



**New Orleans Public Library**  
Executive Committee Meeting  
ZOOM Teleconference  
Tuesday, January 12, 2021  
4:30 PM

**NOTE REGARDING PUBLIC COMMENT:**

The legal purpose of open meetings is to allow individuals to observe and participate in the deliberations of public bodies. Meetings of public bodies must be open to the public unless closed pursuant to a statutory exception, such as set forth in R.S. 42:16 – 42:18, which authorizes closed executive sessions. Public bodies must provide an opportunity for public comment prior to action on the agenda item upon which a vote is to be taken. The governing body may adopt reasonable rules and restrictions regarding the comment period. R.S. 42:14, requires each public body, except school boards, conducting a meeting that is subject to the notice requirement of R.S. 42:19(A), to allow a public comment period prior to action on an agenda item upon which a vote is to be taken.

**NOTICE OF TELECONFERENCE MEETING:**

This meeting is being conducted via teleconference per Executive Order 59-JBE-2020 Section 2.C, which states: “All state agencies, boards and commissions, and local political subdivisions of the state shall continue to provide for attendance at essential governmental meetings via teleconference or video conference and such attendance shall be allowed during the pendency of this emergency. All efforts shall be made to provide for observation and input by members of the public. Before any meeting conducted pursuant to this section, the state agency, boards and commission, or local political subdivision of the state shall first provide a written certification that it will otherwise be unable to operate due to quorum requirements. Such certification shall be posted at the same time and in the same manner as the agenda for the meeting. Nothing in this order shall be interpreted to waive any notice requirements.”

**MINUTES**

**I. Call to Order — (Phala Kimbrough Mire)**

1. Executive Committee Chair, Phala Kimbrough Mire called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

Present: Chair Phala Kimbrough Mire; Vice-Chair, Vonda Flentroy Rice; Secretary, Andrea Neighbours; NOPL Executive Director, Dr. Gabriel Morley; Budget Manager, Michel Thompson; HR Director, Ross Matthews; Executive Secretary, Tammy Hanson

**II. Public Comment – (Phala Kimbrough Mire)**

1. No public comment

**III. Committee Assignments – (Phala Kimbrough Mire)**

1. The 2021 Committee Assignments that have been confirmed are:
  - A. Vonda Rice will Chair the Strategic Planning Committee
  - B. Phala Kimbrough Mire will chair the Governance Committee
  - C. Rocky Dufauchard will continue as the appointee for NORD (not an official committee)
  - D. We are waiting for the new board member appointment to replace James Chassee to chair the finance committee.
  - E. We are submitting nominations of board members who will represent us on the Foundation board. They will be announced at next board meeting.
  - F. There will be an Ad Hoc committee to oversee the millage campaign.

**IV. Executive Director Update – (Dr. Gabriel Morley)**

1. A more thorough Strategic planning/millage discussion will be held at next week’s regular board meeting.
2. The NIX ADA construction is stalled as we are waiting for the city to sign the contract.
3. The city has vaccines for city employees. When and to whom vaccines are distributed is predetermined by a tier system. Over the next two weeks, employees can sign up if they wish to receive the COVID-19 vaccination and distribution will begin by the end of January or February. Because the city’s health department is small, they are recruiting volunteers to help with the vaccine administering process. Several library staff members have volunteered and will receive the vaccination as an incentive.
4. Part of our strategic plan involves redesigning the NOPL website.
5. There have been several retirements of managers and regional managers. The city HR department has created a new level to get the positions filled quicker.
6. Ms. Thompson is working with the city’s real estate and legal departments to finalize the leasing contract with Astor-Crowne Plaza Hotel. This will be an increase the lease amount from \$150,000 to \$215,000 per year and extends the lease to 2064.
7. Ms. Neighbours asked if our newest board member will be a good fit for the open seat on the Finance Committee. Ms. Kimbrough-Mire responded that based on what she has seen the new board member is an appropriate selection.

**V. NOPLF Update – (Phala Kimbrough-Mire)**

1. The NOPL Foundation has updated their bylaws and articles of incorporation including seats for three NOPL board members. Barbara Waiters and Demetric Marcodel will be at the regular board meeting to provide a report. Ms. Kimbrough-Mire confirmed that the three NOPL board members serving on the Foundation board will be selected prior to the regular board meeting.

**VI. Strategic Planning Update — (Vonda Flentroy-Rice)**

1. Ms. Flentroy-Rice, Ms. Thomas, and Dr. Morley met with Kelly Newsom of the Cleveland Library and Ms. Thomas will update the rest of the board on the strategic plan next Tuesday.
2. The strategic plan will be data driving and determine strengths and weaknesses with 4 to 5 goals that focus on the needs of our stakeholders. Stakeholder interviews will begin in January and focus groups in February. Matrix of strategic goals and

objectives will begin in March. The board will revisit discuss mission, vision and equity statement. Goal is to have Strategic plan by May that we can socialize by summer.

3. Dr. Morley added that Ms. Thomas has already identified some of our stakeholders. The goal is to vote on the strategic plan at the May board meeting.
4. Ms. Neighbours stated that she felt that by standing up for the library on Proposition 2, her position as Strategic Planning chair was revoked as a punishment. She added that she had spoken to Ms. Thomas at length through the fall about strategic planning processes and possible stakeholders and would like to give Ms. Flentroy-Rice more details of those conversation. Ms. Kimbrough-Mire stated that it is often more efficient and logical for the Vice Chair to also chair the Strategic Planning Committee because it is the plan that they will be executing under their term. Ms. Kimbrough-Mire confirmed that Ms. Thomas' contact has been finalized.

**VII. Millage Campaign – (Phala Kimbrough-Mire)**

1. There will be a special Ad Hoc committee to oversee the millage campaign and decide when to place it on the ballot. Dr. Morley is ensuring that necessary paperwork is being submitted. John Cratska is, again, assisting us and discussing our options. Dr. Morley added that the vote can be held in either October or November noting that the Mayoral election is in October and the runoff will happen in November.

**VIII. Progressive Discipline Policy - (Dr. Gabriel Morley)**

1. Ross Matthews gave an overview of the policy and the wording that makes it problematic. Progressive discipline was added to the handbook with good intentions to describe steps taken for counseling prior to what Civil Service considers discipline. For example, a staff member was falsifying her timecards and received a written warning. Because written warnings are not technically considered discipline, she won her case. An attorney at the City Attorney's office advised us to revise or delete this policy because it does not synch with the Civil Service rules which do not mention progressive discipline at all. As an alternative, Mr. Matthews offered to rename the policy 'Counseling and Corrective Action' and remove any mention of progressive discipline. Civil Service rules allow for either discipline or no discipline (it is either appealable or is not). Ms. Neighbours stated that she was advised that progressive discipline was put in place during Charles Brown's tenure as City Librarian as a way staff could improve their performance. Mr. Matthews will make revisions and send it to the executive committee for consideration.

**IX. Adjournment**

1. Vonda Flentroy-Rice moved to adjourn the January 12, 2021 Executive Committee meeting. Second by Andrea Neighbours. Meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.