



Livingston Parish Library Board of Control
Regular Meeting, March 19, 2024

Minutes

The Livingston Parish Board of Control met in a regular session on March 19, 2024. 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 6:02 p.m.

2. Moment of Silence

Board President, Ronnie Bencaz called for a moment of silence.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance is said by those in attendance.

4. Roll Call

Present: Ronnie Bencaz, Ivy Graham, Kathy DeGeneres, Melissa Anderson, Larry Davis, Wendi Neal, Francine Smith, Abby Crosby, and Steve Bernard

Absent:

Also Present: Michelle Parrish (Director)

5. Approval of Minutes

Motion to accept minutes as written made by Melissa Anderson, seconded by Wendi Neal

Yeas: Bencaz, Graham, DeGeneres, Anderson, Davis, Neal, Smith, Crosby, Bernard

Nays:

Absent:
Abstain:

The motion carried.

6. Public Comments on Agenda Items

No comments were made.

7. Director's Report – presented by Michelle Parrish, Director

a. Financial Update

- i. Michelle Parrish, Director, informed the board of the original budget adopted and the actual year-to-date budget and stated that there is no need to amend or adjust the budget at this time.

b. LEH Grant & Administrative Server Room Generator

- i. Ms. Parrish spoke about the receiving of a Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities grant to keep the server room working in case of an emergency shutdown. As it stands, all Wi-Fi and internet capabilities run through the Administrative building, so if any reason the Admin building loses power, then the system is shut down. This generator will make sure this doesn't happen in the future. She also mentions a letter written by representative Shane Mack recognizing and congratulating the library system on this accomplishment. The generator total was \$19,780 and the grant was awarded for \$10,000.

c. Comic Con Report

- i. Ms. Parrish spoke on the record-breaking attendance of over 2,000 people. She informed the board that more parking will be needed if the event is to be held at the Denham Springs-Walker location in the future. Ms. Abby Crosby asked for the total spent for this event and Ms. Parrish informed her that the budgeted total would be sent at her request.

More detailed information on the Director's Report may be found by listening to the posted audio recording of the meeting or watching the posted video link to our YouTube channel.

8. Presentations

a. Livingston Parish Library Strategic Plan 2025-2030

i. Presented by David Gray, Public Information Officer

David Gray discussed the implementation of a new strategic plan for the next 5 years. The current plan expires at the end of 2024. Mr. Gray goes on to give a slideshow presentation to the board on the goals and aspirations concerning the future of the library system. He then goes on to state the mantra for the study with three words, Connect, Discover, and Enrich. He states *“This basically sums up what we want to do. We want to **Connect** with this community, we want them to **Discover** the resources the library has for them, and we want to **Enrich** their lives through those resources.”*

Mr. Gray goes on to say that this will be a board-approved document that the board will need to vote on, once completed.

He goes on to state that approximately 800 patrons responded to an economic impact study that was released to Adult patrons over a two-week period. An example given was that 67% of patrons who responded showed interest in a satellite branch where patrons could use WiFi and return and pick up items on hold.

Mr. Larry Davis states that to get a wider scope of responses for future surveys, it might be best to also include schools or places where people gather.

More detailed information may be found by listening to the posted audio recording of the meeting or watching the posted video link to our YouTube channel.

9. New Business

a. Citizen’s Request for Appeal of Reconsideration [3-309c] for “Queerfully and Wonderfully Made: A Guide for LGBTQIA+ Teens” by Leigh Finke

1. Presented by Ronnie Bencaz, Board President

There was discussion amongst the board members regarding the book itself and whether or not it should be moved to the Adult section, or stay in the Young Adult section of the library.

Francine Smith, Board Member, states that she “didn’t really care for it” and that if you took out the LGBTQIA+ aspect of it, then it was basically a generic book on advice for teens that included sections on ignoring bullies and setting boundaries. She goes on to state that she doesn’t want to remove the book, but simply move it to the Adult section.

Wendi Smith, Board member discusses some of the concerns she had pertained to the references to pornography and how it encouraged them [Teens] to watch pornography and the hows on searching online for sexually explicit poetry. She stated that there was another reference in the back of the book to online hangouts and one specifically was Trevor Space for 13 – 24 year olds. She stated “I thought that might be inappropriate because that’s minors and adults” and not appropriate for teenagers.

Abby Crosby, Board Member, discusses various pages of the book (examples: pages 56, 61, 33, 129, 130, 156, 159, 169) and states “They don’t know what shoes to wear and it’s teaching them to be activists, that’s very concerning.” She goes on to state the book is misleading and like Ms. Smith, references websites that are found in the back of the book.

Mr. Larry Davis, Board Member, states that he didn’t finish the book, but speaks on the theme of the book and how the bible does not support this based on its mention of Christianity. He states pornography is something that men and women struggle with and if someone is “exposed too early and not properly educated with can bring dire circumstances.”

Mr. Davis asks the question of how a book is classified as Non-Fiction if it’s simply an opinion piece. Ms. Michelle Parrish, Director, then states that “Most non-fiction books are an opinion. It’s the opinion of the person who’s writing it.” She states that regarding this particular book, the authors are a Psychologist, a Minister, and a retired Educator. She states “Any non-fiction book is going to be the opinion of the author.” She also states “I don’t think that where it’s a fiction or non-fiction book is the issue y’all have to address. It’s whether or not we just need to move it.”

Mr. Ronnie Bencaz then opens up the floor for any comments from the public.

There were then approximately 11 Livingston Parish residents ranging from retired Educators, local elected officials, and taxpaying citizens who voiced their opinions on this matter. Due to the length of this discussion, **more detailed information may be found by listening to the posted audio recording of the meeting or watching the posted video link to our YouTube channel.**

Motion to move the book to Adult section made by Francine Smith, seconded by
Melissa Anderson

Yeas: Bencaz, Graham, DeGeneres, Anderson, Davis, Neal, Smith, Crosby, Bernard

Nays:

Absent:

Abstain:

The motion carried.

9. New Business

b. Discussion of Library Signage in front of Facilities

i. Presented by Abby Crosby, Board Member

Ms. Crosby speaks to the Board about the signage regarding R.S. 15-538, on probation parole and sexual offenders within 1,000 feet of a public entity. She states that signs need to be displayed in front of the libraries at least with the revised statute, and will perhaps be a deterrent. Ms. Smith then states that Giovanni [Tairov, former Director of Livingston Parish Library] spoke with Mr. Erdey and had him include libraries.

Ms. Parrish states wording of the signage needs to be carefully considered and the Revised Statute should be posted on the signage. This idea would need to be run by Mr. Moody, Parish Attorney before any signage is made. It's not unheard of, but no other library systems have these signs in place.

Motion to confer with Mr. Moody on the correct wordage of the sign made by Francine Smith, seconded by Melissa Anderson

Yeas: Bencaz, Graham, DeGeneres, Anderson, Davis, Neal, Smith, Crosby, Bernard

Nays:

Absent:

Abstain:

The motion carried.

9. New Business

c. Discussion & Resolution: Red, Yellow, Green Card System for Speaking at Board of Control Meetings

i. Presented by Larry Davis, Board Member

Mr. Davis discusses the need to provide a more streamlined meeting and to allow those speaking at meetings if with a group, to register support or opposition and appoint a

spokesperson. This card system would allow people to render their opinions or suggestions or what they disagree with or dislike into our system. Ms. Parrish states that instead of retaining paper cards, the library will have them electronically scanned to make it easier for retention purposes.

There is discussion amongst the attendees and the board regarding this card system and what it entails. **More detailed information may be found by listening to the posted audio recording of the meeting or watching the posted video link to our YouTube channel.**

Motion to add to our policy the red/green card system as used by the Louisiana Legislature made by Larry Davis, seconded by Abby Crosby

Yeas: Bencaz, Graham, DeGeneres, Anderson, Davis, Neal, Smith, Crosby, Bernard

Nays:

Absent:

Abstain:

The motion carried.

9. New Business

d. Discussion of Resolution: Formally Request LA Attorney General Opinion Regarding the Tulane Letter Received on January 18, 2024

i. Presented by Michelle Parrish, Director

Ms. Parrish states that she spoke with Mr. Moody over the phone and received a letter from him, which she read in full. She then states that a motion is needed on record so the minutes may be submitted to Mr. Moody to be submitted to the Attorney General.

Motion to formally make a resolution to get an Attorney General's opinion "of relocation of library materials challenged under policy code 3-309a while the library processes the request" [on removing a book before its due process] made by Larry Davis, seconded by Wendi Neal

Yeas: Bencaz, Graham, DeGeneres, Anderson, Davis, Neal, Smith, Crosby, Bernard

Nays:

Absent:

Abstain:

The motion carried.

9. New Business

e. Roof Replacement of Administrative Offices: Quotes Review & Approval

i. Presented by Michelle Parrish, Director

Ms. Parrish spoke to the board regarding someone who came out and put patches on the Administrative Office roof and that the shingles were not put on properly, and nails were driven too far down and it is sloughing off the shingles. The front part of the original roof has to be replaced. There were three quotes from ACI, our facility maintenance company,

CNG - \$61,573

Coleman - \$66,000

Blanco - \$72,000

With an additional 10% managed service charge.

She states that we reached out to our own roofing company and we would then manage ourselves with A&A Roofing at \$56,000.

Motion to go with A&A and not pay 10% made by Abby Crosby, seconded by Francine Smith

Yeas: Bencaz, Graham, DeGeneres, Anderson, Davis, Neal, Smith, Crosby, Bernard

Nays:

Absent:

Abstain:

The motion carried.

9. New Business

f. Policy Changes for Approval: Amendments

i. Code: 3-337 – Library of Things

1. 3-337.h – Keep Louisiana Beautiful (KLB) Kits

Mr. Cotton spoke about the Keep Louisiana Beautiful initiative and how we partnered with the Parish Government at no cost to the library to include various items to help pick up garbage around the parish. Ms. Fran Smith then spoke how she reached out to Ms. Gardner regarding this and how it was paid for by a grant.

The grant proposal was for the Main Branch and so the initial allotment of trash pickers, vests, and various items in the kits are to be split between Main (16), Watson (10) and Denham Springs-Walker (10).

Kits will be checked out for a 2 week period with no renewal.

ii. Code: 3-301 – Services of the Library

Mr. Cotton informed the board that this is just to add the kits to the library services portion of the policy manual.

iii. Code: 3-315 – Circulation Services

Mr. Cotton states that this is just to add the kits into circulation.

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

Motion to accept the policy changes as you read them made by Francine Smith, seconded by Ivy Graham

Yeas: Bencaz, Graham, DeGeneres, Anderson, Davis, Neal, Smith, Crosby, Bernard

Nays:

Absent:

Abstain:

The motion carried.

9. New Business

g. Surplus Inventory: Disposal of Items

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

Mr. Cotton brings to the board a list of items to surplus and auction.

Motion to surplus items as listed made by Francine Smith, seconded by Abby Crosby

Yeas: Bencaz, Graham, DeGeneres, Anderson, Davis, Neal, Smith, Crosby, Bernard

Nays:

Absent:

Abstain:

The motion carried.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Bencaz at 8:06 p.m.