

St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control Meeting
May 26, 2020
Covington Branch Library
310 West 21st Ave.
Covington, LA 70433
Zoom meeting streaming on Facebook Live
2:00 P.M.

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Becky Taylor, President. Kelly LaRocca, Director, called the roll and declared that a quorum was present.

Present: Bill Allin, Dr. Argiro Morgan, Ann Shaw, Rebecca Taylor, Mary Reneau
Absent: John Danjean

1. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Library Board of Control which was held on February 11, 2020.

There were no corrections and no public comment. M. Reneau moved to approve the minutes. It was seconded by Dr. A. Morgan. All were in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

2. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Financial Reports – April 2020

Kelly LaRocca reported that the library received \$1,270,766.90 in Ad Valorem Revenue in March. The total Ad Valorem Revenue received this year is \$9,854,233.72. The first batch of State Revenue Sharing was received, and two more batches are expected before the end of the year. The budget percentage should be 33.33% at this point in the year.

Fines & Fees are below budget at 19% due to not collecting fines or fees in part of March and all of April. Interest Income is below the budgeted amount due to interest rates being lower. The Donations Received line is lower due to receiving most donations from the Friends towards the end of the year.

Membership Dues, Network Utility Software, Polaris Maintenance, and Insurance are higher due to paying those costs at the beginning of the year. The Advertising line is higher due to

advertising for Covington Branch's reopening. The Signage line is higher due to the Covington Branch reopening and because of signage needed during the COVID-19 situation.

The Vehicle Repairs line is higher due to two trucks needing repairs and tune-ups. The Plumbing, Heating, and A/C line is higher due to an underground pipe repair project at Covington Branch. The Architectural line is at 60% due to having a survey done of the Covington Branch property. The Programming Supplies line is at 56%, but will be adjusted on the budget amendment next month. The PC Network and Integrated Library Automation Systems lines are higher due to hardware purchases being done at the beginning of the year. The Microfilm line is at 99% due to the purchase of The Times-Picayune Digital Archive that was approved at the previous board meeting. The Covington Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment line is at 85% due to the purchases for the Covington Branch at the beginning of this year. The remaining purchases should be complete this month.

A. Shaw asked why there was a survey done on the Covington Branch property. K. LaRocca explained that the parish is going to be doing the outside work on the library such as landscaping and sidewalk repairs. The site survey shows the elevation and identifies the electric, sewer and gas lines. That information is needed before digging into the ground. The survey is also needed to adequately describe what needs to be done when going out for quotes.

A. Shaw asked if there was any indication that the amount of funds that the library receives from ad valorem taxes would be less than budgeted. K. LaRocca said that this year's funds will not be affected. She explained that the money received this year is last year's funds. She said that the parish is looking at what the library's ad valorem revenue will be for this year. If there is any impact, it would be on next year's expected funds.

Dr. A. Morgan asked why the library is being charged for the survey if the parish is responsible for the external architectural work. K. LaRocca explained that the parish holds the library's capital funds to handle those types of projects such as major renovations and repairs. The library's funds are used whether it comes from the operational account or the capital funds. She noted that the survey was \$600. She explained that it was beneficial to get it done early since it is needed for the project, and it is good to have for insurance purposes.

B. Taylor asked if there will be a need for a similar survey for the Slidell Branch or other branches. K. LaRocca said that there are surveys on file for other branches. If an elevation survey is needed for the Slidell Branch we will get one.

There was public comment from Bill McHugh. He asked if the library has been able to retain its employees during this time. K. LaRocca said yes, they have been able to retain employees.

S. Lister reported that there was public comment via Facebook Live. A patron asked when will the library reopen. K. LaRocca said that will be discussed during the Director's Report later in the meeting.

M. Reneau moved to accept the April 2020 Financial Reports. It was seconded by Dr. A. Morgan. All were in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

B. Possible Administration Building Purchase

K. LaRocca reported that the owner of the Administration building at 1112 West 21st Ave. wants to sell the property. The owner's real estate agent contacted the library to ask if they would be interested in purchasing it. K. LaRocca stated that the library would need an appraisal done and would not be able to purchase a building for more than the appraisal price. If someone else were to purchase the building they would have to honor the rental agreement, which has another three years. K. LaRocca noted that the building is not ideal because it is a two-story building with no elevator. If the library were to own the building they would be able to modify it to install an elevator and a generator. She explained that the decision to purchase the building would not mean that a combined Administration and Annex building would not be built at some point in the future. The current administration building could be sold at that time. With the millage renewal coming up in three years, it is a good idea to have a stable place for the administration offices. Although no motion or vote is required for library administration to investigate the price, she wanted the minutes to show that there was discussion with the board about the possibility of purchase.

B. Taylor stated that the location of the administration building is very good, staff has dealt with the problem of having the 2nd story, and they are established at that location. She agreed that an appraisal is necessary to determine where we stand and to determine the possibilities of purchasing the building. B. Taylor said that the hope is to relocate and combine Administration, Technical Services, and Maintenance into one location, but that will be some time in the future.

M. Reneau asked if the library has an appraisal team or a company who does appraisals for the library. K. LaRocca explained that there is a list of appraisal companies that the parish uses. They would ask three of them for a quote and would choose the best price.

A. Shaw asked how much space in the building is currently being used. K. LaRocca said that the building is 4,400 square feet and all of it is being used. She said there is not room to grow in the building. She explained that their thought is to eventually combine Administration and Technical Services into its own building that they would design for that purpose. Another option is to have

Technical Services and Maintenance in one building along with some relocated services from the Administration building. That would leave the Administration building with adequate space.

K. LaRocca further clarified that they could keep the building and redistribute the staff that are there, or they would build a new building and sell the current building. She said that a combined Administration and Technical Services building is not going to be built within the next three year, so purchasing the current building gives the library a stable location for headquarters. She stated that they would still look for a more permanent location for Technical Services that could absorb a couple of the offices currently at the Administration building. T. DiMaggio stated that there is also one department whose office is currently located at a library branch. She explained that they are maxed out of space in the current building, yet it still does not contain all of the support departments.

Dr. A. Morgan stated that real estate is in flux at this time due to the COVID-19 situation. Any estimate received would be tentative until the issue is resolved and the economy is stabilized. She stated that once that point is reached they could understand where they are fiscally.

B. Taylor asked for questions from the board and public comment. There was public comment from Bill McHugh. He asked what the rent is on the current Administration building. D. Cuevas stated that the rent is \$6,386.13 per month. S. Lister reported that there was no public comment via Facebook Live.

C. Summer Reading 2020 – Tanya DiMaggio

Tanya DiMaggio presented the details of the 2020 Summer Reading Challenge due to the Children's, Teen, and Adult Coordinators conducting virtual programming at the time of the board meeting. She said she was proud of JoAnna Reeves, Jennifer Rifino, and Jillian Boudreaux for planning such a great virtual Summer Reading Challenge in response to the COVID-19 situation. The entire Summer Reading Challenge will be online this year. This year's theme is "Imagine Your Story," which includes fairy tales, folktales, mythology, fantasy, and classic literature. Children, teens, adults, and older children will track their reading time online using ReadSquared, which is the program that has been used in the last few years.

Paper reading logs will still be available for pick-up for those families who wish to use them. There will be weekly prize drawings and a big prize drawing for participating children this year. The prize at the end of the challenge is a paperback book. Programming will be completely virtual. All three departments began doing virtual programming in April.

Babies and toddlers will have 3-4 storytimes per week. They are all live on Zoom and are offered at different times of the day to accommodate family schedules. The session is recorded and the link is sent to the families who were registered.

Children ages 6-11 will have hands-on programs offered 3 times per week. There will be activities and crafts with audience participation. A list of craft materials will be provided for each program. Grab-n-Go craft supply bags will be available for pick-up at large branches. These sessions are not recorded.

Teen virtual events will include creative writing, cooking, art, book clubs, and crafts. Adult virtual events will include yoga, writing workshops, book clubs, and craft classes. The Reference staff made short tutorials on how to use Zoom to register and attend our programs. This year there will be family programs on Friday nights live on Zoom.

T. DiMaggio noted that this is consistent with what libraries across the country are doing this year for the Summer Reading Challenge.

B. Taylor asked for questions from the board and public comment. Dr. A. Morgan asked if the adult book clubs are operating virtually and whether or not they are incorporating this year's theme into the book clubs. T. DiMaggio confirmed that they are virtual, but they do not follow the theme. The members choose the titles each year. She noted one thing missing from this year is the Battle of the Books. It is a book club and quiz bowl style program for children. There has been talk of possibly moving that to the fall in the future.

Dr. A. Morgan commented that it would be fascinating to have an adult discussion group that reads essays from people who have studied folklore and mythology in detail and discusses its relationship to psychology, sociology, and politics.

S. Lister reported that there was no public comment via Facebook Live.

D. Fines

K. LaRocca reported that during the COVID-19 health emergency she suspended fines as the library was closed and patrons were unable to return materials. The library is open for curbside service and taking back materials, but the state is still under a phased opening approach and members of high-risk groups are encouraged to stay home. Kelly noted that the library may be moving back and forth between phases throughout the rest of the year. She said that she would like to minimize the manipulation of the circulation system of having to continually waive fines. Returned items are quarantined for 72 hours and those items stay on a patron's account during

that time. She would also like to minimize the exchange of money back and forth across the desk.

K. LaRocca proposes that after July 1st items would have regular due dates again, but fines would not be charged through the end of the year. Items are still due and patrons will still receive overdue reminders. If an item is long overdue the patron is charged the replacement cost of the item. If the item is returned, the replacement cost is automatically waived.

When the library is open again to the public, we will be able to accept payment for prints using the coin machine. It will be wiped down and sanitized between uses. Staff can count the money from the machine using gloves once per day. In past emergencies fax fees for patrons were waived, which helps the library better connect patrons with the government agencies that will require fax filing. The fax itself can be sent wearing gloves. K. LaRocca stated that she would like to waive fax fees through the end of the year. In order to accept these recommendations, there needs to be a motion and vote to waive fines and fax fees through the end of this year. Replacement costs and fees for printing and copies are current fees that would need no board revision.

B. Taylor asked for discussion from the board. M. Reneau asked if the books being quarantined for 72 hours are checked in immediately after being returned. K. LaRocca responded that they are not. They are checked in after 72 hours and no fines are currently being charged or accumulating. K. LaRocca explained that she is asking for that to be extended through the end of this year.

B. Taylor asked when the replacement cost gets charged to the patron's account. K. LaRocca said that it is set for 90 days, but that can be changed if needed. A. Shaw asked if this will be helpful in regards to the health of the staff. K. LaRocca said it is for both the staff and patrons. If patrons are home and are unable to leave, they will have time to bring their items back and not be charged fines. A. Shaw asked where the funds would come from in the budget to offset this change. K. LaRocca stated that the fines are around \$100,000 per year. The budget will be amended next month. There will be savings in several other lines such as janitorial, travel, and electricity. The funds can be redistributed to make up for the difference. K. LaRocca also reiterated that we would still be collecting fees for prints and copies, and overall this would make a difference for our staff and patrons.

B. Taylor asked for questions from the board and public comment. S. Lister reported that there was public comment via Facebook Live. A patron asked if there will be an opening for temporary jobs this year. K. LaRocca asked to save that question for the general public comment at the end of the meeting. M. Reneau asked if there had been any inquiries from the public

regarding fines. K. LaRocca said there has been concern from patrons after returning their materials and noticing that the items are still checked out to their account. Staff then explains that there are no fines being charged and that the materials are being quarantined for 72 hours.

B. Allin moved to approve the waiving of fines and fax fees through the end of 2020. It was seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

E. Ethics Reporting – Brent Geiger

B. Geiger reported that it is time for board members to file their annual Ethics Personal Financial Disclosure Statement. It is normally due on May 15th, but the due date is extended to June 8th. Brent asked if there were any questions. M. Reneau asked where she should send her forms. B. Geiger said the forms should be sent to the Louisiana Board of Ethics and that he will email her a link to that address. Dr. A. Morgan asked for clarification on whether or not the discussion was about the Ethics Financial Disclosure Statement or the yearly ethics training course. B. Geiger confirmed that they were discussing the Ethics Personal Financial Disclosure Statement.

B. Allin commented that he faxed his disclosure statement today. He said that he has faxed it in the past, then later received a notice of a fine due because his statement was not received. He asked for input from other board members. Dr. A. Morgan said that has happened to her before and she has since started sending hers in by mail with return-receipt. B. Taylor suggested filing it electronically via the Ethics Board website. They provide a receipt as confirmation that it was turned in.

There were no further questions or public comment.

F. Director's Report – Kelly LaRocca

K. LaRocca reported that the plumbing pipes outside of the Covington Branch leading to the city hook-up were replaced. The backflow preventer at the Slidell Branch is under construction. The parking lots at a few branches were re-striped during the closure.

The 2019 audit was conducted the week of March 16th. The auditor will be at a future meeting to present the audit and answer questions. Kelly stated that she was pleased to report that there were no findings, and it was a clean audit. The auditors were able to complete the audit efficiently due to Debbie Cuevas' organizational skills. She complimented her and the administrative staff for helping to make it go smoothly.

The library advertised via Facebook and the St. Tammany Farmer to promote the library's digital offerings, virtual events, the Summer Reading Challenge, and curbside pick-up. Kelly LaRocca, Jillian Boudreaux and JoAnna Reeves spoke on The Lake 94.7 morning radio show about the library's offerings and plans. Kelly LaRocca was interviewed about the library's Phase 1 reopening plans by Amy Bouton for the St. Tammany Parish Government's Channel 10. The Children's Services Department made 30 school and daycare visits in February.

Sue Ryan retired from her position as Slidell Branch Manager. Hilari Melerine is the new Slidell Branch Manager. Sonnet Ireland is the new South Slidell Branch Manager. Stephanie DeLisi is the new Causeway Branch Manager. Faye Prendergast retired from her position as Collection Development Manager. We are in the process of looking for her replacement. K. LaRocca responded to the earlier public comment question of whether or not the library will have temporary employment openings. She said that there may not be temporary positions available, but there would be part-time associate positions open once the library is fully operational again.

Eight staff members attended the Public Library Association Conference in February. Kelly LaRocca, Tanya DiMaggio, and Brent Geiger attended the Regional Director and Assistant Director's meetings in February and March. Kelly, Tanya, and Brent were also part of meetings with library directors and assistant directors during the course of the COVID-19 closure.

Due to the COVID-19 national health emergency, all library branches were closed on March 16th. Administration met with department heads and branch managers to set up a process for creating temporary library cards, troubleshooting online account problems, distributing new signs for branch doors, and discussing all the tasks that would need to be done during the closure. Starting on March 18th St. Tammany Parish residents could receive a temporary library card and instant access to downloadable offerings by completing an online form. The temporary cards are valid until July 1st, after which time patrons will need to show proof of parish residency to make the cards permanent. Patrons who needed account help could email acctproblems@stpl.us for assistance. The library increased the Hoopla, Overdrive, and Cloud Library limits.

While the library was closed, administration monitored guidance from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Louisiana Department of Health, and Parish Emergency Management. Administration participated in dozens of webinars on COVID-19 best practices and different models of patron service. Storytime and Genealogy programs were offered via Zoom.

Library administration worked to secure shipments of supplies needed for reopening. The library has a supply of gloves, cloth masks, sneeze guards, hand sanitizer, computer disinfecting wipes,

and cleaning supplies for wiping down hard surfaces. Signage and social distancing floor markers were also purchased.

On May 18th the library began contact-less pickup of materials at our 6 large branches. Materials can be returned through book drops. Items returned are quarantined for 72 hours. Exclusive curbside service will continue during Phase 1 of reopening. This will allow time to secure additional supplies and to remove and rearrange furniture and computers to meet the Fire Marshal's occupancy requirements. Small branches will reopen for curbside service when the library can ensure adequate numbers of staff and supplies. This is expected during Phase 2.

K. LaRocca asked if the board had any questions regarding the library's COVID-19 response.

B. Taylor asked if the delivery truck is running between branches. K. LaRocca confirmed that the delivery truck is running 4 days a week.

B. Taylor asked how the part-time and full-time staff are utilized during this phase. K. LaRocca explained that the staff is split into 3 teams that work on different days. This was done so that if a staff member gets COVID-19 only one team will have to be quarantined. The other 2 teams would then work alternate days. This would keep the branches adequately staffed without having to close an entire branch.

Dr. A. Morgan asked if there has been any coordination with the public schools and the library. She wondered if the schools have reached out to the library to help provide bibliographies and other resources related to students' current studies in school. K. LaRocca said that there has not been communication from the schools in regards to that. Kelly explained that the library has communicated that there is free Wi-Fi access available in each library parking lot for those without internet access. The library has also been promoting Tumblebooks, Overdrive, and Hoopla as a resource for students. The Reference Librarians are also providing reference help. Homework Louisiana is a database that is available for students as well.

Dr. A. Morgan commented that the curriculum developers at the schools should coordinate with the library during the pandemic while the children are out of school. She is concerned about the loss of literacy during this time. K. LaRocca said that with those thoughts in mind, the library started the Summer Reading Challenge early this year. The prize incentive encourages them to read and it creates an opportunity for literacy growth.

M. Reneau asked for an update on the property next to the Slidell Branch. K. LaRocca said that the brush was cleared. The next step is for the parish to choose an architect to draw up the plans. The process was delayed due to COVID-19, but it will be back in the works soon.

The Children's Services Department offered 98 programs with 1,022 children and 828 adult attendees in February. Children's Services had six Storytime Live events on Facebook and Zoom with 259 participants. The Teen Services Department offered 37 programs with 123 teen and 24 adult attendees in February. Teen Services offered eight Zoom events with 26 teen and 13 adult attendees. The Adult Programming Department offered 69 programs with 718 attendees in February. Adult Programming offered four Zoom programs with 37 attendees. The Reference Department has offered seven Zoom classes with 125 attendees. Nearly 60 people logged in to watch Jester Jim juggle during the Imagine Your Story Summer Reading Challenge Kick-off event on May 15th.

Staff has created more than 620 temporary library cards, and responded to 80 email requests for help with account problems during the closure. K. LaRocca referenced the statistics spreadsheets for February, March, April, and the year-to-date. She noted the statistics for virtual visits during the COVID-19 health emergency.

B. Taylor asked how the Administration and the Annex locations have circulation statistics. K. LaRocca stated that those are materials that staff checks out to themselves, their families, interlibrary loan items, and materials sent to Tech Services to be repaired. K. LaRocca said they are currently looking at ways to prevent counting in-repair items as statistics.

B. Taylor asked for questions and public comment. There was public comment from Bill McHugh. He asked if all the book drops are open at this time, and what hours is the Wi-Fi available. K. LaRocca answered that the book drops are only open at the large branches since they are open at this time for curbside pick-up. Wi-Fi is available between 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. at all 12 locations. B. McHugh asked if the 3 staff teams are at each open branch. K. LaRocca explained that they are at the location or working from home and on call.

K. LaRocca responded to the earlier question via Facebook Live. A patron asked when the library will reopen. Kelly said that the date in which the large branches will open for inside service will coincide with Phase 2 of the Governor's reopening. At that time, the small branches will reopen for curbside service.

There were no further questions or public comment.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. St. Tammany Parish Library Foundation Update

A. Shaw reported that the Foundation was able to hold its membership event in March at the Covington Branch. Members were able to take tours and see the newly renovated library. She thanked all of the staff that helped with the tours and the event. The Distinguished Speaker event that was scheduled for April has been postponed until September. They have had a virtual board meeting.

B. Friends of the Library Report

B. Allin commented that he has many books that he would like to donate. B. Geiger reported that the Friends have their new building, but the stay at home order has delayed their progress. They need to install shelving before they can begin accepting more donations. They will be working on this soon. B. Taylor reported that the Friends of the Slidell Library are taking donations through the Slidell Branch. They are looking forward to resuming their book sales.

4. Public Comment

Dr. A. Morgan made a suggestion for the library's Twitter account. She said that a member of the Foundation board began posting quotations from Walker Percy and other famous authors. She said that it has generated interest and is encouraging others to read. She suggests that the library begin posting similar quotes.

B. McHugh asked for clarification on how many days overdue an item has to be before a patron is charged the replacement cost. K. LaRocca clarified that right now it is 90 days. She said that 30 days was discussed, but might not be an adequate amount of time. They will review the procedure and determine what that will be, but at this time it is 90 days.

On behalf of the board, B. Taylor thanked the staff for their hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic. She is impressed at all of the creative ways the library has been serving the public. She feels that the library has met the challenge and is a shining light through this situation.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by M. Reneau and seconded by B. Allin. The motion carried.



Mary Reneau, Secretary