



Livingston Parish Library Board of Control Special Board Meeting October 28, 2025

Minutes

The Livingston Parish Library Board of Control met in a special session on October 28, 2025. The meeting occurred at the Denham Springs – Walker Branch, 8101 US Highway 190, Denham Springs, LA 70726.

1. Call to Order

Jennifer Dorhauer, Board President, called the meeting to order at **6:09 p.m.**

2. Invocation

Ms. Dorhauer called for an invocation from Mr. Jonathan Davis.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Those in attendance said the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Roll Call

Present: Becky Morgan, Kristan Whann, Rodlyn Hammond, Jennifer Dorhauer, Jonathan Davis, Sheila Goins, Patricia Wilson, DeWanna Christian, Trey Cowell, Randy Delatte (Ex Officio)

Absent:

Also Present: Kyla Webb (Interim Director), Dustin Cotton (Assistant Director of Branch Services), Julia Falcon (Assistant Director of Support Services), Shelley Taylor (Human Resource Manager)

5. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Ms. Dorhauer states that public comments will be allowed on each agenda item that is voted on.

Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comment.

3 names were listed on the public speaking signup sheet or spoke on various agenda items: Clark Forrest, Summer Smith, and Marla Elsea

6. New Business

- a. Executive Session – Consideration of Settlement Offer from the Attorney General's Office in the matter of *Liz Murrill, et al. v. Livingston Parish Library Board of Control, et al.*, Suit No. 189362, 21st Judicial District Court, Parish of Livingston – Jennifer Dorhauer, Board President

MOTION by Randy Delatte to go into Executive Session, seconded by Jonathan Davis

The Board of Control left the meeting to attend Executive Session at 6:12 p.m.

MOTION to return to the meeting made by Trey Cowell, seconded by Dewanna Christian. The Board of Control returned to the meeting and resumed at 6:38 p.m.

- b. Discussion: Acceptance of the Settlement Offer from the Attorney General's Office in the matter of *Liz Murrill, et al. v. Livingston Parish Library Board of Control, et al.*, Suit No. 189362, 21st Judicial District Court, Parish of Livingston – Jennifer Dorhauer, Board President

MOTION to accept consent judgment made by Randy Delatte, seconded by Rodlyn Hammond

Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comment.

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote.

Yea: Christian, Cowell, Davis, Delatte, Goins, Hammond, Morgan, Whann, Wilson, Dorhauer

Nay:

Absent:

Abstain:

The motion carried 10-0

c. Discussion & Decision: Regarding the Hiring Committee's Recommendation for the Appointment of a New Livingston Parish Library Director – Jennifer Dorhauer, Board President & Hiring Committee Chair

Ms. Dorhauer states that interviews for the position took place last week, and although there were three candidates, one withdrew, so they only interviewed two candidates. Out of the two candidates, there is only one that they consider a viable candidate based on education and experience in the director's position.

Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comment.

Clark Forrest spoke to the board and stated that he wants the *"most qualified candidate as library director,"* and goes on to state, *"I want an expert in library science."*

Ms. Sheila Goins asks Ms. Shelley Taylor, Human Resources Manager, if the application listed MLS and MLIS, to which Ms. Taylor responds that it listed MLIS.

Ms. Dewanna Christian asks if the job was advertised as MLS, per policy.

Summer Smith stated that was the question she was going to ask as well. Ms. Smith noted that without having MLS listed, we were breaking our own policy.

Ms. Kyla Webb clarified the confusion by stating, *"It is essentially nomenclature terminology developed by the school, but it essentially represents the same degree. So, it is not a major difference; it is simply terminology. The curriculum is going to focus on the same material."*

Marla Elsea addressed the board by stating that both degrees are the same thing.

Mr. Cowell states that the *"MLS is an older degree that wasn't advertised according to our policy, then we could be missing candidates who could have applied who maybe has an older degree that matches our policy. I think there are other issues, like the process and the full board not being able to request public questions for the candidate at hand. I think that it would be wise that we possibly revisit our process, and also possibly re-advertise. If we need to change our policy to where we're only going to accept MLIS degrees, then we need to, in our November meeting, change our policy, change our job description that we advertise with, because even in the job description, it says Master of Library Science. I know it's one word, but again, you could be missing people that got their degree 30 years ago, before this degree changed, and so that could have applied, and we're missing candidates that could be in the pool that may be even in Livingston Parish."*

Ms. Dorhauer and Ms. Goins then asked Mr. Cowell if he had reviewed the questions beforehand and what questions he would like to add. Mr. Cowell states that he wasn't on the hiring committee and would like to submit questions before the interview.

Mr. Delatte then states that "*I really believe that the hiring committee has done an outstanding job.*" He goes on to state that the MLIS and MLS are the same, according to Ms. Webb's previous explanation. He said that the board needs to look at qualifications and their past work history in order to expect what they can do in the future. He stated that the number one question he has is "*How that library director operates in this political situation? If we got to come back in 18 months and do it again, then we fail.*" He also stated that he would like to see a higher starting salary to attract more applicants. He said, "*I'm not trying to rush to hire, I'm trying to get the hire right.*"

Ms. Dorhauer then asks Mr. Delatte if he is suggesting that they have the one potential candidate come to the next board meeting and have the entire board ask questions. Ms. Dorhauer then asks the board if they are okay with inviting the candidate to the next board meeting in November.

Ms. Patricia Wilson states that in the corporate world, one typically conducts multiple interviews. So, you have a "*hiring committee that narrows down the candidates, and then you bring that candidate, and if it's a public position, as our library administrator is, then that person comes before the full board and the public and has a second interview. And everybody's given an opportunity to ask questions. Now, on a professional level, we should share those questions, so we're not all asking the same question. So that we can get all those questions answered, and, in my personal opinion, the public should also be able to ask a question or two because this person works for all of us, not just this board, but for all of us. So, in my opinion, to do it correctly. Then, we need to bring that person in and have a full interview, and they need to be aware of what they're getting into because this is just the iceberg. And, if you can't handle coming before the board and the public and being interviewed, then this is probably not the right job for you.*"

Ms. Goins then asks for an explanation, stating that they went over the questions and were told that you can ask this, but not that, legally. She then asks the question, "*How are you going to control that in a setting where you open it up to the public to ask all kinds of questions that could be illegal questions that we can't ask a candidate?*"

Ms. Goins states that the hiring committee reviewed every question and discussed them with Ms. Taylor before the interviews began.

Ms. Christian asks if questions can be submitted beforehand.

Mr. Delatte states to the board that they need to gather their questions together and submit those to the candidate beforehand so that the candidate can be prepared. He states that it should be added to the agenda for the next board meeting to discuss the hiring process, and a good goal would be to have someone in place by the end of the year.

The board then discussed the starting salary of \$75,000, which was deemed too low, and considered possibly raising that amount at the next board meeting. Ms. Christian and Mr. Cowell state they need to readvertise the position. Mr. Delatte states that the current candidate needs to be thoroughly vetted first.

The board then discussed references, credit, and background checks on the current candidate. Ms. Dorhauer informed Ms. Taylor that, before the next board meeting in November, a background and financial check would need to be run on the candidate to ensure she is worth pursuing.

Ms. Morgan clarifies that questions will be submitted to Ms. Taylor to ensure their legality before they are asked of the candidate.

7. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn made by Randy Delatte, seconded by Rodlyn Hammond

Ms. Dorhauer adjourned the meeting at 7:02 pm.