



## **Livingston Parish Library Board of Control Regular Board Meeting**

**July 15, 2025**

### **Minutes**

The Livingston Parish Library Board of Control met in a regular session on July 15, 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. Invocation**

Ms. Dorhauer called for an invocation from Ms. Becky Morgan

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

## **5. Approval of Minutes**

- a. May 20, 2025, Regular Board Meeting

MOTION to approve minutes as presented made by Rodlyn Hammond, seconded by Becky Morgan

Ms. Dorhauer states that a roll call is unnecessary because there is no dissension, and the minutes are adopted as is.

## **6. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comments.

17 people signed up or spoke on various agenda topics: Edward Braithwaite, Brian Gunter, Marla Elsea, Melissa Anderson, Holley Hughes, Summer Smith, Abby Crosby, Rebecca Roberts, Jordan Gonzalez, Cathleen Hyde, Jessica Legath, Joseph McCullen [sic], Fran Smith, Erin Sandefur, Larry Davis, David Gray, and DeeDee [sic] Delatte

## **7. Report of Administrative Librarian**

- a. Financials
  - i. Presented by Michelle Parrish, Director

Ms. Parrish informed the board that the library is currently within budget. She stated that the Finance Committee will have two upcoming meetings. The goal is to have a tentative budget for September for the board to look over before the November meeting. Ms. Parrish also stated that the most recent audit was clean and had no findings.

- b. Summer Reading
  - i. Presented by Michelle Parrish, Director

Ms. Parrish informed the board of the current Summer Reading statistics. She stated that 5,000 registrants of the program, 2,700 completed the program, and 193 events were held with 9,275 attendees.

## **8. Reports of Special Committees**

Ms. Dorhauer makes a few comments regarding the committees and how they function. She stated, *"Our committees are intended to help us so that we do not have four-hour*

*meetings every time we come together. They are not to bind our hands so that we cannot act."* She also informed the board that she contacted the legislative auditor's office and spoke with their attorney regarding Robert's Rules of Order, *"That any member of this board at any time may stick something on our agenda. So, it doesn't have to go through our committee. We choose to use committees to try to move things forward."* She also stated that there were comments that a Committee Chair could not make a motion; however, she received clarification that anyone on a committee can make a motion.

**a. Finance Committee Chair's Report**

Ms. Patricia Wilson gave the update from the Finance Committee. She stated there will be two meetings in August, on the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 26<sup>th</sup>. The meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> will be held at the Main Branch in Livingston from 5 pm to 7 pm, and the meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> will be held at the Denham Springs-Walker Branch from 5 pm to 7 pm. She stated there will probably be another meeting in September to review the budget before it is brought to the full board.

**b. Policy Committee Chair's Report**

Mr. Jonathan Davis gave the update from the Policy Committee. He stated that many policies had been taken care of prior to this meeting, and they are hoping to schedule a meeting in the next week or two. Currently, there are no new updates.

**c. Government & Community Relations Committee Chair's Report**

Ms. Jennifer Dorhauer gave the update from this committee. She stated that two items were discussed: the first being the high school diploma program that the library sponsors. She states there have been two to complete this program, as it is a two-year program, with those receiving their high school diploma instead of a GED. She also spoke on the discussion about moving forward and seeking business sponsorship for this program.

Ms. Dorhauer then stated that this committee is looking into contacting public high schools because the Louisiana Department of Education has a community service diploma endorsement. If a high school student earns 80 hours of volunteer service during their high school career, they can get an endorsement on their diploma. She hopes to get the word out amongst the students that volunteer opportunities regarding this program are available at the library.

**d. Facilities Committee Chair's Report**

Ms. Becky Morgan gave the update from the Facilities Committee. She informed the board and public by saying, *“Before I get started with our committee report, I want to clarify identification that I’ll be speaking about. There is a Billy Taylor, as you know, that is chairman of our council. And then there is a Billy Taylor, the second of McLin Taylor engineering and land survey. I want to make sure you don’t get those two people confused as I give you my report.”*

Ms. Morgan then stated that the Facilities Committee met on Tuesday, July 8th, to discuss the retaining wall courtyard project at the Albany-Springfield branch. Mike from ACI met with the committee to review the proposed preliminary project budget. This was a preliminary budget provided by ACI, free of charge. As of this date, no contractors have been engaged, no contracts have been signed, and no money has been spent on this project. The preliminary budget had three main categories broken up into 21 line items. The estimated service provided by ACI to get a budget number was \$368,000. Mike advised that the figure is higher than he expected to spend because their estimators are trained to estimate a higher number to avoid increasing the budget later. Ms. Morgan states that Mike anticipated the final budget would be lower than \$368,000.

The following steps would be to approve the preliminary proposed budget and hire an engineer. This engineer would ensure the project is done correctly and up to code. She then states that ACI already provided a preliminary rendering that attempts to address the erosion problem and create a functioning space for the land we own, for the people of the Albany-Springfield area. However, once the architect and engineers dive into the project, they may make a replica of what has already been provided or submit an entirely new design. Ms. Morgan then states, *“There was debate regarding the purpose of the meeting, since we had voted in March to hire an engineer for the project. Based on the information we received in the committee meeting, we needed to vote to approve a preliminary scope and budget and to hire the engineer who will serve as the Project Overseer. It will be the architect who actually engages the engineer for the studies we need conducted.”*

During this committee meeting, Mike also recommended reaching out to one of three engineering firms for further clarification and the next steps needed. McLin Taylor Engineering and Land Surveying was contacted via email about this project, and they said they would be glad to assist, and the next step would be to hire a professional of records. Ms. Morgan states that if they choose to appoint them, the studies, drawings, and specifications will all be done during the design phase, and the scope and budget may change at any time.

Once finalized, the engineer will initiate the public bid process. She states, *“You cannot go out for a bid without a finalized plan.”* The board would also need to vote to approve

the finalized plan so it could go out for bid. Furthermore, there should be a motion to approve the preliminary budget and scope of the work and the hiring of McLin Taylor, who will serve as our professional of record. She finishes with *“The professional of record will then move forward with permits, engineering, designing, and initiating the bid process, which will be, according to ACI’s figures, approximately 11% of the estimated budget ACI provided us with.”*

## 9. New Business

- a. Discussion & Approval: Preliminary budget and scope of work so that ACI can proceed with next steps, including permits, engineering, and bidding
  - i. Presented by Rodlyn Hammond, Board Member

Ms. Hammond states that she would like to move forward with hiring McLin Taylor to begin this project.

Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comment.

***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 to our YouTube channel.***

Mr. Jonathan Davis, Board Member, asks Ms. Parrish to explain the difference between the preliminary and project budgets. Ms. Parrish stated that Billy Taylor and ACI both reiterated that there needed to be a scope of work and a budget for them to work toward or on. A more detailed budget would be available after the initial renderings, permits, and drawings.

Mr. Davis also responded to previous questions regarding the millage. He stated that the board decided to keep it at the current mills of 7.53 to assure the public that *“everybody on the board is trying our very best.”* He also stated that at the last meeting, they moved to hire an engineer and architect to move forward, and the board lacked a lot of clarity. Ms. Morgan interjected with *“We didn’t have all the information. We didn’t know at that point that we needed to approve a scope of budget and a scope of project in order for an engineer to move forward.”* Ms. Parrish states that Billy Taylor would become the professional of record, and that office would then handle everything, including bids.

Ms. Morgan asked Mr. Moody, legal counsel, if they could adopt a budget and engage an engineer in the same motion. Mr. Moody stated that they could both be in the same motion. Ms. DeWanna Christian then asked if they could hire the engineer only. Some board members discussed why they are being asked to hire the engineer again if it had

already been approved. Mr. Randy Delatte, Ex Officio, stated that there needed to be a MOTION to hire a professional of record to come and perform their duties and inform the board of any issues at hand. Mr. Delatte asks Mr. Moody if they need to move forward with hiring the professional of record or if they need to adopt the budget first. Ms. Parrish then states that Mr. Billy Taylor of McLin Taylor *“needed a scope of work, so he is taking the budget that ACI had already worked up”*, to which Mr. Delatte says that they do not need to adopt a budget.

MOTION to hire McLin Taylor and Associates to look at the branch made by DeWanna Christian

Ms. Morgan states that the work will not be done unless they approve a scope and budget. Ms. Christian states there is *“\$10,000 on that budget, so I say, why not pull out a number, \$10,000 is what ACI said he was allowing for an engineer that he’s not gonna hire. So why don’t we just hire an engineer?”*

Ms. Rodlyn Hammond states they cannot hire Billy Taylor without the preliminary budget approval. So, when the motion is made, it needs to state that they will hire him with this budget approval. Mr. Delatte said that he *“works with him every day, and you hire a professional of record, and you tell him that you have this problem, and we want to solve this problem as cheaply as we can, if that’s our criteria. Or we tell him we want to solve it as most expensive as we can, if that’s a criteria.”*

Ms. Christian states that James and Mike [ACI] said there was *“no damage to the main building. There’s no damage to the library building. We’re talking about a chiller that has one corner washed away.”* Ms. Jennifer Dorhauer, Board President, states that the project they inherited from the previous Director, Giovanni Tairov, has *“multiple facets to it. It is fixing the chiller, it is making a functional space in the back, and to keep the entire library from eroding in the future. It is a three-faceted thing. That’s why we need to send this to an engineer to see which parts of these do we need, which phases can we do, and what happens.”* Ms. Morgan then states that in her earlier discussion with Billy Taylor, he said that *“he needed a scope and budget for this project”* and, he would have a very itemized budget. It would be broken down into phases and portions.

Ms. Christian states that on ACI’s budget plan, \$10,000 was budgeted for an engineer.

MOTION to take the \$10,000 line item made by ACI off the budget and take that \$10,000 and say we’re going to hire an engineer starting with \$10,000 to tell us what needs to be done, what is actually needed, what is beautification, what is needed to stabilize that building, and that chiller made by DeWanna Christian, seconded by Trey Cowell

Ms. Dorhauer states that if they only allow him to complete this portion, he will not be able to conduct the soil survey that is needed. Based on the phone conversation with Mr. Taylor, Mr. Davis asks for clarification from Ms. Morgan regarding the soil samples being done with 11% of the current budget. Ms. Morgan states that the whole group of items that ACI put together in the budget that was sent was approximately 11% of the total project amount. Mr. Davis states that this will allow the engineer and architect to look at the site, determine what needs to be done, and give a more in-depth scope of the project itself.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION to hire a person of record, McLin Taylor, to start the project at Albany, made by Randy Delatte, seconded by DeWanna Christian

Ms. Morgan states that if this passes, *"We're going to be right back where DeWanna said. Jonathan made a motion for us to hire an engineer. When we turned it over to ACI and James, he brought back to us what he thought was the engineering information, the scope, and the budget."* Mr. Delatte then states that ACI is not an engineer, so they could not complete the needed tasks.

Ms. Hammond asks for a FRIENDLY AMENDMENT to the SUBSTITUTE MOTION to ask Mr. Taylor for the scope when he is hired. Mr. Delatte states that the scope is the project you give them, the project at hand at Albany.

DeeDee Delatte, Mr. Delatte's wife, texted and received a message from Mr. Taylor regarding the correct wording for the board. Ms. Delatte reads *"Hire McLin Taylor as your agent [professional of record] for the project. He is going to assess it, come back with a report to tell you what's needed with the amount that it's going to cost, and you come back as a board and vote on whether you want to approve it or not."*

Ms. Dorhauer calls for a vote on the SUBSTITUTE AMENDED MOTION.

**Yeas: Whann, Davis, Goins, Wilson, Christian, Cowell, Delatte**

**Nays: Morgan, Hammond, Dorhauer**

**Abstain:**

The motion carried 7-3

Mr. Davis then asked Ms. Morgan for a committee meeting the week after the results from the engineer arrived.

- b. Discussion & Approval: Livingston Parish Library Strategic Plan
  - i. Presented by Jennifer Dorhauer, Board President

Ms. Dorhauer speaks to the board regarding the Strategic Plan brought before the former board last year. She states that it was not approved by the prior board but set up as a four-year plan. Ms. Dorhauer states that she has asked to change this to a ten-year plan. She also states that a four-year plan is not feasible due to the current economic climate. She then referred to the previous study, where citizens wanted to improve upon the libraries currently in operation rather than building other branches.

Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comment.

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Ms. Parrish speaks to the board and states that every organization needs a strategic plan to move forward; without one, there is no growth. Mr. Delatte also states that the plan can be amended at any time.

MOTION to adopt the plan as is made by Randy Delatte, seconded by Becky Morgan

Ms. Dorhauer calls for the vote.

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

**Nays:**

**Abstain:**

The motion carried 10-0

- c. Discussion & Approval: Surplus Items for Disposal
  - i. Presented by Dustin Cotton, Assistant Director of Branch Services

Mr. Cotton brings a list of items for disposal and auction to the board, including, but not limited to, broken computer equipment, launchpads, desktop computers, coffee pots, and water coolers.



Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comment.

MOTION to approve surplus items for disposal made by Patricia Wilson, seconded by Trey Cowell

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

**Nays:**

**Abstain:**

The motion carried 10-0

## **10. Executive Session**

- a. Annual Performance Evaluation of the Livingston Parish Library Director – Jennifer Dorhauer, Board President

Ms. Dorhauer explains that the Director's annual performance review is confidential and private and takes place at a different location, where the public and the Director do not attend. She goes on to state that there is a rubric that is used to evaluate the Director's performance, and all discussions are confidential *"unless it is something that requires a vote, which we do not anticipate at this time."*

Mr. Moody, legal counsel, reiterates that no decisions are made during the executive session. If anyone in the audience stayed, they would not be missing anything, as they do not anticipate a vote. Ms. Dorhauer states, *"Since this is not a votable thing, that's why we do not have public comment before then. Because it's not a vote."*

Someone in the audience asks, *"You do not anticipate a vote. Does that mean there could be a vote?"* Ms. Dorhauer responds, *"Not to my knowledge."* Mr. Davis then responds, *"If somebody feels like they need to carry a motion after we get out of executive session, we could."* Mr. Moody responds, *"It would be limited because that's not on the agenda."* Someone then asked if it could be added to the agenda at any time. Mr. Davis responds with *"No, in order to do that, we would have to lift the agenda, but it would have to do with the evaluation or the overview."*

Mr. Delatte then asks for clarification on the executive session. Ms. Dorhauer responds, *"It is only for the annual performance evaluation of Michelle in her role as Livingston Parish Library Director. That is it. That is all that is being discussed in executive session."*

MOTION to move to executive session made by Randy Delatte, seconded by Patricia Wilson

With no opposition, the board exited the room to begin an executive session at 7:37 pm.

Ms. Dorhauer calls the meeting back to order at 9:40 pm.

MOTION to exit executive session made by Jonathan Davis, seconded by Randy Delatte

Mr. Delatte stated, *"Madam Chairman is going to make a statement that no action was taken during executive session."* He says his personal opinion is *"That we will continue to have the problems that I see of dissension. I feel like we need a new director in place of Michelle. I don't know if I got votes to do those things, but I want you to know that it's a personal feeling that this library is going to be looked at from this point on, and the only constant that we have had has been Michelle. We changed the board out three times. We still have the same issues of miscommunications. This is my personal opinion. We also have the issue of no vision, and leadership skills are lacking notably. That's why we had the problems we had. It's okay to disagree, we're all going to disagree because we're all different people, but I would like to take this opportunity, Madam Chairman, to make a MOTION that we do not renew the contract for Michelle, and we ask whoever is next in line to move on up until we hire a full-time director."*

Ms. Dorhauer then states, *"I want to apologize to the public because I stated beforehand that I thought there would be no actionable issue once we went into executive session,, and I called Mr. Randy on this and said that he knew what he was going to argue, and he let me lie to the public, and I apologize for that. I could block his motion currently, but Ms. Michelle has requested that we go ahead and vote on this and not push it off into a further meeting, so that she doesn't have to wait. So, I will not block your motion, Mr. Randy, if there is a second."*

Someone from the audience asked if there would be public comment. Ms. Dorhauer states yes, as long as there is a second. There is discussion among the board on if public comment would happen before or after a second to Mr. Delatte's motion.

Mr. Delatte clarified his MOTION which was not to renew the contract for the current director, Michelle, and he then suggested that the next person in line take over as interim until we decide who that person is going to be

Mr. Davis then asks for clarification on who the next person in line is. Ms. Michelle Parrish states, Dustin or Julia.

Ms. Dorhauer asks for a second regarding Mr. Delatte's motion. Mr. Davis seconds the motion.

Ms. Dorhauer opens the floor for public comment.

Several audience members spoke to the board regarding the motion to remove Ms. Parrish as director.

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Mr. Dustin Cotton, Assistant Director of Branch Services, states that, according to policy and State law, he cannot be the interim director because his spouse also works for the system.

Ms. Julia Falcon, Assistant Director of Support Services, states that she, too, has no desire to be interim director.

Mr. Delatte amended his motion not to renew Michelle's contract and stated that whoever is next in charge is qualified to do the job, meaning they can write checks and supervise all employees. Whoever that next person is, they will be on an interim basis until we decide who we will hire full-time for that job.

Mr. Davis then asks who the next person would be. Ms. Parrish states that it would move to one of the managers. Mr. Cotton states that a manager or department head would be next in line, as they are degreed librarians.

Mr. Delatte then stated that he wanted to make two motions.

The first MOTION is not to renew the contract of the director made by Randy Delatte; this was seconded by Jonathan Davis.

Ms. Dorhauer calls for the vote.

**Yeas: Whann, Davis, Goins, Christian, Cowell, Delatte**

**Nays: Morgan, Hammond, Dorhauer, Wilson**

**Abstain:**

The motion carried 6-4

After the vote was concluded, Ms. Parrish indicated that her job was done. Ms. Patricia Wilson states, *"I would like to put on record that I appreciate the opportunity to have been on this board, but I resign."* This is followed by the verbal resignations of Ms. Becky Morgan, Ms. Rodlyn Hammond, and Ms. Jennifer Dorhauer.

All four members and Ms. Parrish exited the meeting.

Mr. Delatte indicated that there was still a quorum of the board present. Mr. Cotton stepped in to fulfill the duties of the Secretary for the remainder of the meeting per policy.

Mr. Davis then makes a MOTION to lift the agenda and elect officers, seconded by Mr. Delatte. There was no dissension with the decision to lift the agenda.

Mr. Davis moves to open nominations for Chair, Mr. Delatte nominates Mr. Davis, who then moves to close nominations.

The vote is called.

**Yeas: Whann, Davis, Goins, Christian, Cowell, Delatte**

**Nays:**

**Abstain:**

The motion carried 6-0

Mr. Jonathan Davis is elected Board President (Chair).

Mr. Davis opens nominations for Vice President (Vice Chair), and Mr. Delatte nominates Ms. Kristan Whann. Mr. Davis moves to close nominations.

The vote is called.

**Yeas: Whann, Davis, Goins, Christian, Cowell, Delatte**

**Nays:**

**Abstain:**

The motion carried 6-0

Ms. Kristan Whann is elected Vice Chair.

Mr. Delatte then requests a special called meeting or committee to begin the search for a new director.

Mr. Davis creates a Hiring Review Committee for the interim director with the four remaining board members, Ms. Whann, Ms. Goins, Ms. Christian, and Mr. Cowell.

Mr. Delatte recommends Ms. Goins as the Chair of the Review Committee, which she accepts.

Mr. Davis then states, *"It's with a heavy heart that I had to accept the Chair. I didn't anticipate anybody resigning tonight, and this was certainly not my intention. I look forward to doing my very best to serve the people of this parish."* Mr. Davis then states that he has no intention of remaining president after the new board members are put in place.

Mr. Delatte states that he knows it is a long road ahead, but progress has begun. He then states, *"Everything that was said on behalf of the director, Michelle, is true. It's the things that wasn't said that made me do the decision that I came to. She is a good person, y'all. She is. She's worked as best as she could to her ability, she did do those things. The shortcomings was in her leadership style, her leadership ability, her communication, and her willingness not to recognize it, but just by deflecting and often excuses. If she would have just been willing to work, you know, we could have offered different things. We could even offer, but she just, in my opinion, reacted emotionally like we would've, I would've, anybody else would've, and I understand it. She's not a bad person; it's just I think this position needs that extra person that's got vision to take us from where we're at with turmoil and fighting amongst ourselves. I can't do it as Parish President, and you can't do it as chairman; the citizens that are complaining can't do it. It's going to take a special person that puts this together and holds the confidence. Michelle had the confidence of certain people and other people she didn't have that confidence of, and it made her an ineffective leader."*

***You can continue Mr. Delatte's statement by listening to the posted audio recording or watching the posted video link to our YouTube channel.***

There was then a discussion regarding the duties of the acting director. Mr. Cotton states that he and Ms. Falcon share acting director duties. Ms. Cotton states, *"For the reports who report directly to the director, right now will have to be split. I will take Human Resources, IT, and then Julia will have to take Community Engagement, which is my wife's department, and Outreach."*

Mr. Delatte's wife, DeeDee Delatte, made a final comment, ***which can be found by listening to the posted audio recording or watching the posted video link to our YouTube channel.***

## **11. Adjournment**

MOTION to adjourn made by Mr. Cowell at 10:23 pm, all members left after..