



New Orleans Public Library
Executive Committee Meeting
ZOOM
Tuesday, November 2, 2021
4:30 p.m.

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.

PUBLIC COMMENT IS LIMITED TO TWO MINUTES PER INDIVIDUAL

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 (Board Chair, Vonda Flentroy-Rice, 1 minute)**
 - A. Committee Chair, Vonda Flentroy-Rice called the November 2, 2021 Executive Committee meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

- II. **Roll Call — (4:32 p.m.)**

Present: Vonda Flentroy-Rice, Andrea Neighbours, Kathleen Coverick
Staff Present: Dr. Gabriel Morley, Michel Thompson, Tammy Hanson

- III. **Public Comments — (4:32 p.m.)**
 - A. There was no public comment

IV. **Executive Director Update – (4:32 p.m.)**

- A. The Board needs to decide if the November regular board meeting will be held virtually or in person.
- B. The Foundation approved donating \$30,000 to the library PAC to promote the millage. We have asked WDSU to correct their story stating that Irvin Mayfield stole money from the library board. Sentencing is scheduled for November 3rd.
- C. The library will be paid \$28,000 for filming that is being done at the Latter branch this week. The payment is earmarked for repairs and updates to the Latter facility. We discovered the city is promoting Latter as a potential filming site. Thus, we discuss a policy that dictates whether the fee is appropriate to closing the library. The library administration feels that a minimum of \$20,000 is required to close one of the library branches due to the amount of coordination involved. This amount would also allow us to justify the closures to patrons. All fees will be collected by the Friends of the NOPL.

Ms. Flentroy-Rice asked if patrons are notified prior to the closures. Dr. Morley responded that yes, all closures are announced in house and on the NOPL website ahead of filming.

Ms. Neighbours asked if there will be a maximum number of days a library could be closed for filming. Dr. Morley responded that it depends on how lucrative the offer is, but this is something the entire board needs to discuss.

Ms. Neighbours asked if we could hire a consultant with some of the proceeds who would guide the board/administration on what our baselines and parameters are.

Dr. Morley agrees that we need to have a policy in writing.

- D. FEMA will remain at the Main library through November or until the number of people requiring their services diminishes. They may continue after Thanksgiving.
- E. The finance committee asked that the MLK proposition be postponed until after the millage election.
- F. The REACH lease with the Corpus Christi Community Center was approved although the City asked us to renegotiate to ~\$17/sq. ft. It will go back for the Mayor's office for approval.
- G. The Nix construction crew anticipates work to be completed by the end of November, but facility updates will require additional time.
- H. NOPL was awarded \$200,000 from the Emergency Connectivity Fund to acquire 500 tablets enabled with Wi-Fi chips. These will be available for checkout in 11-month increments. Tablets will be ordered this week and set up by T-Mobile.

Ms. Neighbours asked if the tablets can be checked out by anyone or if checkout is limited to students. Dr. Morley responded that patrons will need to sign an affidavit stating they are using the tablet for educational purposes, but anyone will be able to check them out. Affidavits will need to be signed by an adult at least 18 years of age. These will be housed at one place under the direction of the Youth Services Librarian.

Ms. Neighbours requested that they not be housed at an uptown location. Dr. Morley responded that Main will most likely be selected as the central location.

Ms. Coverick asked if something like a bookmobile could be used to distribute to other locations. Dr. Morley said that they will be catalogued and delivered via

outreach vans to where people are. This will be determined later. T-Mobile is providing all of the tech assistance. We may allow an 18-month checkout period. Ms. Neighbours asked if there is a maintenance policy and how patrons can pay to replace lost or damaged tablets. Dr. Morley stated that \$50 is charged to the patrons library card account.

Ms. Coverick thinks there will be a lot of questions related to tech literacy. Dr. Morley responded that T-Mobile will handle all of this. If patrons come to the library needing extensive tutorials on how to use the tablets, they will need to seek the help of the Digital Literacy Librarian.

Ms. Neighbours asked if we can offer technology tutorials as part of our Strategic goals. Dr. Morley said yes, that will be the responsibility of the Digital Literacy Librarian. Ms. Flentroy-Rice reiterated that T-Mobile will be the main contact for tech assistance.

V. Finance Committee Update – (5:04 p.m.)

- A. The 3rd quarter financials will be discussed at the regular board meeting. Ms. Thompson has provided the finance committee meeting notes.
- B. Dr. Morley noted that BGR, in doing their own calculations, had questions regarding the fund balance. Ms. Thompson will reach out to BGR to clarify the numbers. BGR is skeptical about having a 20-year millage because a 10-year millage is standard practice to ensure accountability. BGR published a report explaining why the housing initiative and library millage are separate items on the ballot.

VI. Millage Update – (5:08 p.m.)

- A. Since Mr. Henry was absent, Ms. Neighbours gave the millage update. The bank account and PAC have been set up and coordinated with the Ethics Committee. Ron Nabonne was hired as the campaign manager. The goal is to be prepared to promote the millage immediately after the November 13th election.

VII. Review of Regular Board Agenda – (5:09 p.m.)

- A. The Committee decided to meet virtually for the regular board meeting.
- B. Ms. Neighbors noted an email that was sent to the board regarding a poll about the mask mandate. She asked if this is a concern amongst the NOPL staff and if the board has the authority to re-issue the mask mandate for the library. Ms. Flentroy-Rice responded that as a city agency the library does not have the authority to mandate masks. Dr. Morley responded that we could mandate masks but the science and data does not affirm the need. Ms. Thompson added that Emily Painton sent a detailed email to all staff information on the elimination of the mask mandate.
Ms. Neighbours suggested that we give patrons the same information. Ms. Flentroy-Rice suggest that information come from the Health Department and not the library staff. Ms. Coverick suggested promoting the library's contactless services. Dr. Morley will ensure more information is posted on the library website.
Ms. Neighbors asked where suggestions on improving the website should be directed. Dr. Morley responded that suggestions go directly to Jane LeGros and will be addressed after the end of the year.

Ms. Flentroy-Rice suggested that there be a training for new board members with Rebecca Hamilton to discuss roles and responsibilities and the future of the library. She will send out potential dates to all board members.

Ms. Neighbours asked Ms. Hanson to remind the board members about the mandatory Ethics certification.

VIII. **Adjournment**

- A. Ms. Flentroy-Rice adjourned the November 2, 2021 Executive Committee meeting at 5:11 p.m.