

# Ouachita Parish Public Library

## Board of Control

### Minutes

October 9, 2025

The Ouachita Public Library Board of Control Meeting was held on Thursday, October 9, 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; Ms. Alex Webre; Ms. Kathy Craig, and Ms. Debbie Blue. Mr. Wyman Mardis and Ms. Misti Cordell were absent. Also attending were Mr. William Long, OPPJ Treasurer; Ms. Jennifer Johnson, OPPJ Assistant District Attorney; 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 12:01 pm and Ms. Craig led the invocation.

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

President Cooper welcomed guests Ms. Dilcie McDonald Green and Ms. Gladys Smith.

Mr. Bill Land of Land 3 Architect then gave his update on the new Main Branch Library building. He first discussed the Audio-Visual equipment quote he has received from AVL in Ruston. The quote estimate was around \$191,000 for flat screen smart TVs and projection equipment to be installed in all the meeting rooms in the new Main Branch building. Mr. Land stated that AVL had provided the estimated cost of the technology that would be needed but Mr. Land would be bringing the estimate to the Police Jury to proceed in going out for public bid. President Cooper asked how many TVs were planned to be throughout the new Main Branch for that estimate. Mr. Land stated the front large meeting room will have two ceiling-mounted 86" flat screen TVs along with a permanently mounted projection screen for the ability to split the large room into two smaller meeting rooms. The other meeting room at the back of the building is planned to have a 100" flat screen TV and two 86" flat screen TVs. The other smaller meeting rooms throughout the building including a small conference room upstairs and a conference area in the branch manager's office will have 75-85" TVs in them. Mr. Land stated that \$350,000 had originally been estimated for the AV equipment and security system installation combined. The security system installation is around \$186,000, so if the bid for the AV equipment is around his estimate of \$200,000, then the cost would be over budget by around

\$36,000; however, he reminded the board that at present the project is \$1 million under budget.

Mr. Land then discussed the new Main Branch building site sign. He stated that there had been a slight adjustment made to the sign rendering he had previously shown the board. The font on the sign was changed in order to be more modern. Mr. Land stated he would bring the updated rendering to show the board for their approval before proceeding with taking it to the Police Jury.

Mr. Land ended his discussion by presenting the photographic murals to be placed in 6 to 7 locations throughout the new branch. He showed the board a layout of the building, marking where each mural will be placed. Ms. Green and Ms. Bosworth have worked with Mr. Land on the placement of the photographs chosen by the Board for the mural.

President Cooper next called for local realtor Ms. Gladys Smith to discuss with the board their thoughts for finding a new location for the Carver-McDonald Branch. Ms. Smith expressed to the board that she wanted to better understand what they are looking for in order to know where to begin her research. She discussed that she had already begun by researching the land behind the current location of the Carver Branch and that she had found that the land was owned by the City of Monroe. She mentioned that she had also found two unoccupied lots on both 25<sup>th</sup> Street and 27<sup>th</sup> Street, which both cross over Renwick Street, where the current branch is located. Mr. Warren asked Ms. Smith if she could start by looking into the property behind the current branch, as well as possibly reaching out to Miller Funeral Home again to see if the owners had changed their minds about selling the lots adjacent to them. Ms. Smith said she would begin her research there, and if neither location was an option, she would begin to look into other areas nearby. The board expressed approval of this plan.

Ms. Dilcie McDonald Green commented that she had attended a recent program at the Carver-McDonald Branch, where over 50 people were in attendance and because of the limited parking at the current branch location, patrons had to park across the street at the recreation center. Ms. McDonald Green stated that many of the patrons were elderly and crossing the street was not safe for them.

Ms. Smith then asked the board how much property they felt would be required to build a new branch, and Ms. Webre stated she believed past meetings and discussions had estimated that 1.5 acres of land would be sufficient for a new branch building.

Reports were then presented.

The minutes from the previous meeting held on September 11, 2025, were approved on a motion by Ms. Craig, seconded by Ms. Blue, with all present voting in favor of approval.

The Statistical, Financial, and Personnel Reports for September 2025 were approved on a motion by Mr. Warren, seconded by Ms. Webre, with all present voting in favor of approval.

#### New Business/Action:

The 2025 Revised and 2026 Proposed Budgets were presented for approval. Mr. Long discussed the various sections of the budget, noting the amount currently entered for Ad Valorem Taxes was close to but not as high as the amount he was given in a recent meeting. He felt it was best to keep the amount where it currently was, and if it came in higher, it would be a positive outcome. Mr. Long noted he had also received an updated amount for the Indirect Cost Allocation line than what was listed for Revised 2025 and stated he would make the change before the presentation to the Finance Committee meeting. Mr. Warren questioned the Sale of Assets line having \$2.5 million for the sale of the current Main Branch Library as possibly needing to be moved from Proposed 2026 to 2027 due to the possibility of the new Main Branch Building not being completed and moved into until after the beginning of 2026. Mr. Long also discussed the Capital Outlay for Revised 2025 and Proposed 2026, explaining to the board the spread of the cost for construction and architectural fees over the course of 2025 and 2026.

The Revised 2025 and Proposed 2026 Budgets were approved on a motion by Ms. Webre, seconded by Mr. Warren, with all present voting in favor of approval.

Ms. Green asked the board to separately approve the 3% raise being requested for staff on the Proposed 2026 Budget. Mr. Warren asked if that was built into the Budget the board was viewing, and Ms. Green stated it was. The 3% raise for staff was approved on a motion by Mr. Warren, seconded by Ms. Webre, with all present voting in favor of approval.

Mr. Warren then requested the Board move into Executive Session. This was done with a motion by Mr. Warren, seconded by Ms. Craig. Ms. Green, Ms. Bosworth, and Ms. Castle left the meeting at this time. The board adjourned the executive session at 1:00 pm on a motion by Ms. Craig, seconded by Mr. Bratton, and Ms. Green, Ms. Bosworth, and Ms. Castle were asked to return to the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 13, 2025, at the Main Branch Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:01 pm on a motion by Ms. Craig, seconded by Ms. Blue, with all present voting in favor.

Betty Ward-Cooper, President

Nancy Green, Secretary