

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

September 17, 2018

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 September 17, 2018. Nora Stelly, Acting President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 5:16 PM.

I. Roll Call

Board Members Present: Nora Stelly, Acting President; Andrew Duhon; Joan Wingate; Adele Blue; Jolan Jolivet

Board Members Absent: Suzanne Dardeau; Yung-Hsing Wu; Hilda Edmond

Other Staff Present: Teresa Elbertson, Director; Terry Roy, Library Administrator; Larry Angelle; Library Operations Manager; Danielle Breau; Director's Executive Secretary; Nancy Hebert, Administrative Assistant; Jason Gilbert, Accounting Specialist; Dan Crowley; Maintenance Supervisor; Lorita Brock, Clerk II ; Kathy Mulloy, Head of Programming; Sarah Durr, Head of Youth Services; Meredith Crawford, Librarian II; Benton St. Romain, Library Budget Analyst

Members of the Public: Rhonda Gleason, Robert Judge, Sally Herman, M. Christian Green, Gary Herman, Christy Boutte, Keith Boutte, Carolyn Alcina, Hannah Boni, Bryan Patin, Rodney Chitwood, Mary Speyner, Fay Bowen, Ali Roberts, Nichole Wilson, Irma Escobar, William Thiele, Joan Beduze, Jared Eubanks, Michael Lunsford, Daniel Martinez, Thomas Drake, Ngozi Maduagwu, Cesar Franco, Linda Kirksey, Iveth Martinez, Jamal Taylor, Teresa Streety, Elias Bartel, Tara Baudoin, John Rougeau, Sandra Guidry, Linda Lanclos, Brandon Trott, Nicholas Charming, Xavier Fontenot, George Armbruster III, Ben Broussard, Evan Olwell, Dory Thomassie, Zechariah Long, Stephanie Armbruster, Georgia Gates, Mary Ann Doyce, Layne St. Julien, Luci Arsement, Lindsey Arsement, Dayna Haynie, Virginia Bienvenu, Katherine Hurst, Nell Hahn, Lessie Melancon, Dale Hoffpauir, Patricia Morales, Rane Wiseman, Fr. Ken Domingue, Annie Underwood, John Broussard, Marie Sallinger, Mike Spears, Nathan Nedopak, Dannielle Garcia, Amanda McElfresh, Ben Myers

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve of the minutes of the July 16, 2018 Board Meeting was made by Andrew Duhon and seconded by Joan Wingate.

Yeas: Stelly, Duhon, Wingate, Blue, Jolivette

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Dardeau, Wu, Edmond

The motion to approve the minutes was carried.

III. Comments from the Library Board

A. Lafayette Public Library Foundation Report

Joan Wingate informed the Board that the Foundation has had a very busy month. They have decided to increase monetary support for Lafayette Reads, which will start at the beginning of 2019. They have been focusing less on fundraising and more on increased endowments and updating their website with a new group of members.

IV. Director's Report & Comments

Teresa Elbertson announced staff changes, including one resignation, one retirement, and many transfers and new hires. Terry Roy is currently interviewing to fill vacancies. The library is currently in the process of opening the new West Regional positions, which were funded in the budget as of August 1.

The annual Full Staff Meeting was held August 23 from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Main Library. All library locations were closed until 1:00 PM to give all library staff the opportunity to meet together in one location. The library director gave an update on library projects and staff service awards were given. Staff had 6 mini programs to attend that morning focused on learning and using makerspace services and equipment. The staff participated in FoodNet's 100 Food Item Challenge donating 380 lbs. of food.

The Library Director and the Library Operations Manager attended the City of Scott's Apollo Road groundbreaking/ribbon cutting ceremony on September 12.

Amy Wander, Head of Outreach, and the Hilliard Art Museum Staff presented information on the circulating museum pass program at the LAMcon2019 (Louisiana Association for Museums) Conference in Baton Rouge on September 10.

The Friends of the Lafayette Public Library's semi-annual book sale was held September 12-15th at the Heymann Center. They report a good attendance and a great opening night.

September is Library Card Sign-Up Month. Two special edition cards were launched including "Louisiana Flora" by local artist Cayla Zeek and Disney-Pixar's Incredibles.

The Lafayette Public Library hit 9000 likes on Facebook on September 10.

A letter was sent to Teresa Elbertson and the Library Board of Control on September 7, 2018 from the American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom supporting the Drag Queen Story Time program. It acknowledged the courage shown by the Library and the Board for defending inclusivity and intellectual freedom in this library system. It was signed by James LaRue, the Director of the office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association; Jody Gray, the Director of the Office of Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services of the American Library Association; and Millie Davis, the Director of the Intellectual Freedom Center of the National Council of Teachers of English.

Monthly departmental reports were included in packets. Also included were the statistics for the Lafayette Public Library Summer Reading Program for 2018.

V. Construction and Facilities Updates

Larry Angelle, Terry Roy, Clinton Guillory and Teresa Elbertson last met with the contractor, architects and the Public Works representative on the West Regional project on September 6th. Afterwards they were allowed to walk the building. All of the steel frame walls are up. Glass has been installed on all of the clear glass windows (colored glass will come later). The patio cement has been poured and the perimeter wall/fencing is being worked on. The project time line has been adjusted to account for previous rain days that were granted. Completion of this project should be early December 2018, with a tentative opening date in early 2019.

A go live set date has for November 1, 2018 is in place for the Dude Solutions Facility Assessment. Larry Angelle has set up the software, logins and training for all Managers, Clerks, Supervisor II, Supervisor II, Technicians, and Administrators. This software will be used for a Maintenance and IT request system-wide so this can be tracked and data can be compiled.

The RFID tagging project is about three weeks behind schedule, and should begin on September 20. Several casual employees have been hired and regular employees will be offered overtime to work toward getting the tagging done within the original 12 week plan. The delay has been on the part of MK Solutions.

Cost estimates will be discussed with LAND Architecture on September 21 on the Library Park.

The first meeting was held on August 21 with the architect Gene Sellers concerning the South Regional Library Expansion. Plans are to add 7800-8800 square feet to the current building and remodel sections of the inside. The current extension plan was reviewed and wish list items were added so that Gene Sellers could move forward into schematic design and develop cost estimates for the project. Additional items included updating AC units and controls, adding additional green space, and drainage improvements for the site. Also discussed was keeping the building open and emergency exits clear while the building is under construction.

The Friends of the Lafayette Public Library donated a book bike for the Outreach Services department, now called Bibliobike. The plan is to take this bike to parks and to other outdoor events. It does have lights and patrons will be able to checkout materials. Cayla Zeek did the artwork for the bike box.

VI. Old Business

A. Student Library Cards

All public school students in Lafayette Parish can now use their school ID as a library card. It can be used as any regular library card, and there will be no fines on any late item that a student has checked out. Any student can get free homework help by using the statewide resource HomeworkLouisiana, download books, audiobooks, and magazines, or enjoy reading, listening and learning with any popular student resources like TumbleBooks, TrueFlix, or ScienceFlix. There is a wealth of learning resources available online 24/7.

B. FY 18/19 Library Budget

The City-Parish Council approved the Library Budget on September 6, 2018. A 2% cost of living increase was added at the last minute before being sent to the Mayor-President for either a signature or a veto. At this time, it is not known if it will be signed. The budget will be presented to the Library Board at the next meeting. The millages were set on August 21 to be collected at the same rate as last year. All three will be collected in 2018. The failed millage will not be collected in 2019.

VII. New Business

A. Library Board Contact Information

Teresa Elberson presented the board with different options for contact information for the Board of Control. She stated that four options were as follows:

1. List personal email and/or work email addresses; list personal phone numbers; list personal or work addresses.
2. Make one library board address with @lafayettepubliclibrary.org that can be checked daily by the Director's Executive Secretary who can then forward mail to personal email addresses.

3. List Board contact phone number as the Director's Executive Secretary's phone number along with library mailing address.
4. Make @lafayettepubliclibrary.org email addresses for every board member. They would need to use Outlook 365 to retrieve emails and would need to set up an account.

Changes to be made to the Administrative side would include listing email addresses for all and list the Director's Executive Secretary's name and email address, and revising the Comments and Suggestions form and making it available as an online form submittal.

Teresa also included what other bigger library systems in the state do and how they list their Board contact information.

Nora Stelly, Acting President of the Board, tabled discussion until the October 15, 2018 Board Meeting.

B. Background Check Information and Library Security

Public Libraries do not operate in loco parentis, or in place of the parent. Parents are responsible for their own children, not the staff of the library. The library is a public building. Currently, the only law that prohibits access to any group is Louisiana Revised Statute 14.91.2, that went into effect in 2013. This addresses sex offenders that have committed acts against those under the age of 13 being in or on public library property. This policy has been addressed and can be found on the library website. The door counter at Main counted 28,839 people in the month of August. Any library designed or remodeled since 2002 is designed with safety in mind. The library works with the architects to prevent hidden spaces such as hallways or bathroom entrances. Family restrooms have been included in all children's departments. There is security camera coverage in every area of the libraries excluding private offices and bathrooms. The cameras are maintained and updated regularly to give the latest and greatest coverage. Security guards have been at the Main Library for over 25 years. Once it was renovated to 3 floors, the library contracted through the sheriff's department and through LCG who contracts their own security to have a guard on all three floors and in the parking lot. In 2012, the Library Board voted to follow along with LCG's background checks as a condition of employment. Last year, the library spent over \$1900 on background checks for 22 new hires. The Children's and Teen's staff at Main work exclusively in those departments and get to know the patrons and are very good at recognizing if someone needs assistance. The Library staff does not limit children's access to the library. Parents and children stay for every Storytime. Children's staff always stays for children's programming. Our library locations have excellent response time by all law enforcement agencies throughout the parish. The library has a Patron Behavior policy in place. Any person or persons that commits a crime against staff is arrested and charges are pressed. The library also reports any crimes witnessed by staff. Many times patrons witness crimes and do not report them. The library cannot report crimes not witnessed by staff so patrons are encouraged to come forward and report anything seen.

VIII. Announcements

A. Reminder that the next Library Board Meeting will be Monday, October 15, 2018.

B. Yearly Ethics Training due before December 31, 2018

IX. Comments from the Public on any matter not on this Agenda

Robert Judge spoke in opposition to the Drag Queen Story Time. He stated that Ms. Elbersson did not know who Radar Productions was, as they were the company that started the Drag Queen Story Hour in San Francisco. He stated that many are touting this as something for tolerance and acceptance but this is not exactly congruent with what the DQSH says about themselves. He stated that this is about introducing children to transgenderism and gender fluidity. He also stated that as a scientist he was intolerant of bad ideas, and that transgenderism was dangerous for children.

Christy Green introduced herself as the President of Indivisible Acadiana, and stated that she also serves as the Secretary for Blue Acadiana, two groups that promote progressive political activities. She gave a brief childhood history and said that she has always been open to new ideas. She stated we need to challenge fear and be diverse as a species to evolve as a society.

Keith Boutte spoke in opposition to the Drag Queen Story Time because he would not like a child to see something that they had no ability to understand.

Hannah Boni spoke in support of the Drag Queen Story Time and all other programs presented by the Lafayette Public Library. She stated that reading to children not only increases cognitive ability but creativity, and improves social skills. She stated that it is essential for LPL to provide programming that does show cultural diversity so that more individuals are reached.

Bryan Patin spoke in opposition to the Drag Queen Story Time and stated that books were his escape from reality as a child and he appreciated the library. He said he was against it because he doesn't want his grandchildren to lose their peace and doesn't want adults to drag them into their sexuality. He said it would create turmoil in their emotional lives.

Rodney Chitwood spoke in opposition to the Drag Queen Story Time by saying that the board had done a disservice to the children by allowing this to happen. He stated that children should not be allowed the mindset of diversity because people cannot grow up to be what they want such as a Ninja Turtle or a dog. He asked the Board to have a Special Meeting before October 6 to cancel the event.

Mary Speyper spoke in support of Drag Queen Story Time and said that she thinks it will be fun and everything she read about it shows that it will be entertaining. She stated that if you don't want to go, no one is forcing you to attend.

Fay Bowen spoke in support of Drag Queen Story Time, stating that she is a 63 year patron of the library and was thrilled to hear that her City and Library were finally coming into the 21st century and hosting such an inclusive event. She said that it would be awesome to show children that being different does not have to be scary. She quoted a song from the musical

South Pacific called *You've Got to be Carefully Taught*. She then stated that wouldn't it be wonderful instead of teaching our children hatred and fear, to instead teach them to love.

Ali Roberts spoke in support of Drag Queen Story Time and announced statistics on other societal issues in the State of Louisiana, including divorce rates, single parent home rates, high drinking rates and illiteracy rates, calling 'where is your religious indignation there?' and saying that this story time should be the least of our worries.

William Thiele spoke in support of the Drag Queen Story Time. He asked the Board to be on the right side of history and cast aside political juggernauts. He quoted the theme song from Reading Rainbow, stating "I can be anything, take a look, it's in a book, a Reading Rainbow".

Joan Beduze spoke in opposition of the Drag Queen Story Time saying that it isn't possible to change your DNA, and fear isn't her reason for denying this program. She said that drag queens don't need to be in an authoritative position teaching young children and they should use their own facility if they wish.

Jared Eubanks spoke in support of the program saying that is an important event for a number of reasons, including teaching empathy and tolerance. He stated that asking this event to be canceled is discrimination.

Michael Lunsford spoke in opposition to the program saying that the Library is not the proper venue for politics. He spoke of the public records requests and stated that the Board should make a formal statement.

Thomas Drake spoke in opposition to the Drag Queen Story Time event. He presented the Board with a petition signed by 17,000 people asking the Board to cancel the program in the Public Library and not expose children to unnatural, delusional behavior.

Ngozi Maduagwu spoke in opposition to the program. She stated that children are entitled to innocence.

Jamal Taylor spoke in support of the Drag Queen Story Time. He stated that people there spewing hatred and bigotry were not signing up to be readers. He stated that it was surprising to him that politicians were taking sides to further their political agenda.

Tara Baudoin spoke in opposition to the program. She stated there was a difference in treating people with respect and embracing every expression and idea that people put forth. She claimed that drag queens were inherently sexual and it wasn't defensible as a children's program.

Sandra Guidry spoke in opposition to Drag Queen Story Time. She stated that no one has the right to come before children and tell them that it isn't okay to be who they are and they cannot change who Jesus wants them to be. She stated that gender dysphoria was mental child abuse.

Linda Lanclos spoke in opposition to the program. She asked the Board to stop this program. She stated that she was not homophobic, as she had a brother that died of AIDS. She doesn't think the Library should promote a lifestyle that is so dangerous.

Brandon Trott spoke in opposition to Drag Queen Story Time. He asked the board to reconsider the issue with him. He stated that this program is meant to endorse their lifestyle choices and their beliefs about gender, sexuality, and moral opinions. He stated that belief systems should not be taught in public places.

Nicholas Charming spoke in support of Drag Queen Story Time and any other library program that teaches compassion, understanding, cultivation of thought and willingness to look beyond oneself and one's small world view. He stated that those that do attend can hold this program as a beacon in their hearts to call upon when they may be facing situations that make them feel alone and can remember that they are not alone in this world.

George Armbruster III spoke in opposition to the Drag Queen Story Time. He stated that this is potentially harmful to 3-6 year olds that are unable to process the information in front of them, and that outweighs any good presented by the program. He said that anti-bullying can be taught to children without exposing them to gender fluidity. He said that children that do attend the program will tell their friends about what they saw therefore exposing those children whose parents chose not to bring them.

Stephanie Armbruster spoke in opposition to the program. She stated that her job as a parent is to protect her children and explained that the program is absolutely inappropriate for 3-6 year olds. She implored the Board not allow this to happen.

Layne St. Julien spoke in support for the Drag Queen Story Time. She stated that growing up and establishing an authentic identity is the hardest thing for a child to do, and those that don't fit into the usual molds often conclude that they simply can't. She stated this is a tragedy for them, for their families, and for their community.

Katherine Hurst spoke in support of the program. She stated that the American College of Pediatricians being quoted in opposition to the program is in no way affiliated with the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Nell Hahn spoke in support of Drag Queen Story Time as a program to model tolerance and acceptance of those that are different. She explained that a good bit of bullying is because of gender nonconformity and that can happen to children at a very young age. She thinks it would reassure kids that are different that they are okay and teach kids that aren't different to be more tolerant.

Dale Hoffpauir spoke in opposition of Drag Queen Story Time. He asked Teresa and the Board to reconsider the event or consider having it moved elsewhere.

Daniel Martinez spoke in opposition to the Drag Queen Story Time. He said that taxpayer money should not be used on this program for 3-6 year olds.

Cesar Franco spoke in opposition to the Drag Queen Story Time. He said sexualizing kids from 3-6 years of age is totally inappropriate. He stated that children have a right to their innocence.

John Rougeau spoke in opposition to the Drag Queen Story Time. He stated that his children had friends that were drag queens, but did not flaunt that in front of everyone.

Evan Olwell stated his opposition to the Drag Queen Story Time. He said that the program was very much related to promoting transgender agenda and ideology. He stated that it would be confusing and harmful to children, contradicting science and reality.

Irma Escobar spoke in opposition to the Drag Queen Story Time. She stated that the books wouldn't be educational and that books about gender fluidity would not bring up educational scores for our state.

In total, 22 people signed in, in support of Drag Queen Story Time. 37 people signed in in opposition. 2 did not circle an opinion.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business, Andrew Duhon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jolan Jolivet seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Teresa Elberson, Secretary