

**St. Tammany Parish Library
Board of Control Special Meeting / Rules and Regulations Committee Meeting
June 16, 2025
St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers
21490 Koop Dr.,
Mandeville, LA 70471
10:00 A.M.**

MINUTES

The meeting was scheduled as a Rules and Regulations Committee meeting. Due to a quorum of the Library Board of Control (LBOC), the meeting was held as a special board meeting.

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), Tamarah Myers (arrived after roll call), Ann Shaw, Dinah Thanars, Travis Thompson

Absent (1): Jill Kesler

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

A. Shaw introduced Travis Thompson as the new Library Board of Control member. A. Shaw explained the meeting rules and 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.

D. Thanars led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. NEW BUSINESS

A. Section 209 – Limits of Library Use – B. Overdue Fees (regarding exception to fines and fees for Mobile Library patrons)

DISCUSSION:

The committee discussed the current policy and suggested changes. K. LaRocca answered questions from Board members and provided clarification on current and proposed policies. They discussed incorporating specific procedures from the staff Procedures Manual into the Rules and Regulations policies. They discussed fines, fees, overdue items, lost materials, replacement costs, refunds, damaged items, partial payments, and Interlibrary Loans. K. LaRocca explained that the Board passed a resolution on February 26, 2024, stating that there would be no fines, fees, or replacement costs associated with Books By Mail and Lobby Stop services provided by the Mobile Library. K. LaRocca recommends this directive to be added to the policy. A revised policy will be drafted incorporating the committee's suggestions and the exception to fines and fees for Mobile Library patrons.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Lisa Rustemeyer – She asked questions regarding partial payments, Interlibrary Loan fines, and fines on different family member's library cards. T. DiMaggio and K. LaRocca answered her questions.

B. Section 209 – Limits of Library Use – C. Other Fees (regarding discontinuation of fees for faxing and exception to fees for printing for U.S. Military Veterans)

DISCUSSION:

K. LaRocca reviewed the current policy for Section 209 – Limits of Library Use – C. Other Fees, and the suggested changes. She noted that some of the topics that were previously discussed are stated in this section of the policy. The committee discussed the issuance of out-of-parish library cards and the associated annual fee of \$30. K. LaRocca explained that the \$30 fee was originally set many years ago, based on the estimated average property tax contribution at that time. She noted that the Board may wish to review and consider updating the fee. Board members expressed varying opinions regarding the issuance of out-of-parish library cards to individuals who are not residents of St. Tammany Parish.

The committee discussed discontinuing fees for faxing and printing for United States Military veterans, active duty service members, reservists, and members of the Louisiana National Guard. C. Branton would like this policy change publicized. The committee also discussed the possibility of discontinuing fax fees for all patrons, as the library incurs no additional costs for providing fax services.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Lisa Rustemeyer – She spoke in favor of removing barriers to library services and supported the suggestion to discontinue fax and printing fees for military veterans and service members.

C. Section 407 – Statements of Concern About Library Resources (revisiting Statements of Concern policies)

DISCUSSION:

K. LaRocca reviewed the current policy for Section 407 – Statements of Concern About Library Resources and referred to a list of suggestions that were made by board members and the public for discussion. The committee discussed three out of the five bullet point suggestions that were listed.

The first bullet point stated: "No discussion of Statements of Concern on books or other materials intended for adults – only Children's or Teen." C. Branton expressed concern that this suggestion takes away the ability for patrons to request that a book be removed from the library, noting that patrons have the right to make that request. The committee discussed additional scenarios, such as situations where an item has already been addressed administratively and the requested outcome has been achieved (such as relocating a book to the Adult section). E. Couvillon provided clarification on the current policy, briefly summarized the previous process, and highlighted key points in LA R.S. 25:225. The committee reviewed and polished the policy's wording and phrasing to enhance clarity, incorporating suggested edits and expanding sentences as needed. E. Couvillon advised on which directives need not be codified in Section 407 and may instead be addressed via a Board resolution. E. Couvillon emphasized that every patron will still have due process rights to challenge or appeal any decisions to the Board if they so choose.

A. Shaw called for public comment regarding bullet point one.

PUBLIC COMMENT #1:

Becky Bohm – She inquired whether a book's placement could be challenged after relocation following a previous SOC, and E. Couvillon confirmed that another patron may submit an SOC challenging the placement of that title. B. Bohm is in favor of excluding SOCs for titles that have always been located in the Adult collection.

Jean Wiggan – Abita Springs, LA. She agreed with the previous speaker and supports excluding SOCs for titles that have always been located in the Adult collection. She opposed reviewing SOCs for Adult books when the complainant's request is to remove the book from the library.

Lisa Rustemeyer – She opposes telling an Adult what they can and cannot read and considers it a violation of her rights.

Devin McGee – He emphasized the importance of the SOC process, discernment, content curation, and cited Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996. He expressed concern that the Parish President has delegated his role on the Board to someone he says prevents discussion of the term "access."

DISCUSSION:

Discussion began regarding the second bullet point: "More than two Statements of Concern at a time - board can set time limit for discussion and hear all public comments at once." The committee discussed ways to streamline the review process in order to expedite the resolution of pending SOCs. They discussed consolidating the review of multiple SOC submissions from a single patron into a special board meeting, noting that addressing them individually in regular meetings may be too cumbersome. C. Branton suggested that the Board hold quarterly special meetings where 10 books can be addressed at one time. The committee inquired about the allotted speaking time for public comments on multiple titles. E. Couvillon referenced Louisiana's Open Meetings law, LA R.S. 42:14 and stated that the Board can adopt reasonable rules and restrictions regarding such comment period. The Board will need to determine what a reasonable amount of time should be for discussing each book.

A. Shaw called for public comment regarding bullet point two.

PUBLIC COMMENT #2:

Becky Bohm – She is not in favor of a time limit and stated that everyone should have the opportunity to speak for their allotted time.

Jean Wiggan – She asked for clarification on whether they are considering the review of 10 books in one meeting. E. Couvillon explained that the committee is discussing ways to develop a solution on how to address the backlog of SOCs and are open to hearing public input. A. Shaw clarified that these are just suggestions to consider. J. Wiggan asked for the Board to review no more than 2-3 books at a time.

Lisa Rustemeyer – She expressed confusion about how the Board will determine which books will be reviewed at one time. K. LaRocca stated that the suggestion was to group together and review multiple SOCs submitted by one person. C. Branton mentioned additional suggestions of how to group books together to streamline the review process.

Becky Bohm – She commented that she has challenged 4-5 books and she would like them to be reviewed and discussed individually.

E. Couvillon suggested using the current staff committee review procedure and establishing additional committees to complete reviews, send the decision letters, and have the Board address any submitted appeals. She noted that this approach would not impede anyone's due process rights.

DISCUSSION:

Discussion began regarding the third bullet point: "Must be specific about page numbers (if the book has them) when expressing concerns." The committee discussed the suggestion and agreed that SOCs should include page numbers for the specific content in question (if page numbers exist) when the complaint is about specific content rather than shelving location. The committee noted that some books were challenged due to shelving location after relocation, and considered addressing them cumulatively at a special meeting.

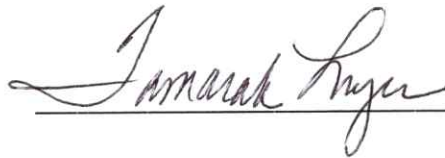
E. Couvillon advised that page numbers are important when reviewing challenges that are subject to LA R.S. 25:225. She offered to draft appropriate wording to add to the policy for the committee's review.

A. Shaw announced that the meeting must conclude, as the Council Chambers was reserved for only two hours and it is nearing the 12:00 p.m. closing time. There were concerns from the audience because there was no time left for further public comment. E. Couvillon clarified that this was a Rules and Regulations Committee meeting to discuss the topics before proposing any changes to the Board, and that no changes will take effect without a Board vote. C. Branton stated that the audience can email their comments to the Board. E. Couvillon explained that attendees can request their email comments be included in the meeting record and a copy will be appended to the minutes.

2. Adjournment

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

APPROVAL:



A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tamarah Rye", is written over a horizontal line.