



Livingston Parish Library Board of Control
Regular Meeting, September 20, 2022

Minutes

The Livingston Parish Board of Control met in a regular session on September 20, 2022. The meeting took place at the Main Branch, located at 20390 Iowa Street, Livingston, LA 70754.

1. Call to Order

Board President, Ronnie Bencaz called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Ronnie Bencaz, Kathy DeGeneres, Ivy Graham, Debbie Henson, Stephen Link, Erin Sandefur

Absent: Melissa Anderson, Layton Ricks (non-voting member), Giovanni Tairov (Director)

Also Present: Jennifer Seneca (Assistant Library Director)

3. Approve Minutes of July 19, 2022 meeting

Motion to table minutes to next board meeting by Erin Sandefur, seconded by Kathy DeGeneres due to lack of time to review minutes by Ms. Sandefur.

Yeas: Bencaz, Graham, Link, Henson

Nays: 0

Absent: Anderson

Abstain: 0

4. Public Comments

Lori Callais, Livingston Parish resident, read statement provided by Amanda Jones in response to Resolution from Layton Ricks to Parish Council.

Board member Erin Sandefur asked for a point of order in regards to the statement stating that *"no one is banning books."*

Robert Poole, Denham Springs City Councilman made arguments concerning the differences of banning and restriction of materials. He stated that decisions need to be made on behalf of the children. Also stated *“If they are wrong, my child’s welfare is at stake. If I am wrong, then it’s just a book in another part of the library.”*

Clark Forrest, Livingston Parish resident, voiced concerns over Livingston Parish residents being outnumbered at meetings from out of parish attendees and is afraid what has happened in Lafayette Parish Library will also happen here. He also encouraged the board to continue the library’s current Collection Development and selection process.

Brian Clemmons, Livingston Parish resident stated that he wanted the board of control to do their job and control book access and restrict controversial materials.

5. Unfinished business: None

6. New Business

a. Resolution presented by Livingston Parish President Layton Ricks and Livingston Parish Council – Erin Sandefur

Erin Sandefur began by reading the Livingston Parish President Layton Ricks’ Parish Council Resolution #22314. After reading in its entirety, she prompted the board to discuss the matter. Ivy Graham stated that the library board cannot ignore its own policies that are in place, referencing policies 3-306, 3-308, 3-309, the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read policy, she said what Ricks and the Parish Council are asking us to do is skip steps. Stephen Link stated that the board needed to address the letter and the issues it covered. Sandefur asked who placed these books in our library system and wanted the names of the committee members. Ronnie Bencaz, Ivy Graham, and Debbie Henson all stated that the identities of the committee members and discussion of the development collection policy was not addressed in the resolution nor on the agenda, as such should not be discussed. Graham reiterated the policies in place for challenged materials and relocation of materials in the library system.

At 5:33p.m. Erin Sandefur makes a motion to establish a three-person committee consisting of Library Board of Control members to review all content involving content of books regarding sexual content. The motion is seconded by Stephen Link. The motion fails with a 4-2 vote.

Yeas: Sandefur, Link
Nays: Bencaz, Graham, Henson, DeGeneres
Absent: Anderson
Abstain: 0

At 5:35p.m. Debbie Henson makes a motion to the Board of Control in appreciation of the Livingston Parish Council and Layton Ricks for their thoughtful argument, and to send him copies of our collection development processes as well as reconsideration policies, and to reaffirm our existing processes for reconsideration and that the library cannot operate outside of its policies and procedures at hand. Seconded by Kathy DeGeneres. The motion carried.

Yeas: Bencaz, DeGeneres, Graham, Henson, Link, Sandefur

Nays: 0

Absent: Anderson

Abstain: 0

b. Discussion of a board resolution commending the hard work and dedication of the Livingston Parish Library staff- Debbie Henson.

Debbie Henson presented to the board a resolution in support of the staff and administration and to compliment them on handling themselves well over the past few months regarding the current issues at hand.

Erin Sandefur claimed she could not vote on the resolution until she was able to discuss personal matters in an Executive Session and makes a motion to move to an Executive Session. The board's attorney then states that moving to a session in the middle of a normal board procedure without extraordinary circumstances would not be legal. Sandefur then asked to table agenda item 6B and this was denied due to no secondary motion.

Ivy Graham then seconds resolution 6B to commend the hard work and dedication of the Livingston Parish Library staff. The motion carried with 5 yeas and 1 abstain.

Yeas: Bencaz, DeGeneres, Graham, Henson, Link

Nays: 0

Absent: Anderson

Abstain: Sandefur

c. Approve Change Order #3 – Jennifer Seneca

Assistant Director, Jennifer Seneca, brought up change notices to cover extra charges associated with the Administrative Office expansion, including issues at the back of the facility, issues with drainage, and the purchase of a gutter system for runoff. This discussion included multiple individual change orders for line items. Motion to approve all change orders by Kathy deGeneres and seconded by Debbie Henson. The motion carried.

Yeas: Bencaz, deGeneres, Graham, Henson, Link, Sandefur

Nays: 0

Absent: Anderson

Abstain: 0

7. The meeting adjourned at 5:49 p.m.