

St. Tammany Parish Library
Board of Control Meeting
February 8, 2022
1112 W. 21st Avenue
Covington, LA 70433
Zoom meeting streaming on Facebook Live
6:30 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: Dr. Argiro Morgan, Mary Reneau, Ann Shaw, Becky Taylor

Absent: Bill Allin, Carmen Butler

K. LaRocca stated that public comments can be made by calling 985-871-1219 extension 2007 or by commenting on the Facebook Live stream.

1. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Library Board of Control that was held on December 7, 2021.

There were no suggested corrections to the minutes. B. Taylor asked for a two-minute public comment period. There was no public comment. Dr. A. Morgan moved to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2021 meeting. It was seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent.

2. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Financial Reports – Year-End 2021

K. LaRocca explained that the year-end financial reports have not yet been adjusted by the auditor. The audit will be performed the week of March 14, 2022 and adjustments will be made at that time. We did not receive any ad valorem taxes after October 2021 and no state revenue sharing after June 2021. Once the auditor makes adjustments, revenues will be at 99.8%. The expenditures will be closer to 100% once the auditor adjusts the Library Salaries line. The check date of the final pay period of 2021 was January 5, 2022, but 9 out of 10 days fell in 2021. Those 9 days will be charged back to 2021.

Kelly gave an explanation for lines that were over or under budget. The Health Insurance Expense line is under budget due to open full-time positions. The Health Trust line is over budget due to medical procedures taking place this year that were previously delayed due to COVID. The Advertising and Signage lines are under budget because funds were left there in case of strategic planning and COVID-related advertising. Electricity costs have gone up, while natural gas usage has gone down. The Network Utility Software line is under budget due to not purchasing Microsoft Office 365 in 2021 as planned. It will be purchased in 2022 in order to receive the proper discounts.

The Pest Control and Termite Contract lines will be on target after the auditor's adjustments in March. The Consultants line is under budget due to the timing of starting the strategic planning process. The Security line is under budget due to not using security guards in 2021. The Bank Service Charge line is over budget due to ordering checks and paying the safe deposit box fees at the end of the year. The Conventions and Seminars line is under budget due to less in-person events during the pandemic. The Vehicles line is at 0% because the vehicle has not come in yet.

Kelly concluded that overall, 99% of the Capital Outlay-Library Resource Acquisitions funds were spent and she is proud of the librarians for their collection development efforts in 2021.

A. Shaw asked about the condition of the vehicle that is being replaced. Kelly explained that it is holding up well due to engine repairs that were made. The vehicle is not in terrible shape, it is just time to replace it according to the replacement cycle schedule. A. Shaw asked if we purchase vehicles through the Parish or on our own. Kelly explained that we use the state contract for purchasing vehicles. A. Shaw asked if local dealerships are used. Kelly explained that the state contract moves around depending on who has the best price. At this time, dealerships in Marrero and Breaux Bridge hold the state contract.

B. Taylor asked for a two-minute public comment period. A. Shaw asked if the bank can comp us for checks or if bills can be paid online to reduce the cost of checks. Kelly explained that we order checks from a separate vendor because of the security features needed on commercial checks. We require two signatures of administrators on each check as part of our dual approval process. We do pay some utilities electronically, but it would be a painstaking process to get the bank accounts of our vendors and approve each electronic transaction using dual-factor authentication.

M. Reneau moved to approve the Year End 2021 financial reports. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent.

B. 2022 Spring Budget Amendment

K. LaRocca reviewed the 2022 Spring Budget Amendment and gave explanations for all of the adjustments. The original budget was produced in July of 2021. The adjustments are based on how the library ended the 2021 fiscal year, the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and upcoming projects such as the Annex building replacement. The library will operate on revenue of \$12,023,600. An additional \$300,000 in ad valorem revenue is expected. We typically experience this amount of growth each year. The Donations line is increased due to more donating opportunities from our library support groups this year.

Retirement Contributions are reduced as our required contribution percentage is less for 2022. The Electricity line is increased to match usage for 2021 and the cost of electricity with having both the new and old Annex in use at the same time. The Software line is increased to upgrade our email to Office 365 and upgrade IT network security. The Physical Plant Maintenance line is increased to more closely match this year's maintenance plans. The estimated cost of movers for moving the Annex and IT to the new building has been added to the Movers line.

The Financial line is reduced to match last year's costs. The fluctuation in the line is related to how expensive the audit will be. The Library Property and Flood Insurance line is reduced to reflect last year's expenses. Lines under Operating Supplies are reduced due to lower costs and to match last year's usage.

The Improvement to Physical Plant line is increased to address higher costs due to the pandemic and Hurricane Ida. The Office Equipment, Furniture, and Shelving line is increased to allow modifying and adding to the Annex's furniture. The Music Recordings and Audio Recordings lines are reduced as more people are downloading music and audiobooks rather than the physical items. The Electronic/Downloadable Media line is increased to accommodate the demand for downloadable materials.

Kelly reviewed the library's savings. The savings are dedicated to the following: operational reserves needed to run the library prior to receiving the first millage from the Parish, disaster and emergency funds, and furniture at the Slidell, Causeway, Mandeville branches. The savings is also reserved for salaries for the last pay period of the year, invoices to-be-moved from 2022 to 2021, and 4th quarter 2021 retirement. Kelly noted that the cost of steel has increased, which will affect the cost of replacing Slidell's shelving. The total dedicated or reserved savings is \$5,264,808. The total unassigned savings is \$135,139. Kelly stated that there is an overall increase in revenue of \$333,200 and an increase in expenditures of \$335,350. The budget is balanced and each department was allocated the funds to enable their plans.

B. Taylor asked if shelving replacement is included in the Slidell Branch renovations. Kelly explained that Slidell will get the same type of refresh as Covington and will depend on input from the public and staff.

B. Taylor asked for a two-minute public comment period. There was no public comment. Becky read the budget amendment resolution aloud. Dr. A. Morgan moved to approve the 2022 Spring Budget Amendment. It was seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent. Motion carried.

C. Employee Handbook Update – Holiday Schedule

B. Geiger reported that Juneteenth became an official Federal, State, and Parish holiday in 2021. The library is asking the Board to approve adjusting the official holiday list in the Employee Handbook and to update the 2022 Holiday Schedule that was previously approved. Juneteenth is on June 19th, which falls on a Sunday this year. We would observe it on Monday, June 20th.

B. Taylor asked for a two-minute public comment period. There was no public comment. A. Shaw moved to approve adding Juneteenth to the holiday schedule and Employee Handbook holiday list. It was seconded by Dr. A. Morgan. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent.

D. Capital Projects Update

K. LaRocca reviewed several planned capital projects that will begin this year. Kelly referenced a spreadsheet that outlined the capital projects. The South Slidell Branch roof project will go out for quotes soon. Covington Branch exterior renovations will go out to bid this spring. The Mandeville Branch roof replacement is complete and will cost less than anticipated. Slidell Branch Parking and Expansion should begin in March. The new location for Technical Services, Maintenance, and I.T. was purchased on January 31, 2022. Kelly noted future projects that will require a millage renewal to complete. B. Taylor thanked Kelly for the useful and concise layout of the spreadsheet.

B. Taylor asked for a two-minute public comment period. There was no public comment.

E. Designation of Capital Funds – Annex Renovation

K. LaRocca reported that the Parish closed on the new Annex building at 68361 S. Commercial Way, Unit 3, Mandeville, LA 70471 on January 31, 2022. The final closing cost was \$501,191. The remaining \$198,809 will need to be designated for renovations in the capital plan. The renovation work will include: changes to the layout of downstairs offices for proper workflow,

adding an elevator to get materials to the 2nd floor, painting, and flooring. Based on rough estimates from our Maintenance Department, we have enough capital funding to cover the renovation costs. The Parish requires us to designate funds before an architect can be selected. Kelly has asked for an extension of the lease of the current Annex building, since it will take through the end of the year to complete the entire renovation and moving process.

B. Taylor asked for a two-minute public comment period. There was no public comment. A resolution is required to dedicate the funds. Becky read the resolution aloud. Dr. A. Morgan moved to approve the Designation of Capital Funds for the Annex Renovation. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent.

F. Designation of Capital Funds – Technology Upgrade – People Counters

T. DiMaggio reported on the technology upgrade for people counters. This project was first presented to the Board on July 28, 2020. The project was on hold due to the pandemic, and the library is now ready to proceed with the upgrade. Tanya explained that our current people counting system is antiquated and uses light beams and electromagnetic gates. The gates are 30 years old and are unreliable and expensive to maintain. The total number of people entering the library is calculated and recorded by hand.

The new system would be automated, touchless, and streamlined. It tracks both entry and exit numbers. It tracks useful data such as use by time of day, week, and month. It has the capability to compare branch-to-branch numbers and real-time occupancy information. The original cost estimate was \$36,051.46. The revised estimate is increased by 15% to account for inflation and is \$41,459.12. A total of \$42,000 should be sufficient to allocate to this project. The licensing fee is the only recurring cost, and the library's operations budget can absorb that fee going forward. M. Reneau asked what is the cost of the licensing fee. Tanya stated that it is estimated to be \$4,000 per year. It is for the software needed to read the data that the device has collected. The data can be remotely accessed from any location. B. Taylor noted that there will be three devices at the Slidell Branch due to the three entrance doors.

B. Taylor asked for a two-minute public comment period. Becky asked if there are multiple vendors available to choose from. Tanya confirmed that we will get three quotes. Dr. A. Morgan asked if the cost will increase again. Tanya explained that 15% was added to the original estimate plus a 10% contingency. M. Reneau asked if installation will interfere with patron usage. Tanya said that it can probably be installed before we open for the day and should not interfere with patrons entering the buildings.

A. Shaw asked if we are locked in at a certain price. Kelly explained the Parish can ask for pricing for a specified amount of time when they write the request for proposal. B. Taylor asked if the counters will be noticeable after they are installed. Tanya stated that they should blend in and will be unobtrusive. A. Shaw asked if other libraries are using this technology. Kelly explained that many libraries have people counters incorporated into their Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system.

A resolution is required to dedicate the funds. B. Taylor read the resolution aloud. M. Reneau moved to approve the Designation of Capital Funds for the People Counter Technology Upgrade. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent. Motion carried.

G. Re-introduction – Technology Update – Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)

T. DiMaggio reviewed the information about RFID that was previously presented to the Board on July 28, 2020. The RFID project is part of the capital plan and was put on hold due to the pandemic. Tanya summarized the function and purpose of RFID. Tags are inserted inside books and other circulating materials. The RFID circulation pads and checkout stations read the radio frequency from the tag. It functions as item identification, checks items in and out, and provides security. The system increases staff accuracy and efficiency. Tanya highlighted the benefits of RFID. Multiple items can be checked out at once without scanning each individual item. The flow of materials being checked in, out, and re-shelved is dramatically improved.

The task of shelf reading is improved because RFID helps ensure the integrity of the collection and aids in finding misplaced materials. It will free up staff time to help patrons one-on-one. For branches with the space for security gates, RFID combines inventory control and security in one system. It will provide a self-checkout option to help during peak hours, such as after storytime and programs. It provides less handling of materials during checkout, which reduces the exposure of pathogens on library materials. COVID-19 has brought an awareness of the need to reduce health risks.

T. DiMaggio referred to an updated cost estimate noting that it has increased by 15% from the original estimate. The total estimate is \$945,201.80. The original estimate included fewer staff stations. Library administration decided that a station is needed at each staff desk. The smart return was removed from the new estimate, as we do not have the space for one in any of our branches. That helped balance out the cost of adding the staff stations. Tanya explained that we would contract an outside company to perform the Retroconversion Project, which is the process of inserting tags into all library materials. It would be extremely time-consuming for staff to complete. An updated detailed report was also provided to the Board. No action of the Board is

required at this time. A request for the dedication of capital funds will be at a future meeting. B. Taylor noted that due to the cost of the project it will go out to bid.

B. Taylor asked for a two-minute public comment period. M. Reneau asked if research has been done to determine if this method works well in libraries. Tanya explained that many libraries have converted to RFID. Dr. A. Morgan recalled that during the building of the Madisonville Branch, one of the libraries that the Board researched for ideas was using RFID successfully. M. Reneau asked if there is any indication that RFID might cause a reduction in library staff due to the automated nature of the system. Tanya clarified that most of the RFID stations will be staff-operated. Each branch will have only one self-checkout station. The Slidell, Covington, and Mandeville branches will likely have two self-checkout stations due to the volume of patrons at those branches. Tanya stated that the majority of our patrons will want to check out and interact with the staff. The self-checkout will be an extra option for peak times with large crowds. Tanya assured the Board that the self-checkout station will not be replacing checkout at the circulation desk.

Kelly explained that the intention is not to reduce staff, but to reduce the pressure on staff during busy times. M. Reneau commented that she understands the efficiency of the system, but is concerned that in the future some staff will be reduced because the system is so efficient. Kelly explained that she understands the concern and assured the Board that the intent is to continue providing face-to-face interaction between staff and patrons. Kelly also noted that additional positions may develop following the strategic plan, which will provide even more opportunities for staff. B. Geiger explained that the circulation staff performs many other duties at the desk beyond just checking items in and out. We provide so many more services that require face-to-face interaction while helping patrons. There was no further public comment.

H. Director's Report

K. LaRocca reported that masks are still required for staff while at work, whether they are vaccinated or unvaccinated. The Slidell Branch closed early on January 31, 2022 due to lack of staff. Lee Road Branch got a new circulation desk and new shelves for behind the desk. The Parish closed on the new Annex building on January 31, 2022. Repairs were made to the Madisonville Branch restrooms. A garden sidewalk was added to Pearl River Branch. The South Slidell Branch has new touchscreen accessible computers for each workstation.

Staff attended training, webinars, Library Foundation meetings, symposiums, job fairs, Parish Council meetings, and various association meetings. Staff met with the St. Tammany Health System and Northshore Technical College to discuss future collaborations. Staff appeared on The Lake 94.7, The Highway 104.7, and STPG-TV. The following databases have been added to

our online database collection: Weston Woods Plus, Wall Street Journal, Ethnic Diversity Source, and Black Life in America.

Sonnet Ireland is the new Director of the Washington Parish Library System. Byron Holdiman is our new Genealogy Librarian. Stephanie DeLisi, Causeway Branch Manager, left the library to spend more time with family. We have advertised the branch manager positions. Ten new part-time staff have been hired.

Kelly referenced the 2021 Statistics. There were 888,708 total circulations, which includes both physical and virtual items. It is an increase of approximately 100,000 from 2020, which included 6 weeks of closure due to COVID-19. 64% of circulating items were physical and 36% were virtual. Kelly reviewed circulation by branch, door count, branch computer usage, programs and attendance. The Board was also provided with the December 2021 and January 2022 service statistics. A. Shaw commented that it is so exciting to see everything that the library is doing. B. Taylor agreed and stated that the staff is what makes up the library.

B. Taylor asked for a two-minute public comment period. There was no public comment.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. Strategic Planning Committee

K. LaRocca reported that strategic planning is underway. The committee held two working meetings on December 9th and January 11th to identify key stakeholders and to begin getting a list of community advisory committee members. Key Stakeholder interviews were conducted January 31st and February 1st. More are scheduled for later in February. Focus Group training has been scheduled for February 10th. The consultants are reviewing raw data from the surveys staff completed at the end of 2021. The consultants are working on the community and library statistical analysis. Carson Block and Susan Kent would like to schedule a time to meet with board members to speak about their vision for the library. Kelly and the Board discussed meeting time options. Dr. A. Morgan thanked Kelly and the staff for all of their work on the strategic plan. Kelly thanked the staff along with Brent and Tanya for their support in getting the project off the ground.

B. Rules and Regulations Committee

K. LaRocca reported that the committee held working meetings December 17th and 31st. The committee reviewed revised financial policies to ensure they were ready for review and sent

them to the District Attorney's Office. The committee will be meeting with Emily Couvillon via Zoom to discuss her comments on February 16, 2022.

C. St. Tammany Parish Library Foundation

A. Shaw reported that the Foundation meeting is tonight. Membership totals have netted over \$4,400. The Foundation is focused on the Distinguished Speaker event on March 24, 2022. They are very excited to have John Ed Bradley as the speaker this year.

D. Friends of the Library Report

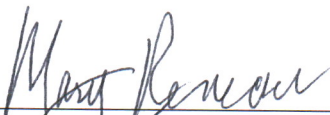
B. Taylor reported that the Slidell Friends will have a Second Saturday Special Sale this Saturday, February 12th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Slidell Branch. The theme is Newer Adult Fiction. On Saturday, February 19th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. they will have their once-year multi-media sale with DVDs, Blu-ray, music CDs, etc. There will be bundles of collectible Golden Books and \$1 per bag romance paperbacks.

4. Public Comment

M. Reneau asked if there is any way to tell how many people are watching the meeting via Facebook. Amy Bouton explained that we can see how many views the video gets and there were four people watching the meeting at that time. The video can be watched afterwards as well. Amy offered to include the analytics in future board meetings. M. Reneau asked how Donald Westmoreland is doing. Brent commented that Donald stopped by recently and is doing well. There was no further public comment.

5. Adjournment

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



Mary Reneau, Secretary