

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

August 15, 2022

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 August 15, 2022. Robert Judge, President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 5:14 PM.

I. Roll Call and Invocation

Board Members Present: Robert Judge, Board President; Joan Wingate; Stephanie Armbruster; Shane Landers; David Pitre

Board Members Absent: Landon Boudreaux; James Thomas; Daniel Kelly

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

Members of the Public: Paige Beyt, Oats & Marino; Lynette Mejia; Melanie Brevis; Pablo Mejia; Andrew Duhon; Mitzi Moss Duhon; Mary Lib Guercio; Aimee Barber; Joseph Abraham; Nureaka Ross; Mark Harris; Matthew Humphrey; Alton Trahan; Sherica Davis; Anne Swanson; Seth Roy; Francesco Crocco; Forrest Chiasson; Dominick Cross; Corey Grimley; Ben Carver; Ken Broussard; Constance Milton; Melany Champagne; Alice Ferguson; Laura Truxillo

The invocation was led by Robert Judge.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

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

III. New Business

Approval of Minutes

- A. A motion to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2022 Northeast Library Exploratory Committee Meeting was made by Robert Judge and seconded by Shane Landers.

Yeas: Judge, Wingate, Armbruster, Landers, Pitre
Nays: None
Abstained: None
Absent: Boudreaux, Thomas, Kelly

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2022 Regular Board Meeting was made by Stephanie Armbruster and seconded by Joan Wingate.

Yeas: Judge, Wingate, Armbruster, Landers, Pitre
Nays: None
Abstained: None
Absent: Boudreaux, Thomas, Kelly

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2022 Special Meeting was made by David Pitre and seconded by Shane Landers.

Lynette Mejia questioned the lack of recording of the Special Meeting. She stated that 11 of 16 public speakers' comments were not recorded in the minutes.

Pablo Mejia stated that the minutes did not adequately reflect the content of the meeting.

Yeas: Judge, Wingate, Armbruster, Landers, Pitre
Nays: None
Abstained: None
Absent: Boudreaux, Thomas, Kelly

IV. Comments from the Library Board

The Friends of the Library have a book sale scheduled September 15-17. It will be open from 9AM to 8PM on Thursday, September 15, from 9AM to 6PM on Friday, September 16, and from 9AM to 2PM on Sunday, September 17.

The Lafayette Public Library Foundation is working on a new outreach to get Lafayette reading, giving more awareness to all things literary and assisting the library. The Foundation will have a tent at ArtWalk on October 8.

V. Director's Report and Comments

The library had its budget hearing before the Parish Council during which some council members discussed their concerns about the proposed northeast library. The library is projected to use a little over \$600,000 from its fund balance in fiscal year 2022-2023, and it is expected that actual spending will be less than revenue. The library reduced its workforce by eight positions. This is the second consecutive year of staff reductions.

Staff changes were announced to the board.

Director plans to meet with LPSS administration in early September.

During June and July, the library circulated 294,256 physical items and 55,602 digital items. There were 144,379 library visitors and an additional 6,281 people used the drive-through windows. There were 29,302 public computers sessions. Patrons recorded 2,032,636 minutes read towards the Summer Reading goal from June 1 to July 31.

A full-staff meeting is scheduled for the morning of August 18. All libraries will open at 1:00 pm.

VI. Facilities Update & Financial Report

The Public Works Department has reviewed specifications and plans for the Main Library Roof Replacement Project and recommended minor changes. The Architect will have a final set of plans and specifications printed and sent to the Purchasing Office for final review. Once approved by the Purchasing Office the project will be sent out for Public Bid.

Architectural Services Contract Amendment for the South Regional Upgrades is pending execution.

Architectural Services Contract Amendment for the North Regional Library Upgrades is pending execution.

The Library is waiting on the Lease Amendment for the Library Warehouse to be reviewed and signed by the Lessor of the building.

Best and final offers for the Northeast Library RFP were received on 7/27/22, posted online, and sent to Board President and Vice President.

East Regional Library has an Emergency Exit Door Threshold Leak that is pending repair. Repair is scheduled for 8/5/22. Vending Area Roof Leak has returned. Roofing

Contractor recommended adding a piece of break metal be installed to close off some wall panels receiving splashing water which is thought to possibly be a cause of the leak.

Annual Backflow Preventer Inspections are to be scheduled for the Main and all Regional Libraries in the month of August.

Delivery truck backed into overhang and back door area of the Main Library during heavy rain on 7/27/22. Documentation (camera footage, photos, packing slip, and estimated repair costs) was sent to vendor to take corrective action.

The library has collected 11.1M in revenues and has spent 8.4M.

Interest on Investments earnings are performing much better. E.g. November 2021 earnings were \$2,058 vs. June 2022 earnings of \$16,115.

Fuel costs are up. Bookmobile repair costs (generator) are up which required a shifting of funding to cover the remainder of the fiscal year.

Postage costs are up and a small shifting of funding was required.

Utility costs are up, and a major shifting of funds will be required if the trend continues.

VII. New Business

A. Northeast Library

Legal advised that the LPL Board is not legally obligated to use competitive bidding. The Board is not legally bound by the laws governing the RFP process to acquire property or entering a lease for property.

Requests for Proposal scored by the Northeast Library Exploratory Committee included ESD Investments, Chappuis, Holy Rosary, and Duhon properties. The highest scoring property was ESD investments. Holy Rosary did not come within the scope of the RFP.

June 22, 2022, it was recommended that the Board establish a competitive range and negotiate with the properties within the competitive range. This would include ESD Investments and the Chappuis property. An amendment to the original motion was made to include the top two scored that met the RFP requirements including Chappuis Property and ESD Investments and that the Board establish a competitive range of 700 to include those two properties for further negotiation.

Director stated that it is possible to make changes to finance and staff a new library with the current library funding.

Dr. Sherica Davis stated that all property owners were given the same RFP and that all should follow the RFP requisites. She stated that any changes to the RFP or any instructions should have been distributed fair and equitable. She stated that she was not informed that any changes could have been made to the ESD Properties original RFP. Dr. Davis stated that a library would serve the community a great justice.

A motion to accept the offer by ESD Investments was made by Shane Landers and seconded by David Pitre.

Andrew Duhon stated that the biggest issue with the project was managing expectations. He stated his support for the motion.

Mary Lib Guercio urged the Board to take action. She stated that the millage can be raised to generate more revenue.

Aimee Barber serves on the community and family engagement committee for a school in the area, and stated that there is a great need for a library.

Joseph Abraham encouraged the Board to move forward with the motion.

Nureaka Ross stated that the Northeast Library Exploratory Committee was dissolved without notice. She stated that the Committee recommended the RFP by ESD Investments and urged the Board to move forward with the motion.

Mark Harris stated that he along with 6 others own property at 100 Shadow Bluff Drive that is intersected with Louisiana Avenue. He requested that the Board allow them to make a proposal. The property is 10 acres and would be subdivided to fit the 4-6 acres needed.

Matthew Humphrey urged the Board to move forward and build a library.

Alton Trahan encouraged each Board member to vote in favor of the motion. He stated that as a member of the NLEC, he was able to review all RFPs and that ESD was the number one choice. He stated that there is a need and that is feasible to operate.

Anne Swanson stated that Women of Wisdom were in support of the ESD Investments property and encouraged the Board to move forward on the proposal.

Melanie Brevis urged the Board to ensure sustainable funding for the library system and urged the Board to move forward.

Lynette Mejia questioned the information given on the library website. She stated that it is disingenuous to allow one property owner to change their RFP and not the other. She recommended that the Board move forward with purchasing the ESD Investments property. She asked that the Northeast Library Exploratory Committee be reinstated.

Seth Roy urged the Board to move forward with the process.

Francesco Crocco, President of Move the Mindset, stated his support for the proposal. He stated that one of the reasons Louisiana is 49th in education is the legacy of Jim Crow and institutional racism. He stated there is a documented need for the library and urged the Board to support the motion.

Forrest Chiasson stated his support of the ESD Investments location and urged the Board to respect the wishes of the Northeast Library Exploratory Committee.

Yeas: Judge, Wingate, Landers, Pitre

Nays: None

Abstained: Armbruster

Absent: Boudreaux, Thomas, Kelly

VIII. Announcements

There were no announcements.

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

Mary Lib Guercio spoke to how the library system treats employees. She stated it would be difficult attracting competent employees to apply given the atmosphere that surrounds the Board. She thanked the Board for taking action on the Northeast Library.

Joseph Abraham stated that National Read a Book Day is observed annually on September 6.

Nureaka Ross thanked the Board for the support of the Northeast Library. She asked that the Board consider reinstating the NLEC.

Matthew Humphrey asked for the resignation of Robert Judge and stated that he is working with the Parish Council to have Robert Judge removed.

Dominick Cross thanked the Board for moving forward with the purchase of property for the Northeast Library.

Corey Grimley asked that library displays be developmentally appropriate and not promote ideologies. He asked that the Board and the Director abide by community standards for selection and age-appropriate classification of materials.

Pablo Mejia stated that by leaving Cara Chance off of this agenda, Cara Chance and the library owners are left in the dark as to Cara Chance's outcome. He asked that the Board state the matter was being dropped and requested that an apology be issued to Cara Chance.

Lynette Mejia stated it unconscionable to haul someone to what she considered a tribunal for the express purpose of firing them the day before they were scheduled for a surgery, as this would ensure the person would not have health insurance to cover the cost of the surgery. She stated that Cara Chance deserved to be informed of her status.

Melanie Brevis stated that the Board has used civility as a weapon.

Ken Broussard asked which community standards were being enforced, and spoke against traditional standards. He stated that Christ was not one of exclusion and embraced those who were different.

Constance Milton, Head of Outreach Services, stated that she had recently put in her two weeks' notice. She asked that the Board make decisions that make things better for staff.

Melany Champagne urged the Board to attend professional development.

Francesco Crocco thanked the Board for moving forward on the purchase of land for a Northeast Library. He stated that the book display policy did not avoid situations where a certain groups or situations would avoid a political backlash. He stated that this guideline would prevent a display for the Lafayette Parish Bicentennial.

Alice Ferguson expressed her shame and embarrassment by the behavior of the Board. She stated the treatment of Cara Chance shameful.

X. Closing Prayer, Adjournment

David Pitre led the Board in a closing prayer.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:26 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danny Gillane, Secretary