

Ouachita Parish Public Library

Board of Control

Minutes

November 13, 2025

The Ouachita Parish Public Library Board of Control Meeting was held on Thursday, November 13, 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; Ms. Alex Webre; Ms. Kathy Craig, and Ms. Debbie Blue. Mr. Larry Bratton, ex-officio member; 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 12:02 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. Craig, with all in favor.

President Cooper welcomed guests Mr. Shane Smiley, Ouachita Parish Police Jury President and Juror for District E; Mr. Michael Thompson, Ouachita Parish Police Juror for District D; and Ms. Dilcie McDonald Green.

There were no public comments.

Mr. Bill Land of Land 3 Architect was asked to give his update on the new Main Branch Library building. Mr. Land first discussed the furniture for the new branch that was ordered through KI and said that it is expected to be shipped in December, with a delivery date expected 30 days after shipment. The separate furniture order, not under state contract, for the Agati seating, Datum shelving in Special Collections, special furniture for the Children's area, and the wall graphic murals will be put out for bid a week from today, with an expected 15-day bidding deadline. Mr. Land expected all bids to be in by December 15, and he hopes to present the winning bid at the Police Jury meeting, also scheduled for that date. Mr. Waren asked about the pricing for these furniture pieces not on state contract. Mr. Land stated the Agati furniture was around \$95,000, the Datum Shelving was around \$63,000, and the furniture for the Children's area was around \$24,000.

Next, Mr. Land discussed the wall graphic murals. Local graphics company HD Graphics is providing a proposal for the murals that could possibly be cheaper than the cost for contracted

painter, Guidry Painting, would provide for the murals. Mr. Long then asked if HD Graphics did the murals, would the money originally provided to Guidry Painting for this job be returned to the library? Mr. Land stated it would be. President Smiley inquired if HD Graphics would offer a warranty for installing the murals. Mr. Land stated he did not know at this time, but that with Guidry Painting, the warranty would be good for 1 year.

Mr. Land presented the board with an updated rendering for the new branch site sign. The change would use a circle instead of a rectangle for the kickout with "Main Branch" on it. The board stated they liked the change. He next asked the board if they wanted just the words "Main Branch" backlit on the kickout or if they also wanted the words "Ouachita Parish Public Library" to be backlit on the main area of the sign. The board decided they would like both areas to be backlit. Mr. Waren stated he did not like the placement of the wording with "Ouachita" on one line, "Parish Public" on a second line, and "Library" on a third line. He felt that Ouachita Parish should be on a line of its own. Mr. Land said there was not enough space on the sign to do that; however, he could put each word on a line of its own, having 4 lines instead of 3. Mr. Waren asked Mr. Land to create a rendering of that to see what it would look like.

President Smiley asked about the estimated completion time for the parking lot and exterior of the new building. Mr. Land stated that the contractor planned to repair and repave the parking lot and complete the exterior upon completion of the majority of the interior of the building, so as not to damage the newly paved lot with the construction equipment being used.

Mr. Land then spoke about the Audio-Visual equipment that will be installed in the new building. The installation is to be done by Bluum Technology, and local representative, Michael Redman can do any future maintenance or repairs needed. The bid for this proposal will be presented at the next Police Jury meeting. The new quote includes equipment for the Podcast room. Mr. Land also discussed the need to adjust the location of certain pieces of furniture to accommodate power to them.

Local realtor Ms. Gladys Smith then presented information concerning a new location for the Carver-McDonald Branch. Ms. Smith began by saying she had again reached out to Mrs. Miller, owner of the Miller Funeral Home on Renwick Street in Monroe, about the possibility of her property, which is located across the street from the Carver-McDonald Library. Mrs. Miller again stated she was not interested in selling this property. Ms. Smith then contacted the attorney for the City of Monroe about the possibility of the property behind Carroll High School, and she is waiting to hear back from him. Ms. Smith stated the land was vacant but a road would have to be built to access the property. The other option would be to gain access through the school grounds to reach the property.

Ms. Smith also located some potentially available property between S 27th and S 28th Streets. She spoke to the owner of an occupied lot on this property, Ms. Joyce Jackson, who said that she would be willing to sell the property to the library and felt the other property owners on

that same block would also be willing to sell. Ms. Dilcie McDonald Green then stated that the area would need to be rezoned since it is currently residential property. Ms. Webre then researched her phone and combined the size of the different lots that were mentioned and concluded that there was not enough property for the new branch building.

The board then requested that Ms. Smith wait to hear back from the City of Monroe attorney concerning the land behind Carroll Junior High School.

The minutes from the previous meeting held on October 9, 2025, were then approved on a motion by Ms. Webre, seconded by Ms. Blue, with all present voting in favor of approval.

The Statistical Report for October 2025 was approved on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Ms. Webre, with all present voting in favor of approval.

The Financial Report for October 2025 was presented and approved on a motion by Ms. Webre, seconded by Mr. Waren, with all present voting in favor of approval.

The Personnel Report for October 2025 was approved on a motion by Ms. Craig, seconded by Ms. Blue, with all present voting in favor of approval.

Ms. Green then presented the 2026 Board Meeting Dates and 2026 Ouachita Parish Public Library Holiday Dates for approval. At this time, Ms. Blue had to leave for another meeting, and Ms. Johnson stated that since President Smiley was present, he could serve as a voting member of the board, so that the meeting could continue with a quorum. The 2026 Board Meeting Dates were approved on a motion by Mr. Waren, seconded by Ms. Webre, with all present voting in favor of approval. The 2026 OPPL Staff Holiday Dates were approved on a motion by Ms. Webre, seconded by Ms. Craig, with all present voting in favor of approval.

New Business/Action:

President Cooper called for the discussion of the Ouachita Parish Public Library Director position.

Mr. Waren then read a statement:

"Ms. Robin Toms retired in October of 2021. At that time, Ms. Green was asked to accept the position of Director, but she stated that she was not qualified since she did not have the qualifications necessary for the position. The Library Board of Control then named Ms. Green as Acting Director after a search for a new Director led the board to choose Ms. Bosworth to take the position upon completion of passing her state certification. Ms. Bosworth was then named Assistant Director, awaiting the completion of her state certification. Ms. Bosworth has since received her state certification. Ms. Green plans to stay with the library at least until the completion and move to the New Main Branch Building, then she plans to retire. He also noted a recent change in state law, and a Library Director is no longer required to hold a Master of Library Science Degree or be state-certified to hold the Director position. The OPPL bylaws state that the Director must have an MLIS Degree to qualify, but state law supersedes the bylaws."

Therefore, Mr. Waren made a motion for the board to change Ms. Green's title from Acting Director to Director until her retirement, upon which Ms. Bosworth will be named Director. This motion was seconded by Ms. Webre, with all present voting in favor of approval. Ms. Green expressed her appreciation and surprise at the board's decision.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 11, 2025, at the Main Branch Library.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Ms. Craig, seconded by Ms. Webre, with all present voting in favor.

Betty Ward-Cooper, President

Nancy Green, Secretary