

## JEFFERSON PARISH LIBRARY BOARD REGULAR MEETING

East Bank Regional Library – Administration Conference Room  
4747 W. Napoleon Ave., Metairie, LA 70001

**April 18, 2023**  
**MINUTES**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Lisa Conescu, Patricia Cox, Becky Knight, Judy Mills, and Margaret Thompson

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** James Simmons

**LIBRARY STAFF PRESENT:** Irene Lunkin, Melissa Muhoberac, Antoinette Scott, and Jessica Styons

**OTHER PARISH STAFF:** Cherreen Gegenheimer, CAA and Toni Hurley, Parish Attorney for Library

**GUEST:** Marketing/Outreach Manager David Johnson and WBR Library Manager Danny Cangelosi.

Becky called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Cox/Conescu made a motion to dispense with the reading of the March minutes and accept them as written. Motion carried.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

- Library Property Manager Offord Langston is our acting Library Maintenance Superintendent since Roy recent retirement. It is exciting to announce that Offord is also the Library's Employee of the Year. He will be recognized by Parish President Cynthia Lee Sheng at next week's Council meeting.
- The outside contractor has started work at North Kenner library to help complete the renovation process faster. The walls were demolished and now they are working on framing for the storage closet, study rooms, and the manager's office. All is moving along.
- Pre-construction meetings are being arranged for the Grand Isle Library elevator installation and the roof project. Flooring has been installed and maintenance is painting and adding the cabinetry in the staff area. The next phase will consist of our IT team installing the technology and technical equipment. We hope to have the library reopened this summer.
- The roof at Westwego Library is being inspected tomorrow. The new flooring and a new circulation desk is in place. We expect the new shelving units to be in place mid-June; then we can plan the reopening.
- We continue to work on getting the contract signed by the contractor for the Avondale Library construction project. The next step will be to schedule the pre-construction meeting.

- The resolution authorizing the advertisement for sealed bids for the Wagner Library Addition/Renovation project was passed at the last Council meeting.
- Jessica supports and encourages overall collaboration and engagement among staff and for staff to do the same with other organizations. Yesterday we had a Library Leadership Team meeting with the Parish President's Executive staff where we shared a lot of ideas. Staff continue to participate in conferences and classes; in fact, one of our staff members will give an online presentation at the American Library Association (ALA) Conference this June. Recently our Special Collections staff met with NOPL Archives team.
- On May 20, we will have a festival to launch our Library of Things (LoT) collection at the Terrytown Library. The festival, organized by Skye Cornelia and Terrytown Branch Manager Bet Lopreste, will include outdoor and indoor demonstrations of some of the items available for loan from the LoT collection, storytime and crafts, and food trucks on site. They are still in the planning stages, but more information will be presented at next month's meeting.
- West Bank Regional Branch Manager Danny Cangelosi spoke on the comment letter and how the staff at WBR made the patron's day. He mentioned how the Children's department is a big draw for WBR; and it was reported to him that about 200 people attended last week's festival, *Medieval Times at the Library*. Danny mentioned monthly programming at WBR includes book clubs meetings, movie night, and sewing club meetings. He also mentioned WBR services a diverse population and he would like to start hosting ESL and citizenship classes, and would love to see the library as a hub for the community and partner with other agencies to offer public assistance and programming events.
- David, Marketing/Outreach Manager, reported WBR Children's Librarian Jennifer LaBurre appeared on the Fox 8 morning news to promote the renaissance festival at WBR. A taping of this segment is posted on our Facebook page. Lots of people attended the Friends book sale this past week. David and Angie attended the Grand Isle Migratory Bird celebration this past weekend. They registered many people for library cards and had available for loan backpacks from the LoT collection that included binoculars. David reported their presence meant a lot to the residents. Last week, Parish President Cynthia Lee Sheng read to an audience of elementary students in the EBR Children's section. We are in the planning stages of organizing Summer Reading Program kick-off events at the EBR (6/3) and WBR (6/4) libraries.

Jessica said she is thankful for the Friends members that volunteered at the book sale. Margaret mentioned after the book sale, the Friends donated the puzzles left over to a Veterans home. She also mentioned the Genealogy series presented by Gwen went well and would like to see it presented at WBR. Chris Smith reported plans are in place to start the Genealogy series at WBR this summer-September. Danny mentioned previous Genealogy classes at WBR held during the daytime were well received.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Becky read the proposed language for revising Article 4, section 1 of the Library Board bylaws that read

*Regular meetings of the Jefferson Parish Library Board shall be held monthly on the third Tuesday of every month at the East Bank Regional Library, or on such dates as set forth in the yearly calendar. The yearly calendar containing the dates for each*

*monthly meeting shall be voted on at the regular meeting in December of the year prior. The Board by majority vote may reschedule any regular meeting where necessary and where within the notice requirements of Open Meetings Law. Special meetings may be called as required.*

Thompson/Mills made a motion to accept the proposed language for revising Article 4, section 1 of the Library Board bylaws as written. Motion carried. All in favor.

Lisa asked if the time of the May meeting can be changed to 4:00 PM instead of 1:00 PM.

Conescu/Mills moved to change the time of the May meeting to 4:00 PM instead of 1:00 PM. Motion carried. All in favor.

#### **PUBLIC REMARKS:**

Dr. Elizabeth Deitch stated she is concerned about the challenged books in the library. She stated it is vital to have books that feature LGBT characters, which is what the challenges are about. She feels the books give children and teenagers the opportunity to read about people who are not like themselves and that it is a value to the community to encourage teenagers developing into adults to have empathy and understanding for a community full of diverse individuals. She also mentioned the process of the Statement of Concern About Library Materials is vague and would like the process to be spelled out more clearly.

Pat Tunmar stated the library is a public forum available to all kinds of people. She stated she does not think that one group of individuals should eliminate any person's ability to read and feels that exposure to ideas is the way we grow and learn. She stated we don't learn anything when we suppress access to knowledge.

Micheal Lowe stated he is a patron of the North Kenner library and thanked the library and the board for all the programming that take place in the libraries. He stated his son has a disability and he and wife bring him to library programs to get him out and expose him to everything. He feels he is taken out of his comfort zone too while at the programming events, which he is glad because he gets the opportunity to learn new things too. He asked if the events happening at the library can be posted at that library.

The next meeting is May 16, 2023 at 4:00 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 1:46 p.m.