

# Ouachita Parish Public Library

## Board of Control

### Minutes

December 14, 2023

The Ouachita Parish Public Library Board of Control Meeting was held on Thursday, December 14, 2023, at the Main Branch of the Ouachita Parish Public Library. In attendance were the following members: Ms. Betty Ward Cooper, President; Mr. Darris Waren, Vice-President; Ms. Alex Webre; Mr. Larry Bratton, ex-officio member; Ms. Kathy Craig; Ms. Misti Cordell and newly appointed board member Mr. LaMario Looney. Mr. Wyman Mardis was absent. Also attending were Mr. Brad Cammack, OPPJ Treasurer; Ms. Nancy Green, OPPL Acting Director; Ms. LaKeisha Bosworth, OPPL Assistant Director; and Ms. Casie Castle, OPPL Business Manager.

President Betty Ward Cooper called the meeting to order at 12:03pm, and newly appointed board member Mr. LaMario Looney led the invocation.

There were two agenda changes that involved adjusting the sequence of the agenda and these changes were approved on a motion by Ms. Craig and a second by Mr. Bratton.

President Cooper welcomed one guest, Ms. Dilcie McDonald Green.

There were no public comments.

Mr. Bill Land of Land 3 Architect gave an update on the new Main Branch building and stated that the design phase of the plans should be complete by the end of January. He also noted that Mr. Cammack had authorized the asbestos abatement contractor (PAC) to complete asbestos removal in the building to begin around mid-January or early February, but Mr. Land noted the existing cubicles in the space must be removed ahead of time.

Mr. Land also stated that since Twin City Electric had previously done all the electrical in the building, they had been retained to map out the electrical surface in the building to speed up the renovation process. Mr. Land noted that his company had reached out to a few in-state vendors for library furniture options.

Mr. Land informed the board that he would be invoicing the library for previous work his company had done to create plans for renovating the current Main Branch before the decision had been made to purchase the new building. He noted the price would be around \$45,000 for some 900 hours of work done over time.

Mr. Cammack mentioned that the board should instruct Ms. Green to move forward with getting a contract to remove the cubicles from the building. Mr. Cammack stated it was the Police Jury's responsibility to remove the cubicles and one possibility would be to deal with someone to remove the cubicles for free in order to sell the materials for scrap and keep any money from the sale.

The next agenda item was the presentation of the revised policies necessary to comply with Act 436 which has become La. R.S. 23:25:225 The Checklist provided by Mr. Jay Mitchell, OPPJ Assistant District Attorney, was presented to be used as legal guide to ensure that the library met the mandated requirements set forth in the law. The State Library of Louisiana also years sent a template to serve as guidance for Louisiana public libraries in updating their policies to meet the requirements. Ms. Green expressed that she, Ms. Bosworth, and Mr. Mitchell spent time working together to make the necessary changes to the Ouachita Parish Public Library's policies.

The updated policies were then presented to the board with the notation by Mr. Mitchell that the "community standards" requirement of the law "doesn't apply to limit the library's acquisition of materials IF the library has adopted the library card restrictions for minors". The revised policy section on "Library Cards," meets that requirement and the updated portion of the policy defines the terms "Digital Content," "Sexual Conduct," and "Sexually explicit material" using definitions directly as outlined in the law. An update was also made to the library's Audio-Visual Borrower policy, increasing the minimum patron age for DVD borrowing from 17 years of age to 18 years. The purpose section of the Materials Selection section of the Policy Manual was also updated.

Mr. Warren asked what was to stop a child from going to the adult section of the Library and getting a book off the shelf and reading it in the Library. Ms. Green and Ms. Bosworth both noted that children under the age of 13 were not allowed in the library without a parent or guardian, and it is normal staff procedure for the librarians to question an unaccompanied minor in an area of the Library not designated for children and return them to their parent or guardian.

The Reconsideration of Materials section of the Policy Manual was reviewed and the updates included definitions for "Digital Content," "Sexual Conduct," and "Sexually explicit material" as well as an update for the process to review a reconsideration of material form made by a patron. The Library Board shall review and make a determination in an open meeting on any material brought before them for reconsideration with a completed reconsideration form. Once a determination has been made and the patron notified of the outcome, the patron has 30 days from the date of notification to appeal the board's decision.

Ms. Bosworth next briefly pointed out other updates to the Policy Manual not associated with meeting the mandated requirements of La. R.S. 23:25:225. The State Library of Louisiana had again offered a template to use for the library to do so. A motion was made by Mr. Warren and

seconded by Ms. Webre to adopt the updated policies as presented to adhere to La. R.S. 23:25:225.

The minutes from the previous meeting held on October 12, 2023, were approved on a motion by Ms. Cordell, seconded by Mr. Looney with all present voting in favor of approval.

The monthly Statistical, Financial, and Personnel Reports from the months of October, due to no quorum, and November of 2023 were presented.

The Statistical Reports for the months of October and November 2023 were approved on a motion by Mr. Looney, seconded by Ms. Craig.

The Financial Reports for October and November 2023 were presented and approved on a motion by Ms. Webre, seconded by Ms. Cordell.

The effective start date for the 4% increase in salary for staff was then addressed. Mr. Waren made a motion and was seconded by Mr. Looney to make December 25 the effective date for the increase to begin. Mr. Waren then made the formal motion necessary by the Library Board of Control to grant the 4% Cost-of-Living Adjustment increase for all staff. This motion was seconded by Ms. Cordell.

At this time, Mr. Cammack addressed the fact that Ms. Green had not received a raise during the 2023 year in which she served as Acting Director of the library. When asked why, he mentioned that the HR director had thought the board would evaluate Ms. Green as Acting Director and decide her salary increase based on the evaluation as has been done in years past with Directors. Due to this not taking place with the board, Ms. Green's salary for 2023 had remained the same as in 2022. The board asked Ms. Green, Ms. Bosworth, Ms. Castle, and a member of the public, Ms. Dilcie McDonald Green, to step out of the meeting.

Later Ms. Green, Ms. Bosworth, Ms. Castle, and a member of the public Ms. Dilcie McDonald Green were asked to return to the meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Waren, seconded by Mr. Looney to return to a regular session meeting. A motion was then made by Ms. Weber, seconded by Ms. Cordell to increase Ms. Green's salary to \$100,000 effective December 25. The board expressed their appreciation for all Ms. Green has done during her time as Acting Director. Ms. Green expressed her appreciation to the board for all they have done to help the library.

The Personnel Reports for October and November 2023 were presented and were approved on a motion by Mr. Waren and seconded by Ms. Webre.

The 2024 Holiday Schedule for the Ouachita Parish Public Library was discussed, and a change was made when Mr. Waren noted the dates for the New Year's Holiday at the end of 2024 were incorrect. The library will be closed Tuesday, December 31, 2023, and Wednesday, January 1, 2024, in observance of the New Year's holiday. A motion was made by Mr. Waren, seconded by Mr. Looney to approve the proposed Holiday Schedule with noted changes.

There was no other business on the agenda and the meeting was adjourned at 1:47 pm on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Ms. Cordell, with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted:

Nancy Green

Acting Director and Secretary

Betty Ward-Cooper

President