

**St. Tammany Parish Library  
Board of Control Meeting  
July 24, 2023  
St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers  
21490 Koop Dr.,  
Mandeville, LA 70471  
6:30 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

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

Present: Jake Airey, Bill McHugh, Anthony Parr, Ann Shaw, Becky Taylor  
Absent: Carmen Butler

Jim Bolner with the Civil Division of the District Attorney's Office was also present as legal counsel for the library.

B. Taylor explained the rules for public comment. A three-minute time limit is established for each member of the public wishing to speak (for or against) an item on the Agenda. Persons wishing to speak on multiple agenda items must fill out separate comment cards for each agenda item. If a speaker asks questions, those questions are part of their three-minute public comment period and will be noted as such. In the case of a Statement of Concern (SOC) decision, the person who filed the SOC is given five minutes to speak.

B. Taylor noted that she made an error in a previous meeting by allowing a representative of the author of a SOC to speak for five minutes. This action did not conform to St. Tammany Parish Library policy. Only the author of a SOC can address the Board for five minutes during the public comment period. If they choose not to attend or speak, they may submit a written statement. Anyone representing them must complete a speaker card and will have three minutes to speak. B. Taylor noted that copies of the policy concerning this matter are available on the table with the comment cards. Board members can request a brief recess during the meeting if needed. Public comments were accepted by email ([lboc@stpl.us](mailto:lboc@stpl.us)) until 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

**1. Recognition and thanks for years of service to the Library Board of Control – William Allin and John Danjean**

B. Taylor recognized John Danjean for his 11 years of service to the St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control. Mr. Danjean served from 2010 to 2021. B. Taylor stated that Mr. Danjean brought a lot of experience as a contractor while serving on the Board. He has since been enjoying his retirement. B. Taylor presented Mr. Danjean with his award in gratitude and appreciation for his service.

B. Taylor recognized Bill Allin for his 11 years of service to the St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control. Mr. Allin served from 2012 to 2023. B. Taylor stated that Mr. Allin brought expertise from the corporate world to the Library Board. He was meticulous in reviewing the monthly documents in preparation for Library Board meetings, asked very good questions, and always did his homework. B. Taylor presented Mr. Allin with his award in gratitude and appreciation for his service.

Mr. Allin stated that his years of serving on the Library Board was one of the most important aspects of his community service. He said he did his best to protect the library system and to help move it forward towards a successful millage renewal. Stated that it pains him greatly to see libraries being caught up in this debilitating and dangerous culture war. Stated he is sorry he resigned in the middle of it, but his health made him do so. Stated he has enjoyed working with everyone, especially Kelly LaRocca and the library staff, who he described as dedicated, impartial, and talented public servants who deserve praise, not the abuse and misinformation that is being directed towards them. He wished everyone luck and expressed his support.

**2. Approval of the minutes of the meetings of the Library Board of Control that were held on June 5<sup>th</sup> and June 16<sup>th</sup> 2023.**

**Discussion for June 5, 2023 minutes:** There were no suggested corrections to the minutes.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**Vote:** B. McHugh moved to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2023 library board meeting. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and one was absent. Motion carried.

**Discussion for June 16, 2023 special meeting minutes:** B. McHugh asked for a correction on page 7, paragraph 2, second to last sentence. The statement was directed at politics specifically, so he asked for the wording to be changed to read: "Stated that no one's politics, including his own, will have an influence on his decision-making for the Library Board."

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**Vote:** B. Mchugh moved to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2023 special board meeting with the stated corrections. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and one was absent. Motion carried.

### 3. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Financial Reports – June 2023

**Discussion:** K. LaRocca reported that the library received more Ad Valorem and State Revenue Sharing in June 2023. The budget percentage should be 50% for this point in the year. Revenues are at 50.35% and Expenditures are at 49.36%.

K. LaRocca explained lines that were over or under budget and noted that some of the explanations will be repeated in the budget amendment later in the meeting. Interest Income remains higher than budgeted due to higher interest rates. The Health Insurance Expense line fluctuates depending on how many full-time employees are on staff. The Health Trust line is at 69% due to paying some bills in February that were leftover from 2022. The Publication of Legal Notices line continues to be higher due to longer board meeting minutes. The Advertising line is higher due to the Summer Reading postcards that were sent out this year and the line will be in balance later in the year. The Signage and Promotional Production lines will be expended later in the year. Under Utilities, Water is higher due to paying for service at the two annex buildings temporarily, but will be in balance at the end of the year. The Postage line is higher because the postage meters were refilled. The Network Utility Software and Polaris Maintenance lines were expended early in the year.

The Financial line is above budget due to paying for the audit for the year. Most of the Web Design Consultant line has been expended for the year, but there are some other expenses that will come out of that line before the end of the year. The Property Insurance line will be expended once we receive the bill from the Parish. The Computer/Printer Supplies line is above budget due to increased costs of toner. The Office Equipment, Furniture, and Shelving line is higher due to purchasing the furniture for the new Annex building. Many of the lines under Library Resource Acquisitions will be expended later this year after Summer Reading.

A. Parr asked for K. LaRocca to explain the website expense. K. LaRocca explained that the web design expense pays for the software and framework that runs our website. There are three main components – Polaris catalog, event calendar, and the actual website. Multiple departments use and maintain various aspects of the website components.

#### **Public Comment:**

Kevin Marino – Asked about the line for Ad Valorem for 2020 on page 2 of the financial reports. K. LaRocca explained that it is a typo that needs to be updated by the CPA and is actually for

2023. She explained that the line will increase throughout the year as we receive more Ad Valorem revenue.

**Vote:** A. Parr moved to approve the June 2023 financial reports. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and one was absent. Motion carried.

### **B. 2022 Auditor's Report**

John Murray from Laporte CPA firm presented the 2022 Audit Report. A copy of the report was provided to the Board and is also in the board packet posted on the library's website for the public to view. J. Murray reported that the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The auditor gave a clean, unmodified opinion on the financial statements for the year. There was one accounting standard change this year regarding leases. In the past, non-purchase type leases were recorded as expenses as they were incurred. The library adopted new accounting guidance, Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 87. The adoption of GASB Statement No. 87 required the library to report a right-to-use asset and a lease liability for leases which were previously accounted for as operating leases. The effect was a reduction in net position of approximately \$94,000.

J. Murray reviewed the Statement of Net Position, Statement of Activities, Governmental Fund balance sheet, Statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balance, and budgetary comparison schedule. Variances in expenditures were within the 5% threshold in accordance with state law. There were no deficiencies in internal controls and no instances of non-compliance. There were no findings to report in the audit for 2022.

This was the first year that the library has been under the Statewide Agreed-Upon Procedures (SAUP), since St. Tammany Act 774 was repealed. J. Murray stated that it is comprehensive with 14 different compliance and best practice areas. There was one exception related to cash collections. The Legislative Auditor has set a best practice for collections to be deposited within one business day. Some deposits are made on a weekly basis due to the small monetary amount of deposits and other internal controls mitigate that.

A. Parr asked for J. Murray to explain the Differed Inflows on page six. J. Murray explained that the amounts are determined by an annual actuarial evaluation related to employee pensions and post-retiree health insurance.

J. Airey asked if a clean audit is a good audit with no findings. J. Murray confirmed that it is.

J. Murray thanked Kelly LaRocca and Debbie Cuevas for their efforts and hard work throughout the audit.

### C. Director's Report

K. LaRocca reported that the Technical Services' move to the new Annex building was complete on June 16<sup>th</sup>. The South Slidell roof replacement was complete on July 12<sup>th</sup>. During the roof replacement process there was heavy rain and there was some water damage to the inside of the building, but that has been mitigated.

Staff held Storytimes at A-Z Preschool, 1<sup>st</sup> Class Academy, Mayfield Elementary School, Park Place Academy, Little Feet First, Open Arms Academy, Little Academy, Lancaster Elementary, the Children's Museum, Kidz Klub House, Tiny Tumbler Preschool, and Fontainebleau Children's Academy.

Staff offered outreach services and promoted the library to William Pitcher Jr. High School, the Slidell Rotary Club, MLK Gardening Day, The Lake and The Highway radio stations, Northshore Resource Round-up, Folsom Kiwanis Club, and the Northlake Nature Center. Adult Programming has a monthly Outreach Book Club with St. Anthony's Gardens. Adult Programming also opened the Creative Writing Showcase for public submissions in June. The library held 6 writing workshop events in July with local award-winning authors as the presenters.

Staff attended the following conferences, meetings, and webinars: Telehealth 101: What libraries need to know, American Library Association Conference, Louisiana Library Association Conference, Bibliocommons BiblioApps webinar, and Managing Difficult Conversations webinar.

Byron Holidman was appointed to the position of Vice-Chair and spoke on a panel for the pre-conference for the ALA Genealogy Committee of the RUSA History Section. He also presented a webinar for BYU Library's Genealogy Department.

The following contracts were renewed or began: BiblioCommons for BiblioSuggest (facilitates patron requests for materials), Gallagher Benefit Study (salary study), Loomly, Inc. social media management system, Librarica for SPOT Global Print upgrade, Procurify renewal (purchase approval and order system), and Swank renewal (public showing movie license for all large branches). SPOT Global Print is an application that allows patrons to print from their phone or other device. This upgrade allows patrons to send print jobs to the library branch of their choice when at home or on the go.

We have received 19 public records requests since the beginning of November 2022. Eight are currently outstanding. The outstanding requests consist of extensive email searches that are in line for redaction and combinations of electronic and paper documents that will need to be sorted and organized to ensure the completeness of the records. Our new file clerk is pulling and redacting the needed records.

To date, the library has received 210 statements of concern on 167 titles since August 2022. The library board has made decisions on 14 titles and will be deciding on two titles during this board meeting. Of the remaining 151 titles, the time extension for review granted by the Board will expire on July 25<sup>th</sup> for 139 titles. The Board will consider extending the review time for these titles during this Board meeting. Library staff continue to read titles, hold meetings, and make recommendations.

Staff have begun working on writing implementation plans for the Strategic Plan. The first two goals are as follows:

Goal 1. The St. Tammany Parish Library will be recognized as a major civic institution that will be responsive to the needs of all residents in a changing, evolving and increasingly diverse community.

Goal 2. The St. Tammany Parish Library will serve as a platform for creativity, innovation, and community interaction.

Library Administration has also had their first meeting with Gallagher regarding the staff salary study. This ties into Goal 7 – The St. Tammany Parish Library will ensure that its staff has the resources and professional development opportunities needed to underpin the library's goals for the future and maintain its reputation for excellence in customer services.

K. LaRocca reviewed the May 2023, June 2023, and year-to-date service statistics.

A. Parr stated the library is doing a great job reaching people at St. Anthony's Gardens. Asked how the library could service The Windsor or The Trace. K. LaRocca explained that we have relationships with program coordinators at different facilities and we periodically let them know what book club boxes are available. A. Parr asked about the Bibliocommons BiblioApps webinar. K. LaRocca explained that it is staff training for using the software for our website.

B. McHugh thanked K. LaRocca for the effort in making the reports so detailed and informative. He stated they give a good perspective of the extensive offerings of the library system. Stated that there is so much more to the library than buying books and putting them on the shelf or behind the circulation desk. Spoke of the amount of effort it takes to make the library what it is and acknowledged that many people are working really hard to make this an excellent library system.

#### **D. 2023 Summer Budget Amendment**

**Discussion:** K. LaRocca explained the differences in revenue and expenditure forecasts between the 2023 Spring Amendment and the 2023 Summer Amendment. Overall, there is an increase of \$156,768 in revenue. K. LaRocca noted that the 2023 Budget was produced in July of 2022.

This budget amendment is adjusted based on how the library ended the 2022 fiscal year, how the budget has performed over the first two quarters of 2023, and projects such as the Annex building replacement.

The Board was provided with the Budget Amendment and Savings spreadsheets along with the explanations. This information is also included in the board meeting packet posted on the website for the public to view. K. LaRocca reviewed adjustments to budget lines with explanations for each adjustment. The current Unassigned Savings is \$869,521, which puts the library in a good position to work on goals identified during the strategic planning process.

The Budget Analysis shows a forecasted increase in revenue of \$156,768 due primarily to increased interest income. The budget amendment shows an increase in expenditures of \$156,760. The budget is balanced, leaving \$760 of revenue unbudgeted.

A. Parr asked for an explanation of the Publication of Legal Notices. K. LaRocca explained that we are required to publish a notice for the budget hearing for the upcoming year and all board meeting minutes in the journal of record, which is the *St. Tammany Farmer*. The meeting minutes have become lengthier due to longer and more frequent meetings.

A. Parr asked about the prorated audit charge. K. LaRocca explained that some 12-month contracts for services span part of 2022 and 2023, rather than January through December. The auditor moved the charges to the correct years and charged them accordingly.

A. Parr asked about the Annex/Technical Services facility timeline. K. LaRocca clarified that we have moved in and are out of the old building. She noted that the Board has approved funding for an elevator, which the Parish council will have to include in the capital budget, and then it will have to go through the procurement and construction process.

McHugh asked K. LaRocca to explain the percentage rule and why we amend the budget. K. LaRocca explained that the library is required to amend the budget if revenues or expenditures are out of balance by 5%. She clarified that we have not done that because we have not had to, but we aim to keep the budget accurate, so we amend it approximately three times per year.

A. Shaw asked about the timeline for the Causeway, Mandeville, and Slidell furniture orders. K. LaRocca explained that we will renovate first before purchasing the furniture for Mandeville and Causeway. Stated that an architect was recently selected for the Mandeville upgrade. Causeway's renovation will be for carpet replacement and the plan is to get the furniture for both branches at the same time for a better price. K. LaRocca explained that the Slidell furniture will also be purchased after renovations are complete. The Board has not yet approved capital funding for that project. Once approved, it will then go before the Parish Council to be included in the capital budget.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

B. Taylor read the 2023 Summer Budget Amendment Adoption resolution aloud.

**Vote:** A. Parr moved to adopt the 2023 Summer Budget Amendment resolution. It was seconded by B. McHugh. Roll call vote:

Airey: Yes Butler: Absent McHugh: Yes Parr: Yes Shaw: Yes Taylor: Yes

Motion carried.

#### **E. Causeway Lease Renewal**

**Discussion:** K. LaRocca reported that the lease for the Causeway Branch (3457 U.S. Hwy 190, Mandeville, LA 70471) expires in October. We have the option to renew until the end of 2025 and then renew for five years if the millage is renewed. There is a difference in cost, but all other terms remain the same. K. LaRocca explained that the Causeway Branch provides meeting space and study rooms for the Mandeville area, as the Mandeville Branch does not have meeting or study rooms. It is a well-used branch.

J. Airey asked if this is fair rent for that area. K. LaRocca stated that rent in that area has gone up in the last five years and the shopping center has been greatly improved recently.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**Vote:** B. McHugh moved to approve the Causeway Branch Lease Renewal. It was seconded by A. Parr. All were in favor, none were opposed, and one was absent. Motion carried.

#### **F. Statement of Concern Decision – *A Costume for Charly***

K. LaRocca presented the SOC for the book *A Costume for Charly* by C.K. Malone. The statement was submitted by Connie Phillips, representing the St. Tammany Parish Library Accountability Project. K. LaRocca read the statement aloud.

The recommended action by C. Phillips is: "Move to minor restricted area of the library where kids cannot have access without an adult checking out the material." Reason given: "Not suitable for children in St. Tammany Parish See La. R.S. 14:91:11 [sic]. The material is offensive to the average adult applying contemporary community standards. 'A gender-fluid teenager who struggles with identity creates a blog on the topic that goes viral, and faces ridicule at the hands of fellow students'-- NO GENDER IDENTITY BOOKS IN THE MINORS SECTION OF THE LIBRARY."



K. LaRocca reviewed the book résumé which includes the publisher's summary, number of copies STPL owns (4), total circulation on all print copies (6), comparable library system statistics, reviews by *School Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Horn Book Magazine*. A total of 174 public libraries across the nation own copies of the book. The title is shelved in the Juvenile Picture Books section at STPL with E Mal as the call number.

K. LaRocca reviewed the committee's evaluation of the title which includes demographics of the committee members, the committee's report, and the committee's recommendation.

Since the current complainant cites the Louisiana Criminal Law Revised Statute 14:91.11, the book was evaluated based on the criteria set forth in the statute. K. LaRocca stated that legal counsel has advised the Board that all four criteria in the R.S. 14:91.11 must be true to be a violation of the statute. The committee did not find a violation of the statute.

Summary of the Committee's Report: There are no sexual descriptions, display or depictions of sexual acts, or of genitals. The characters remain fully clothed throughout the book, even when they are changing clothes. There is nothing in the text or illustrations that would elicit a sexual response. The committee acknowledges that the book might not be for every family, but there are families in our parish that want books to use to facilitate discussion of gender. The committee also noted that the book could be read as a story about finding the perfect Halloween costume, a common dilemma for school-aged children, without the gender context. The committee noted that it was only on the shelf for two months before being challenged. The committee found that the book has literary value in its outline of the problem-solving process.

Options for the Board: Move the book to Juvenile Non-Fiction (J306.768) under the call number for gender identity, move the book to the Adult Fiction section, keep the book in the restricted area behind the circulation desk, return the book to Holiday (Halloween) Picture Books, or remove it from the library.

Committee Recommendation: The committee recommends that the book be returned to Holiday (Halloween) Picture Books.

**Public Comment:**

Connie Phillips, the patron who submitted the Statement of Concern for *A Costume for Charly*, was offered five minutes for public comment. C. Phillips was not in attendance and did not appear for public comment.

Rachel Rhodes – Mandeville, LA. Asked to keep the book on the shelf. Stated that it contains no sex and it is about someone modifying their Halloween costume. Stated this is a ploy to remove LGBTQ books from the shelves. Spoke of boys wearing dresses in history and elite men wearing

makeup and wigs. Stated it was once considered scandalous for women to wear pants. Stated that times are changing and people are afraid of change.

Rebecca Steele – Folsom, LA. Stated that, according to [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org), children begin understanding gender differences by age two and have a stable sense of their gender by age four. Spoke of support, love, and social acceptance. Shared that the book helped them realize they are bi-gender. Stated there is nothing harmful and no graphic scenes in the book. Asked for the book to be returned to the shelf.

Roxanne Newman – Mandeville, LA. Stated that the challenged books have opened her eyes to new material that she may not have read otherwise. Stated that the book is about a child searching for the perfect Halloween costume. Noted that children are supposed to be accompanied by parents in the library and suggested that they not allow their child to check out the book if they do not want them to read it. Spoke of censorship being illegal and asked for the book to be returned to the shelves.

Catalina Reyna – Stated that the book makes no mention of sexuality or sexual identity. Stated that the complainant treats gender and sexuality as the same. Stated the book is about a child who feels both masculine and feminine and is figuring out how to express that. Stated that finding yourself is a beautiful thing. Noted that the artwork in the book is beautiful. Thanked the Board and library staff. Commended the inter-library loan service that the library provides.

Kevin Marino – Mandeville, LA. Stated there is nothing inappropriate in the book. Asked for it to be returned to the shelf. Read a statement from the author aloud. Stated that the book is about identity, not sexuality, and creates empathy and understanding. B. McHugh asked for a copy of the author's statement.

Joan Simon – Covington, LA. Stated that it is a sweet book. Agrees with the supportive comments. Stated the author's statement was very moving. Read a statement from Barack Obama aloud. Spoke of seeking to understand views that do not fit our own.

Barbara Mamoulides – Mandeville, LA. Stated that the book does not mention sexuality or sexual identity. Stated that it is simply a story about a child who feels both masculine and feminine and is figuring out how to best express that. Stated there are indeed bi-gender people in the world and even in St. Tammany Parish. Bi-gender kids will see themselves in this book. Asked for the book to remain in the children's section.

Gary Lacoste – Abita Springs, LA. Asked for the books to be made available for the public to review before the meeting. Stated that God only created two genders. Stated that children are his main concern. Stated that children cannot buy porn or alcohol, but they can find things that are confusing for them. Stated the book should be in the Adult section.

K. LaRocca confirmed that a full set of the challenged books will be available for in-house review at the Covington and Slidell Branches. They will be placed on a special cart and will have bands on them identifying them as items that cannot be checked out.

Jean Wiggan – Abita Springs, LA. Stated that when her nephew was 4-5 years old he only wanted to wear dresses. Stated his parents were tolerant, loving, and allowed him to do so. Stated that if this book was available when her nephew was young, his parents would have read this to him to help make him feel comfortable. Asked for the book to be kept in the children's section. Stated she is opposed to the books being kept behind the circulation desk for months.

**Discussion:**

B. Taylor stated the book does not violate R.S. 14:91.11. Agreed with the committee's recommendation to return the book to its original location in the holiday Picture Books.

B. McHugh noted that C. Phillips has identified one of the sources of her list of challenged books – Louisiana Save Our Schools. Stated that the book is harmless, entertaining, and not pornographic.

J. Airey pointed out that the back of the book states juvenile fiction and asked what the difference is between that and picture books. K. LaRocca explained that the publisher's designation as juvenile fiction means that it is meant for children and is fiction. In our library system, juvenile fiction refers to chapter books. K. LaRocca explained that the book is actually shelved in the holiday section of the picture books at STPL along with the other Halloween picture books.

J. Airey stated the book is not pornographic, though people may disagree about what type of issues are put before kids. Recognized that parents have a role to play in that.

**Vote:** B. McHugh moved to affirm the committee's recommendation to return the book *A Costume for Charly* to the Holiday Picture Books section. It was seconded by A. Parr. Roll call vote:

Airey: Yes Butler: Absent McHugh: Yes Parr: Yes Shaw: No Taylor: Yes

Motion carried.

**G. Statement of Concern Decision – *Tricks***

There were three SOC's submitted for the book *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins by the following people: Connie Phillips, representing the St. Tammany Parish Library Accountability Project, Rosalind Murr, and Frances Smith. K. LaRocca read each SOC aloud.

The recommended action by C. Phillips is: "Restrict access to minors as outlined in statute above. Require parent to check out for minor. The book should be shelved in a section where minors do not have access. A separate place in the library. A room or some section where minors do not have entry without parent and minors cannot check out." Reason given: "Violates [sic] Content violates the state obscenity statues [sic] for minors. 2021 Louisiana Laws Revised Statutes Title 14 - Criminal Law Not suitable for minors. This book contains explicit sexual activities including child rape and abuse; drug abuse; violence; alcohol use; and adult and child prostitution." Cites excerpts from the book.

The recommended action by R. Murr is: "Remove it from any children's sections, ask for ID to check out and not allowable for a minor to download." Reason given: "This is breaking child."

The recommended action by F. Smith is: "Any book that shows, depicts or gives this type of knowledge to a child or teenager should not be allowed in public libraries or school libraries for that matter. Adults can get this type of literature on the internet. My tax dollars do not have to pay for this. Children should not have to worry about some pervert in the library being in there with [sic]." Reason given: "The language."

K. LaRocca reviewed the book résumé which includes the publisher's summary, number of copies STPL owns (2), total circulation on all print copies (136), total circulation on all E-audiobooks (3), comparable library system statistics, reviews by *Kirkus Review*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, *Hornbook Guide to Children*, and *BookPage*. Also noted are awards and lists featuring this title. A total of 1,765 public libraries across the nation own copies of the book. The title is shelved in the Young Adult Fiction section at STPL with YA Hopk as the call number.

K. LaRocca reviewed the committee's evaluation of the title which includes demographics of the committee members, the committee's report, and the committee's recommendation.

Since complainants cite the Louisiana Criminal Law Revised Statute 14:91.11, the book was evaluated based on the criteria set forth in the statute. K. LaRocca stated that legal counsel has advised the Board that all four criteria in the R.S. 14:91.11 must be true to be a violation of the statute. The committee did not find a violation of the statute.

Summary of the Committee's Reports: Some of the passages describe sexual conduct as a positive, "normal" part of intimacy between two consenting mature teens. The negative scenes that portray sexual conduct between nonconsenting teens and adults are not written to appeal to a positive sexual response. The committee believes that the book is appropriate for many older teens ages 16-17, as evidenced by the steady circulation over the past 14 years. The book is a cautionary tale that deals with contemporary issues that persist to this day. The book brings awareness to the problem of child trafficking. The book realistically shows how grooming of young people takes place. It shows a variety of homelives and situations that can lead to young

people being preyed upon. The book also shows teens that there is a path out of destructive situations.

Options for the Board: Move the book to the Adult Fiction section, keep the book in the restricted area behind the circulation desk, remove it from the library, or return the book to the Teen Fiction section.

Committee Recommendation: The committee acknowledges that the average person in St. Tammany Parish, applying contemporary standards, may deem the material inappropriate for minors of any age because of the difficult passages that describe nonconsensual sexual conduct between minors and adults. The committee believes that the book is not harmful to minors, does not violate La R.S. 14:91.11, and that the book could in fact be helpful to some teens. The committee does not recommend removing the book from the library's collection. However, it recognizes that the gravity of the topic warrants it being moved to the Adult section to accommodate parent's and guardian's choices for their minor children within our card system.

**Public Comment:**

Connie Phillips, Rosalind Murr, and Frances Smith, the patrons who submitted the SOC's for *Tricks*, were offered five minutes for public comment. None were in attendance and none appeared for public comment.

Ashlie Chatagnier – Folsom, LA. Stated that the book follows five teenagers who go through different situations and end up in terrible relationships. Stated that one of the teens came out as gay to his father and he was kicked out. The teen entered into relationships with older men who own homes so that he would not be homeless. Stated that another teen was sold by her mother into a relationship and she became a sex worker to make a living. Stated that another teen gets sent to a conversion camp and sleeps with one of the workers so that he will smuggle her food. Stated that these are real things that happen to real teenagers.

Roxanne Newman – Mandeville, LA. Stated she listened to the audiobook, as it was the only format available. Stated it was a compelling story and a cautionary tale for children and parents. Stated that the sex and drug use mentioned is not appealing for prurient interests. Spoke of the tiered card system and how parents can choose a restricted card for their children. Asked for the book to be returned to the YA Fiction section.

Kathleen Wiley – Mandeville, LA. Stated she respectfully disagrees with the previous commenters. States that the book violates the obscenity laws. Read the definition of pornography aloud. Stated that the young people in the book express exhilaration from the booze and sex. Stated that it is guiding them on how to look up pornography, which she says is grooming. Read an excerpt from the book aloud.

Johanna Miner – Stated that Connie Phillips is not there because she is working behind the scenes to have the Board removed. Read an excerpt from the Bible aloud. B. Taylor advised J. Miner that her comment should pertain to the agenda item. J. Miner continued reading the excerpt. Stated that she read words from *Tricks* aloud at a previous board meeting. Stated there is no value in the book, it is disgusting, and putting it back on the shelf is a violation of the new law and promotes pedophilia. Stated that the Board will not be here much longer and their time is coming to an end.

Gary Lacoste – Abita Springs, LA. Stated the book should only be in the Adult section. Compared it to pornography, yet it is allowed in the library. Stated that he understands free speech and is not asking for the book to be banned. Stated that it is not appropriate for teenagers. Asked for it to be noted on the website which age groups are appropriate for these books. Stated that reviews and statistics are skewed.

Kevin Marino – Mandeville, LA. Stated that the book is disturbing, it's uncomfortable, and covers disturbing topics. Stated that one of the characters was raped at the age of ten. Stated that this stuff happens and noted that St. Tammany Parish had 66 sex crimes in 2022. Stated that people are being groomed, and clarified that he does not take that term lightly, unlike the complainants who accuse librarians of grooming. They are taught that this behavior is appropriate. Spoke of the tiered card system appropriately restricting usage if the parent chooses.

Jamie Segura – Covington, LA. Stated that the book has been in the system since 2009, but that Connie Phillips and her cohorts have just discovered it. Stated that *Tricks* is an intriguing story and shows how difficult real life can be. Stated that she volunteers with an organization that helps children who had to be taken from their homes. Stated that a 14-year-old boy she cared for fell prey to family members giving him drugs and using him in some of the same activities mentioned in the book. Stated that books are a way for children to understand the tactics of the ministers, coaches, and teachers who are grooming them and sexually abusing them. Asked about missing books from the library that have been checked out and never returned.

There were two public comments from individuals who did not wish to speak. Both comments were not in favor of restricting the book.

**Discussion:**

B. Taylor stated that it took a while to get through the book, as the author writes in prose. Stated that the book does not violate each part of the La R.S. 14:91.11. Stated she is comfortable moving the book from YA Fiction to the Adult section.

J. Airey stated he has similar thoughts, as the book contains mature topics. Noted the tiered card system. Noted there are no images, but does have difficult text that reflects real life.

Commented that the story is skillfully woven together. Agreed to move the book to the Adult section and let parents make the decision for their kids via the card type.

B. McHugh agreed that the book is disturbing and that it is a cautionary tale. He shared statistics from the February 2023 Louisiana Annual Human Trafficking Data Report from the Governor's Office of Human Trafficking Prevention. The office served 992 confirmed and suspected victims in 2022. B. McHugh disagreed with F. Smith's comment that reading page 196 was enough to know what the book was about. Stated that there is redemption for the teens at the end. Stated that the book as a whole is gut-wrenching, but accurately describes what really happens in the real world. Stated that the book shows that no matter how bad things get, there is always hope, and always the possibility to make things right. Noted that teens will find the book if they want to read it. Stated his personal preference is to leave it in YA, but respects the professionalism and concern expressed by the committee and supports moving it to the Adult section.

A. Parr stated the book is a disturbing part of our reality. Stated that he has worked with troubled teens and this book reflects some of their realities. Agrees that teens will find the book if they really want to read it and supports moving the book to the Adult section.

**Vote:** B. McHugh moved to affirm the committee's recommendation to move the book *Tricks* to the Adult Fiction section. It was seconded by A. Parr. Roll call vote:

Airey: Yes Butler: Absent McHugh: Yes Parr: Yes Shaw: Yes Taylor: Yes

Motion carried.

#### **H. Resolution regarding extension of time to allow for procedural due process of Statements of Concern**

**Discussion:** K. LaRocca reported that extensions on 139 titles will expire on July 25, 2023. She is asking the Board to extend the waiver of the time limit for response to pending SOC's that will expire on July 25, 2023, and any SOC that may be received before the Library Board of Control's next regular meeting on August 21, 2023.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

B. Taylor read the resolution aloud.

**Vote:** J. Airey moved to adopt the resolution to extend the time to allow for procedural due process of Statements of Concern. It was seconded by A. Shaw.

Airey: Yes Butler: Absent McHugh: Yes Parr: Yes Shaw: Yes Taylor: Yes

Motion carried.

#### 4. OLD BUSINESS

##### A. Rules and Regulations Committee Update

K. LaRocca reported that the Rules and Regulations meetings have focused on the Challenged Materials process and policy. Due to increased interest by the Board, these committee meetings have been upgraded to special board meetings to accommodate this. The committee met on June 16<sup>th</sup>, June 27<sup>th</sup>, and July 13<sup>th</sup>. We continue to talk about the challenged materials process. Library administration is currently working with legal counsel from the DA's office to determine what requirements newly signed ACT 436 will have on library policy. Our next meeting of the Rules and Regulations Committee or special board meeting remains to be determined.

#### 5. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by J. Airey and was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and one was absent. The motion carried.

  
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Rebecca Taylor, Board President