

St. Tammany Parish Library
Board of Control Meeting
October 25, 2022
Slidell Library
555 Robert Blvd.
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, Ann Shaw, Becky Taylor, Susie Tosso
Absent: Bill Allin, Dr. Argiro Morgan, Mary Reneau

B. Taylor explained the public comment process. Anyone wishing to comment will need to complete a public comment card. There will be a three-minute time limit for public comment. She asked for people to silence their cell phones, be considerate of their neighbor, and do not interrupt the library reports. The library will not engage in discussion at the board meeting. If someone has a question during public comment, the question will be noted and the board will attempt to answer the question at the end of the public comment period. B. Taylor noted there is a period for general public comment at the end of the agenda. B. Taylor asked for the public to speak into the microphone during public comment, as the audio is being recorded for the purpose of typing the minutes of the meeting.

1. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Library Board of Control that was held on September 27, 2022.

There were no suggested corrections to the minutes. S. Tosso moved to approve the minutes of the September 27, 2022 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 – September 2022

K. LaRocca reported that the library has received 99% of expected ad valorem revenue and 100% of state revenue sharing for the year. The budget percentage for this point in the year is 75%. Revenues are at 74.76% and Expenditures are at 71.47%. K. LaRocca explained that we

have received more revenue than expected in fines and fees due to patron printing returning to pre-pandemic levels. Interest Income is higher because interest rates have increased. Donations are expected to be received from the Friends of the Library later this year. K. LaRocca reviewed the expenditures and explained any lines that are over or under budget. Lines that are off balance will be amended later during the budget amendment. K. LaRocca referenced the Capital Fund Report from the Parish and the Capital Projects spreadsheet. All of the projects that the Board has approved are on the reports. A. Shaw asked if cameras were installed in the new Slidell Branch parking lot. K. LaRocca explained that we were able to redirect some of the cameras on the side of the building facing the parking lot.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was public comment from A.G. Crowe. He asked what percentage of the budget comes from taxpayers at the local and state level. K. LaRocca stated 97% of our budget comes from local ad valorem taxes and state revenue sharing. State revenue sharing is calculated using a formula that gives reimbursement to parishes who have homestead exemption. Those are local taxes, not state tax dollars. The remaining 3% is from fines, fees, donations, and interest income.

C. Butler moved to approve the September 2022 Financial Reports. It was seconded by S. Tosso. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

B. 2022 Fall Budget Amendment

K. LaRocca reviewed the 2022 Fall Budget Amendment. She reported that there is an overall increase in revenue of \$38,967. She reported that increases and decreases in individual expenditure lines are due to the budget performance during the first three quarters of 2022, continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the new Annex building renovation being shifted to 2023. K. LaRocca referred to the budget amendment narrative and spreadsheets and gave explanations for increases and decreases in budget lines.

Any unused money at the end of the year becomes Prior Years' Operating Revenue. The projected fund balance for December 31, 2022 is \$5,504,878. This figure is half of one year's worth of operating revenue and are dedicated to the following purposes: Operational reserves for running the library until we receive our first significant portion of our millage from the Parish, disaster and emergency funds, 4th quarter 2022 payment for retirement, and dedications for Causeway, Mandeville, and Slidell furniture projects. The auditor will move charges initiated in 2022 but are paid in 2023 to the year in which they were incurred. Additionally, the last payroll period of the year falls in 2022 and 2023. The auditor will move some of the cost to 2022. This leaves an unassigned savings of \$197,416. K. LaRocca noted that the funds for a Compensation and Classification consultant that was discussed at the previous meeting would come from these savings.

An increase in revenue of \$38,967 is forecasted, due primarily to more print fees collected and higher interest rates. The amendment shows a decrease in expenditures of \$65,904 due to the Annex move occurring in 2023 and open positions throughout the year. The budget is balanced and leaves \$ 104,931 of revenue unbudgeted. Each department was allocated the funds to enable their plans for the 2022 fiscal year. K. LaRocca is confident that the library has adequate funds to meet its goals.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. A.G. Crowe asked if the library receives revenue from the American Library Association directly or through the Louisiana Library Association. K. LaRocca answered that we do not. He asked if we receive any grants, funds, or income from those sources. K. LaRocca replied that we have not received any grants from those associations this year.

T. DiMaggio read the resolution to amend the budget aloud. S. Tosso moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2022 Operational Budget Fall Amendment Adoption Resolution. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

C. Extension of the Annex Hwy 36 Lease (Old Annex)

K. LaRocca reported that the current lease for the Annex building, which houses the Technical Services and Maintenance departments, expires on December 31, 2022. The new building should be under construction starting in December 2022. We have the opportunity to extend the lease until April 30, 2023 at the current rate of \$3,000 per month.

A. Shaw asked if the new Annex building is where we will be moving furniture upstairs and installing the elevator. K. LaRocca clarified that we are able to furnish the upstairs now, but the downstairs needs to be renovated to suit the Technical Services department's workflow needs. K. LaRocca explained that the elevator will be a separate project.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment. A. Shaw moved to approve the addendum to extend the Annex Hwy 36 Lease. It was seconded by C. Butler. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

D. Designation of Capital Funds – Elevator for New Annex Building

K. LaRocca reported that the new Annex building will need an elevator to ease the moving of I.T. and Public Relations equipment up and down between the first and second floors. This will also provide overall ADA accessibility for the building. This will be a separate project on the Capital Budget. The cost of the elevator is \$165,048. K. LaRocca noted that we do have the funds to cover this cost, as previously presented in the financial reports. The Board will need to

vote to include this in the capital projects list. The cost estimate from the Parish Engineering Office and a sample resolution is presented for the Board's consideration. A. Shaw asked if it will be an industrial elevator. K. LaRocca stated that it is meant to carry both people and the load of heavy equipment. T. DiMaggio read the resolution aloud. B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

C. Butler moved to approve the resolution to designate capital funds for the Technical Services and Maintenance building elevator. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

E. 2023 Holiday Schedule

B. Geiger presented the proposed 2023 holiday schedule for the Board's consideration. The day before Christmas is a Sunday. The Employee Handbook's designated holiday is exchanged for Veterans Day. The schedule lists 15 official holidays and three system-wide closed days. B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

S. Tosso moved to approve the 2023 holiday schedule. It was seconded by C. Butler. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

F. 2023 Board Meeting Schedule

B. Geiger presented the proposed 2023 LBOC board meeting schedule. The Board will need to select a date in February for the first meeting of the year, as the year-end financial reports will not be complete in time for a late January meeting. The Board will also need to select an early December meeting date, as the end of November coincides with the Thanksgiving holiday week. The Board selected February 7, 2023 as the first meeting date and December 12, 2023 as the last meeting date. B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment. C. Butler moved to approve the 2023 board meeting schedule. It was seconded by S. Tosso. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

G. Director's Report

K. LaRocca reported that 2,200 pounds of non-perishable food was collected during Food For Fines in September for distribution to the following local food banks: First Baptist Church of Slidell Food Pantry, Bush Food Pantry, Northshore Food Bank, and Samaritan Center. Susan Kent of Carson Block Consultants met with staff via zoom at our All-Staff meeting. She gave an overview of the Strategic Planning process and staff participated in an exercise as part of the planning process.

Staff participated in outreach services at the St. Tammany Parish Chamber Expo, the Northshore Technical Community College Wellness Resource Fair, COAST, the Pumpkin Festival in Slidell, the Wooden Boat Festival in Madisonville, the Veterans Resource Festival at the St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office, several school visits, radio interviews on the Lake 94.7 and the Highway 104.7, Check it Out TV Show, and WWL-TV Morning Show's *Great Day Louisiana* segment.

The library received three Statements of Concern at our August 23rd Board meeting. As part of Section 407 of the Library Rules and Regulations Manual the staff formed a committee and responded to the statements of concern. They were mailed on September 30, 2022. We have not as of yet received a request for an appeal to the LBOC from any of the three petitioners. Three more Statements of Concern were received at our September 27th Board meeting. We are currently working on responses to these concerns and will mail them over the next week.

Staff attended association meetings, conferences, training, and webinars. Staff attended local community meetings such as the Commission on Families, Northshore Nonprofit Resources Round-Up, and Chevron Community Fellows. B. Geiger reminded Board members to complete their Ethics Training and Sexual Harassment Training for the year. The following staff were awarded Employee of the Year: Sally Cooper Gill, Librarian of the Year. Cassi Breaux, Full-time Employee of the Year. Eric Collins, Part-time Employee of the Year, and Byron Holdiman, Rookie of the Year. Nichola Kleyle will be the new Circulation Manager at the Covington Branch. Barret Reich is the new Reference Librarian in Mandeville.

The website statistics show 53,142 sessions with 30,423 users between September 21st – October 20th. New visitors comprised 52.29% of these sessions. K. LaRocca referenced the September 2022 and year-to-date service statistics. B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

H. Request to Alter the Agenda – Addition of Resolution to Seek Legal Advice

B. Taylor requested to alter the agenda to include a resolution to seek legal advice. The following resolution was read aloud:

In light of the possibility of appeals on the Statements of Concern, the Board as part of its fiduciary responsibilities needs to be aware of the legal ramifications, federal, state, and local, of the disposition of materials in question and to request this information from our Parish legal advisor and if they cannot supply the requested information, then we will seek outside counsel at the Attorney General's standard rate of compensation.

A. Shaw moved to add the resolution to the agenda. It was seconded by C. Butler. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

B. Taylor read the resolution aloud for a second time. B. Taylor asked for public comment. An audience member who did not state her name said that she did not understand the addition to the agenda. B. Taylor read the resolution aloud for a third time. Another audience member who did not state her name said that the audience members are not lawyers and asked for the Board to explain what materials are as referred to in the resolution. B. Taylor clarified that materials are items in the library's collection that have been challenged by the public by submitting Statements of Concern. K. LaRocca explained that if a person is not satisfied with the committee's decision after reviewing their Statement of Concern and challenged item, the person can appeal to the Library Board of Control. There are legal ramifications to any action taken on a book. The Board would like to seek legal advice to be advised on what actions can be taken on appealed library materials.

There was public comment from Trey Brownfield. He asked if the Board is asking to use taxpayer funds to work against the will of the taxpayers who are present at the meeting. B. Taylor stated that the Board will respond to questions at the end of each agenda item. There was continued discussion back and forth between T. Brownfield and B. Taylor. Emily Couvillon, the library's legal counsel from the District Attorney's Office, stated that in order to avoid debates at the podium the Board will note his concerns and, if appropriate, will respond. T. Brownfield stated his question for a second time. K. LaRocca stated that a library's collection is a designated public forum. She stated that due to the First Amendment and free speech, there can be legal ramifications to what the Board decides to do with the books. She explained that if the library is sued and has to pay legal fees, those fees would be paid for by taxpayer dollars as well. She stated that seeking legal advice to inform us of the legal ramifications of moving or removing books is far less costly than costs associated with being sued. She stated that the library is not seeking legal advice for the purpose of going against what taxpayers want. The Board wants to ensure that the library is doing things correctly and is making the best decisions with taxpayer dollars.

There was public comment from A.G. Crowe. He asked if the library is not confident enough in the legal counsel that is already appointed to advise. K. LaRocca clarified that our current legal counsel has to have enough time to advise us on such matters. If they do not, then we will have to go elsewhere. She stated that we will start with our appointed legal counsel. A.G. Crowe commented that the meeting did not begin with the Pledge of Allegiance.

There was public comment from Candice Mallard. She suggested that the library post the material that is controversial before purchasing so that the public can comment and vote on it before adding the material to the collection.

There was public comment from Heather Oster. She asked if there is money set aside to seek outside legal counsel. K. LaRocca stated that we do have funds included in the budget for legal purposes. She asked if the library has a Parish attorney that would defend the library against the citizens of the Parish. K. LaRocca said that is not what the Board is asking for. She clarified that the Board is seeking counsel to ensure that what we do fits within the laws of the federal, state, and local governments.

There was public comment from Tamara Murray. She stated that she understands the need for outside legal counsel and is sorry the Christian bigots in the room are forcing the library to do so.

A. Shaw moved to approve the resolution to seek outside counsel. It was seconded by C. Butler. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. Rules and Regulations Committee Update

K. LaRocca reported that the committee met on October 12th at the Causeway Branch to continue discussing, reviewing, and updating Chapter 4 – Collection Development. The next meeting is November 16th at the Causeway Branch at 11:30 a.m.

B. Strategic Planning Committee Update

K. LaRocca reported that the committee continues to make headway. Library Administration received the complete data collection and community engagement report and met with the consultants via Zoom to review. The report was distributed to the Community Advisory Committee and the Library Board of Control. The consultants visited in person for the Board's Strategic Planning Workshop and visioning/mission statement session.

C. St. Tammany Parish Library Foundation Update

There was no update from the Library Foundation.

D. Friends of the Library Report

There was no update from the Friends of the Library.

4. Public Comment

Camille Thompson – Stated that there are better things in the community to participate in besides gay rights and Pride Month. She stated she would like to see her tax money spent on items that inspire integrity, hard work, patriotism, love of family, God, and community. She suggested putting the challenged books through a shredder to dispose of them.

Candice Mallard – Suggested the library develop a plan for public input before purchasing controversial children's books. She listed books that she objects to due to inappropriate sexual material and propaganda promoting alternative lifestyles. She spoke about the library grooming children and asked the Board to repent and turn to Jesus.

Kathleen Benfield – Stated that pornographic books are available to children through the library. She stated that selling such items to minor children is likely prosecutable and noted a Louisiana state statute. She suggested a policy similar to the policy that prohibits children from accessing R-rated or NC-17 materials.

Gene Mallard – Stated that his opinions represent 1,200 members of the First Baptist Church of Slidell and community. He stated that the LGBTQ community has the right to their beliefs and activities, but they do not have the right to expose those lifestyles to children in the community. He suggested that all LGBTQ and transgender books should only be available upon parental request.

Sonnet Ireland – Stated that Eisenhower would be rolling in his grave, as he was anti-censorship. She stated that the government is not responsible for parenting children. A compromise on this issue would only make one side happy. She stated that if you do not like something, do not read it. She spoke about gay and transgender youth feeling alone and suicidal.

Johanna Miner – Stated that she is going to heaven. She asked the Board if they thought they would be promoting the grooming of children to change their sex as young as two and three years old. She referred to the book *I Am Jazz* and said that the boy knew at two years old that he was a girl in a boy's body. She quoted bible verses and said she would pray for the Board.

Connie Phillips – She referred to posters containing enlarged pages and images from several books, such as *I Am Jazz*, *Sex: A Book for Teens*, *Lawn Boy*, and *Gender Queer*. She stated that the books violate criminal statutes. She read excerpts from *Lawn Boy* aloud. She referred to images from *Gender Queer* and stated that it is porn and pedophilia. She stated that only homosexuality is celebrated, not heterosexuality.

A.G. Crowe – Stated that he appreciates the work that the library is trying to do. He spoke of the library's Challenged Materials Policy. He stated that it does not say on the website who purchases the books. He said that is an act of censorship because the library is censoring what is allowed in the library. He stated his interpretation of the policy and said that it allows for inadvertent psychological harm to children.

Diane Bruni – Stated that she is disappointed in the decision of her Statement of Concern. She stated the books are recruiting tools to promote the transgender movement to children. She stated that children would not be questioning their gender on their own unless they have been exposed to or indoctrinated with this knowledge. She stated books like *Lawn Boy* are violating the law.

Bonnie Schmidt – She thanked the Board and the library for not banning or censoring books. She stated that the library is a vital component of our community and provides information on both sides of the subject so that anyone can read what they want to read. She stated that the morality police are not needed in Slidell. She stated that there are women in Iran dying in the streets for the freedom of expression that we take for granted.

Fran Smith – She shared a personal story of sexual abuse as a young girl. She stated that it was hard to grow up and not feel guilty and to try to live a normal life. She asked the Board what is wrong with their hearts. She stated that what the library is allowing is shameful. She spoke of the possibility of children reading these books, then becoming a pedophile and hurting others.

Cynthia Karimpanamannel – Stated that she is disappointed in the Board and how they assume that her grandsons need this information. She stated that she appreciates the notion that it is the parent's responsibility what a child reads. She stated that the books are not wanted in the library and that it is wrong. She asked the Board to search their hearts.

Randy Trahan – Stated that he and his husband have lived in St. Tammany since 1989 and pay both property and sales taxes just like other homeowners. He stated there are a lot of books he does not like in the library, so he just does not read them. He stated that the previous public comments have made him feel as though he shouldn't be allowed in the library. He stated that he loves and supports his public library.

David Cogle – He asked the Board if they ever thought they would be approving pornographic and pedophilic material targeted to minors. He asked why those who approve the alleged books have not been fired. He spoke about transgender people and it being permanent mutilation. He stated that the Board is pimping out the library to outside activist groups. He stated that the library is breaking laws. He asked for the library to stand with the children to protect their innocence.

Donna Bonnoitt – She asked for policy changes for displays and challenging books. She stated that her group will go to the Parish President and Parish Council. She asked for the removal of all pornographic and pedophilic materials from all branches. She asked for public notice of all materials before purchase and would like all books approved by the public rather than the three librarians. She asked for 30 days notice of all display themes. She asked for picture IDs to be required for public comment.

Barbara Mamoulides – She stated that she has family members in the LGBTQ community. She explained that a kid reading about gay kids does not make them gay, nor does reading about straight kids make them straight. She stated that books are tools for understanding complex

issues. She stated that limiting access to books does not protect people from those issues, rather it takes away valuable resources for learning. She stated that individuals should not be making decisions for other readers or other parents.

Nina Davies – She stated that she is a mother of six children who has brought her children to the library for many years. She stated that some books look innocent at surface level, and it can be a difficult thing for parents to censor. She spoke of a book that referenced rape and transgender issues. She stated children cannot understand those concepts and books such as that should be in the adult section.

Dr. Gary Martinez – Stated that he does not believe the library should be censoring, but they already are due to only one person buying books for each age group. He stated the titles should be put on the website so that the public can vote before purchasing the materials. He quoted a bible verse. He stated that as a teacher he would be fired and sued for showing images like the ones in the *Gender Queer* graphic novel.

Cynthia Collins – She stated that the library has an impact on the culture and the community. She stated that the images in the *Gender Queer* graphic novel are pornography. She stated that adults have a responsibility to guide children. She spoke of books in the catalog regarding pornography addiction and gender identity. She stated there are 86 books regarding gender identity.

Amanda Pohlmann – She thanked the Board for their service and dedication to serving the community. She stated they are the guardians and gatekeepers for children and the community. She acknowledged that there are many moving parts involved with running the library. She stated that the books in question have explicit content in both written and graphic form and should be stopped by the gatekeepers. She referenced the Miller Guide to Obscenity.

Kristen Gregory – She spoke of her husband, a police officer who passed away. She stated that books in the library, *Lawn Boy* and *Gender Queer*, illustrate pornography and pedophilia. She read excerpts of *Lawn Boy* aloud. She said the books are available in the library and on Hoopla. She said there should be an audit of every book in the library.

Shirley Thomas – She spoke about Russian leader, Khrushchev, who censored books when she was a child. She stated that is what people are trying to do today and that it will be other books next. She stated that the book *Maus* is banned in Tennessee. She explained that the book is about children who are portrayed as mice and the cats are the Nazis. She stated that children should be able to read about things that have happened in the past so that history will not be repeated.

Larry Roques – He spoke of the first library he visited as a child with Dorothy Crockett as the librarian. He stated that she would be heartbroken. He spoke of what is literature and what is not literature. He stated that the internet has opened doors that cannot be closed. He said children are looking for direction from adults. He shared that his daughter was molested as a child by a teen who was sexually awakened before his time.

Rev. Jarrett Banks – He stated that as a faith leader he is here to stand with those who Jesus stood up for. He said that he stands with those who are marginalized, vilified, and demonized by culture, politics, and religion. He stated that the greatest commandment is to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves. He stated that he publicly stands against all bigotry, discrimination, and censorship.

Tamara Murray – She stated that she is thankful to the Board and is thankful for the LGBTQ display at the Mandeville Branch. She spoke of the suicide statistics of transgender youth. She spoke of how LGBTQ youth are mistreated and stigmatized by society. She stated that reading books about other gay and transgender people may mean the difference between feeling accepted rather than rejected.

Casey Rushing – He asked the Board and Library Administration if they have read the book *Gender Queer*. T. DiMaggio responded that she has read the book. C. Rushing asked what she thought about the book. B. Taylor stated that questions will be addressed at the end of public comment. C. Rushing asked the Board why he shouldn't sue the library if his child checks out *Gender Queer*. He stated it is distribution of pornography to a minor and is a crime.

A member of the public that did not state her name called the Board and Library Administration licentious oligarchs.

Lisa Rustemeyer – She stated that the library is doing exceptionally well serving the needs of her family. She said that she does not expect to like every book available. She stated that the library serves the entire community. She stated that *Lawn Boy* and *Gender Queer* are located in the adult section. She stated that the pages of the books displayed are cherry-picked and wonders if they have read the books in their entirety.

Erin Kennedy – She stated that she is in favor of keeping the recently challenged children's picture books in the library. She stated that she would like to acknowledge the collection developers and their role in keeping the library's mission of providing books for all of the community. She stated that the books are not meant to convince anyone to transition against their will.

Elizabeth Rogers – Stated that she is a transgender woman who has been a library patron since childhood. She stated that she has two children who she loves and who love her. She shared that she almost took her own life at age 24 and her father recently disowned her. She explained that no one wants to make their children transgender or queer. She said that since she has transitioned, she is the happiest that she's ever been in her life.

Heather Oster – Stated that she has a family member who is non-binary. She said she did not know what that meant until recently. She said she prays for him. She stated that no one wants to be something that they feel they are not. She stated that the library is no longer a sanctuary.

Mel Manuel – She spoke in support of the three children's books that have been challenged. She said she read the books, which are about children of color who are trans or gender non-conforming. She explained they live with families who love and support them the way they are. She stated that people will continue to challenge trans books because they are uncomfortable with trans people.

Kitty Carmody – She stated that she is disappointed to see the number of people in favor of censorship. She explained that what one person considers shocking, rude, or immoral is not what others may think. She stated that censoring books is a slippery slope. She said that it is not the library's job to protect or make decisions for her child or anyone else's child.

Donald Bryan – He stated that he sits on 11 boards. He stated that board members are trustees. He stated there are regulations for what is considered appropriate material. He stated that adult materials are segregated from children for good reason. He stated that the material he has seen at the meeting is inappropriate for children.

B. Taylor answered previously asked public comment questions. B. Taylor stated that the Library Board of Control members are appointed by the Parish Council and the Parish President. She explained that the Board serves as volunteers and receive no compensation for their services. She said the Board members take an oath to guide the institution and have fiduciary responsibilities for governing how the funds for the library system are spent.

K. LaRocca explained the process of how a minor child can obtain their own library card to check out materials. Minors under 18 years old must have a parent co-sign the library card application giving the child permission to obtain their own library card. By signing the library card application, the parent agrees that they are responsible for the materials their child borrows. No minor under 5 years of age can obtain a library card of their own. No child under the age of 10 may be left unattended in the library.

B. Taylor stated that it is any patron's right to submit a Statement of Concern about library materials. She stated that there is a policy and a process that the library follows. She explained that the Board does not read each book that is challenged. The Board only reads the books that are appealed by patrons if they are not satisfied with the decision made by the library. B. Taylor explained the following process of challenging a book: A patron submits a Statement of Concern. The library forms a committee that reads the book and book reviews. The committee discusses the book and the concerns. A decision is made in writing and mailed to the person who submitted the Statement of Concern. If the person is not satisfied with the decision, they can appeal to the Library Board of Control by contacting Brent Geiger, Assistant Director of Public Services. The appeal will be placed on the agenda for the next Library Board of Control meeting.

B. Taylor explained that as of today, no one has appealed the decisions made for any of the books that were challenged so far. If any of the titles are appealed, the Board will add it to the next meeting agenda. She repeated that an appeal is the next step in the process if the patron is not satisfied with the library's decision. K. LaRocca stated that people have asked why the challenged books are not on the board meeting agendas, and that is because there have been no appeals. B. Taylor stated that it is not the Board's business to pull books without following the policy and process.

A member of the public who did not state her name asked who is on the appeal board. K. LaRocca answered the Library Board of Control. The member of the public asked who is the Library Board of Control. B. Taylor answered that she and the other four members present are part of the Library Board of Control, along with three others who are absent.

A member of the public who did not state his name stated that he previously asked the Board how they feel about the books being challenged. B. Taylor answered that her personal preference has no place here. She explained that the Board signs an oath to be impartial and ethical.

E. Couvillon clarified that there is no agenda item to be acted on at this time and that this is just a period of public comment. She repeated the process of challenging a book and the appeals process. She stated that the Board has not yet reviewed the material because there have been no appeals. The member of the public asked if the items are appealed to the Board, will they then give their personal opinion on the books. B. Taylor repeated that the Board's personal opinions do not come into play. The member of the public asked who approved the books to be purchased. E. Couvillon stated that the Board does not have that information. She stated that the Board has provided answers to the questions and the public can follow up via email. The man continued to speak from the audience. E. Couvillon stated that the meeting will return to the business at hand. She explained that she is there to ensure the meeting is conducted with decorum. The man asked

why he should not sue the library if his child obtains the books in question. E. Couvillon stated that he has the right to consult an attorney on the matter.

A woman who did not state her name asked if the books are purchased or donated. K. LaRocca stated that as the Library Director she is ultimately responsible for the materials purchased, and the library obtains materials in two ways. She explained that 36% of the materials that the library purchases are patron requests that are submitted through the website. She stated that the remaining items are purchased by trained librarians, as there is a lot of work involved with building library collections. She said the library employs experts in children, teen, and adult literature as well as reference materials and digital materials. She clarified that it is not just simply three people choosing books. She said their job is to make sure they buy materials for everyone in the community, and they have the tools, training, and years of experience to do so.

A woman asked if the books discussed at the meeting were donated. She stated her concern for those types of books and noted that she found 86 books on a similar topic when she searched the library catalog. She stated she is concerned about groups pushing an agenda by putting these items in libraries. K. LaRocca stated that the books were purchased by the library, not donated. She explained that the library has over 750,000 items in its collection and that 86 items is well below 1% of the library's collection. K. LaRocca stated that the library does not have an agenda and we do not have any group imposing an agenda. The library does have a mission to provide resources for everyone in the community that reflects their viewpoints and values.

Another woman who did not state her name stated that there are no parental controls on Hoopla. K. LaRocca said she would look into that for her and also suggested the children's portal in the Libby app. K. LaRocca agreed that parents should be able to control what their child is looking up and stated that the library wants to give parents the tools to do that.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by S. Tosso and seconded by C. Butler. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.



Mary Reneau, Secretary