



Livingston Parish Library Board of Control Regular Board Meeting May 20, 2025

Minutes

The Livingston Parish Library Board of Control met in a regular session on May 20, 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 **6:00 p.m.**

2. Moment of Silence

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 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. February 18, 2025, Special Meeting
- b. March 18, 2025, Regular Board Meeting

MOTION to approve minutes as presented made by Rodlyn Hammond, seconded by Jonathan Davis

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote.

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

Nays:

Abstain:

The motion carried 9-0

6. Public Comments on Agenda Items

No public comments at this time.

7. Report of Administrative Librarian

David Gray (Public Information Officer) presented the Comic Con report. Mr. Gray stated that approximately 2,000 visitors attended this year's Comic Con despite the rainy weather. Some highlights included the Dinosaur Experience, Wall to Wall Martial Arts, The Petite Princess Company, balloon twisting, and caricature artists. However, the biggest turnout was for the cosplay contest with approximately 60+ participants.

Mr. Gray also highlighted events such as the Reader's Club, stating that through April, approximately 7,000+ books have been logged in the year-long adult reading challenge. An estimated 578 people have completed the challenges so far, which is on pace to exceed last year's total of 1,100.

The final presentation was on the upcoming Summer Reading Program, which runs from May 19th through August 3rd. Last year's Summer Reading statistics showed that approximately 76,000 books were logged, a record-breaking year.

Director Michelle Parrish then informed the board that the audit is still in progress and should be completed by June 30th. Currently, there is no need to amend the budget, as everything is within normal limits.

8. Reports of Special Committees

a. Finance Committee Chair's Report

Patricia Wilson gave the update from the Finance Committee. She stated that the committee reviewed and approved a vehicle purchase already in the budget. She also noted that bids went out for landscape contracts, and Angelo's was the middle bidder with the highest score. She also discussed purchasing a bookmobile for underserved areas and how, with two bookmobiles, the larger one could be for Adults, especially those with mobility issues, and the current bookmobile for children. Ms. Wilson also discussed paying legal counsel hourly, which is more cost-effective than being on retainer.

b. Policy Committee Chair's Report

Jonathan Davis gave the update from the Policy Committee. He stated there were three items to come through the committee. The first was how to handle public commenting moving forward regarding the color card system currently in place. The second was for the board members to get legal advice or consultation from the legal department. The final policy was regarding the committee review process for agenda items.

9. Presentations

a. Presentation by Livingston Parish Assessor Jeff Taylor regarding the Livingston Parish Library Millage

Livingston Parish Assessor Jeff Taylor explains millage and reassessment cycles. He states, *"Once you have an election that year, your millage is established, it goes toward your maximum. So, whether or not you take it or not, that's up to you, but your maximum is established at that point. So, you don't have to go back to your maximum until 28, which is the next reassessment year. So, you can do anything this year from 0 to 10 according to the legislative auditor."*

He states that the 10 mills must be taken before 2028, or they will be lost. Questions were then asked, such as whether it would cost taxpayers more in 2028 versus 2025. Mr. Taylor stated that the board has until September 15, 2025, to declare the intended levy.

Due to the length of this presentation, the entire discussion may be found by listening to the posted audio recording or watching the posted video link on our YouTube channel.

10. New Business

- a. Resolution for Acceptance of the Livingston Parish Library Ad Valorem Tax Millage Rate Approved by Voters on November 18, 2023, beginning in FY 2025 [to adopt the Millage Rate for 2025]
 - i. Presented by Michelle Parrish, Director

Ms. Parrish reiterates what Mr. Taylor stated: This is the renewal year and the year in which the millage begins. She said that ideally, the library would like the entire 10 mills, as plans are in the works. She states that necessities such as roofs, HVACs, computer purchases, and two branches still need to be re-carpeted. However, it is ultimately up to the board to decide.

Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comment.

7 comment cards were submitted on this agenda item.

1 neutral that has a question for this item that requires clarification: Summer Smith

4 present and in support and would like to speak: Fran Smith, Jordan Gonzalez, Mandy Jo Pickering, and Marla Elsea

1 present and in support, but do not wish to speak: Wade McAllister

1 present and in opposition and would like to speak: Larry Davis

Due to the length of public comment, the comments and board discussion may be found by listening to the posted audio recording or watching the posted video link on our YouTube channel.

The board discussed this agenda item at this time. Ms. Becky Morgan asks, *"If I understood what he [Mr. Taylor] said, we will need to take the 10 or lose it by 2028. Is that correct?"* Ms. Dorhauer responds, *"Once. By 2028."* Mr. Jonathan Davis then states, *"I also understood that all we have to do is raise it to as high as we want it to lock in that. So, if we wanted to go to 9.8, we would have 9.8 as our highest. If we're willing to lose the 10."*

Mr. Davis then states that his biggest concern is the record inflation over the past few years and how he doesn't feel this would be a great year to raise the complete 10 mills. Mr. Davis then states, *"So, at the appropriate time, I'd like to move to maintain the current, what is it, 7.53 that we're charging now?"* Ms.

Sheila Goins asks, *"Will it cost the public more money between 2025 and 2028? It's going to cost the people more money. We're just postponing the injury."*

Mr. Trey Cowell states that when the 10-mill tax was voted on the November 2023 ballot, the 10 mills would collect approximately \$6.8 million. However, the same 10 mills today would collect approximately \$9,5090,673. He states that *"That's \$2.7 million more money from the people of the parish. And we have, again, we have operated. This library has operated, you know, well, this year at that 7.53%. And so I think that it is crucial that we do everything we can to keep it at 7.53%, knowing that there even is the possibility of growth money that's coming into play."*

MOTION to maintain the current percentage for the mills made by Jonathan Davis, seconded by DeWanna Christian

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote.

Yeas: Morgan, Whann, Dorhauer, Davis, Christian, Cowell

Nays: Hammond, Goins, Wilson

Abstain:

The motion carried 6-3

- b. Discussion & Approval: Policy Change – to amend Code 2-202, Organization and Bylaws for Board of Control
 - i. Presented by Patricia Wilson & Jonathan Davis, Board Members

Mr. Davis states that the purpose of this agenda item is to change the language to be the same as state law, which changes the definition of a quorum to something that matches one of the revised statutes.

The next change would be to designate specific ideas, potential policies, or changes in the budget to the finance committee or the policy committee in the future.

The final change would be the addition of Article 10 to define how the invocation adopted at the last meeting would be determined, basically, the order in which it will be rotated among board members. Mr. Davis states, *"The duty to offer the invocation shall rotate among board members in the order of their district number. If a board member is absent or if the position is vacant, the next board member in the rotation shall offer the invocation."* He stated that the board

wanted some order of operation, a procedural way to choose who does the invocation, which was passed unanimously at the committee meeting.

Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comment.

8 comment cards were submitted on this agenda item.

1 neutral that has a question for this item that requires clarification: Summer Smith

2 present and in support, and would like to speak: Larry Davis and Jerry Morgan

4 present and in opposition, and would like to speak: Jordan Gonzalez, Wade McAllister, Deanna Charette [sic], and Marla Elsea

1 present and in opposition, and does not wish to speak: Evelyn Robinson

Due to the length of public comment, the comments and board discussion may be found by listening to the posted audio recording or watching the posted video link on our YouTube channel.

Mr. Moody is then asked questions about the legality of Article 10. Mr. Moody states that it is an “*evolving area of law*” that courts have become more tolerant of a public body allowing prayer, and they can dictate a process for doing so. He states, “*If you have a rotating thing and no one’s required to give a Christian prayer, anybody can step out anytime they want to. I don’t think you’d have any trouble defending this policy.*”

The board then discussed this item and its legality based on similar cases nationwide.

MOTION to accept Code 2-202 as presented made by Trey Cowell, seconded by Sheila Goins

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote.

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

Nays:

Abstain:

The motion carried unanimously, 9-0

- c. Discussion & Approval: Policy Change – to amend Code 2-202a, Public Speaking Policy, Board Meetings
 - i. Presented by Dustin Cotton, Assistant Director of Branch Services

Mr. Cotton states that this proposed change is based upon the colored card system, which the public has complained about since its implementation. He states that this is to clean up some verbiage. He goes on to state, *“I’m trying to make it to where it’s very clear that anybody who wants to be heard will be able to speak during the public comment section, which is the beginning of the agenda, but also that the board president will designate that that they can speak before the votes, which is what we’ve been doing for years. I’m trying to make that very clear in this section.”*

The second change is to clean up the statement that *“public comments must relate to items listed to the meetings and the required voting process.”* Mr. Cotton states that if a member of the public wishes to speak, they would sign the public speaking sign-up sheet, which will be located on a clipboard at the podium. *“So, when you come up, you put your printed name, your city of residence, and then just the agenda item you’re speaking on.”*

Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comment.

5 comment cards were submitted on this agenda item

1 neutral that has a question for this item that requires clarification: Summer Smith

1 present and in support, and would like to speak: Jordan Gonzalez

2 present and in support, but do not wish to speak: Marla Elsea and Wade McAllister

1 present and in opposition, and would like to speak: Larry Davis

MOTION to accept Policy Change to amend Code 2-202a made by Sheila Goins, seconded by Rodlyn Hammond

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote.

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

Nays:

Abstain:

The motion carried unanimously, 9-0

d. Discussion & Approval: Policy Change – to amend Code 2-205, Budgeting and Authorization of Payment

i. Presented by Patricia Wilson, Board Member

Ms. Wilson states that the first item is a verbiage cleanup to clarify the policy. She goes on to state that the president or vice president would notify the administrative librarian on behalf of the board of control concerning expenditures for legal counsel consultation. She further states, *“So, if we’re going to hold somebody accountable for the expenditure of funds, then no one, not even a board member, should go have expenditures on the long-range dollar without her knowledge.”*

She then states that *“individual board members may not authorize library budget expenditures, period. Whether it be legal counsel or some kind of program that you want to promote, you just take it upon yourself to go out, get materials and supplies for, and hand Michelle a receipt saying Hey, pay this for me. It’s for the good of the library.”*

She states that these guidelines include, but are not limited to, legal counsel consultation occurring without prior notification. *“This is not saying that board members cannot seek legal counsel from our legal advisor. This is just simply saying that the administrative librarian is notified in advance.”*

She goes on to state that this *“It’s not saying we have to tell Michelle what’s going on, why we need legal counsel. We’re just, as a courtesy, saying we need to seek legal counsel, so expect a bill, it’s coming. And that helps her keep up with the budget, not be surprised on things because we do in fact hold her accountable.”*

The board members and Mr. Moody have a lengthy discussion regarding the legality and need for the Administrative Librarian to be notified in advance of the attorney’s counsel due to previous charges made by Parish Council members. ***Due to the length of this discussion, its entirety may be found by listening to the posted audio recording or watching the posted video link on our YouTube channel.***

Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comment.

6 comment cards were submitted on this agenda item.

1 neutral that has a question for this item that requires clarification: Summer Smith

3 present and in support, and would like to speak: Francine Smith, Marla Elsea, and Jordan Gonzalez

1 present and in support, but does not wish to speak: Evelyn Robinson

1 present and in opposition, and would like to speak: Larry Davis

MOTION to approve Policy Change to amend Code 2-205 made by Becky Morgan, seconded by Rodlyn Hammond

SUBSTITUTE MOTION to send this back to the policy board to review some of the wording and to get Mr. Moody's advice on it, made by DeWanna Christian, seconded by Trey Cowell

Ms. Dorhauer calls for the vote on the SUBSTITUTE MOTION

Yeas: Whann, Davis, Christian, Cowell

Nays: Morgan, Hammond, Dorhauer, Goins, Wilson

Abstain:

The SUBSTITUTE MOTION failed 4-5

ADDITIONAL SUBSTITUTE MOTION made by Jonathan Davis is to keep item number 3 as it is, but to change the last sentence to a notification to the president or vice president. Also, to delete sentences one and two in number 4, and the last sentence says that upon notification to the administrative librarian, they will record the expenditure made by Jonathan Davis, seconded by Sheila Goins

Ms. Dorhauer calls for the vote on the ADDITIONAL SUBSTITUTE MOTION

Yeas: Morgan, Whann, Hammond, Dorhauer, Davis, Goins, Wilson

Nays: Christian, Cowell

Abstain:

The ADDITIONAL SUBSTITUTE MOTION carried 7-2

- e. Discussion & Update: Assessment and progress on the process of reviewing the relocated Young Adult materials
 - i. Presented by Becky Morgan, Board Vice President

Ms. Morgan introduces Ms. Julia Flacon, head of Cataloging, who informed the board of the update and process of relocating YA materials. She states that as of the March 18, 2025, board meeting, they had completed close to 2,000 books, close to 20% of the 10,000 titles. However, by today, May 20, 2025, approximately 6,253 titles have been reviewed, equaling 63%. She states they are well on track, even though it might take longer due to Summer Reading.

- f. Discussion & Approval: On whether to have Livingston Parish Library Board of Control Committee Meetings be videorecorded or livestreamed
 - i. Presented by Trey Cowell, Board Member

Mr. Trey informs the board that he feels the public would benefit from having all committee meetings live-streamed, as many meetings happen during work hours.

2 comment cards were submitted on this agenda item

1 neutral that has a question for this item that requires clarification: Summer Smith

1 present and in opposition, and would like to speak: Jordan Gonzalez

Board members ask if this would be a big expenditure if implemented. Ms. Parrish states that only one equipment set-up is currently being used to record and stream the board meetings, so the meetings would need to be held at the Main Branch, where the equipment is housed. Also, the head of IT runs the equipment, so this would entail her attending every committee meeting or training someone else to handle this.

MOTION to livestream all of our committee meetings on our YouTube channel made by Trey Cowell, seconded by DeWanna Christian

Ms. Dorhauer calls for the vote.

Yeas: Whann, Davis, Christian, Cowell

Nays: Morgan, Hammond, Dorhauer, Goins, Wilson

Abstain:

The MOTION failed 4-5

11. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn made by Jennifer Dorhauer, seconded by Patricia Wilson

The meeting adjourned at **8:16 p.m.**