

St. Tammany Parish Library  
Board of Control Meeting  
September 27, 2022  
Causeway Branch Library  
3457 U.S. Hwy 190  
Mandeville, LA 70471  
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: Bill Allin, Ann Shaw, Rebecca Taylor, Susie Tosso  
Absent: Carmen Butler, Dr. Argiro Morgan, Mary Reneau

B. Taylor explained the public comment process. Anyone wishing to comment will need to complete and submit a public comment card. There will be a three-minute time limit for public comment.

1. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Library Board of Control that was held on August 23, 2022.

There were no suggested corrections to the minutes. There was no public comment. S. Tosso moved to approve the minutes of the August 23, 2022 board meeting. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

2. NEW BUSINESS

A. Financial Reports – August 2022

K. LaRocca reported that \$11,348,147.90 in ad valorem revenue was received this year. This is 99.16% of what was expected and budgeted for this year. State revenue sharing has also been received in full for the year. Kelly reviewed the revenues and expenditures. The budget percentage for this point in the year is 66.66%. Revenues are at 66.48% and expenditures are at 63.89%. The library has received more money in fines, fees, and interest income than budgeted.

The Library Salaries line is at 61.95% due to open positions. The Health Trust line is under budget but will even out through the end of the year as more deductibles and claims are paid.

The Bookbinding line is at 0% but will be paid once the bookbinding invoice is received. Postage is over budget due to filling both postage meters and mailing board packets. This line will be adjusted in the October budget amendment. The Vehicle Lease Expense line is at 0% because we have not had to lease a vehicle this year.

Some of the Maintenance of Property and Equipment lines are at 90% because they are paid for early in the year. Some of the Maintenance of Services lines are below budget but will be expended at the end of the year. The Movers line is at 0% due to the Technical Services department moving in 2023 instead of 2022. The Office Supplies line is at 78% due to the rising costs of supplies, notably paper. The Improvement to Physical Plant line is under budget but will be expended through the end of the year. The Juvenile Books line is under budget because the children's books are purchased later in the year after summer reading wraps up.

B. Allin asked about the Interest Income line being over budget. Kelly explained that interest rates are much higher than anticipated and the line will be adjusted in the October amendment.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment. B. Allin moved to approve the August 2022 financial reports. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

#### B. Health Insurance Update – Leon Golemi

Benefit consultant Leon Golemi gave a yearly update on the UMR group health plan. There are no changes to the health plan benefits for 2023. Leon referenced the 2022-2023 Medical Benefits Summary that was included in the board packets. UMR has partnered with Ochsner Health System to offer benefits at lower costs to the employee by utilizing Ochsner facilities. B. Allin asked about the UHC Network column on the summary. Leon clarified that the UHC Network is our current regular benefit, which pays 85% of certain medical services. Using Ochsner facilities offers an enhanced benefit, which pays 100%. Leon mentioned that the Teledoc feature is being well-utilized for both general medicine and behavioral health purposes. Leon reviewed and highlighted the medical and pharmacy claims reports.

Leon stated that it is time to review our reinsurance carrier and the board will need to vote on the carrier options presented. The carriers are American National, US Fire, and Companion Life. Companion Life is the most cost-effective out of the three comparisons presented. Leon recommends Companion Life as the reinsurance carrier for 2023. Leon reviewed a Group Health Plan Market Analysis comparing the STPL Health Plan with other plans. The STPL Health Plan continues to be the better option.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment. S. Tosso moved to accept the recommendation of Companion Life as reinsurance carrier for 2023. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

C. 2021 Audit Report – John Murray, CPA, CGFM LaPorte

J. Murray reviewed the 2021 Audit Report. It is the auditor's opinion that the accompanying financial statements present fairly in all material respects the respective financial position of the governmental activities and each major fund of the library as of December 31, 2021. Respective changes in financial position for the year ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Mr. Murray noted a correction of error relating to an understatement of prepaid expenses and an overstatement of capital assets. The auditor's opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

J. Murray reviewed the following financial statements: Statement of Net Position, Statement of Activities, Governmental Fund balance sheet, Statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balance, and budgetary comparison schedule. J. Murray reported that there were no deficiencies in internal controls found and no instances of non-compliance.

In the Agreed-Upon Procedures Report, there was an exception noted in reviewing the inventory of capital assets. Four computers were missing inventory asset tag stickers. The library responded that the tags were missed during the manual migration into the new inventory system that was implemented in the spring of 2021. The library will place asset tags on the computers and link them to the inventory system. No other exceptions were identified in the performance of these procedures.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment. B. Allin moved to approve the 2021 Audit Report. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

D. RFP for Classification and Compensation Study – Introduction

B. Geiger reviewed the draft of an RFP (Request for Proposal) for a classification and compensation study. The purpose is to have a company evaluate job descriptions to see what changes need to be made to better represent staff duties. The compensation study would entail comparing the salaries of other library systems, local government, and some private companies. The current range and step scale would be evaluated to see if each employee is in the correct range and if their compensation schedule is appropriate for their job duties. We used the format from the RFP for the strategic planning consultant and updated it based on our current

procurement policy. The RFP is being introduced at this meeting with potential approval at the October board meeting. The RFP will be sent for legal review before the Board is asked for approval. B. Taylor asked how long it has been since the library has gone through this process. B. Geiger said that in 2010 a human resources consultant evaluated each employee file, but this will be the first time a study like this is performed.

B. Allin commented that we need to be realistic regarding the salaries. B. Geiger agreed and stated that is why the library is seeking a consultant to perform the study and present the data. S. Tosso asked if this will be put out for bid soon. B. Geiger explained that it is only being introduced at the present meeting and will possibly be up for approval at the October board meeting. B. Allin asked if there will be a selection committee and how will it be structured. K. LaRocca explained that staff will grade the proposals and they will be brought to the Board for approval. The Board will select the consultant. B. Geiger clarified that part of the proposal is that the company will have to present its findings to the Board. The following evaluation criteria will be graded on a point scale: Compliance with the RFP, responsiveness to and understanding of the scope of work, quality of work plan, methodology, overall approach to complete the scope of work, ability to perform within the stated timeframe, qualifications, cost, and proposal quality. B. Allin stated concerns about staff grading the proposals and that we have to be careful about fairness in the process to avoid a *fait accompli*.

A. Shaw asked if there is a potential budget in mind. K. LaRocca stated that the City of Mandeville conducted a study recently and it was approximately \$80,000. They did not put out an RFP, as it was considered a professional service. We will look at the Parish's point scale and we will also give our RFP to legal counsel for review. B. Allin asked if our RFP should be in sync with the Parish's recent RFP. Kelly explained that the Parish is asking for certain positions to be compared to the private sector outside of Parish government and we are asking for a comparison to other library systems. The RFPs are asking for two very different comparisons, as we could never compete with the private sector.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was public comment from Donna Bonnoitt. She stated that the previous board meeting included information from a consultant comparing library staff salaries from surrounding parishes and asked why another consultant is needed. B. Geiger clarified that no consultants were used to gather the figures from the previous meeting. The information was collected by library administration. D. Bonnoitt asked how much the library spends per year on consulting fees. K. LaRocca stated that the library has spent \$47,594.07 on consulting fees this year for strategic planning. K. LaRocca clarified that is not what is typically spent per year, but it is part of what has been budgeted this year for the strategic planning process. D. Bonnoitt stated that she thinks some things need to be put on the back burner until

the economy changes. She stated that she does not know if any more money can be drained from taxpayers.

#### E. Director's Report

K. LaRocca reported that the Slidell Branch's new parking lot is open. The Lacombe Branch received new carpet, furniture, and paint. Library Administration met with KVS Architects & Associates, the architect for the new Technical Services building, to draw up plans for the renovation. Construction is expected to be underway by the end of December. The current Technical Services building on Hwy. 36 has sold. The new owner is willing to extend the lease on the building until April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Carson Block Consultants met with the Community Advisory Committee and the Directors for a strategy session to gather input to update the mission and vision statements as part of the Strategic Plan process.

Staff offered outreach to Chahta-Ima Elementary School, Pontchartrain Elementary School, Kidz Klubhouse, and COAST. Amy Bouton gave interviews to The Lake 94.7 radio station. Amy Bouton, Jennifer Rifino, and Susan Badon filmed the Check it Out TV show. Librarians taught multiple technology classes at the Council on Aging Activity Centers in Slidell and Pearl River. Staff and librarians attended committee meetings, webinars, and library conferences. Melanie Sharp has retired after 36 years of service to the library. Ellen John joined Administration as Reference Coordinator. Five new part-timers were hired in September. Website statistics show 69,520 sessions and 39,692 users visited the website. New visitors comprised 53.11% of these sessions. Kelly referenced the August 2022 and year-to-date service statistics.

### 3. OLD BUSINESS

#### A. Strategic Planning Committee

K. LaRocca reported that Library Administration received a complete data collection and community engagement report and will meet with the consultants over Zoom to review the report on October 4<sup>th</sup>. The full report will then be distributed to the community advisory committee and the Library Board of Control. Library Administration, staff, and the Community Advisory Committee participated in an update on strategic planning and a visioning and mission statement word exercise. The Library Board will participate in their visioning and mission statement session on Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## B. Rules and Regulations Committee

K. LaRocca reported that the committee met on September 15<sup>th</sup> at the Causeway Branch to discuss reviewing and updating Chapter 4 – Collection Management. Copies of sample policies and resources such as the *Intellectual Freedom Manual* and the *Weeding Manual* were distributed. The committee discussed typical features of collection development and collection management policies. Sample policies were chosen based on libraries we typically benchmark against and recommendations from the *Weeding Manual*. The committee will review sample policies and documents such as the Freedom to Read statement, the Library Bill of Rights, and the Code of Professional Ethics found in the Employee Manual. The next meeting is October 12<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. at the Causeway Branch.

## C. St. Tammany Parish Library Foundation

A. Shaw reported that the committee for the Distinguished Speaker Event believes they may have a speaker for next year's event. The Foundation's membership drive begins in mid-October.

## D. Friends of the Library Report

There were no reports from the Friends of the Library.

## 4. Public Comment

There was public comment from Connie Phillips. She read excerpts from the book *Sex: A Book For Teens* by Nikol Hasler. She spoke about her concerns with the content of the book, citing descriptions of various sexual acts and terms. She stated that the book is not appropriate for teens or children.

There was public comment from Jeannene Kogler. She stated that the library is responsible for how taxpayers' money is spent on library materials. She asked if library staff and the Board are aware of the content of the books in the library. She asked who is responsible for ordering and examining the books.

There was public comment from Diane Bruni. She spoke about the book *I Am Jazz* by Jazz Jennings and Jessica Herthel and submitted a Statement of Concern. She stated that books like this are propaganda promoted by the authors to push an agenda. She stated that teaching children about gender dysphoria is aimed at corrupting children at an early age.

There was public comment from Johanna Miner. She spoke about the book *Frankie & Bug* by Gayle Forman and submitted a Statement of Concern. She stated that the book seemed to have a good storyline until page 192 where being gay is mentioned. She stated that Frankie is a girl who wants to be a boy and that children are too young to comprehend these kinds of ideas.

There was discussion about the Statement of Concern submission process. It was clarified that a Statement of Concern can be submitted at any time, not just during a board meeting. J. Miner commented that there were four police officers and a reporter at the July 2022 board meeting and that the meeting was packed with gay people. She asked why have police officers and reporters not attended any other meetings. B. Geiger explained that we were not sure how many people to expect at the July meeting and asked for one police detail from the Madisonville Police Department. J. Miner asked why there was a reporter at the July meeting. B. Allin stated that the press attends board meetings periodically. J. Miner stated that she will ask for a reporter to attend the next meeting.

There was public comment from Tina Register. She asked how many books have been pulled after a Statement of Concern has been submitted. B. Taylor explained that there is a procedure that is followed when a Statement of Concern is submitted. A committee is formed, committee members read the item in question, and the committee meets to discuss the item and Statement of Concern. A decision is made and the patron is notified in writing of the decision. T. Register asked if any books have been removed after following this process. K. LaRocca answered that in the past the library has moved books and catalogued them in different sections of the library, but has not removed a book from the collection. T. Register questioned how the previously mentioned book *Sex: A Book for Teens* could not qualify for immediate removal from the library. She stated that one should not have to follow a procedure to remove that item. K. LaRocca repeated the review process as previously explained by B. Taylor. She added that if a patron is not satisfied with the committee's decision, they can appeal to the Library Board of Control who will then render a decision.

There was public comment from Donna Bonnoitt. She stated that she represents a group of concerned parents and grandparents. She asked for taxpayers to be involved in approving the displays, collection materials, and the Statement of Concern process. She asked why there are only three librarians responsible for buying books and stated that it is censorship. She questioned whether or not the people who attended the July 2022 board meeting are actually residents of St. Tammany Parish. She asked for photo identification to be part of the process to speak. She asked for the removal of all sexually explicit materials in the children and teen sections of the library. She stated that the library's goal is to promote reading and literacy, not a Marxist agenda. She stated that the library should not be used to sexualize minors, which is a criminal activity. D.

Bonnoitt referred to handouts that she gave to the Board and asked for her concerns to be addressed.

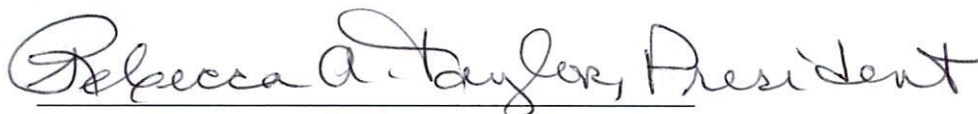
There was public comment from Anita Gamble. She stated that she believes libraries should be a place of knowledge and free speech. She stated that parents should discuss inappropriate books with their children rather than the library restricting and banning books. She stated that children are going to find ways to learn about things and we should help them with that rather than restrict information.

There was public comment from Roxanne Newman. She showed her driver's license and stated that she is a resident of St. Tammany Parish and did attend the July 2022 board meeting. She stated that she has a young adult daughter who is gay. She stated her daughter was born that way and did not learn to be gay from reading books in the library. She stated that it is important for children to see themselves reflected in popular culture. She spoke of the high suicide rate of young LGBTQ people. She expressed that a parent has every right to prevent their own child from checking out materials, but others should not be prevented from accessing the materials. She thanked the library staff and librarians.

There was public comment from Patricia Walsh. She stated that she is against banning books. She stated that access to books giving different perspectives is the whole point of the library. She stated that citizens should not be on committees analyzing books because everyone is different. She stated that children are learning about many topics on the internet on their own and feels that using a book to teach children about certain topics is a better approach.

#### 5. Adjournment

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



Mary Reneau, Secretary