

Ouachita Parish Public Library

Board of Control

Minutes

September 14, 2023

The Ouachita Parish Public Library Board of Control Meeting was held on Thursday, September 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. Wyman Mardis; Mr. Larry Bratton, ex-officio member; and Ms. Kathy Craig. Ms. Misti Cordell and Ms. Mashi Epting 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 12:02pm. Ms. Webre gave the invocation.

There were no agenda changes, and the agenda was approved on a motion by Ms. Craig, seconded by Ms. Webre.

President Cooper welcomed the public, Ms. Dilcie McDonald Green.

Mr. Bill Land of Land 3 Architect was also present at this time.

There were no public comments.

The minutes from the previous meeting held on August 10, 2023, were approved on a motion by Ms. Webre, seconded by Mr. Waren with all present voting in favor of approval.

Ms. Green presented the Statistical Report for August 2023 and noted the number of programs for the month of August was lower as Children's and YA programming are suspended during the month of August after Summer Reading.

Ms. Green also noted that Prime Time programming is being held at the Carver-McDonald Branch during September and October. Ms. Bosworth further explained that the program was made possible through a grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, with the purpose of assisting children and parents with building a home library as well as demonstrating how to read creatively with children to encourage critical thinking skills.

The Statistical Report for the month of August 2023, was approved on a motion by Ms. Webre, seconded by Mr. Waren.

The Financial Report for August 2023 was presented with discussion of a grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield Louisiana Telehealth Pilot Program. This grant provides a booth that will enable patrons to privately access a health care provider using the library's network and receive medical advice free of charge. The Financial Report was approved on a motion by Mr. Waren and seconded by Ms. Craig. Ms. Green then reminded the board that the next board meeting to be held on October 12 and would include the yearly OPPL Budget.

The Personnel Report for August 2023 was next reviewed by the board and was approved on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Ms. Webre.

Mr. Bill Land of Land 3 Architect presented an update on the new Main Branch Construction. He stated the preliminary plan had been developed and now the detailed documents, such as the blueprints to go out to bid, were now in the works. Mr. Land stated he would be meeting with Ms. Green and Ms. Bosworth as he wanted to be sure everything was correct before handing it to the engineers. Mr. Land stated the Fire Marshall and City would have to inspect the building after the first of the year and there would be a 30-day bid process followed by an estimated one year of construction. Mr. Land projected his estimated time frame for completion of the building would be around the first quarter of 2025.

Mr. Waren inquired about the upcoming library tax expiration and the time frame for the tax election. Mr. Mitchell responded that spring or fall of 2025 would be a good time to consider the election being held to levy the tax in 2026, noting it would not have to be labeled a new tax if done in this manner.

Mr. Land inquired about the removal of the cubicles located in the new Main Branch building. A motion was made by Mr. Waren and seconded by Ms. Webre that the Police Jury try to dispose of or sell the cubicles. All members voted in favor of this motion.

Ms. Webre pointed out that the Board had requested that the signage shown on the building in Plan A be changed as they felt the look of the signage on one of the other plans stood out more than what was on Plan A. Mr. Land stated he would change the signage.

Mr. Mitchell moved to the next item on the agenda which was an update on the Carver-McDonald Branch. He stated the board had decided to reach out to Ms. Miller who owns property next to Miller Funeral Home across from the current Carver-McDonald Branch to see if she would be willing to sell as well as getting appraisals on the Dhaliwal property presented at a previous board meeting. President Cooper responded that she had been in touch with Ms. Miller and that Ms. Miller did not wish to sell her property. Mr. Mitchell stated that he had requested an appraisal be done of the Dhaliwal property. He stated that if this was not what the board wanted, he could stop the appraisal at this point without any cost. The members of the Board were in favor of proceeding with this appraisal. Ms. Webre questioned if the Dhaliwal property had been checked to see if there were any gas tanks under the property to which Mr. Mitchell said he did not believe that had been checked yet.

Ms. Green expressed appreciation to the Board for the progress that has been made with not only the new Main Branch but also with the Carver-McDonald Branch. She also said that she and Ms. Bosworth, and the whole library system were excited about the new Main Branch library building and progress with Carver-McDonald. Mr. Waren then noted how appreciative he and President Cooper were that Ms. Webre and Ms. Green could step up at the Police Jury meeting to present the plans for the new Main Branch building when he and President Cooper were unable to attend the Police Jury meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, October 12, 2023, at the Main Branch Library in the Louis Lock Meeting Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:38 pm on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Ms. Webre, with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted.

Nancy Green, Interim Director, and Secretary

Ms. Betty Cooper-Ward, President