

Ouachita Parish Public Library

Minutes

October 15, 2022

Ouachita Parish Library Board of Control Meeting was held on Thursday, October 13, 2022, at the Main Branch of the Ouachita Parish Public Library.

In attendance were the following members: Ms. Betty Ward Cooper, President; Mr. Darris Warren, Vice-President; Mr. Wyman Mardis; Mr. Robert Wright, Jr.; and Mrs. Kathy Craig.

Mr. Larry Bratton, ex-officio member; Ms. Alex Webre; and Ms. Misti Cordell were absent.

Also attending were Mr. Brad Cammack, OPPJ Treasurer; Mr. Jay Mitchell, OPPJ Assistant District Attorney; 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 12:04pm. Mrs. Kathy Craig led the invocation.

President Cooper welcomed guests Ms. Maxine Tatum, Chairman of the Carver-McDonald Committee, and Ms. Dilcie McDonald Green.

There were no changes, and the agenda was approved as presented on a motion by Mr. Warren, seconded by Mrs. Craig.

The minutes from the previous meeting held on September 15, 2022, were approved on a motion by Mr. Mardis, seconded by Mr. Warren with all present voting in favor of approval.

President Cooper called for Ms. Green to present the Ouachita Parish Public Library's Amended 2022 and Proposed 2023 budgets for the Board's approval. Ms. Green noted that a recent unforeseen repair to the Bookmobile caused a last-minute adjustment to be made to the Amended 2022 budget, making it different than what had been previously emailed to all board members. Ms. Green also noted Interest Earnings had increased higher than expected. Mr. Cammack spoke up saying that Interest on Investment was projected to increase as well. Ms. Green noted that Utilities were going up. She next proposed an across-the-board 4% salary increase for Ouachita Parish Public Library staff for 2023, citing cost of living as well as a 12% increase in health insurance as the need for that percentage increase in salary.

Ms. Green noted that the account line for the Acquisition of a new Bookmobile had been moved from 2022 to 2023 as the year 2022 is nearing its end and a new Bookmobile will not be bought this year. It was also pointed out that Security services were gone from the branches which took that expense from the budget. Travel expenses for the proposed 2023 budget were

increased in anticipation of library staff traveling to the Public Library Association's annual conference. Food purchases were also increased for the 2023 proposed budget due to an increase in branch programming. Ms. Green expressed that the upstairs A/C chiller at Main has gone out and will be repaired using the Major Improvements account line.

Ms. Green referred to Mr. Cammack to further discuss the Amended 2022 and Proposed 2023 budgets. Mr. Cammack noted that costs for 2023 were not as much as the original amount proposed for 2022. Personal services such as Salary and Benefits account lines lessened for the Amended 2022 budget due to vacant positions within the library system not being filled, so the original funds requested for those lines will be lessened for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Cammack then discussed Capital Outlay, and the library board asked that the \$1,000,000 for Major Improvements in 2022 Capital Outlay be instead moved to the 2023 Proposed budget increasing that line to \$5,000,000. The Amended 2022 and Proposed 2023 budgets were approved with the minor change to Capital Outlay on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Ms. Craig.

The President called for Ms. Green to review OPPL's monthly Statistical, Financial, and Personnel Reports from September of 2022.

Ms. Green noted on the Statistical Report several areas of increase: In-House use, Patron Visits, Reference Questions, Programs and Program Attendance, Fair/Special Events Attendance (Ms. Green mentioned the library's participation in the Career Fair at the Monroe Civic Center.), Virtual Programs and Attendance, eBooks/Audio Books/e-Videos circulation, and new patrons processed into the system. The Statistical Report was approved on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Mr. Wright.

The Financial Report was approved on a motion by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Waren.

The Personnel report for September 2022 was then discussed by Ms. Green and was approved on a motion by Ms. Craig, seconded by Mr. Wright.

Mr. Bill Land of Land 3 Architect addressed the Board about the presentation he made to the Ouachita Parish Police Jury to promote the renovation of the Main Branch. Mr. Land then discussed the possibility of the Stein Mart Building as the new site for the Main Branch. He noted the increase in square footage of that building and that the roof had been updated and was still under warranty. He also pointed out that A/C units were only 10 years old and the building has an emergency generator as well. Mr. Land expressed that the cost to renovate the Stein Mart Building would be considerably less at about \$3-4 million. Mr. Waren inquired about the possibility of adding more windows in the front of the building to add more natural light.

Mr. Bill Roark, local realtor addressed the Board and presented information that he had collected in the past for the Board concerning the Carver-McDonald Branch with an area sketch of properties that were and still are available in the area close to the existing Carver-McDonald Branch. Mr. Roark presented a "Buyer's Agreement- Exclusive Right -to -Represent" form to be

used if his services are needed. Other properties were discussed including the 1.7 acres adjacent to Miller Funeral Home and 1.4 acres of land on the corner of Renwick Street and Highway 165.

Ms. Gladys Coward, another local realtor in the area around Carver-McDonald Branch, was also present to introduce herself to the Board.

Ms. Maxine Tatum expressed concern about nepotism over an available lot in the area close to the Carver-McDonald Branch that is owned by a member of her family since she is on the Carver-McDonald Committee. Mr. Jay Mitchell, legal counsel for OPPL advised that since the Carver-McDonald Committee is an ad hoc committee formed by a group of concerned citizens and not governed by the same laws as a board such as the Library Board of Control is that there would be no concern of nepotism.

Mr. Waren expressed that he wanted to move forward with looking to the future for property for a new Carver-McDonald Branch and suggested they look at the 1.7 acres available next to Miller Funeral Home.

A motion was made by Mr. Waren and seconded by Mrs. Craig to have Mr. Jay Mitchell explore the possibility of being able to buy the Stein Mart building to compare the costs to renovating the current Main Branch location.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, November 10, 2022, at the Main Branch Library in the Louis Lock Meeting Room. The meeting was adjourned at 1:28 pm on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Mr. Mardis, with all voting in favor.

Respectfully,

Nancy Green, Secretary

Betty Ward-Cooper, President