Ouachita Parish Public Library

Board of Control

Minutes

August 14, 2025

The Ouachita Parish Public Library Board of Control Meeting met on Thursday, August 14, 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. Wyman Mardis; Ms. Alex Webre; and Ms. Kathy Craig. Mr. LaMario Looney; Mr. Larry Bratton, ex-officio member; and Ms. Misti Cordell were absent. Also attending were Mr. Jay Mitchell, OPPJ Assistant District Attorney; Ms. Jennifer Johnson, OPPJ Assistant District Attorney; Mr. William Long, OPPJ Treasurer; Ms. Nancy Green, OPPL Acting Director; and Ms. Casie Castle, OPPL Business Manager.

President Cooper called the meeting to order at 12:05pm and the invocation was given by Vice President Darris Waren.

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

President Cooper noted there were no guests, and, therefore, no public comment at this time.

Mr. Bill Land of Land 3 Architect then presented his update on the New Main Branch Library building. Mr. Land began by stating that he had not heard back from the audio-visual company in Ruston, AVL, who will be providing the quote for all the technology the new building will have in the meeting rooms. He reiterated that MoeBiz will no longer be working with the library on creating this bid. Mr. Land said he would reach out to AVL and see where they are in the process of getting a bid together. He noted that he, Ms. Green, and Ms. Bosworth had walked through the new Main Branch building with a representative from AVL to get recommendations on what the branch would need. Mr. Land also told Ms. Green that he had an update on the back meeting room’s projection system as it would be changed to three flat screens instead.

Mr. Land next discussed the site sign for the location. He reminded the board that they had previously expressed not wanting a digital aspect to the sign due to it being difficult to read when driving by. He had the board rendering of a site sign his office had created that was fin shaped with a kick out with Ouachita Parish Public Library on it with the bottom of the sign having letters for Main Branch. Mr. Land stated that the kick-out portion would be backlit as well. He reiterated that the site sign would be a separate bid than the original construction plans in order to avoid a change order to add it to the construction plans. President Cooper asked Ms. Green which vendor had installed the new site sign at Anna Meyer Branch. Ms. Green stated a local company named Rawls had installed it. President Coooper asked Ms. Green to send their contact information to Mr. Land to include them in the vendors that will be contacted for a bid proposal of the new Main Branch site sign.

Mr. Land spoke to the board about the quote he had received for repairing the areas of the roof that were discussed at previous meetings. He said the quote was $6,000, and that he will be taking it to the next Police Jury meeting for approval to move forward with the repairs. He also discussed a mechanical unit on the roof that was sloping slightly, stating he had received a quote of $6,000 to level the unit. He had also inquired about the cost of repairing 7 places on the roof where the metal roof deck is falling in. He asked a vendor about the cost to take either 2x4 or 4x4 pieces of plywood and screw them onto the interior of the building to cover those 7 areas. This quote was $6,000, however, Mr. Land stated he was not going to move forward with that vendor, but that he would try to get a second quote or see if he and his staff could do it themselves.

Next, Mr. Land reminded the board of the previously discussed issue of the 2nd floor exterior wall being without insulation. He stated that the plan will be to install a stud wall inside the existing walls and insulation will be added between the new stud walls and the existing exterior cinderblock wall. He also mentioned that the air conditioning units had been turned on to test the units. He then reported to the board that the paint the board selected had been applied to the exterior of the building and asked Ms. Green and the board if they would like to paint the exit doors the same color as the exterior or a different color. All agreed they would like the exit doors to be painted the same color allowing them to blend in with the rest of the wall instead of highlighting the doors.

Mr. Land next spoke to the board about the furniture for the new building. He has gotten a quote from KI Furniture which is on state contract for $1,187,472.04 that he will also be presenting to the Police Jury at their next meeting. Mr. Land said that he wanted to get the furniture ordered before the upcoming price increase in September. He also showed the board a picture of the Datum High Density Storage unit that will be purchased for the Special Collections section of the new building. This unit will expand and compress using hand cranks offering more storage while taking up less space. This item will also be purchased on State Contract through a local furniture vendor Pettus Office Products for $63,000.83. Another piece of furniture presented to the board was an Agati curved seating area that is not on state contract. He received a quoted price of $95,000 for these pieces but plans to put it out for quotes from other vendors. The board asked how many of these seating areas the library planned to order, and Mr. Land stated approximately 12. Mr. Land is also researching shelving units for the Children's area that Ms. Bosworth brought to him that have attached playhouses, trains, etc. for children to play on. He has not gotten pricing on the shelving yet.

Mr. Land reminded the board that the original budgeted amount for the construction work on the new building was a little over $7 million and that the actual winning bid for construction came in at around $5.3 million. That lower cost along with the added change orders is still well under budget for the entire project. Mr. Land then asked if the board had any questions about anything he had discussed in his update.

At this time, Ms. Vickie Krutzer, a member of the public who had arrived at the meeting at 12:13pm after the time for public comment had passed, raised her hand to ask a question. President Cooper acknowledged Ms. Krutzer and allowed her question. Ms. Krutzer asked Mr. Land to repeat the costs he had given for the construction of the building. She questioned if the cost was $7 million. Mr. Land stated that was the originally budgeted amount for the construction only on the new building, restating that the actual bid for construction came in well under budget at $5.3 million. Ms. Krutzer then asked for the amount in change orders. Mr. Land stated change orders so far were around $136,000. He asked Ms. Krutzer if she would like him to go through the list of change orders to which she responded that she did not need him to. Mr. Land stated that the project as a whole was still well under budget. Ms. Krutzer then asked about how the roofing issues and sloping mechanical units had been overlooked before the building was purchased. Mr. Land stated the mechanical unit was sloped at such a slight angle that it was only discovered when a plumber was checking the units and noticed water pooling to one side of it. He stated such a slight angle would not be visible to the naked eye. He also noted that roofing issues had been noted before purchasing the building; however, these current issues were not visible upon inspection until the tiles covering the whole ceiling had been removed. Mr. Mitchell spoke up to say that the cost to purchase the building was actually lessened due to the roofing issues that were discovered before purchase. Mr. Mitchell estimated $89,000 had been taken off from the original cost of purchase because of the roofing issues. Mr. Waren asked Mr. Land if he had an estimated time of completion on the project. Mr. Land stated everything so far was going according to schedule or maybe even a little ahead of schedule, so the estimated time would be somewhere from November to the end of the year.

Mr. Land then asked if the board needed to make a motion to approve taking the furniture bid to the Police Jury since it was such a large item. Mr. Mitchell said it might be best to have the board's approval for the Police Jury to know they had seen and agreed to the presented bid. A motion was made by Mr. Waren, seconded by Mr. Mardis to approve the furniture bid on state contract as presented by Mr. Land, with all present voting in favor of approval.

The minutes from the previous meeting held on June 12, 2025, were approved on a motion by Ms. Webre, seconded by Ms. Craig, with all present voting in favor of approval.

President Cooper next called for Ms. Green to review OPPL's monthly reports from the months of June and July 2025 due to there being a lack of quorum for the July 10 meeting. First, Ms. Green discussed the Statistical Reports for June and July 2025 and they were approved on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Ms. Craig, with all present voting in favor of approval.

Ms. Green also noted to the board that the library had experienced an increase in the number of patrons who signed up for the Summer Reading Program. She noted that in 2024, 732 Adults had participated and in 2025 that number rose to 1,016 Adults. In 2024, 160 Teens participated, and in 2025, 252 had participated. The number of Children who participated in 2025 were 1,153.

The Financial Reports for June and July 2025 were presented and approved on a motion by Ms. Webre, seconded by Mr. Waren, with all present voting in favor of approval.

Personnel Reports for June and July 2025 were presented and approved on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Ms. Craig, with all present voting in favor of approval.

Under Other Business/Action:

The Carver-McDonald Branch plans were discussed, and the decision was made for President Cooper to inquire about the possibility of the expansion of the existing location of the Branch with the Monroe City School Board and report back at the next meeting.

The art project for the new Main Branch was then discussed and photos were chosen to be used in this project.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, September 11, 2025, at the Main Branch Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:57pm on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Ms. Webre, with all present voting in favor.

Addendums to these minutes are attached.

Betty Ward-Cooper, President

Nancy Green, Secretary