



New Orleans Public Library
Regular Board Meeting
Main Library Board Room
Tuesday, September 14, 2021
4:30 p.m.

MINUTES

- I. **Call to Order**
 - A. Board Chair, Vonda Flentroy-Rice, called the September 14, 2021 Board of Directors meeting to order by board chair, at 4:36 p.m.

- II. **Roll Call — 4:36 p.m.**

Members Present: Vonda Flentroy-Rice, Rocky Dufauchard, Dana Henry, Andrea Neighbours, Bill Settoon, Kathleen Coverick, Daniel Tapia
Absent: Phala Kimbrough-Mire
Staff Present: Dr. Gabriel Morley, Tammy Hanson, Jane LeGros, Michel Thompson
Stakeholders Present: Courtney Kearney, John Chrastka, Demetric Mercadel

- III. **Public Comments — 4:36 p.m.**
 - A. No public comments were made.

- IV. **Action Item: Approval of Consent Agenda — 4:37 p.m.**
 - A. Review of draft July 13, 2021 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
 - B. July 6, 2021 Executive Committee Minutes
 - C. July 28, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes
 1. Ms. Flentroy-Rice moved to approve the consent agenda. Motion seconded by Ms. Neighbours. No Discussion. Motion carries with unanimous consent.

- V. **Information Items — 4:37 p.m.**
 - A. Friends of NOPL Update – Courtney Kearney
 1. The used book sale will reopen at Algiers Regional in September with a new manager, Daniel Neathery.
 - B. NOPL Foundation Update – Demetric Mercadel
 1. The Foundation Board is meeting at the end of September. The Foundation is looking for a vice president. They are awaiting the Mayweather sentencing trial to end so they can ramp up fundraising. The sentencing date is continued. Mr. Settoon added that he believes the sentencing date is set for October 6th. Ms. Mercadel added that there was discussion about potential payments.
 - C. Executive Director Update – Dr. Gabriel Morley
 1. Damage from Hurricane Ida was minimal with broken windows at Main and Mid-City Branches. A patron’s vehicle in the Latter parking lot was crushed by a fallen

- tree. Parks and Parkways has been contacted. Central City and Keller were open the Friday after the storm with others opening as they were able to offer A/C, computer use, and cellphone charging. There was no damage to the Archives.
2. RTA is planning relocation of its transfer station due to safety and efficiency issues. A permanent transfer station is planned for Canal and Elk Streets. The project will be in effect for 3 to 5 years and is primarily funded by grant money. The one transfer station will be divided into five separate stops to make routes more efficient. We plan to ask RTA if they can adjust the placement of the station on Loyola Street in front of the Main Library. An on-site manager is planned as well as bathroom facility for bus drivers. The Downtown Development Association agreed to police the area and clear the area of trash.

Some improvements we would like to be permanently implemented are:

- Hard-scaping in the area on Tulane Avenue so it's not messy
- Moving the area in front down to prevent congestion
- Leaving the monitor and bathroom structures for future use.

Completion is slated for January 2, 2022. Conversation between a board member and RTA suggested they are open to on-site social worker.

Ms. Neighbours asked if RTA disagrees to our suggestions if Dr. Morley would let the board know. Dr. Morley agreed. She also asked if RTA would be willing to advertise our services and develop some partnerships, perhaps, even formalizing it in a written agreement. Ms. Neighbours also asked if the NOPL could partner with Blue Bikes to offer passes for citizens to try them. Dr. Morley responded that the engineer that designed the Blue Bike project also designed the reconfiguration of the RTA stations.

We had to reschedule the millage meetings with Mr. Chrastka; however, he is scheduled to be in New Orleans October 4th through October 7th so hopefully our timeline to begin our millage campaign will get back on track. Mr. Settoon asked if the NOPL is hosting FEMA or any other recovery groups at any branches. Dr. Morley responded that the branch manager at ENO had coordinated one and many have been set up at several NORD facilities. Several FEMA individuals are at the Allie Mae Center, located next door to the Central City branch.

D. 2nd Quarter Performance Report – Jane LeGros

1. All numbers increased in comparison to last year due to the CORONA VIRUS limiting patrons' access to our resources. 198,000 digital resources items were circulated vs. 172,000 print resources. We had just under 46,000 library visits and 3300 new library accounts. Computer visits were almost 14,000 and programing delivered 119,000 programs with 4700 participants. We had 249,000 website views in the 2nd quarter.

Dr. Morley added that we are still operating under COVID protocol and may be until the end of the year. President Biden has mandated vaccinations for staff but Hurricane Ida extended the deadline. Mr. Settoon asked if there has been any resistance to mandatory vaccinations. Dr. Morley replied that a staff survey suggests that some staff may have not received the vaccination.

E. Budget Department Update – Michel Thompson

1. Revenues for 2022 are expected to be the same as 2021 (\$19 million). Trust fund dollars will be spent by the end of 2021. In an effort to start implementing the Strategic Plan, we have requested \$2.1 million out of the fund balance, to offset the unavailability of trust fund money. The 2022 proposed budget is \$21 million and an increase of \$350,000 over the 2021 budget. Personnel expenses increased \$700,000 mainly due to new positions to support the Strategic Plan. Operating expenses for 2022 are \$7.2 million. The first year investment in the Strategic Plan is proposed to be \$3.1 million.
2. Ms. Neighbours asked if the NOPL will receive recovery money. Ms. Thompson responded that COVID money was received in 2021 and since it is grant money, the Friends of NOPL act as executors of those funds. That money will be spent in 2021.
3. Ms. Thompson recommends spending down the fund balance by allocating supplemental OPS and Strategic Plan Initiatives with \$2.1 million and retaining \$8 million for emergency funds. Ms. Neighbours suggested maintaining a \$6 million emergency fund balance and using more money towards the Strategic Plan years 2-5. Ms. Flentroy-Rice thought the 6-month emergency plan was based on best practices. While Ms. Thompson could not confirm that, she reminded the board that emergencies such as the pandemic may take months to overcome and thus, she believes a 6-month spending plan is needed.
4. Mr. Settoon asked if we have any standing contracts with emergency response companies. She responded that we do not. Such as the tree that is on the fallen car at Latter, we rely on the Parks and Parkways Department to remove it.
5. Ms. Neighbours asked when the budget will be presented to City Council. Ms. Thompson responded that the date is set for some time in October but may be delayed due to Hurricane Ida, but she has previously entered the budget into the system with notes and supporting documentation.

VI. **Action Items: Vote to Approve 2022 NOPL Budget** – 5:16 p.m.

- A. Ms. Flentroy-Rice made a motion to approve the NOPL 2022 budget totaling \$21 million. Motion seconded by Mr. Henry. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. **Discussion Items** – 5:18 p.m.

A. Millage Update—Dana Henry

1. The Millage Committee has been working to identify partners such as the Library Foundation and the Friends of NOPL, Save Our NOLA Library, and Action New Orleans and will be working with several of them this week. The purpose of the meetings is to let them know our high-level plans, to get feedback from them, and discuss what roles the partnerships will entail. From there, Mr. Chrastka will form a millage plan for each to follow and the campaign will formulate a budget. Since the campaign got a late start, the extra month to prepare and organize is helpful. The campaign also plans to reach out to BGR so they understand how we plan to use our monetary resources effectively.
2. Mr. Chrastka added that he will be at NOPL from October 4-8. He will work with staff during the day across the system. He is also building a 2021 version of the community engagement team. This will empower staff to engage their

communities about what is on the ballot. Mr. Chrastka is available for face-to-face meetings with board members as well. Following his visit, he will be available the following two weeks via phone, email, and Zoom.

3. Dr. Morley added that the millage is a renewal that the NOPL is dependent on for day-to-day operations as our primary funding source.

B. Strategic Plan Update – Dr. Gabriel Morley

1. The strategic plan is an add-on to our basic operations and helps us complete our mission of categorically emphasizing the library system as an essential community resource. We need to drive home that the strategic plan is an expansion of important things the community is interested in beyond our daily operations.
2. We have three new staff hired to initiate some of our objectives. Shukrani has visited some other libraries to get insight into developing our own REACH center. We are finding that some objectives need to be refined.

VIII. **Action Items: Vote to Approve 2022 Meeting Calendar** – 5:32 p.m.

- A. Ms. Flentroy-Rice made a motion to approve the 2022 meeting calendar. Motion seconded by Ms. Dufauchard. Motion carried unanimously.

IX. **Attachments**

- A. Board Packet

X. **Adjournment**

- A. Board Chair Vonda Flentroy-Rice made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Ms. Dufauchard. Motion passed unanimously. The September 14, 2021 Board of Directors meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.
- B. Prior to adjournment Ms. Thompson inquired whether the board still needed to vote on the spending plan that was attached to the approved budget. The board decided that a separate vote was not necessary.

APPROVED: _____

Andrea Neighbours, Secretary