

St. Tammany Parish Library
Board of Control Meeting
August 23, 2022
South Slidell Library
3901 Pontchartrain Dr.
Slidell, LA 70458
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: Carmen Butler, Mary Reneau, Ann Shaw, Becky Taylor, Susie Tosso

Absent: Bill Allin, Dr. Argiro Morgan

B. Taylor introduced the new board member, Susie Tosso. She represents the rural area of St. Tammany Parish. The Board looks forward to working with Susie.

B. Taylor explained the public comment process. Anyone wishing to comment should complete and turn in a 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 July 26, 2022.

B. Taylor noted a typo in the last paragraph on page two. Roof replacement should be two words. There were no other corrections to the minutes. A. Shaw moved to approve the minutes with the stated correction. It was seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent. Motion carried.

2. NEW BUSINESS

A. Financial Reports – July 2022

K. LaRocca reported that \$175,230.77 in ad valorem revenue was received in July. Total ad valorem revenue received this year is \$11,348,147.90. All state revenue sharing has been received for the year. Interest Income is more than budgeted due to higher interest rates. The budget percentage should be at 58.33% at this point in the year. Revenues are at 58.2% and expenditures are at 54.62%.

The Health Trust line is at 48% due to staff utilizing their health insurance later in the year after deductibles are met. The Workers Compensation line is at 100% and spending is complete for the year. The Book Binding line is at 0%, but we plan to send an order to the bindery later this year. Vehicle Lease Expense is at 0% because we hold those funds in case the book delivery truck breaks down. The Fuel and Lube line is still over budget due to the cost of fuel.

The Juvenile Programming line is under budget and will be expended during the remainder of the year. The Improvement to Physical Plant line is under budget because improvements to library branches will be completed in the fall. The Office Equipment, Furniture, and Shelving line is under budget, but installation of the new furniture at Lacombe is upcoming and will be paid in the fall. Under Capital Expenditures, the Cameras line is at 0% because the cameras for the new Annex building have not yet been installed.

M. Reneau asked if funds are included in the budget for the garden at the Slidell Branch due to the expansion. Kelly said that funds are included in the money to renovate the library. Kelly explained that we can also designate funds in our operational budget to move the gardens before the construction. That is not included in the 2023 budget but would be up for Board consideration for the 2024 budget.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. Diane Bruni asked if the Board receives a salary. B. Taylor replied that board members are volunteers and are appointed by the Parish Council or Parish President.

M. Reneau moved to approve the July 2022 Financial Reports. It was seconded by S. Tosso. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent. Motion carried.

B. Presentation of the 2023 Budget

K. LaRocca explained the new color-coded budget spreadsheet. As required by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor, the spreadsheet now displays the previous three year's budget, the current year's original budget, the last adopted amendment, year-to-date actual, projected spending, percentage change between the last adopted amendment and the projected actual amounts at the end of the year, and the proposed budget for next year.

K. LaRocca presented the 2023 budget. Expected revenue numbers were provided by the Assessor's Office and the St. Tammany Parish Department of Finance. The figures are estimates and the revenue is budgeted conservatively. Expected expenditures are based on the three previous years. Budget discussions about the upcoming year were held with each library department. Kelly stated that the library will operate on a revenue of \$11,980,478. The primary

source (97%) of the library's 2023 income is a 5.78 mill property tax millage. That is 4.91 mills for operations and .87 mills for capital improvements to library buildings. The remaining 3% of the library's income comes from state revenue sharing, fines and fees, interest, and donations. Overall, there is an increase of \$152,800 in revenue due to average growth in ad valorem taxes. Kelly highlighted each section of the proposed budget with explanations.

There is enough funding in the Library Salaries line to cover a 1.5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and merit raises for 2023. In approving the 2023 budget, the Board will also approve these raises. There is also flexibility to allow the Director to create a new position or add hours if needed. The Health Trust line has been adjusted upward to account for more usage of health insurance benefits as pandemic conditions improve and the possibility of more staff positions being filled.

The Patron Cards line is increased, as we will need to purchase library cards in 2023. All utilities are being increased to match projections through the end of this year. The cost of leases should be stable in 2023. The Physical Plant Maintenance line is increased to add regular window washing, power washing parking lots, and sidewalk cleaning. The Web Design Consultant line is increased to cover further development of apps. The Office Supplies line is increased as supply costs have increased. Public Relations and Programming lines have been kept stable for 2023.

Funding for a vehicle purchase has been added to cover the cost of a forklift for the new Annex building and a replacement of one vehicle for 2023. Kelly referenced the Savings spreadsheet, noting the total dedicated or reserved Savings will be \$5,270,090. The total Unassigned Savings is \$591,533. This leaves the library in a good position to have funding for any special projects identified during strategic planning.

B. Taylor asked where the proposed budget was available for public inspection. Kelly stated that it was available at the circulation desk at each library branch, as well as at the Administrative Office. It was advertised in the legal notices section of the St. Tammany Farmer for three consecutive weeks prior to the board meeting. A. Shaw asked about the percentage of the merit raises and the cost-of-living raise. Kelly explained that merit raises are anywhere between 1.5% to 3%. The cost-of-living raise is 1.5%. A. Shaw asked if we follow the Parish for those guidelines. Kelly explained that those percentages are standard for the library based on our funding and budget. There are plans to have a consultant evaluate the library's salaries in the near future. B. Taylor asked if merit raises are automatic or given after an evaluation. Kelly confirmed that they are given after a yearly evaluation. M. Reneau asked if we have been receiving a consistent cost-of-living raise. Kelly stated that the most recent COLA was in 2020 and the previous one was 10 years earlier in 2010. M. Reneau commented that 1.5% is not a lot of money.

M. Reneau moved to open the public hearing on the 2023 Budget. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent. Motion carried. The hearing was opened. B. Taylor asked for public comment on the 2023 Budget. There was no public comment.

M. Reneau moved to close the public hearing on the 2023 Budget. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent. Motion carried. The hearing was closed.

K. LaRocca read the budget resolution aloud. A. Shaw moved to adopt the 2023 Budget. It was seconded by C. Butler. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent. Motion carried.

C. Summer Reading Wrap-Up

The Board viewed the Summer Reading Wrap-Up video produced by Benny Bruce. Jenny Mayer, Children's Programming Coordinator, reviewed the children's summer reading statistics and highlighted some of the children's events. There were 3,947 children registered and 380 children's programs. Jenny is pleased that the numbers continue to increase towards pre-pandemic levels. Jennifer Rifino, Teen Services Coordinator, reviewed the teen summer reading statistics and highlighted some of the teen events. Jennifer is very happy with the teen statistics this year and noted that every teen program was filled and had waiting lists. Jennifer complimented the 53 teen volunteers who completed 953 service hours. Jillian Boudreaux, Adult Programming Coordinator, reviewed the adult summer reading statistics and highlighted some of the adult programs. Jillian reported that 1,028 adults registered, which is almost double last year's number. There were 110 well-attended adult programs. Jillian was happy to see so many adults attending in-person summer programs again. B. Taylor and A. Shaw commented how fun the summer seemed to be for the staff, volunteers, and patrons and thanked the staff for their efforts. B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

D. Cost of Living Adjustments 2022 & 2023

K. LaRocca reported that library administration is working on a Request for Proposal (RFP) to seek a consulting firm to review the current compensation and classification of library employees and compare how we compare to area employers. In the meantime, there is room in this year's budget for a 1.5% cost-of-living adjustment. The adjustment for this year would include adjustments for starting pay for associates and librarians. The increase in starting pay will help in catching up with salary competition from the outside. The starting pay for an associate in 2022 would go from \$10.97 to \$11.13. The starting pay for a librarian would go from \$19.23 to \$19.52.

A 1.5% cost-of-living adjustment for next year was presented earlier in the meeting and was approved by the Board as part of the 2023 Budget. We are requesting that the adjustment should also be made to starting salaries. In 2023, this would make an associate's starting pay go from \$11.13 to \$11.30 and a librarian's starting pay go from \$19.52 to \$19.81. A vote of the Library Board is required to approve both the 2022 COLA and the changes in starting pay for both 2022 and 2023. Kelly provided the Board with examples of starting pay for similar neighboring library systems in our region and starting pay for local government's lowest paying positions.

B. Taylor asked when the 1.5% COLA for 2022 would start if approved at the meeting. Kelly said it will go into effect on the next paycheck. A. Shaw asked how our salaries compare to the school system. Kelly said that the school system's starting salary is higher than our librarian's salary. A. Shaw asked how many people have left the library this year for better-paying jobs elsewhere. B. Geiger stated that over the last 2-3 years we have lost approximately 10 librarians and 25 associates. C. Butler asked how many openings are there currently. Brent answered there are two department heads, two librarians, two full-time associates, and about 7 part-time positions. C. Butler stated that we must keep salary comparable to keep consistency in the library. A. Shaw mentioned the effect it has on morale to lose co-workers.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment. C. Butler moved to approve the 2022 Cost-of-living Adjustment. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent. Motion carried.

M. Reneau moved to approve the increase in starting pay for 2022 and 2023. It was seconded by S. Tosso. All were in favor, none were opposed, and two were absent. Motion carried.

E. Director's Report

K. LaRocca reported that the Slidell Branch parking lot is about 14-21 days away from completion. New gutters were installed at the Folsom Branch. The St. Tammany Parish Government Department of Engineering will facilitate projects moving forward, instead of the Facilities Department. The Back-to-School Bash at the Slidell Branch was a success. Library Card sign-up month is coming up in September. The library will participate in Food For Fines, where one non-perishable food item waives \$1 in fines. The Lacombe Branch will be closed next week for new carpet, paint, and furniture installation.

M. Reneau asked how the Lacombe patrons will check out items during the closure. B. Geiger explained that they have been publicizing the upcoming closure to be sure patrons know that it will be happening. The closest branches that patrons can utilize during the closure are the Mandeville or Slidell Branches. Brent explained that the branch is too small to complete the

renovations while open to the public. The Folsom and Pearl River branches were previously renovated in this same way. Kelly thanked the Friends of the Slidell Library for sponsoring the new circulation desk at Lacombe. Librarians offered outreach to the Bush Community Center and Little Feet First Daycare. Librarians were guests on the Check it Out TV Show and interviewed with The Lake 94.7 and the Highway 104.9. Brad Westmoreland has retired after 23 years of service. Staff attended meetings, webinars, and professional development courses. The website statistics show 65,521 sessions and 39,894 users visited the website from July 18th to August 17th. Kelly referenced the corrected June statistics as well as the July and year-to-date statistics.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. Rules & Regulations Committee Update

K. LaRocca reported that the committee met on August 15th at the Causeway Branch to discuss the logistics of reviewing and updating Chapter 4 – Collection Management. They will be collecting policies from other libraries for review. The next meeting is scheduled for September 15th at the Causeway Branch.

B. Strategic Planning Committee Update

K. LaRocca reported that the consultants recently presented a preview of the results of the information collection efforts and community engagement for Library Administration, the Library Board, and the Strategic Planning Committee's review. Administration has begun to review the draft of the full report of data collection. The next step is a visioning workshop for staff, the Community Advisory Committee, and the Library Board. The consultants will visit in person for the Board's session and have suggested Saturday, October 22, 2022 as the ideal date.

C. St. Tammany Parish Library Foundation Update

A. Shaw reported that the totals from the Distinguished Speaker Event have been calculated. The total gross was \$33,680 and the net was \$26,020.22. It was the highest amount the Foundation has received from a Distinguished Speaker Event. The Foundation President has requested a wish list of needs from the library.

D. Friends of the Library Report

There was no report from the Friends of the Library.

4. Public Comment

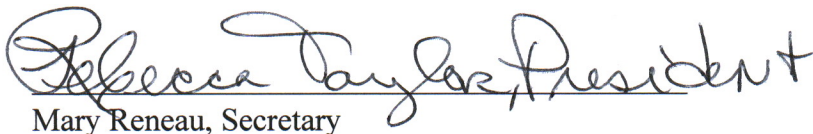
There was public comment from Donna Bonnoitt. Ms. Bonnoitt stated there is a need for transparency and accountability to the residents of St. Tammany Parish. She stated that the library receives 5.78 mills of property tax and is the 6th highest property tax recipient. She stated that the Pride displays in June were not vetted with the public and that a schedule of possible displays should be provided to the public for approval. She stated that the public should be provided a list of all collection materials being considered for purchase for public approval prior to purchasing. She stated that people who offer public comment at board meetings should show proof that they are citizens and taxpayers of St. Tammany Parish.

There was public comment from Johanna Miner. Ms. Miner submitted a Statement of Concern about the book *Julian is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love and spoke of her concerns. She stated that the book has no page numbers, the child in the book removes his clothes several times, and his grandmother promotes his attraction to mermaids. She stated the book should not be available to children and should be removed from the library.

There was public comment from Diane Bruni. Ms. Bruni submitted a Statement of Concern about the book *My Rainbow* by DeShanna Neal and Trinity Neal. She spoke about the content of the book. She stated that the girl in the book was transgender. She stated that we should be careful of what we make children aware of. She said the book uses terminology beyond a child's understanding, such as cisgender and transgender. She asked the Board to have a conscience and hold accountable whomever is responsible for bringing books like that into the library system. She stated that children should not be made to carry the burden of understanding topics like that.

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