

Ouachita Parish Public Library

Board of Control

Minutes

May 8, 2025

The Ouachita Parish Public Library Board of Control met on Thursday, May 8, 2025, 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; Mr. Larry Bratton, ex-officio member; Mr. LaMario Looney; Ms. Alex Webre; and Ms. Kathy Craig. Mr. Wyman Mardis 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 Cooper called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm and Mr. Waren led the invocation.

Next, President Cooper called for any agenda changes. There were none. The agenda was approved on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Ms. Webre, with all in favor.

President Cooper welcomed Ms. Jennifer Johnson, who will replace OPPJ Assistant District Attorney Mr. Jay Mitchell upon his retirement later this year.

There were no public comments.

Mr. Bill Land and Mr. Robert Many were called upon to give an update on the renovation of the New Main Branch Library building located at 1000 Oliver Road.

Mr. Land began by stating that progress was being made at the new location. The drywall has been installed, and spaces are taking shape. He noted that there were three change orders thus far for the project. The first change order concerns getting the sprinkler system area located in the building that goes through the company in the adjacent building switched to the library. Another change order concerns domestic waterworks. The final change order is to replace an outdated sprinkler backflow valve. The board asked Mr. Land what the total cost of all three change orders would be, and he gave an estimate of \$75,000. Mr. Land then reminded the board that the renovations had been budgeted for \$7 million and stated that at present, the cost was around \$5,545,000, and construction costs are coming in well under budget. Mr. Land then added that there would be a future change order to replace several hundred square feet of roof deck to install the planned arch over the entrance to the building.

Mr. Land next discussed furniture options that were being put together to present to Ms. Nancy and Ms. Bosworth to choose colors and fabrics. He also noted that some furniture would serve as charging stations for patrons to charge laptops and cell phones. These pieces would be

located next to towers where electrical wiring would be accessible. Mr. Land stated that the color selections were ready to finalize for the building. He explained that the contractor needs to know the location of the copy machines in the building and finalize the room names for the installation of ADA signage for the blind next to each room. Also needed were the final choices for signage to be displayed in each department and directional signage for amenities such as restrooms.

The next step in the building construction, according to Mr. Land, will be the excavation for the entrance arch as well as cutting out bricks on the north side of the building to install 5 windows in the Young Adult and Children's areas. The board asked Mr. Land if he could get a price on bigger windows for these areas. He stated he would.

Next, the board was asked about the exterior paint color chosen for the building. The options provided for Ms. Green and Ms. Bosworth before the building was painted were various shades of gray. Several members of the board thought that a lighter shade would be better and Mr. Many then explained that he had taken the color that had been selected for the window and door frames on the outside and used it to find matching grays on the same color spectrum. Mr. Land then suggested that warmer tones could be found and presented to the board to select for the outside of the building if they wanted to choose a different color.

Mr. Many next discussed the interior color scheme for the new branch with gray carpeting down the middle of the interior space and tiles along the aisles. The smaller meeting/study rooms will have gray as the base color, but there will be color accents throughout each room. Each of these rooms will have glass walls with black framing around the glass panels. Ms. Webre expressed her concern about the glass walls and doors due to her past experience with locking glass doors. She mentioned that she had experienced glass doors shattering at times from trying to lock them from below. Mr. Land said that he would try to go to the CenturyNext building to see their meeting rooms and compare the design to what was planned for the new Main Branch building. Mr. Many went on to discuss that the color of the baseboards in each room had been chosen by Ms. Green and Ms. Bosworth to be a darker gray color, showing an example to the board. Mr. Land asked if the board would like to go with black baseboards instead in the main area of the building to tie in with the door and window frames. Mr. Bratton, Mr. Waren, Ms. Craig, and President Cooper agreed that black would look better.

Mr. Many then presented the board with information about the color choices for the planned Podcast room in the building. He stated there would be a built-in wooden desk with chairs and the carpeting would be gray with red accents. A couch with red accents would be in that room to tie the room's colors together. Mr. Many then presented a rendering of the Young Adult area, which will have chairs that can form a couch or be left individually, giving the area a relaxed feel. The chairs will also have arms that have flattened areas to be used for laptops. These chairs, he reiterated, would be near towers to provide electricity to them for charging laptops and cell phones. He also presented the board with a rendering for cell phone spaces, which are booths for patrons to go into and take cell phone calls if needed. Mr. Many stated

the furniture order was currently being prepared and should be completed by July due to expected price increases in August. He presented the board with a rendering of the Young Adult gaming area that is planned. He and Mr. Land again stated there would be accent walls and murals throughout to incorporate color with the gray base color. They showed the board pictures of acoustic panels with vibrant colors and shapes on them that were planned to be installed throughout the building to provide better sound.

Mr. Land then told the board that he, Ms. Green, and Mrs. Bosworth had met with the local company MoeBiz to help put together a list for the equipment needed for the new library building, particularly the meeting rooms. Once the quote for this equipment is received and approved, Mr. Land stated that the equipment would be bid out since it is not on state contract. He expressed the need to put the equipment in before the ceiling tiles go in. He also asked Ms. Green about the security cameras needed for the new building. The library has a current vendor they are using for the system-wide security cameras, so he did not include permanent cameras in the equipment bid, assuming the library would use the current vendor they are contracted with. Mr. Land and Mr. Many then concluded their presentation to the board.

At this time, Mr. Bratton mentioned that since the board did not meet in April, nothing had been said about the passing of the millage renewal for the library during the local March election. Mr. Bratton stated he felt the presentation by the library and Police Jury at the ribbon cutting held at the new Main Branch building before the election had helped with getting people out to vote for the millage renewal.

Mr. Land then made a final comment that, due to the progress that was being made with the contractors, he estimated that they would be completed by October or November of this year.

The minutes from the previous meeting held on March 13, 2025, were next on the agenda and were approved on a motion by Ms. Craig, seconded by Mr. Looney, with all present voting in favor of approval.

President Cooper then called for Ms. Green to review OPPL's monthly reports from March and April 2025. The board decided on a motion from Ms. Webre to approve all reports at one time. The Statistical, Financial and Personnel reports for March and April were presented and approved on a motion by Mr. Warren, seconded by Ms. Craig, with all present voting in favor of approval.

Before adjourning the meeting, Ms. Green shared with the board the library's partnership with the Department of Children and Family Services to promote the Foster Care System and the need to recruit volunteers to become foster parents for this program. DCFS plans to have events at all Library branches that would offer information and training to promote fostering local children. The board members commented on how beneficial this program will be to the community.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 12, 2025, at the Main Branch Library.

The meeting was officially adjourned at 1:09pm on a motion by Ms. Webre, seconded by Mr. Looney, with all present voting in favor.

Betty Ward-Cooper, President

Nancy Green, Secretary