

St. Tammany Parish Library
Board of Control Meeting
December 13, 2022
Covington Library
310 W. 21st Ave.
Covington, LA 70433
6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

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

Present: Bill Allin, Mary Reneau, Becky Taylor, Susie Tosso
Absent: Carmen Butler, Dr. Argiro Morgan, Ann Shaw

B. Taylor stated that proper decorum is expected of all meeting attendees. She asked that the public not interrupt speakers or reports and to refrain from clapping or applause. She explained the public comment process. There is a three-minute time limit for regular public comment. In the case of an appeal of a Statement of Concern decision, the person making the appeal is given five minutes to speak.

1. Approval of the minutes of the Strategic Planning Workshop Special Meeting that was held on October 22, 2022 and the minutes of the October 25, 2022 regular board meeting.

There were no suggested corrections to the minutes of the October 22, 2022 Strategic Planning Workshop Special Meeting. There was no public comment. M. Reneau moved to approve the minutes. It was seconded by B. Allin. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

There were no suggested corrections to the minutes of the October 25, 2022 regular board meeting. There was no public comment. S. Tosso moved to approve the minutes. It was seconded by B. Allin. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

2. NEW BUSINESS

A. Financial Reports – October and November 2022

K. LaRocca reviewed both the October and November 2022 financial reports. She stated that the library has received 100% of what was expected in ad valorem revenue and state revenue sharing for the year. The budget percentage for November is 91.66%. Kelly reported that the library is on target, as revenues are at 92.05% and expenditures are at 87.61%.

K. LaRocca stated that lines such as Signage and Promotional Production are under budget, but will be in balance by the end of the year as new door decals are purchased and promotional materials are replenished. The Gas line is under budget due to the weather, as temperatures have not been cold yet this year. The Publication of Legal Notices line is over budget due to longer library board meeting minutes that are published in The St. Tammany Farmer.

B. Allin asked about the Juvenile Reference line being at 36%. K. LaRocca explained that the World Book Encyclopedia gets published at the end of December, and the library purchases copies for several branches. B. Allin asked about the Juvenile Books line. K. LaRocca explained that juvenile materials are typically ordered at the end of the year, since the Children's Department is busy during the Summer Reading Challenge.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment. B. Allin moved to approve the October and November 2022 Financial Reports. It was seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

B. Board Meeting Dates 2023 Amendment

K. LaRocca explained that the first library board meeting of the year is usually in early February, due to the year-end financial statements not being ready in time for a January meeting. Due to increased library business discussion and Strategic Planning, we are asking for the meeting schedule to be amended to add January 24, 2023 as a meeting date and to change the February meeting date to February 28, 2023.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment. S. Tosso moved to approve the 2023 board meeting date amendment. It was seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

C. Election of Officers

B. Taylor explained that board officers are elected annually. In accordance with the board's bylaws, the Secretary of the Board has polled all board members prior to the final meeting of the year to determine their willingness to continue to serve and to determine who wishes to serve in a new capacity. All current officers wish to continue to serve. The officers and positions are listed below:

Becky Taylor, President
Ann Shaw, Vice-President
Mary Reneau, Secretary

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was no public comment. B. Allin moved to re-elect the current officers for another year. It was seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

D. Alcohol Request for the Library Foundation

The St. Tammany Library Foundation will hold its annual membership meeting on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at the Madisonville Branch. It is requested that the Foundation be allowed to serve wine. Wine will be served with food and available only in the meeting room. Approval is required by the Board for any alcohol served at the library, as the Rules and Regulations do not allow for alcohol without approval.

B. Allin moved to approve the alcohol request for the Library Foundation. It was seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

E. Rules and Regulations Committee Update Chapter 4

K. LaRocca reported that the committee met on November 8th, November 16th, November 23rd, November 30th, and December 8th at the Causeway Branch to continue discussing, reviewing, and updating Chapter 4 – Collection Development. The committee updated and discussed Section 407 – Challenged Materials Policy and the Challenged Materials form. The committee also discussed and wrote a new policy: Section 409 – Access to Library Materials by Minors.

T. DiMaggio reviewed the new revised policy for Section 407. She stated that the revised policy explains in detail each step in the challenge process. T. DiMaggio read the policy aloud. She noted that a copy of all the changes as well as the original policy was provided to the Board. She referred to the revised Statement of Concern form.

B. Taylor asked for a correction under Section 407, letter B, number 5. There should be a period after the word “meeting” and the word “report” should be removed. K. LaRocca confirmed that the change will be made.

B. Allin stated that it is very important that the person challenging the title reads the entire book, as the committee makes decisions based on the entirety of the work. M. Reneau noted that question is asked on the Statement of Concern form. B. Allin noted that number five on the form asks “Did you review the entire item? If not, what sections did you review?” M. Reneau suggested replacing the word “review” to “read”. K. LaRocca reminded the Board that the item may be a movie or DVD. M. Reneau suggested replacing “review” with “review/read”. The Board agreed and K. LaRocca confirmed that the change will be made.

K. LaRocca reviewed Section 409 – Access to Library Materials by Minors. She read the policy aloud. To summarize, the policy states that public libraries do not have the legal right or responsibility to act in the place of parents or legal guardians in deciding what material their minor children are permitted to read. Public libraries may restrict access to materials by minors, as long as the motives for these restrictions are not unconstitutional. On the basis of findings by SCOTUS, it is proper and constitutional to restrict minors’ access to public library materials if they are pervasively vulgar. However, to remove or restrict access to books on the grounds of religious beliefs, politics, nationalism, or any other matters of opinion would constitute viewpoint discrimination and not be considered constitutional.

B. Allin spoke about how this policy, the changes in the process of challenging materials, and the resolutions on the meeting agenda are due to the recent controversy regarding access to library materials by minors. He stated that the controversy has grown into a culture firestorm, creates a distorted impression of what goes on in our libraries, and misrepresents the intentions of library staff. He stated that the library already has procedures in place to protect minors from age-inappropriate material, such as new levels of restricted, semi-restricted, and unrestricted juvenile library cards. He referenced the new Section 409 policy that K. LaRocca previously reviewed. He stated that it provides a necessary standard to determine, without discrimination, what material is permissible to be restricted to minors. He explained it is a vague and highly interpretive standard, as no court or other legal authority has precisely defined “pervasively vulgar”.

B. Allin stated that the proposed policy may not be a perfect solution, but it provides a pathway forward that is reasonable, equitable, and grounded in law. He stated that St. Tammany’s library system enjoys widespread respect and praise, both within our parish and statewide. He stated that it is no coincidence that Library Director, Kelly LaRocca, was voted Public Librarian of the Year for 2022 by other librarians across Louisiana. He concluded that the St. Tammany Parish Library

plays a vital role for many in our community, and does not want to see its reputation tarnished, or operations disrupted by well-intentioned citizens on any side of the current controversy.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was public comment from the following people:

Karen Schneider – Stated that she supports the library and is against changes to Section 407. Stated that as a child, books engaged her and did not groom her. Stated that books are tools that parents can use to teach and prepare children and that true learning comes from exposure to many different ideas.

Mel Manuel – Spoke in support of the library. Stated that Kelly LaRocca and the Board promote education and knowledge instead of ignorance and hate. Stated that they are sorry for the harassment, character defamation, and public shaming from the Library Accountability Project. Asked the Board to feel pride for standing up for the 1st Amendment, queer community, and people of color.

S. Tosso moved to approve the changes to Section 407 of the Rules and Regulations Manual. It was seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

B. Allin moved to adopt Section 409 of the Rules and Regulations Manual. It was seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

F. Resolution to extend time to allow for procedural due process of Statements of Concern received on and after November 21, 2022

K. LaRocca introduced a resolution to allow for the procedural due process of Statements of Concern received on and after November 21, 2022 through December 13, 2022. She stated that approximately 75 new Statements of Concern were received in that time period. She stated that she wants to ensure the proper time and attention is given to each Statement of Concern and that those who have submitted statements deserve that attention. The resolution grants a waiver of 120 days to allow for that time.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was public comment from the following people:

Casey Kugler – Stated that he disagrees with banning content just because it does not fit within someone's framework of personal values. Stated that libraries should be equipped to help people from all walks of life. Thanked the librarians for working tirelessly to democratize access to information and for upholding their oath to be impartial and ethical.

Sonnet Ireland – Spoke against the resolution and stated that it will be impossible for the library to sustain due to the amount of challenged materials. Stated that it will prevent vulnerable patrons from accessing materials because they know their neighbors are judging them and the library is acquiescing. Thanked the Board and the library and stated that the community is behind them with support.

Candice Mallard – Stated that the library and the Board lack transparency. Suggested listing each new book on the website. Stated that people think the library is sticking books in secretly. Stated that it is untenable for a parent with three children in the library to monitor what books their children select. Stated that children’s books about alternative lifestyles are inappropriate. Stated that the library has safeguards on their computers, but they need to put safeguards on home computers as well.

Jourdana Webber – Spoke in support of the library and stated that new books are listed on library apps, such as Libby, Cloud Library, and Hoopla.

M. Reneau moved to adopt the resolution to extend time to allow for procedural due process of Statements of Concern received on and after November 21, 2022. It was seconded by B. Allin. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

G. Resolution regarding the temporary disposition of challenged materials

K. LaRocca introduced a resolution that would move all currently challenged items off the shelves and placed on reserve behind the circulation desk. They would still be available for patrons to check out based on the permissions of the patron’s library card. She noted that most of the items that are challenged are being utilized by the committee members who need to read the books. There was discussion by the Board and K. LaRocca clarified that the items will not be behind the desk permanently. B. Taylor read the resolution aloud. B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was public comment from the following people:

Ruth Terry Sipos – Stated that she is concerned about moving materials and said that this will evolve into having more and more books taken off the shelves. Stated the joy of going to the library is browsing the shelves, not looking up titles on the computer. Stated that librarians are our allies and should be trusted.

Diane Casteel – Thanked the library staff and the Board for their hard work. She noted that an additional 75 titles had been challenged and said that it will take months to go through that process. Stated that the group challenging the materials have a concerted effort to remove books they do not agree with. She noted that most of the challenged titles are gay and transgender subject matter, and said that people are afraid of that.

Joan Simon – Stated that she trusts the librarians and is opposed to this resolution. Stated that there is a lot of misinformation circulating from a vocal minority group and that the majority of the citizens do not feel the same. Stated that the library has gotten better through the years and is impressed with what the library has to offer.

Jamie Segura – Stated that she is against the resolution and that moving books to a location not openly accessible to all is censorship and suppression of speech. She read a quote that stated that people are not going to stop at LGBTQ books, nor will they stop at books about race, civil rights, history, women’s rights, or science. Asked the library board to stand up and to stand firm against censorship of books in the library.

There was verbal disruption from the audience and B. Taylor called the meeting back to order.

B. Allin moved to adopt the resolution regarding the temporary disposition of challenged materials. It was seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent.

B. Taylor noted that the full text of the extension of time resolution in agenda item 2F was not read aloud. She read the resolution aloud. The resolution was adopted as previously stated.

H. Resolution regarding location of graphic novels for adults and teens

There was verbal disruption from the audience and B. Taylor called the meeting back to order.

K. LaRocca introduced a resolution to move all graphic novels for adults and teens off the shelves and place them on reserve behind the circulation desk. B. Taylor read the resolution aloud. B. Allin asked about the rationale behind this resolution. K. LaRocca explained that the concern has been about the graphic novels with pictures of sexual content. She stated that the Board does have the option to change the resolution to include only graphic novels with sexual content. She explained that placing all of the graphic novels behind the desk allows for more privacy for the patron.

B. Taylor asked K. LaRocca to define what a graphic novel is. K. LaRocca explained that graphic novels utilize pictures and words together to tell a story. There are both fiction and non-fiction graphic novels. She explained that they are not the same as comics one would find in a comic book store – they are published as novels. T. DiMaggio explained the history of graphic novels and gave an example of the graphic novel *Maus* by Art Spiegelman.

S. Tosso stated that graphic novels are some of the only books that many teens read. She stated that some teens will not know to ask for these books, which will limit their access to the only items they wish to read. She stated that she has concerns about placing the graphic novels behind

the circulation desk. B. Allin spoke of people browsing the stacks to find items versus searching online. K. LaRocca explained that the shelf location in the online catalog would show that the item is at the circulation desk. She stated that the library could create a carousel of the book covers on the website.

M. Reneau asked if there will be signs that say Adult Graphic Novels and Teen Graphic Novels. K. LaRocca explained that there are currently sections for graphic novels and said that signs can be put in place of where they are shelved stating that they are now behind the circulation desk. There was discussion between the Board and K. LaRocca about the popularity of graphic novels.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was public comment from the following people:

Diane Casteel – Stated that she hopes that the Board does not vote to adopt the resolution. Stated that it will punish the majority of the patrons in the Parish due to a few patron's concerns.

Jean Wiggin – Asked the Board not to approve the resolution. Stated that it would be hiding books for adults just in case a four-year-old is walking around the library. Stated that it is censorship and asked the Board not to take away her right and a teen's right to see whichever books they want.

M. Reneau moved to table the resolution and take it under further advisement at a future meeting. She stated that we are discussing adults who know what they want to read, and mature, growing teens who are going to find a way to learn about things. She stated that the library is a resource of information so that people can read, discover, and decide for themselves. She stated that she believes that the library does not have the right to move the graphic novels as stated in the resolution. It was seconded by S. Tosso. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

I. Statement of Concern Appeal – *I Am Jazz*

K. LaRocca reviewed the timeline of the Statement of Concern process for the challenged book *I Am Jazz* by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings. The statement was submitted by Diane Bruni and was received on September 27, 2022. The statement was answered on November 10, 2022. The decision was appealed on November 21, 2022. K. LaRocca read the Statement of Concern aloud. K. LaRocca read the response letter with the committee's decision aloud.

The committee noted Ms. Bruni's comments that the book pushed propaganda instead of a story or plot and portrays explicit sexual orientation on a minor. Jazz Jennings is a well-known public figure with a reality TV show and the book is published by a well-established mainstream

publisher. The book does not mention sexuality or have any references to sex. The committee stated that any family who wished to have a conversation about this topic with their child might use this book. Families might utilize a book such as this to discuss someone in their child's life who is transgender. The committee voted for the title to remain in the library.

Diane Bruni, the patron who submitted the Statement of Concern, was given five minutes for public comment. She stated that she is disappointed in the decision to keep the book in the library and available to children ages three and up. She stated that transgenderism is a movement and ideology being promoted worldwide with no regard to the long-term damaging effects to children. She stated that children fall victim to the perverted ideology of the promoters. She stated that the books are recruiting tools to promote the transgender ideology and movement among the nation. D. Bruni showed a recent photo of Jazz Jennings to the Board. She stated that Jazz has struggled with mental health issues and it has caused her to binge eat and gain 100 lbs. She stated that Jazz's family humiliates her with fat shaming comments. She stated that many doctors, hospitals and social workers are being sued for promoting this ideology, surgeries, and hormone blockers to minors. She noted that many young transgender people have committed suicide. She asked that the book be placed out of reach from children.

B. Taylor asked for public comment. There was public comment from the following:

Lisa Rustemeyer – Stated that her heart goes out to Ms. Bruni, as she can feel her passion, concern, and fear. Stated that she has read the book *I Am Jazz*. Stated that it is about a family who supports their loved one in being their authentic self. Stated it was initially uncomfortable and hard to understand for the family, but they rose to the challenge and supported Jazz. Asked the Board not to remove the books that are up for appeal.

Barbara Mamoulides – Thanked the Board and staff and said that they do not deserve to be treated with disrespect and anger. Stated that thousands of other residents appreciate their hard work. Stated that she supports keeping *I Am Jazz* and *My Rainbow* in the library. Spoke of the LGBTQ statistics in St. Tammany Parish. Stated that we must protect all children, not just a chosen few. Stated that LGBTQ youth deserve to have the same resources as their straight peers.

Emily Goldsmith – Stated that representation of all kinds matter. Stated that as a child, her exposure to LGBTQ content was very limited, as she grew up in a devout Christian family. Shared that she is non-binary and bisexual. Stated that she did not know how to accept herself and attempted suicide at age 16. Stated that kids will not be turned gay or trans due to a library book. Stated that removing *I Am Jazz* and *My Rainbow* would be irresponsible and dangerous to LGBTQ youth.

Cynthia Weatherly – Stated that she grew up in a house with no books, so she would read the encyclopedia. Stated that books such as Stephen King novels were thrown away by her parents because they did not approve of the book cover. Stated that books saved her from a restrictive environment. Asked the Board not to restrict children from books such as *I Am Jazz*.

B. Allin stated that the LGBTQ community has to be represented and the library has a responsibility to serve everyone in the Parish. He stated that imposing religious ideas on others is unconstitutional. He stated that the book *I Am Jazz* does not have pervasive vulgarity.

M. Reneau stated that the library is an institution that provides resources for everyone in the community. She stated that we each have individual responsibilities to our families and to the community. The library does not take a stance one way or the other, it is not the library's responsibility to do so, and it is against the law.

M. Reneau moved to keep the book *I Am Jazz* in its current classification in the library collection. It was seconded by S. Tosso. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

J. Statement of Concern Appeal – *My Rainbow*

K. LaRocca stated that the Statement of Concern for *My Rainbow* by Trinity and DeShanna Neal was submitted by Diane Bruni and was received on August 23, 2022. The statement was answered on September 23, 2022. The decision was appealed on November 21, 2022. K. LaRocca read the Statement of Concern aloud. K. LaRocca read the response letter with the committee's decision aloud.

The committee ultimately decided that overall, the story is positively and lovingly handled. The committee recognized that the intersectionality of the story about an autistic child who is black and transgender was significant and well done. This story may offer tools for families who are searching for a way to identify and work through similar issues with their own children, or children who may know someone who identifies as transgender. For those who read this book and identify as transgender, it might acknowledge their personal circumstance and offer useful tools to move forward in a positive way. The committee voted for the title to remain in the library.

Diane Bruni, the patron who submitted the Statement of Concern, was offered five minutes for public comment. She did not appear for public comment.

S. Tosso stated that the book shows a family who supports a child's wishes and tries to form a solution to make them feel more accepted. B. Allin stated that the common theme of these books is to accept who you are and to be loved for who you are.

S. Tosso moved to keep the book *My Rainbow* in its current classification in the library collection. It was seconded by M. Reneau. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.

K. Director's Report

K. LaRocca explained the new options available for library cards for minors. The new card options are as follows:

1. Juvenile Full Restriction Card — Cardholders may only check out all children's materials. Cardholders cannot check out Young Adult (YA) or Adult materials.
2. Juvenile Semi-restriction Card — Cardholders may check out all children's materials, and YA fiction books. Cardholders may not check Adult books, or adult nonfiction items that have a YA sticker, or magazines in the teen area.
3. Juvenile Card— Cardholders may check out any loanable physical item in the library except R-rated DVDs.
4. Juvenile Unrestricted — Cardholders may check out any loanable physical item in the library, including R-rated DVDs, with parental permission.

On Jan. 3, 2023, all juvenile cards that have not been specified will expire and will require an update, either over the phone, or in a branch. K. LaRocca commended the Technical Services Department for working so hard to make this available as quickly as possible. She also commended the staff in the branches for working with parents and guardians to update their child's existing cards.

Librarians performed outreach services to the Daughters of the War of 1812, Council on Aging St. Tammany (COAST), Three Rivers Art Festival, various preschools and elementary schools, the Children's Museum of St. Tammany, and the Northlake Nature Center. Staff participated in radio interviews and the Check It Out TV show.

Staff attended committee meetings, conferences, Genealogical Society meetings, association board meetings, conference committee meetings, Chevron Community Fellows classes, and Library Foundation meetings. Several staff attended the following training webinars: Spotlight on Safety: Addressing Threats in Public Libraries, Novelist Reader's Advisory Training, and NewsBank training.

Seth Mattei will be the new Circulation Manager at the South Slidell Branch. Nichola Kleyle will move to the Covington Branch as Circulation Manager. Alex Hughes is the new IT Department staff member. The website had 87,545 sessions with 51,419 users from October 23rd to December 8th. K. LaRocca reviewed the October 2022, November 2022, and year-to-date statistics. She expects to surpass last year's circulation statistics and door count totals by the end of the year.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. Strategic Planning Committee Update

Carson Block and Susan Kent are ready to present a draft of the goals and a new mission and vision statement. The presentation is on hold for a short time until the Board and Administration can give strategic planning the time and attention needed to complete the process.

4. Public Comment

Jarret Banks – Stated he is attending the meeting to show love to the Board, as he attended the previous meeting and was horrified by the fearful hate that was spoken. Stated that he was verbally attacked and left the room for safety reasons. Stated that this same type of spirit is what motivated the gunman who killed five people in a recent shooting in an LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado. He referenced other tragedies in history that were triggered by hate.

Shirley Thomason – Stated that banning and restricting books is a slippery slope. She read excerpts from Genesis 19:30-36 from the Bible. She explained that it speaks of two daughters who sleep with their father and bear children from him. Stated that she read that as a child and it did not make her want to sleep with her father. Stated that she would not want to put the Bible behind the circulation desk, nor the challenged books.

Russell Besancon – Thanked the Board and Kelly LaRocca for overseeing a wonderful library system. Stated that he is a retired US Coast Guard Lieutenant, he was an EMT and a volunteer firefighter. Stated that he is also a librarian. He commended the Lee Road Branch for great service. Thanked the Board and the library system for the way they are handling the issues that are facing them.

Roxanne Newman – Stated that her daughter is a lesbian and books are not what made her that way. Stated that reading LGBTQ books will not turn children gay or transgender. She said she trusts the librarians. Stated that a review board, as proposed by the opposition, is not needed.

Barbara Hargrove – Stated that her grandkids go to the library and she complimented the activities and resources that the library offers. She read a quote from children’s book author Meg Medina, who is opposed to removing books from libraries.

Jeff Sims – Stated that he is a pastor at Covington Presbyterian church. Thanked the Board for what they do. Stated that book banning is not necessary. Stated that it is the library’s job to decide what books to put on the shelves and it is his job to decide which ones to read. Stated that it is not the library’s job to act as a parent and that we should be talking about how to love one another and improve the world.

Candis O’Meara – Stated she is the pastor at Hosanna Lutheran Church in Covington and is in support of the library. She stated that some of the attendees at the LBOC meeting in October needed a police escort to their vehicles after the meeting. Stated that someone at the meeting told another pastor in attendance that he was going to hell for his beliefs. Stated that she supports the Board, their work, experience, and willingness to serve.

Catalina Reyna – Stated that libraries are sanctuaries of knowledge. Stated that her family admires and respects the work of the librarians. Stated that she trusts the librarians to select books that represent the interests of the whole community. Stated that banning books is equivalent to burning books in an attempt to silence the stories they contain. She gave the historical example of how the written legacy of the Mayans in Mexico was destroyed.

Shaunah Snyder – Stated that she stands for those children who do not have parents involved in their life. Stated that many children are homeless, have parents with addiction, and do not have adults looking after them. Asked for books with pornography and pedophilia to not be allowed in the library. Asked the Board to extend grace to children with no voice.

Raven Creech – Stated that library employees have not been able to voice their opinions, because they could be misconstrued as speaking on behalf of the library. Stated that she is speaking to encourage the library staff. Suggested that the library staff consider the pros and cons of unionizing.

David Cougle – Stated that he is with the Library Accountability Project, who has demanded reform for months. Stated that the resolutions are inadequate, but prove that the library has the ability to restrict minors from accessing materials. Stated that the foxes will continue guarding the hen house, as the Director and board members are the people who oversee the solution. Stated that they will not stop until a Parish ordinance is adopted that ensures that children are protected from the predatory Library Administration. He noted the upcoming millage renewal

and asked if the Board thinks the citizens are going to renew the millage without transparent and tangible reform.

David Ziegler – Asked the Board to protect young children’s innocence, minds, eyes, intellect, emotions, souls, and spirits from corrupting influences in books, media, and in conversations. Stated that there are more people in the Parish who do not want these books accessible to children. Thanked the library and Board for what they do, but stated the issue will be taken to the next level and brought to the Parish Council.

Fran Smith – Stated that she is here to protect children. Stated that the books are opening doors for them that should not be opened yet. She commented on the laughter coming from the public. Asked why the library would want children to see the illustrations in some of the books. Stated that if most taxpayers knew what was going on in the library they would not vote for the millage renewal. Stated that the library is exploiting children and she is against it.

Camille Thompson – Asked if the Board has lost all common sense. Stated that children are way too young to be thinking about sexual things. Asked why waste library resources on these books. Stated it is the library’s responsibility to protect the children from that content. Stated that she would rather have no library than one that is promoting these books.

Chad Cocran – Thanked the Board and stated they are caught between two warring sides. He shared his story of how the library impacted his life. The library was his only resource and he loved reading books about East Asia. He ended up spending 17 years in Southeast Asia teaching people about God. Stated he is shocked that there are books that some consider pedophilia in the library. Stated he appreciates the steps taken, but it is not enough and suggests additional oversight.

Ian O’Connell – Stated that he is a minor and a student in support of the library. Stated there is no reason to ban literature, access to knowledge, and learning in a state that ranks 48th overall in education in this country. Stated he has been visiting the library with his parents for years and has not seen or heard anything that is offensive.

Donna Bonnoitt – Stated that she has been paying property taxes for 35 years. Noted the library budget, the millage, and the Library Director K. LaRocca’s salary. Asked who is K. LaRocca’s boss, who writes checks, and how many meetings take place besides the LBOC meetings. Asked where the minutes of the Rules and Regulations meetings are located. Asked what the library pays to the American Library Association (ALA) and what does ALA pay to St. Tammany Parish Library. Stated the library and Board have embraced the ALA agenda.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by M. Reneau and seconded by B. Allin. All were in favor, none were opposed, and three were absent. Motion carried.



Mary Reneau, Secretary