

St. Tammany Parish Library Board of Control Special Meeting
January 21, 2026
Madisonville Branch
1123 Main Street, Madisonville, LA 70447
8:30 A.M.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Calling of the Roll (C. Branton)

The meeting was called to order by Charles (Chuck) Branton, Board President. Brent Geiger, Co-Interim Director, called the roll and declared that a quorum was present.

Present (7): Glenn Baham, Chuck Branton, Tamarah Myers, Pennie Petrie, Councilman Larry Rolling (designated by Parish President Mike Cooper), Dinah Thanars, Travis Thompson

Absent (0): None

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance – D. Thanars led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Invocation – T. Thompson led the Invocation.

4. Introductory Comments (C. Branton)

C. Branton explained the meeting rules and the rules for public comment. E. Couvillon reviewed the legal procedures for entering and exiting Executive Session to conduct interviews in accordance with LA R.S. 42:17(A)(1) and noted that she confirmed the procedures with the Louisiana Legislative Auditor. C. Branton introduced Kimberly Schwartz, Human Resources Manager, who will conduct a significant portion of the interviews.

5. Interview of Prospective Candidates by the Library Board of Control

INTERVIEW – Sonnet Ireland (8:45 a.m.) – Sonnet Ireland opted to be fully interviewed in an open public meeting. K. Schwartz and the Board conducted the interview.

A brief recess was held before the next interview.

INTERVIEW – Trevor Collings (10:41 a.m.) – Trevor Collings opted to be fully interviewed in Executive Session.

MOTION: D. Thanars moved to enter Executive Session to conduct the interview of Trevor Collings. It was seconded by P. Petrie.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Kristen Luchsinger – She stated that she would like to hear from the candidate, noting that members of the public were in attendance and were hoping to hear the candidates' views.

VOTE: Rolling: No Thompson: Yes Baham: Yes Branton: Yes Myers: Yes Thanars: No Petrie: Yes
RESULT: Motion carried and the Board entered Executive Session. (Yes – 5 | No – 2)

The interview was conducted in Executive Session with the Board, K. Schwartz, and candidate present.

MOTION: G. Baham moved to exit Executive Session. It was seconded by L. Rolling.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

VOTE: Baham: Yes Branton: Yes Myers: Yes Petrie: Yes Rolling: Yes Thanars: Yes Thompson: Yes

RESULT: Motion carried and the Board returned to open session. (Unanimous – 7)

In response to the earlier public comment, Trevor Collings offered a post-interview statement outlining his library experience and credentials. A lunch recess was held until 1:30 p.m.

INTERVIEW – Dale Saenz (1:30 p.m.) – Dale Saenz opted to be fully interviewed in Executive Session.

MOTION: G. Baham moved to enter Executive Session to conduct the interview of Dale Saenz. It was seconded by T. Myers.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

VOTE: Baham: Yes Branton: Yes Myers: Yes Petrie: Yes Rolling: No Thanars: Yes Thompson: Yes

RESULT: Motion carried and the Board entered Executive Session. (Yes – 6 | No – 1)

The interview was conducted in Executive Session with the Board, K. Schwartz, and candidate present.

MOTION: G. Baham moved to exit Executive Session. It was seconded by P. Petrie.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

VOTE: Baham: Yes Branton: Yes Myers: Yes Petrie: Yes Rolling: Yes Thanars: Yes Thompson: Yes

RESULT: Motion carried and the Board returned to open session. (Unanimous – 7)

INTERVIEW – Stephen Banister (3:30 p.m.) – Stephen Banister opted for the first portion of his interview to take place in an open public meeting and for the second portion to take place in Executive Session. K. Schwartz and the Board conducted the first portion of the interview.

MOTION: G. Baham moved to enter Executive Session to conduct the second portion of S. Banister's interview. It was seconded by D. Thanars.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

VOTE: Baham: Yes Branton: Yes Myers: Yes Petrie: Yes Rolling: No Thanars: Yes Thompson: Yes

RESULT: Motion carried and the Board entered Executive Session. (Yes – 6 | No – 1)

The second portion of the interview was conducted in Executive Session with the Board, K. Schwartz, and candidate present.

MOTION: L. Rolling moved to exit Executive Session. It was seconded by T. Myers.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

VOTE: Baham: Yes Branton: Yes Myers: Yes Petrie: Yes Rolling: Yes Thanars: Yes Thompson: Yes

RESULT: Motion carried and the Board returned to open session. (Unanimous – 7)

6. Board Discussion of Candidates for Library Director Position

E. Couvillon advised that the Board may enter Executive Session to discuss the candidates; however, discussion regarding Sonnet Ireland must be conducted in public session, as she elected that option.

MOTION: L. Rolling moved to enter Executive Session to discuss the candidates. It was seconded by G. Baham.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

VOTE: Baham: Yes Branton: Yes Myers: Yes Petrie: Yes Rolling: Yes Thanars: Yes Thompson: Yes

RESULT: Motion carried and the Board entered Executive Session. (Unanimous – 7)

The Board entered Executive Session to discuss the candidates. E. Couvillon and K. Schwartz were present.

MOTION: D. Thanars moved to exit Executive Session. It was seconded by G. Baham.

PUBLIC COMMENT: James Prentice – He asked if a decision was made in Executive Session and asked if the public can comment on any of the topics.

E. Couvillon clarified that no decision was made in Executive Session and that the Board was reconvening to discuss the candidate who elected to be discussed in public. If there is a motion to offer a letter of engagement to hire a candidate, public comment would be taken on that candidate prior to a vote by the Board.

VOTE: Baham: Yes Branton: Yes Myers: Yes Petrie: Yes Rolling: Yes Thanars: Yes Thompson: Yes

RESULT: Motion carried and the Board returned to open session. (Unanimous – 7)

DISCUSSION: C. Branton thanked all four candidates for their applications and for being present, noting that some traveled a significant distance to attend. He thanked B. Geiger and T. DiMaggio for overseeing library operations during this process, K. Schwartz for her Human Resources assistance, and the public for their interest.

The Board discussed each candidate in the order in which they were interviewed: Sonnet Ireland, Trevor Collings, Dale Saenz, and Stephen Banister. Board members shared general impressions and highlighted relevant experience and skills.

7. Resolution to Employ St. Tammany Parish Library Director (C. Branton)

C. Branton read the resolution aloud.

MOTION: T. Thompson moved to approve the hiring of Trevor Collings as Library Director at an annual salary of \$120,000, plus associated employee benefits, with a 10-day period for acceptance of the offer. The motion was seconded by G. Baham.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jamie Segura – She expressed disappointment with the Board’s selection and the overall process, provided her reasons and stated that the interview questions did not cover all of the topics she considered important.

James Prentice – He stated that he was not there to promote any particular candidate, but applauded the Board for their efforts and commitment.

Lisa Rustemeyer – She appreciated that all candidates hold an MLIS but raised concerns that four have experience only in smaller library systems. She disagreed with the Board’s selection and overall process and explained her reasons.

Devin McGee – He commented that one candidate’s answer on handling library content issues differed from what she had expressed and demonstrated publicly, and he provided further observations.

Jean Wiggin – She raised concerns about the overall process and questioned why a highly qualified female applicant was not selected as a finalist for an interview. She also asked why two of the candidates chose not to speak publicly and instead chose Executive Session.

DISCUSSION: E. Couvillon stated that the process of interviewing in Executive Session was confirmed by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor. She also clarified that T. Collings made a public statement on the record after Executive Session, although some members of the public had already left for lunch.

G. Baham noted that thorough background checks were conducted on the candidates. L. Rolling stated that the Executive Sessions were handled extremely professionally and he was overall impressed with the process.

C. Branton reiterated that the Board has relied on the advice of legal counsel and has been very careful to follow the law. He understands that people may not be happy with some aspects of the process. He applauded the Personnel Committee members and K. Schwartz for their work.

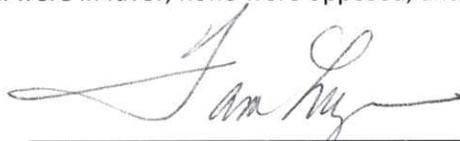
VOTE: Baham: Yes Branton: Yes Myers: Yes Petrie: Yes Rolling: Yes Thanars: Yes Thompson: Yes

RESULT: Motion to hire Trevor Collings as Library Director carried. (Unanimous – 7)

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by G. Baham and was seconded by T. Thompson. All were in favor, none were opposed, and one member was absent. Motion carried.

APPROVAL:



Tamarah Myers, Board Secretary/Treasurer