

JEFFERSON PARISH LIBRARY BOARD REGULAR MEETING

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

March 17, 2026

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Bales, Jackie Jones, Becky Knight, and Gordon Wadge

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Lisa Conescu, Debra Cooper, and Patricia Cox

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

OTHER PARISH STAFF: Assistant Parish Attorney Meredith Hearn

GUESTS: North Kenner Associate Emily Bennett, Marketing Manager David Johnson, and Inter-library Loan Associate Cathy Miller-Moran

Gordon called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM.

Bales/Jones made a motion to dispense with the reading of the February minutes and accept them as written. Motion carried.

Gordon reported he read where Jessica Styons was voted Louisiana Library Director of the Year by the Louisiana Library Association and thought it would be nice to acknowledge her and have her acknowledged at a council meeting. Jessica thanked him. She said she received the award during an awards ceremony at the LLA Conference.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- Jessica introduced Inter-library Loan Associate Cathy Miller Moran who will be retiring with 43 years of service this Friday. She is being celebrated at a “Last Clock Out” party this Friday afternoon, the board was invited to attend. Cathy said she’s been here to witness all types of changes in our Library system and commented on how the cataloging of books, CDs, and DVDs changed from staff manually typing and taping the barcodes and labels, to the items now arriving already cataloged. Cathy added her Parish career started in the Water Department and she later transferred to the Library as an Associate at North Kenner Library before being transferred to Inter-Library Loan. At her Hollywood themed party, she plans to leave staff with a message of sharing love and kindness. Her next chapter after retirement involves her using her mass communications degree from Xavier University, working with people, and considering doing a podcast. The board thanked her for her service.
- North Kenner Associate Emily Bennett is our February Employee of the Month. Jessica introduced her as the “go-to girl” at her branch and is a “superstar” amongst her peers. She displays creativity and is active at JPAS. Emily commented she started as a student volunteer at North Kenner Library when she was 15. She received a degree in psychology, as at that time in her life she wanted to be a child psychologist because of her love for working with people and children. Since working at North Kenner and her love for helping the community, she is now

considering getting her masters in library science to continue her tenure with the Library. She was thrilled to be the EOM and thanked everyone.

- The Louisiana Library Association (LLA) Annual Conference was held in Lake Charles this year. Several staff attended and some did presentations. EBR Manager Daniel Perez, who is the recording secretary for LLA's Public Library Section, presented Concordia Parish Library the award for *Library of the Year*. Terrytown Manager Bet Lopreste, Lakeshore Manager Maria Piacun, Belle Terre Manager Nicholas Caluda, Special Programming Manager Brigid Castro and Network Administrator Ricardo Mesa all gave presentations at the conference. Jessica coordinated exhibits and co-presented with Nicholas on Library Anniversary events. While coordinating exhibits, Jessica saw the Dolly Parton Imagination Book Program and will meet with them about bringing the program to JPL. Our staff's programming events are gaining recognition from all over and we have increasing requests about our programming and for our staff to present presentations at conferences. Jessica commented "our success is the success of our residents".
- Last week Jessica, along with our public services supervisor and EBR and WBR managers, attended a JEDCO meeting where they shared information for future partnerships to better support the community and businesses.
- The Library is working with the Parish's Attorney Office, Public Information, and EIS Offices on developing our AI policy to ensure we are implementing safe guidelines and a policy that works well.
- Items going before council for approval tomorrow include renewals of our Freegal and Midwest Tape contracts, and a resolution granting substantial completion for EBR Makerspace construction project.
- The Clerk of Court Office recently relocated voting precincts to the library which required us to make space in patron areas at some of our libraries to accommodate the additional voting machines. The Lakeshore library will be closed to patrons on election dates, but staff will be on duty to accept materials patrons wish to return. Voting machines will be in patron areas at Westwego and Old Metairie too; but after the 5/16 election, we will determine if those branches need to close for future election dates.
- Facilities Report: Lakeshore library roof and HVAC installation project will start next week; at some point, the library will have to close in order for the contractors to complete the HVAC installation. Furniture for the Makerspace has arrived, we are still waiting for some equipment. Cleaning of the Technical Services department should be complete by the end of the month.
- Our Outreach team will be at the Gretna Farmers Market this Saturday with a vision board for the community to give input toward the WBR Renovation project. At recent events where they have brought the vision board, the community showed a lot of interest in the arts and crafts areas.
- Invitations to the Taylor the Cat and Travis the Dog's Wedding were distributed to the board. The event hosted by JPL and JPAWS will accommodate an attendance of up to 100 people, donated cake for dogs and cake for humans will be served and pets will be on site for adoption. Jessica added she would be there in her finest wedding attire.

Bob inquired about the planning process for the new River Ridge/South Kenner Library. Jessica informed him the project is going before our GAB Committee. If GAB approves, the project will go out for bid. The architect estimates 15 months for construction after the start date. Bob added he toured the Lafitte library and loved how everything was in one area.

Marketing Manager David Johnson reported on this week's and upcoming programming events: local musician and song writer Canine Crooner, has written a song for the Taylor the Cat and Travis the Dog's Wedding that he will sing at the event. Tonight at EBR is the author event *Ozzy & Me*, tomorrow's author event will be *Run, Darling* and Thursday's event will be a lecture *Making Groceries*. He added JPL hosts about 100 events per week. On April 11, we will host our 3rd annual car meet at EBR. Our digital team will do a library tour to help patrons digitize old film and VHS tapes. Their first stops will be Lafitte, Lakeshore, and Rosedale libraries. This event is a big part of our makerspace.

Bob commented on one of the comment letters which suggested a seed library at JPL. Jessica said a seed library had been on the library's radar for a while. Bob, Gordon and Jackie shared ideas and people of interest for kick starting a seed library and community garden at libraries. Bob added he would be happy to be on a committee for a seed library. Gordon asked that we follow-up on ideas for a seed library and community garden.

Jessica reported our 2025 programming statistics have increased from last year and we have seen the most growth in digital usage.

Gordon asked if we could discuss how we partner with JP Schools at next month's meeting.

David announced our lectures are filmed and broadcasted on JPTV and YouTube for anyone wishing to view them. He also announced free shuttles were available for last week's New Orleans Book festival at Tulane.

The next Library Board meeting is April 21, 2026.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 PM.