



Livingston Parish Library Board of Control Regular Board Meeting March 18, 2025

Minutes

The Livingston Parish Library Board of Control met in a special session on March 18, 2025. The meeting occurred at the Main Branch Library, 20390 Iowa Street, Livingston, LA 70754.

1. Call to Order

Jennifer Dorhauer, Board President, called the meeting to order at **6:02 p.m.**

2. Moment of Silence

Ms. Dorhauer called for an invocation from Mr. Trey Cowell

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Those in attendance said the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Roll Call

Present: Becky Morgan, Rodlyn Hamond, Jennifer Dorhauer, Jonathan Davis, Sheila Goins, Patricia Wilson, DeWanna Christian, Trey Cowell

Absent: Randy Delatte (Ex Officio)

Also Present: Michelle Parrish (Director), Dustin Cotton (Assistant Director of Branch Services), Julia Falcon (Assistant Director of Support Services)

5. Approval of Minutes

- a. January 29, 2025, Regular Meeting

MOTION to approve minutes as presented made by Rodlyn Hammond, seconded by Trey Cowell

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote.

Yeas: Morgan, Hammond, Dorhauer, Davis, Goins, Wilson, Christian, Cowell

Nays:

Absent: Delatte

Abstain:

The motion carried 8-0

6. Public Comments on Agenda Items

No public comments at this time.

7. Report of Administrative Librarian

- a. Retaining wall & courtyard plans for the Albany-Springfield Branch

Ms. Parrish reminds the board of the upcoming Comic Con event at the end of March and informs them that there is no need to amend the budget currently; everything is within reason.

She also informs the board of the Albany-Springfield Branch's retaining wall and courtyard plans. She states that a severe erosion issue behind the branch has already caused the chiller yard to crack the foundation. She states that more dirt is needed to help remedy this issue, and the previous administration proposed some improvements in that area, possibly a seating area, which is nothing too extravagant.

James, with ACI, then informs the board of the current erosion issues. He states that the rainwater is causing erosion, washing away dirt on the ground-level side near the chiller yard and pulling it back to the wetlands. He states that the only way to keep this from going further is to pack it back and put it in a retention wall. That will keep it at ground level at its height.

Expanding on this, a courtyard was proposed. Mr. James consulted with a landscape architect and landscaper to determine possible solutions. The architect advised making as much space permeable as possible to avoid displacing the water flow.

He states that the amount of fill will determine the project's cost and that permeable concrete is planned for use. This will allow water to seep through and the seating areas for the courtyard will use the same aggregate as the Denham Springs-Walker location to maintain consistency.

Questions were asked regarding drainage studies and contacting a civil engineer. Mr. James stated that the civil engineer would be responsible for signing off on the project's sufficiency, ensuring it meets state and local guidelines and will assess the structural integrity and provide guidance. A drainage study has not yet been conducted as this is in the early stages of development. However, this study would assess water displacement and its effect on neighboring properties.

Mr. James asks for approval from the board to move forward with the design phase. Once approved, the experts can be consulted, and the design process can begin.

MOTION to go forward with the next steps to hire the civil engineer to hire the architect and to make sure that the civil engineer looks at the retaining wall and sees if it's an overkill or if that's necessary for what we need to do made by Jonathan Davis, seconded by Becky Morgan

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote.

Yeas: Morgan, Hammond, Dorhauer, Davis, Goins, Wilson, Christian, Cowell

Nays:

Absent: Delatte

Abstain:

The motion carried 8-0

8. Reports of Special Committees

a. Policy & Procedure Committee Chairman's Report

Mr. Jonathan Davis informs the board that the committee passed five items favorably, two resolutions that they would like passed, and three policy updates to come.

9. New Business

a. Discussion & Creation: Finance Committee

i. Presented by Jennifer Dorhauer, Board President

At this time, Ms. Dorhauer created a Finance Committee consisting of Trey Cowell, Rodlyn Hammond, Sheila Goins, and Patricia Wilson with the employee member being Michelle Parrish.

She also stated the Policy & Procedure Committee members consisting of Jonathan Davis, Patricia Wilson, DeWanna Christian, and adding Sheila Goins to this committee, with the employee member being Dustin Cotton.

She stated that Mr. Cowell will be the Secretary for the Finance Committee and Ms. Wilson will be the Secretary for the Policy & Procedure Committee.

- b. Discussion & Approval: To formally request the Louisiana Legislative Auditor to visit the Board of Control and give an informational presentation on open meeting laws
 - i. Presented by Jennifer Dorhauer, Board President

Ms. Dorhauer makes a formal request for the Legislative Auditor to present on open meeting laws. No vote was needed, just the formal request. The auditor will be contacted to arrange a date.

- c. Discussion & Resolution 01: A Resolution of the Livingston Parish Library Board of Control Supporting Positive Board Decorum and Professional Conduct
 - i. Presented by Jonathan Davis, Board Member

Mr. Davis reads in full the resolution, which was unanimously passed by the policy & procedure committee. This resolution aims to ensure the board members conduct themselves professionally.

MOTION to pass the resolution made by Jonathan Davis, seconded by Sheila Goins

Ms. Dorhauer asks for public comment on this agenda item.

Tom Aswell asks the question why this is necessary. Mr. Davis responds because there was a change regarding the board and everyone on the current board has decided that *"we're not going to operate in the same manner, whether or not we have the same or differing opinions, we're going to try to conduct ourselves as best as possible."* Mr. Davis states the resolution is non-binding and not a resolution to change bylaws. *"It's just a resolution of support among the board members and it's a show of good faith to the community that we're here to conduct business properly for the Livingston Parish Library."*

Jordan Gonzalez states that he is in support of this resolution.

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote

Yeas: Morgan, Hammond, Dorhauer, Davis, Goins, Wilson, Christian, Cowell

Nays:

Absent: Delatte

Abstain:

The motion carried 8-0

- d. Discussion & Resolution 02: A Resolution of the Livingston Parish Library Board of Control Regarding the Grammatical Revision of Adopted Policies
 - i. Presented by Jonathan Davis, Board Member

Mr. Davis reads the resolution in full and states that it allows for the correction of grammatical errors in adopted policies without altering the substantive meaning.

MOTION to pass resolution made by Jonathan Davis, seconded by Sheila Goins

No public comment on this item.

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote

Yeas: Morgan, Hammond, Dorhauer, Davis, Goins, Wilson, Christian, Cowell

Nays:

Absent: Delatte

Abstain:

The motion carried 8-0

- e. Discussion & Approval: Policy Change – to amend Code: 1-105, Organization of the Library
 - i. Presented by Patricia Wilson, Board Member

Ms. Wilson begins by thanking the public for attending the policy & procedure meetings. She then reads the policy changes in full. This policy aims to incorporate grammatical changes and improve readability.

MOTION to pass updates made by Patricia Wilson, seconded by Trey Cowell

No public comment on this item.

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote

Yeas: Morgan, Hammond, Dorhauer, Davis, Goins, Wilson, Christian, Cowell

Nays:

Absent: Delatte

Abstain:

The motion carried 8-0

- f. Discussion & Approval: Policy Change – to amend Code: 3-306, Challenged Materials
 - i. Presented by Patricia Wilson, Board Member

Ms. Wilson reads the policy changes in full, approximately 10 changes will occur. This section outlines the library's policy regarding challenged materials. The policy acknowledges that pleasing every patron is always impossible, but respects every patron's right to express concerns.

This change aims to reduce the number of public records requests and increase transparency in the challenge process.

The board discussion on this item may be found by watching the posted video link to our YouTube channel.

MOTION to accept and utilize made by Patricia Wilson, seconded by Becky Morgan

No public comment on this item.

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote

Yeas: Morgan, Hammond, Dorhauer, Davis, Goins, Wilson, Christian, Cowell

Nays:

Absent: Delatte

Abstain:

The motion carried 8-0

- g. Discussion & Approval: Policy Change – to amend Code: 2-202, Organization and By-laws for Board of Control
 - i. Presented by Patricia Wilson, Board Member

This section discusses updates to the organization and bylaws for the Board of Control, aligning with the proclamation presented earlier. Ms. Wilson states that the board is trying to be as transparent as possible and wants the community to know where they stand. In a professional and kind way, she states that they would like to set up their own guidelines.

Ms. Wilson reads the changes regarding what is being added and shows what is being deleted. ***The board discussion on this item may be found by watching the posted video link to our YouTube channel.***

Mr. Cowell states that item #4 referring to a quorum as “*a simple majority of the current voting members.*” He states that 5 members are not a quorum because they have succumbed to the fact that ex-officio can vote so a quorum would be 6 out of 10. Mr. Davis states that it could turn into a variable quorum depending on how many members are appointed or currently members.

Ms. Wilson and Mr. Davis state that items 7, 8, 9, and 10 are new and clarify whether meetings can occur and how to conduct additional special meetings.

Ms. Morgan asks the difference between a committee and a special committee. Mr. Davis responds that a special committee is a temporary committee designed to complete a single task, whereas a regular committee is an ongoing standing committee.

Ms. Wilson states some guidelines that have been added for committees:

- a. Committees cannot form a quorum of the board
- b. Meetings should occur at a library facility
- c. Meetings should take place during library hours to avoid disruptions
- d. Library staff members should be included in special committees if deemed necessary by the president
 - i. Including experts from the library’s staff is crucial for informed decision-making.

There was a question from the audience regarding Article 6 #2 on the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer. Mr. Cowell stated that in 2023 the Parish Council deemed that all commissions, committees, and Board appointed by the Livingston Parish Council to say the Pledge of Allegiance and say a prayer before all official meetings. He stated that is why the Board of Control decided to make the decision to say a prayer.

Public comment was made by Marla Elsea regarding Mr. Cowell's statement. She stated that the former board wanted a moment of silence, to respect all religions. She also mentioned that the policy meetings are not being livestreamed, for those who can't make it to those meetings. She said there is no way to go back and see what is being discussed.

Mr. Cowell states that this board is different than the former, and they have chosen to have prayer instead of a moment of silence. He states that it isn't about religion and if someone else wants to pray to a different God then they are welcomed to. Ms. Elsea then asks Ms. Dorhauer if she would consider allowing the public to be able to pray their way? Mr. Cowell states that the prayer is made by the board, unless the board calls for someone else to do invocation. Rodlyn Hammond states that she thinks it should be kept as moment of silence because it could be a moment of prayer, but it doesn't say a public prayer, it just states "prayer." She states that she doesn't feel comfortable making anyone else pray if they don't want to.

Someone in the audience asks if it is a law that is binding or just a resolution, regarding the Parish Council. Mr. Cowell states that it was a resolution, but the committee felt it necessary to make that change based off that resolution.

Holley Hughes makes a comment that *"Saying moment of silence is not somehow in opposition to prayer. You take that moment of silence, if you want to pray, you pray. If there's something heavy on your heart. You have that moment to just kind of get your head back in the game and get straight with yourself. A moment of silence is not anti-prayer, it's just not."*

Mr. Moody, legal counsel, states that the law is evolving regarding prayer, and it used to not be allowed regarding the separation of church and state. He goes on to state that most public bodies have some system to allow for a rotation of different versions of a prayer. Many public bodies now allow a rotation of prayer leaders, accommodating various religious beliefs. There is a shift towards non-sectarian prayers or invocations that are not specific to one religion. He states that perhaps consider implementing a system to rotate prayer leaders among board members.

Mr. Davis asks if public comments can be made after the board finishes the discussion on these policy changes.

Ms. Wilson continues with the changes and speaks on Board Decorum, stating that it focuses on maintaining openness and transparency.

Ms. Dorhauer also asks if a social media Policy could be discussed to address online conduct. The current policy aims to encompass social media activity by vaguely stating

“to engage in activity that tends to injure the Livingston Parish Library’s reputation.”
However, making a social media platform explicit could eliminate ambiguity.

Ms. Wilson states that the board training would emphasize the importance of ongoing training, including ethics, sexual harassment, and cybersecurity. Board training and system familiarization is a new addition to the policy. This training ensures that it covers the specific requirements of the Livingston Parish Library, and it may be tailored to specific roles or entities.

MOTION to approve code 2-202 in the revised form made by Patricia Wilson, seconded by Jonathan Davis

Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comment

Marla Elsea inquired about the possibility of rotating the invocation through the board and allowing board members to pass their turn to a member of the public. She raised concerns about whether the invocations would only ever be Christian prayers, potentially excluding other faiths. She also stated that the original intent of the moment of silence was to respect all religions.

Jordan Gonzalez echoed Ms. Elsea’s sentiments and emphasized that not everyone identifies as a Christian. He suggested opening a moment for a call to prayer where anyone in the audience could offer a prayer from their religion.

Anthony Vance expressed gratitude to the policy committee for addressing the issue, noting that most boards within the Parish already have similar practices. He pointed out that individuals who do not wish to participate in the prayer can simply stand in silence, and he encouraged the board to vote according to their beliefs.

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote

Yeas: Morgan, Hammond, Dorhauer, Davis, Goins, Wilson, Christian, Cowell

Nays:

Absent: Delatte

Abstain:

The motion carried 8-0

- h. Discussion & Update: Assessment and progress on the process of reviewing the relocated Young Adult materials

i. Presented by Becky Morgan, Board Vice-President

Ms. Julia Falcon, Assistant Director of Support Services, updated the board on the progress of reviewing and relocating Young Adult materials. She stated that approximately 30,000 items were temporarily moved from the Young Adult section. This number represents individual copies, not unique titles, with an estimated 10,000 unique titles to review. She stated that by March 17th, approximately 2,000 or 20% of titles had been reviewed. This process is expected to take another four months to complete.

It is important to know that Young Adult patrons still have access to materials during this review process and batches of reviewed books are being sent out weekly to be moved back into the Young Adult section. New materials are also being reviewed as they come in, to minimize inconvenience for patrons.

i. Discussion & Approval: Surplus items for Disposal

i. Presented by Dustin Cotton, Assistant Director of Branch Services

Mr. Cotton provided a short list of items for disposal, including old iPad Air 4s, one computer that will be listed on the government auction website for sale, and lithium-ion batteries that will be recycled.

He also stated that efforts were made to return iPads to the Apple store for credit. However, some devices were ineligible for return.

MOTION to approve disposal as discussed by Dustin made by Patricia Wilson, seconded by Rodlyn Hammond

No public comment on this item.

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote

Yeas: Morgan, Hammond, Dorhauer, Davis, Goins, Wilson, Christian, Cowell

Nays:

Absent: Delatte

Abstain:

The motion carried 8-0

There was a quick discussion on the upcoming Comic Con event, with 45 vendors approved in attendance. There were more vendor applicants than available spots. A

question regarding transportation was asked and those logistics are completely handled. Some highlights discussed were a martial arts company, food trucks, balloon and character drawings, and a cosplay contest.

10. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn made by Jennifer Dorhauer, seconded by Rodlyn Hammond

The meeting adjourned at **8:02 p.m.**