

The Regular meeting of the Library Board of Control was held at the Lockport Branch on Monday, January 25, 2021 at 5:30pm with the following:

PRESENT: Bennie Smith
Courtney Hubbell
Robert Rome
Ruby LeBlanc
Selma Malcombe
Judy Bazare, exited the meeting at 5:35pm
Daniel Lorraine, Council Liaison
Archie Chiasson, Ex-Officio

ABSENT: Talisha Chiquet

Also present were Mrs. Laura Sanders, Director and Mrs. Dana Clement, Administrative Assistant for Lafourche Parish Public Library.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said in unison.

Ms. Smith stated after roll call, we have a quorum and can move forward with our meeting.

A motion to accept the LBC agenda was made by Mrs. Hubbell, seconded by Mrs. Bazare, and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Smith presented a plaque to Mrs. Judy Bazare for her 7 years of dedicate service on the Library Board of Control. Mrs. Bazare expressed her appreciation to the Board and stated it was a great honor and wishes us all the best.

A motion to accept the minutes of November 5, 2020 regular meeting was made by Mrs. Malcombe, seconded by Mrs. Hubbell, and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to accept the minutes of January 11, 2021 special meeting was made by Mr. Rome, seconded by Mrs. Hubbell and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion to accept the minutes of January 11, 2021 Finance Committee meeting was made by Mrs. Hubbell, seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc and the motion carried unanimously.

Public wishing to address the board: Mr. Lorraine approached the Board, stating the Larose Civic Center is asking for help with the expense to cover the cost on their sewer clean out. He explained the Board of Health has contacted the Civic Center and since the Larose branch shares the sewer system, they would like the Library to help pay. Mrs. Sanders told Mr. Daniel and the Board, that she would be happy to contact their representative and see how we can assist.

Finance Report: With Mrs. Lucas absent, Mrs. Sanders gave the report, stating the December financials show we ended 2020 with \$8.5M although some revenues and expenses will continue to be allocated to 2020 and once the parish finalizes expenditures you will receive another December report. Project updates: Thibodaux Branch is in its final stages. The branch is closed to the public while furniture and installation begins; our target date to reopen is Feb 22. There is about \$554,000 left to pay on this project. South Lafourche HVAC is complete, just waiting on a few punch list items to be done; \$500 is left to be paid on this project. The Lockport Entryway supplemental appropriation is on the Jan 26 council agenda for approval, and then will go out to bid for 30 days. We've paid \$18,000 on this project so far. With no other discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Rome, seconded by Mrs. Hubbell, to accept the Finance Report. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Report: Mrs. Sanders reported managing the daily operations of the library system. Mrs. Sanders reported that the residents of Lauren Lane have filed a lawsuit against BETCO and Lafourche Parish Government due to grievances related to Thibodaux Branch construction issues. I will keep the Board updated as the Parish attorney is investigating the matter. The Parish has been helping us

with our Entergy accounts for almost all of our branches. There was a hold up with the mail and some of our buildings were pending power shut off due to non-payment. I gave you a list of the Grants we were awarded last year and some that we have been awarded this year. This includes a generous donation from the Thibodaux Friends of the Library for our new Makerspace area at Thibodaux. Mrs. Sanders reminded everyone that our goal has always been to purchase supplies locally but there are times when the item isn't available in the area and that is when we go to Amazon. A motion was made by Mrs. Hubbell, seconded by Mrs. Malcombe, to accept the Director's report. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

1. Discussion and approval on Revised Memorandum of Understanding between Lafourche Parish Gov't & National Park Service. Mrs. Sanders stated, as you recall we recently approved this MOU but when it was sent to the Park Service to be signed they discovered there were items that needed revision. The items that were amended were just some housekeeping and language corrections, nothing material that impacts the overall agreement terms.

A motion was made by Mrs. Hubbell, seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc, to recommend the MOU be approved by the Council. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Discussion and approval to move the LBC February 22nd regular board meeting to Thibodaux Branch. Mrs. Sanders explained that Thibodaux Branch will be re-opening to the public on Feb 22 and thought this might be a great time to host our next meeting there if the Board would like.

A motion was made by Mrs. LeBlanc, seconded by Mrs. Hubbell, to move the February 22 meeting to Thibodaux Branch. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Discussion and approval to accept the LBC Finance Committee recommendations. Mrs. Sanders explained, at our Finance Committee meeting we talked about our 40% reduction in revenue. This reduction leaves the library with a \$2.1M loss in funding. Due to this loss we cut a million dollars out of our budget and the other \$1.1M will come out of our fund balance. Our books and materials, along with databases have been cut in half. Our Personnel Services category is our biggest and most expensive category but it pays for our greatest assets and what makes us an award-winning library – our staff. It is also the category that was pointed out to us as a concern from some of our Council members and unfortunately where we need to also make some cuts. After much discussion, the Finance Committee recommended that we alter and reduce some of our branch hours. This will allow us the ability to reduce our Personnel Category by changing our full-time staff from 40 hours a week to 36 hours a week with them still retaining their full time status and benefits. I do realize it's not ideal but this was the only way we could reduce our salary category without anyone losing their jobs. Part-time staff will remain the same at 29 hours per week. There will be an exception of six (6) administrators who must continue to work 40 hours but will be unable to collect comp time. This is the same plan that was utilized by Terrebonne Library; they also changed full-time status to 35-36 hours. It is also utilized by the Parish with their employees. With the reduction in our books and materials purchases, patrons will still be able to get the materials they want we just won't have as many copies available. This will increase item hold times. It's been very stressful and breaks my heart to propose these cuts, but we will make every effort to provide the same services for which we are known. Again, Mrs. Sanders stated, I understand that I oversee the daily operations of the library, and that library hours and staffing are my responsibility, but I feel this is such an important decision that I am asking the Board for their input and approval on these changes. I feel, and the Finance Committee agreed, that it would be fiscally irresponsible to have a reduction in funding and not reduce our budget. We do have reserves, but the State Library has always said that best practices state we should keep a year in reserve, this is what almost all libraries do. At the very least we should have \$3M in reserves for emergencies.

A motion was made by Mr. Rome, seconded by Mrs. Malcombe, to accept the Finance Committee recommendations; reducing the 2021 Budget and cutting Branch hours. A roll call vote was called: Mr. Rome yes, Mrs. Chiquet Absent, Mrs. Bazare absent, Mrs. Hubbell yes, Mrs. LeBlanc yes, Mrs. Malcombe yes and Ms. Smith yes. The motion carried 5-0-2-0.

With no further business to discuss, a motion for adjournment was made by Mrs. Hubbell, seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc, and carried unanimously. The Library Board of Control was adjourned at approximately 6:36pm.