

**St. Tammany Parish Library  
Board of Control Meeting  
May 19, 2025  
St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers  
21490 Koop Dr.,  
Mandeville, LA 70471  
6:30 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

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

**Present (6):** Charles (Chuck) Branton, Councilman Jeff Corbin (designated by Parish President Mike Cooper), Jill Kesler, Tamarah Myers, Ann Shaw, Dinah Thanars

**Absent (0):** None

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

A. Shaw explained the meeting rules and the rules for public comment.

D. Thanars led the Pledge of Allegiance.

- 1. Approval of the minutes of the meetings of the Library Board of Control that were held on March 24, 2025 and April 28, 2025.**

**March 24, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

James Prentice – He requested that additional remarks he made during the March 24, 2025, Board meeting be included in the official record. He stated that some questions are best addressed directly to the Board member most knowledgeable about the issue and gave the following examples: Chuck Branton is a skilled attorney who presents plausible arguments about library policy and management flaws. Dinah Thanars is a 30-year primary educator and specialist. Tamarah Myers is a trained child psychologist who can address problems with harmful reading materials. Jillian Kesler is a trained paralegal, a trained respiratory therapist skilled in medical pathology, is great with all types of animals, and has become the great love of his life. He stated that he married her rather than lose her. He stated that there is no shame in his soul because of his association with her and emphasized his First Amendment right to speak as a resident of St. Tammany Parish. He stated that individuals, regardless of their personal affiliation to board members or to the library, should be allowed to give public comment.

Pat Phillips – Mandeville, LA. He suggested that the LBOC use the same audio/video broadcasting system that the Parish Council and other boards use for their meetings, noting a lower audio quality to the library's live stream. E. Couvillon stated that the Parish has declined previous requests from the LBOC to use the system.

**DISCUSSION:** There was no Board discussion.

**MOTION:** D. Thanars moved to approve the March 24, 2025, LBOC meeting minutes. It was seconded by T. Myers.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Branton: Yes Corbin: Yes Kesler: Yes Myers: Yes Thanars: Yes Shaw: Yes

**RESULT:** Motion to approve carried. (Unanimous 6-0)

#### **April 28, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

##### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Devin McGee – He stated that the minutes from the April 28, 2025 meeting did not accurately reflect his comments regarding Jeff Corbin’s attempt to prevent discussion of the term “access.” He stated that J. Corbin argued that the colloquial definition of the word should be adopted, but then voted against having that discussion. He noted that other board members also voted against it or abstained. He suggested it was a calculated effort to prevent them from getting to the truth. He stated that the minutes did not accurately capture his comments regarding a contemporary academic paper called “Drag Pedagogy” written by Harper Keenan, a professor of curriculum and pedagogy, and co-written by a drag queen named Lil Miss Hot Mess. He expressed frustration that his research, including direct quotes referencing blatant admissions of ideological grooming, was dismissed as off-topic. He stated his belief that focusing on the content of his speech could help resolve some of the issues at the library. He also stated that ongoing issues are likely to continue if board members continue voting on controversial materials without having read them.

**DISCUSSION:** Discussion took place concerning the vote to postpone the RFID project, which occurred during the Capital Projects Report under Agenda Item C on page 9 of the April 28, 2025, meeting minutes. Since there was no vote regarding the RFID project listed on the agenda, a unanimous vote was required to add the item as an off-the-floor amendment prior to any vote on the project. E. Couvillon pointed out that the procedural flaw was noted on page 8 stating that “no formal motion was made, no second was offered, and no vote was taken to add the item as an off-the-floor amendment” prior to voting on the substance. She advised that the minutes of the present meeting, May 19, 2025, should reflect that the item was never properly taken off the floor.

C. Branton expressed concern that the minutes indicate that the motion passed, when in fact it did not due to a procedural error. After discussion between the Board and E. Couvillon, it was agreed to add a note following the vote result in the April 28, 2025, minutes, documenting the procedural error and referencing the May 19, 2025, minutes for additional details. The note should read as follows: “Please refer to the minutes of the next LBOC meeting, held on May 19, 2025, for detailed discussion of the procedural error that occurred during this meeting in relation to this motion.”

**MOTION:** C. Branton moved to approve the April 28, 2025, meeting minutes as amended. It was seconded by J. Corbin.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Branton: Yes Corbin: Yes Kesler: Yes Myers: Yes Thanars: Yes Shaw: Yes

**RESULT:** Motion to approve carried. (Unanimous 6-0)

E. Couvillon reviewed the Minutes Requirements outlined in Section 112 of the Rules and Regulations of the Library Board of Control and stated that the minutes are not required to be a verbatim transcript. She noted that the LBOC minutes are much more expansive than those of other boards and commissions she represents and the cost of publishing them in the newspaper increases with their length. After reviewing the minutes of other libraries, agencies, and entities, E. Couvillon advised Library Administration to reduce the length of the minutes going forward. She noted that recordings of the board meetings are available on the website for anyone who wishes to review specific discussions. She stated that the minutes need only to reflect motions, votes, and a very brief summary of any discussion related to the motions.

## 2. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Financial Reports – April 2025

K. LaRocca reported that \$12,572,932.48 in Ad Valorem Revenue and \$89,698.26 in State Revenue Sharing was received as of the end of April 2025. The budget percentage for this point in the year should be 33.33%. Revenues were at 33.53% and expenditures were at 30.71%. K. LaRocca reminded the Board that Ad Valorem Revenue and State Revenue Sharing is credited in twelfths and is reflected as such on the financial report. K. LaRocca gave explanations for any lines that were over or under 33.33%. She explained that some lines are expended early or late in the year, depending on when the expenses are due, but they will be in balance by the end of the year. She asked if any board members had questions or needed further explanation. C. Branton asked if Polaris Maintenance is at 100% because it is paid for the year, and K. LaRocca answered yes.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no public comment.

**DISCUSSION:** There was no Board discussion.

**MOTION:** J. Corbin moved to approve the April 2025 financial reports. It was seconded by D. Thanars.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Branton: Yes Corbin: Yes Kesler: Yes Myers: Yes Thanars: Yes Shaw: Yes

**RESULT:** Motion to approve carried. (Unanimous 6-0)

### B. Director's Report

K. LaRocca reported that a total of 2,637 lbs. of food was collected and delivered to local food banks in St. Tammany Parish as part of the Food For Fines initiative. Staff promoted the library on The Lake and The Highway radio stations and on the STPG-TV Lifestyles Show. Staff provided outreach services to various organizations and community events. Staff performed storytime to various preschools and elementary schools throughout the Parish. The Mobile Library conducted lobby stops at COAST centers all across the Parish. K. LaRocca reviewed contract renewals. The library received two new public records requests since the last board meeting. There are currently 110 Statements of Concern on 107 titles. Two books were moved to Adult Fiction because of sexual conduct. Five books were reviewed and determined not to have sexual conduct and will remain in Teen Fiction.

Parish President Cooper has selected RCL Architecture to provide architectural and engineering services for the Lacombe Branch replacement and Meyer Engineers, LTD for architectural and engineering services for the Slidell Branch expansion. K. LaRocca reviewed the April 2025 and year-to-date service statistics.

T. Myers asked what happens to the old I.T. equipment after it is replaced. K. LaRocca explained that after a computer's five-year life cycle, it is repurposed as an Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC). Once a computer becomes unusable, it is declared surplus and sold at auction. T. DiMaggio added that the replacement cycle is five years to align with the warranty period.

### **C. Summer Reading Presentation**

T. DiMaggio introduced the Children's, Teen, and Adult Programming Coordinators and each gave a presentation about this year's Summer Reading Challenge. This year's theme is "Color Our World." All ages are encouraged to read for 720 minutes throughout the summer. Children's events this year include storytime, family programs, art-themed workshops, Storywalks, and special guests such as Art on the Geaux, Nature on the Geaux, and Louisiana Snake ID. Teen events include workshops such as art and design, cooking, creative writing, floral design, "Nailed It" baking competition, and Mystery Dinner Theater. Adult events include art classes such as pottery, flower arranging, jewelry making, mosaics, Painting with a Twist, games, and virtual events such as art and yoga classes. This year, 65 teens are participating as volunteers, gaining valuable first-time work experience. The Summer Reading kickoff parties are May 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Slidell Branch and May 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Madisonville Branch. There will be arts and crafts, photo ops, pet adoption opportunities, and community partners such as The Lake 94.7 radio station, fire departments, Tchefunky Playground jazz trio, and Blue Bell Ice Cream.

### **D. Spring Budget Amendment (Resolution # 25-011 Shaw)**

K. LaRocca presented the 2025 Spring Budget Amendment for the Board's consideration. The amendment explanation and spreadsheets were provided in the board packet. An overall increase in revenue of \$241,290 is expected based on additional Ad Valorem Revenue, State Revenue Sharing, interest income, and donations. The original 2025 budget was produced in July 2024. The budget amendment adjustments are based on how the library ended the 2024 fiscal year, on increased supply costs, and on projects such as the Mandeville Branch renovation. K. LaRocca reviewed each budget line adjustment.

K. LaRocca highlighted that the Proposals (Ballot) line is reduced by \$160,000 based on a new cost estimate for the millage election from the Parish Finance Office. The estimated cost of the election is between \$70,000 - \$90,000. K. LaRocca noted that the library is proposing to allocate the majority of this year's additional Ad Valorem funds (totaling \$196,000) back to the Parish to support the Mandeville Branch capital project.

K. LaRocca reviewed the Savings spreadsheet. Dedications for Outreach Vehicle and Millage election were removed as these costs are currently part of the operational budget. This leaves a current Unassigned Savings of \$609. The 2025 Spring Budget Amendment shows a decrease in expenditures of \$6,213. The additional revenue plus the reduced cost of the millage election will help fund Mandeville's Capital Project without having to use savings. The budget is balanced with \$82 left unbudgeted.

C. Branton asked for clarification that K. LaRocca is requesting Board approval to move funds between budget lines. K. LaRocca confirmed that is correct.

**MOTION:** C. Branton moved to adopt the 2025 Spring Budget Amendment. It was seconded by J. Corbin.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

James Prentice – He expressed concerns about the budget, specifically referencing salaries and benefits, the Lacombe Branch replacement, and the Slidell Branch expansion. He noted that the South Slidell Branch is very busy and suggested the Board consider directing funds to that area. He encouraged the Board to question the validity of expenses if red flags arise and to distinguish between genuine expenses vs. fluff.

**DISCUSSION:** There was no Board discussion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Branton: Yes Corbin: Yes Kesler: Yes Myers: Yes Thanars: Yes Shaw: Yes

**RESULT:** Motion to adopt carried. (Unanimous 6-0)

**E. Designation of Capital Funds – Mandeville Branch Renovation (Resolution # 25-012 Shaw)  
(includes presentation from Architect Vaughan Sollberger)**

K. LaRocca reported that planned improvements to the Mandeville Branch include carpet replacement, data line rewiring, restroom updates, and front entrance modifications to address flooding and to ensure Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compatibility. She explained that the original cost estimate for this project was \$200,000 and the project was designated by the Board and added to the Parish's capital budget in 2022. Quotes were accepted by the Parish on February 12, 2025. The lowest quote was \$290,000. In order for this project to move forward, the Board will need to designate more funding and the project will need to go out to bid again.

K. LaRocca explained that additional funding is needed to address flooding issues at the front entrance and emphasized the importance of prioritizing this concern. Additional funding for the project is possible due to the \$49,000 in unassigned 2024 interest income, \$59,783 in 2025 interest income, and the \$196,000 in additional Ad Valorem funds that were approved in the 2025 Spring Budget Amendment for the Mandeville Branch capital project.

C. Branton asked how the estimated cost increased to \$458,725 when the lowest quote received was \$290,000. K. LaRocca explained that carpet replacement, initially excluded, was reinstated, bringing the adjusted quote to \$381,500. Additional costs include a 15% contingency of \$57,225, as recommended by the Parish Engineering Department, and \$20,000 for design services, bringing the total estimate to \$458,725.

Architect Vaughan Sollberger gave a presentation on the Mandeville Branch renovation project, detailing the flooding issue at the main entrance vestibule and the plans to address it. Board members asked several infrastructure-related questions, which V. Sollberger responded to in detail. Discussion included subsurface drainage, ground sloping, street grade, ADA-compliant temporary restroom facilities, insurance, and overall construction logistics.

K. LaRocca clarified the project timeline, stating that if the Board approves the resolution, it will be introduced to the Parish Council for a capital budget amendment in July and voted on in August. The Parish Procurement Department will then initiate the bidding process, and she estimates the project could begin in January 2026.

A. Shaw complimented the architectural renderings in the presentation and thanked V. Sollberger for his time.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Becky Bohm – She complimented the project designs and expressed her belief that the additional cost for new carpet will be worthwhile.

**DISCUSSION:** There was no additional Board discussion.

**MOTION:** C. Branton moved to adopt Resolution 25-012. It was seconded by D. Thanars.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Branton: Yes Corbin: Yes Kesler: Yes Myers: Yes Thanars: Yes Shaw: Yes

**RESULT:** Motion to adopt carried. (Unanimous 6-0)

**F. Millage rate 2025 (Resolution # 25-013 Shaw)**

K. LaRocca explained that the Parish Council sets the library's millage rate annually and we must notify the Parish Government Finance Office of the library's requested millage rate for 2025. The St. Tammany Parish Library Ad Valorem levy is 4.35 mills as set by the recent election on March 29, 2025. K. LaRocca recommended maintaining the current voter-approved millage rate, which was reduced by 1 mill, for the upcoming year. The Board can evaluate rolling down in 2026.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no public comment.

**DISCUSSION:** There was no Board discussion.

**MOTION:** C. Branton moved to adopt Resolution 25-013. It was seconded by J. Corbin.


**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Branton: Yes Corbin: Yes Kesler: Yes Myers: Yes Thanars: Yes Shaw: Yes

**RESULT:** Motion to adopt carried. (Unanimous 6-0)

**3. Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by T. Myers and was seconded by D. Thanars. All were in favor, none were opposed, and no one was absent. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL:**

  
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