

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

September 21, 2021

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 21, 2021. Doug Palombo, President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 5:17 PM.

I. Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Members Present: Doug Palombo, Board President; Joan Wingate; Adele Blue; Stephanie Armbruster; James Thomas; Landon Boudreaux; Robert Judge

Other Staff Present: Danny Gillane, Library Director; Terry Roy, Library Administrator; Larry Angelle, Library Operations Manager; Danielle Breaux, Director's Executive Secretary

Members of the Public: Nureaka Ross, Khadijah Rashad, R.J. Fonseca, Jr., Sharon Patterson, Andrew Duhon

Doug Palombo led the board in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. New Business

A. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2021 Regular Board Meeting was made by Joan Wingate and seconded by Stephanie Armbruster.

Yeas: Palombo, Wingate, Blue, Armbruster, Thomas, Judge

Nays: None

Abstained: Boudreaux

Absent: None

III. Comments from the Library Board

Joan Wingate announced that the Lafayette Public Library Foundation was in the final stages of its educational and informational campaign to raise community awareness. A speaker's bureau is currently active, presenting information over various different civic and cultural association meetings.

The Friends book sale ended on September 18. The library is the only beneficiary of funds raised.

IV. Director's Report and Comments

Staff changes were announced to the Board.

The library has cut approximately 3M from capital budget thus far.

A reduction of phone lines will save approximately \$2,300 annually. There have also been roughly \$291,000 in cuts to the operations budget per year.

The Library is adhering to the Governor's mask mandate. The Library staff are required to wear masks when not sitting at their desks in a non-public area. Patrons are required to wear masks.

Library attended budget Parish Council budget adoption.

Director attended Black Folks Talking, a discussion group of community leaders. The group expressed concerns about the library's commitment to building a library on the other side of the Evangeline Thruway.

Director met with Parish Councilman AB Rubin.

Director spoke at the Youngsville and Broussard City Council Meetings with Councilman Josh Carlson.

Director spoke with attorney R.J. Fonseca, Jr. who has been hired to help with the Holy Rosary Redevelopment project. This was an opportunity for both parties to establish a line of communication that is not based on hearsay.

The Library was open at 50% capacity in August 2020. Computer usage was up 46% compared to last year. Compared to last year library visits were up 14%. First-time checkouts were up 1% compared to last year. Library programs increased in number

by 86% over last year and equal to 2019. Attendance was up 141% over August 2020 and up 5% over 2019.

After seeking input from the Board President, the library will be applying for the Witness to Change: Conversations on Coastal Impacts. The grant is a new adult reading and discussion series available to Louisiana public libraries and community partners through the Louisiana Endowment of the Humanities' Coastal Impacts initiative, funded by BHP. The grant would feature 4 books:

Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore by Elizabeth Rush

The Water Knife by Paulo Bacigalupi

Salvage the Bones by Jesmyn Ward

Bayou Farewell: The Rich Life and Tragic Death of Louisiana's Cajun Coast by Mike Tidwell

The grant of \$2300 would pay for 20 copies of each book as well as a speaker. While one of the books does mention climate change, a potentially politically charged topic, the issues that would be discussed are: what makes a place a home, experiences of flooding, hurricanes, family roots and connection to place, land loss and dislocation, scarcity and adaptation, and risk and relocation.

Boudreaux asked why the parking lot at the Main Library is closed at certain times during the weekend. It was explained that this was for maintenance and liability reasons.

Boudreaux stated that various boards were starting to look into cisterns to be used in the downtown area. The LUS Rain Barrel Program regularly advertises at the library. This will be discussed with Environmental and LUS to determine if it would be a viable option for the library.

Boudreaux asked who was in charge of cleaning the sculpture outside of the library. Public Works cuts the grass and maintains the road in the area. Iberia bank keeps up the appearance of the sculpture. The library does not own the land.

Wingate thanked the various libraries for monthly reports. Judge asked that the reports be standardized for easier reading and comparison. Armbruster seconded this sentiment. Armbruster stated that the East Regional report mentioned a leaking roof. This is something that will be repaired under warranty and has been an issue since the branch was opened.

V. Facilities Update & Financial Report

Architectural services contract amendment for the Main Library Roof Replacement Project has been signed by the Architect and should be delivered to the Public Works Administration on 9/16/21. The amendment will then be processed for signature within LCG. Once signed by the Mayor-President, a notice to proceed will be issued to the Architect to start the design work.

The library is waiting on an updated pricing estimate for the South Regional Library upgrades based on the revised scope of work and alternates.

The library is waiting on an updated pricing estimate for the North Regional Library upgrades based on the revised scope of work and alternates.

The lease amendment to reduce the square footage and establish a new lease term for the library warehouse is being reviewed by Legal.

Financial Reports were provided in packets. Larry Angelle stated that library revenues are at \$10.8 million and expenses are at \$9.7 million.

October 2021 is the final month of the current fiscal year (20/21). Many of the October 2021 expenses will not be expensed until November/December as an accrual process occurs. An accurate dollar amount for current fiscal year expenses will take a while to report (Audited Financials are typically finalized in April.). Yearend purchasing deadlines, donated carryovers, and capital carryover processes will occur in September/October.

On Thursday, September 9, 2021 a Special Joint Council meeting was held and the FY21/22 Budget was adopted. No changes to the Library budget occurred.

The library will have a new expense that will cost up to \$18,079 as it relates to COVID-19 Case Management Services and Testing. This was an LCG wide decision and was approved by the Joint Council on 8/17/21.

Potential Grant funding of \$2,300 to be pursued as indicated in the Director's Report.

LCG's Banker is closing its downtown vault location. This will affect how the Library will make daily deposits temporarily. It is likely until a Request for Proposals is sent out and awarded to a new bank, the library may incur new expenses for armored car services to deliver deposits to the Baton Rouge vault location daily. These services are to be split between multiple LCG Departments including LUS and Traffic and Transportation. Costs are not definite at this time. This issue is being handled by LCG's Accounting Manager and Controller.

Property Tax Levy amounts will be voted on by the Parish Council on September 21, 2021. Levy Rates proposed in Parish Ordinance PO-044-2021 are 2.91 and 1.84 as recommended by the Library Board of Control.

VI. New Business

A. Library Book Discards July-August 2021

A motion for the library to discard 2,759 books having been out of use for over a year due to the books being superseded, obsolete, unused, or otherwise unnecessary was made by Landon Boudreaux and seconded by James Thomas.

Yeas: Palombo, Wingate, Blue, Armbruster, Thomas, Boudreaux, Judge

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

Boudreaux announced that the Parish Council had approved amending to adjust the Library millage (2013-2022) to the maximum of 1.97. Angelle stated that means that the library will collect the 1.97 rate until 2022. The renewal is set for 1.84.

VII. Announcements

Because Danny Gillane will be attending the Carencro City Council Meeting on October 18, the date of the October meeting was changed to October 20, 2021.

A. Reminder that the next Library Board meeting will be Monday, October 20, 2021.

B. Reminder that yearly ethics training and sexual harassment training must be completed before December 31, 2021.

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

Palombo stated that the Northeast Regional Library was not placed on the September agenda, as it was discussed in August. A summary of the August discussion was provided.

Nureaka Ross stated that she felt the members of her community have been rendered voiceless. She explained the complexities of crossing Evangeline Thruway and suggested creating a committee to rectify the issue of bringing a Northeast Regional Library to fruition.

Khadijah Rashad explained that she did not see representation on the Board of members of color, and stated that the vote could be outnumbered for this reason. She said that she had a love/hate relationship with the library because of the accessibility issues between cultures. She asked for inclusivity to set an example for the future.

R.J. Fonseca, Jr. introduced himself as the attorney that has been hired to help with the Holy Rosary Redevelopment project. He asked about the procedure for having the site selection process initiated, and if the LCG ordinance put aside funds for site selection. Holy Rosary has property on Louisiana Avenue that they would like to make available for the placement of the library. He asked about the size of the building proposed and number of parking spaces needed. He stated that there are currently certain zoning restrictions in place. He also asked if there were monies allocated to fund operations.

Larry Angelle stated that there is currently a contract in place with Ziler Architects that supplies the proposed square footage of the library building that includes a warehouse and parking space. The library has not gone out for an RFP for site selection. This project is on hold at the moment. Monies for operation were not allocated.

Sharon Patterson indicated that there were many accessibility issues in getting to libraries. She said that September is library card sign up month and that ease of access leads to children being excluded from getting a card and experiencing all that com

Andrew Duhon explained that when the City-Parish council wanted to take money from the library to divert to other purposes, a compromise was made that \$8M would go toward the Northeast Regional Library, but that there isn't currently money to operate. He stated his confidence in library administration coming up with creative ways to operate. He stated that a Parish Council motion to amend to adjust the Library millage (2013-2022) to the maximum from 1.84 to 1.97 was approved. He also relayed that Assessor Conrad Comeaux suggested waited for the spring election and going out for a higher rate.

Robert Judge publicly stated his support of building a new library. He acknowledged some people may have to have less access in order to provide everyone with some access.

Landon Boudreaux also encouraged the creation of a committee.

Board Members encouraged patrons to stay after the meeting to discuss concerns.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danny Gillane, Secretary