

# Ouachita Parish Public Library

## Board of Control

### Minutes

July 14, 2022

Ouachita Parish Library Board of Control Meeting was held on Thursday, July 14, 2022, 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. Robert Wright, Jr.; and Mr. Larry Bratton ex-officio member. Ms. Kathy Craig and Ms. Misti Cordell were absent. Also attending were 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 12:08pm and Mr. Waren led the invocation.

There were no changes, and the agenda was approved as presented.

There were no guests or public comments.

The minutes from the previous meeting held on June 9, 2022, were approved on a motion by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Bratton with all present voting in favor of approval.

The President called for Ms. Green to review OPPL's monthly reports from June of 2022. Ms. Green discussed items such as Physical Circulation statistics going up from May to June, but they are still less than June of 2021. She also discussed that Reference and e-Reference services have come up from May and total e-services are up from May as well. The library also processed 801 new patrons during the month of June which Ms. Green attributed to the library's Amnesty Week which she later discussed in more detail. At this point, Mr. Wright commented that he had visited the Anna Meyer Branch of the library and was pleased with the setup for printing services at that branch. Ms. Green then discussed how onsite programs picked up from May to June. She also made mention of the Juneteenth program the Carver-McDonald Branch held at the Louisiana Purchase Gardens and Zoo with 125 people in attendance. Adult Programs are up Ms. Green noted drawing attention to the Adult online book club. She ended her discussion of the Statistical Reports by stating that overall total library usage from May to June showed an increase. The monthly statistical reports for June 2022 were approved on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Mr. Bratton.

At 12:14pm, Mr. Bill Land, Architect of Land 3 Architect, Inc. joined the meeting.

For the June 2022 financial report, Ms. Green noted that there were no significant expenses in the month of June except for the encumbrance of funds to purchase new staff computers. The financial report was approved as presented on a motion made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Ms. Webre.

The personnel report for June 2022 was approved on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Ms. Webre.

Ms. Green reported on the Amnesty Week that the Ouachita Parish Public Library held during the first week of June. She noted that it was extremely successful. The library waived the fines of 636 patrons of which 169 were children. During Amnesty Week, Ms. Green also noted that over 2,000 patrons signed up for the Summer Reading Program at the library of which 1,115 of them were children, 177 were Young Adults, and 849 were Adults. Mrs. Bosworth stated that she too felt Amnesty Week was well received and that it also helped boost the library's Summer Reading Program. She mentioned that incentives given out for meeting reading goals had to be reordered due to the large number of patrons participating in the program.

President Betty Ward-Cooper then asked Mr. Land of Land 3 Architect to speak concerning the plans to renovate Main Branch that had been introduced in a previous meeting. Mr. Land commented on Mayor Friday Ellis presentation of the plans for Downtown Monroe improvements with the hopes of a library branch being added to the area. Mr. Land suggested that when thinking about the downtown area, the Board should consider that in the past the downtown location did not work for the community should the Main Branch of the library be moved there. He noted it was an area away from schools, and that Libraries are better served in area where schools are close. Mr. Land stated he had researched the Pine Bluff Library that Board member Ms. Kathy Craig had mentioned visiting at the last board meeting. He noted that the amount per square foot for renovating that branch was comparable to what he had presented to the Board during the June 9 meeting for possible Main Branch renovations. Mr. Land also stated that a recession seemed imminent in the current economy which would potentially bring the cost of materials down. Ms. Webre inquired of Mr. Land if there was the possibility of a tax credit for the library that would help with the cost of renovations which Mr. Land was not sure about. He made mention that the Main Branch had been build in its current location in 1954 with the additions made around 1978, he believed. At this point, Mr. Wright expressed to President Cooper that taking the Main Branch to the area proposed by Mayor Friday Ellis at the last board meeting would leave a hole in the community. He wondered if there was a possibility of building a new branch downtown while keeping the Main Branch in its current location. Mr. Waren suggested that possibly in the future a satellite branch with a meeting space could be built downtown instead of a full branch that would offer meeting space. Ms. Webre agreed with Mr. Waren's idea.



Mr. Bratton mentioned available options downtown that he had been looking into and discussed the possibility of taking only the Administration department of the library away from Main to lessen the need for space the library has.

President Betty-Ward Cooper suggested that the Board needs to make a solid plan on what they want to do moving forward with changes to the Main Branch as far as whether the Board wants to renovate Main or move the branch entirely. The Board agreed with President Cooper, and Mr. Wright asked if the discussion could be put on the agenda for the next board meeting. Mr. Bratton asked Mr. Land if he could possibly get together some figures to make a comparison of the cost to build/buy a new building versus renovating the current one.

Ms. Green then noted that she, Ms. Bosworth, and President Cooper had attended the Louisiana Library Association Conference the past week in Alexandria, LA, and President Cooper had been named the Chair of the Board of Trustees for LLA.

The next regular meeting was scheduled to be held on Thursday, August 11, 2022, at the Main Branch Library; however, several board members expressed that they would not be available to attend on that date. Therefore, it was decided by the Board that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 4, 2022, at the Main Branch Library.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Warren, seconded by Mr. Wright, with all voting in favor.

Respectfully

Nancy Green, Secretary

Betty Ward-Cooper, President