor.

A motion to come out of Executive Session and return to the open meeting was made by Andrew Duhon and seconded by Jamal Taylor.

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

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

The motion was approved and the open meeting resumed at 10:03 p.m.

VI. Selection Library Director

Dr. Wu said that all three finalists are in the process of undergoing background checks, with one being complete and two still pending. She stated that the Board feels that all the background checks should be completed before the Board makes a decision.

Andrew Duhon moved to defer any action on selection of a Library Director at least until all the background checks are completed on the candidates, and that a meeting would be scheduled after that time. Amy Goode seconded the motion.

Dr. Wu called for Board discussion on the motion. Mr. Taylor made the following comment "I am a big believer in this idea of one checking one's own privilege. I think that that as I have heard a litany of things about a litany of people, as I read some of the comments, I was incensed. We need to be able to check our privilege when we entertain people that are different, height, color, weight, age, size, nonetheless. And, as I read the commentary, or some of the commentary, I was deeply disappointed. I would challenge everybody to check their privilege and be careful of comments that we make. And those comments are indicative of a far more insidious undertone. And I, for one, will not, as a member of this Board, be a party to that sort of <cannot make out the word on the recording>. So, I would suggest that people check their privilege as they make commentary about people who are applying for positions within our library system."

Mr. Duhon replied "I understand that and that you have the right to that feeling, but I do feel like we can take those comments for what they're worth, and that they are just part and parcel of what we are gathering together to make a decision about the selection of a director. What I mean by that is that we are going to take first of all their experience, their education, via their resumes, what they portrayed to us, what we learned about them in the interviews, the Skypes, and then all the comments that Bradbury put together for us from staff, Foundation, Friends, public forum, etc. we take all that into account. So, as a Board member, that's why I want to take into consideration. There may be other things that you may take issue with one thing; I may take issue with something else. We all have to take this into consideration, I think, and feel like the sum total it was information sufficient for us to make a decision. As so, I'm getting there. I need those background checks to make that decision in the final analysis. So that's why I made that motion."

Mr. Taylor stated that “not only am I concerned about who is going to be the director, but I’m also concerned about the thoughts that exist amongst the staff that work here and the capability of them to then provide service to a group of people that may sound different, that might look different, that might act different, and so I’m going to weigh those equally. But insofar as the fiduciary and management responsibilities this Board has, I am quite concerned, and I think that it may be very important having <cannot make out the word on the tape> information for us to have this discussion ad nauseum at a different date, so our new director can assure that we have some sensitivity training or something around what people say and do. So I made my point for that specific reason and it does matter to me. I understand that we are looking for a director, but I want to be quite clear that some things require immediate addressing and some things do not, and that may not be one of the things that you feel like rises to the level of immediate addressing, but for me it does as a person that has had some experience that mirrors what I saw on that paper. And so I am going to leave it at that, certainly your motion is in order, but I wanted it to be said.”

There were no further comments from the Board. Dr. Wu asked for public comment. Mr. Blue stated that he had no idea what the Board was talking about. Mr. Duhon responded that this was from the Executive Session and that they were not at liberty to discuss it. Mr. Blue stated that he realized that. There was no additional discussion and Dr. Wu called for the vote.

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

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: none

The motion to defer further consideration on a new director until all background checks were completed was approved.

VII. Adjournment

Jamal Taylor made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Bradbury asked for an additional clarification before the meeting adjourned. He asked if the reports and background checks would be discoverable and part of the public record or if they are treated as confidential. Ms. Goode said that she would check with the City/Parish Attorney. Dr. Dardeau asked if the background checks were deemed public records, that the candidates would likely want to know this. Mr. Bradbury indicated that while the candidates had all signed the paperwork for the background checks, they may not expect that this would become public record.

Dr. Wu called a second on the motion to adjourn. Andrew Duhon seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sona J. Dombourian, Secretary