



New Orleans Public Library
Regular Board Meeting
Main Library Board Room
Monday, November 30, 2022
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.

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order — (Board Chair Vonda Flentroy-Rice, 1 minute)**
- II. Board Chair, Vonda Flentroy-Rice, called the November 30, 2022 regular board meeting to order at 4:39 p.m.
- III. **Roll Call — (Executive Assistant, Tammy Hanson, 1 minute)**
Board Members Present: Vonda Flentroy-Rice, Kathleen Coverick, Justin Ross-Hilliard, Alexis Parent-Ferrouillet, Dana Henry
Absent: Phala Kimbrough-Mire, Andrea Neighbours, Raquel Dufauchard
NOPL Staff Present: Emily Painton (remotely), Heather Riley, Tammy Hanson, Sarah Lewis, Jane LeGros, Shukrani Gray
Friends Staff Present: Shannan Cvitanovic
- IV. **Public Comments — (Vonda Flentroy-Rice, 2 minutes)**
 - A. There were no public comments
- V. **Action Item: Approval of Consent Agenda — (Vonda Flentroy-Rice, 2 minutes)**
 - A. Review of September 6th Executive Committee minutes
 - B. Review of draft September 13th Regular Board Meeting minutes
 1. Ms. Flentroy-Rice moved to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Ross-Hilliard seconded the motion. Consent agenda was approved by unanimous vote.
- VI. **Information Items**
 - A. Friends of NOPL Update – (Shannon Cvitanovic, 2 minutes)
 1. Friends received \$10,000 from the Jones Family Foundation, \$3000 from the Jazz Heritage Foundation that is earmarked for Summer Fun activities. The Jazz Heritage monies are specifically earmarked for musical instruction.

2. The Latter book sale on November 12 brought in more revenue than what two sales did in previous years.
 3. Friends has received \$5000 in grant monies from the GPOA Foundation to ensure the financial measures that are in place are streamlined and correct.
 4. Friends has withdrawn its application for the LEH grant, but is still in the running for the Primetime Reading Grant.
- B. NOPL Foundation Update – Demetric Mercadel
1. No member of the NOPL Foundation was present
- C. Introduction of Tamyka Miles Assistant Library Director -- NOPL Executive Director, Emily Painton
1. Executive Director, Emily Painton, introduced the new Assistant Director, Tamyka Miles, to the board of directors. Ms. Miles is excited to collaborate with staff moving forward.
- D. State of the Library Update -- NOPL Executive Director, Emily Painton
1. In addition to hiring a new Assistant Library Director, we have hired ten new public-facing library assistants still leaving 32 open public-facing positions pre-Covid. We are currently trying to fill branch manager and assistant branch manager positions. We are focused on hiring children’s librarians and in early 2023 will be hiring a social worker for NOPL.
 2. We’ve received a great deal of press particularly regarding Crescent City Sounds. Staff have interviewed with NPR, Vice, and the Guardian.
 3. The budget hearing before City Council went well. The main question was what our plans were regarding spending the fund balance. A major priority is to update and maintain our current buildings.
 4. All branches are currently open. We are still awaiting roof repairs at Mid-City. We have the lease for the REACH Center and are working on marketing and getting furnishings. We are considering two appraisals for buildings to move MLK to, and one in Mid-City if the roof repairs do not get completed. Algiers Regional has some HVAC issues and Alvar has lighting issues due to construction around the building. Central City is having trouble with the heating system. Hubbell was broken into during the Thanksgiving holiday, making us aware that not all of our branches have security systems. We plan to alarm all our buildings and may install a security badge system to ensure building security. The Latter branch had wasps in the second floor that have been treated.
 5. The meeting room policy is being adjusted to shorten the turn-around time. The regional managers also have edits. The board will be able to vote on it at the January board meeting.
 6. Ms. Flentroy-Rice added that it is important going forward to be transparent in letting the public know how we are spending our budget. Mr. Ross-Hilliard added that it would be a good idea to create an entire narrative of how we are investing in our historical buildings and technology. Ms. Painton noted that we also need to make our facilities ADA friendly
- E. 3rd Quarter Performance Report – Marketing Director, Jane LeGros
1. Circulations are up both physically and digitally. A coordinated marketing effort for our eResources is upcoming.
 2. Computer sessions are increasing due to more patrons visiting the branches.

3. The Strategic Programming team is doing an excellent job on determining which programs are popular and have high attendance.
 4. Library card sign-ups are 1.4% higher than 2019. Marketing is doing a coordinated effort to get more library cards to New Orleans residents. Our statistical software determined that we have only reached 24% of our market. The goal for 2023 is an increase of 3%. Other libraries of comparable size to NOPL are at 25% and the goal is to get ours to 27%.
 5. Mr. Ross-Hilliard suggests that the Marketing Department design a campaign that focuses on our research resources. Ms. LeGros responded that the new E-resources staff member and the marketing team are working on this. Ms. Gray added that the AARC has been visiting schools to let them know the free research databases that are available through NOPL and how to use navigate them. Ms. Riley added that our Outreach librarians also function in this capacity. We just subscribed to Niche Academy where patrons can get tutorials with one click and it is always up to date and accurate.
 6. Mr. Ross-Hilliard also suggested that we get on the agenda of the school board meeting to do a presentation. Ms. Parent-Ferrouillet also suggested LAPCS to get on their newsletter. Ms. Riley stated that we used to have a partnership with some of these organizations pre-pandemic and will get with Marketing to see if we can renew them.
 7. Ms. Coverick asked how our computer usage compares to other libraries. Ms. LeGros responded that we don't have that specific information. Ms. Lewis added that according to Savannah, lower door traffic and computer usage is a nationwide trend for libraries. Also, we have devices that patrons can check out and use at home now.
 8. Ms. Cvitanovic mentioned that the bus passes Friends funded over the summer were used more during the school year. The most usage was MLK and Central City because they the kids didn't need to depend on the yellow school bus to get home. Our Youth Programming librarian is working to find funding to continue this. Ms. Coverick asked if Friends has a contact at the RTA. Ms. Cvitanovic responded that Friends have been in discussions with advocacy groups to put pressure on the City to provide free youth fares during the summer and certain times of the year.
- F. Budget Department Update – Budget Director, Michel Thompson
1. Millage receipts are on pace. We will be collecting more in millage monies that originally anticipated. Personnel costs are 66% due to open staff positions. Operating costs are at 58% due to a backlog in getting contracts through City Hall. Operating costs will increase with the 2023 proposed budget.
 2. The City Director of Finance recommended increasing the millage budget due to the expiration of the property tax waivers. The 2023 budget is now \$9 million.
 3. The Finance Committee met with the City CAO regarding the inability to spend the fund balance due to how long the process takes to get contracts through.

VII. Discussion Items

- A. Operational Plan – Sarah Lewis
1. Ms. Lewis briefed the board on the upcoming public-facing dashboard that will allow the board and public to explore the progress we are making on the

strategic plan. This will create more transparency with the external public and internal staff.

2. The software shows the three-year, overall progress of the strategic plan as well as how specific projects are moving forward. As of now, this is 23% complete.
3. There are 150 projects that are being tracked. 74% are on track and 11.5% haven't begun. Users can click on each pillar to see more specific information.
4. When the page goes public, the more specific information will be summarized to make it easier to understand.
5. Ms. Coverick added that this software is a great compliment to the financial report in that it will be easier to identify how our budget ties into the strategic pillars.

B. Widerstand Consulting EDI Audit Proposal for NOPL – Shukrani Gray

1. The goal was to identify an organization that can audit us as a system in regards to our equity, diversity, and inclusion plans. The criteria to find an organization that can assess our strategic plan and also study our employee handbook, speak with our external stakeholders and fundraising entities, board members, staff, and patrons.
2. It was important that the organization have experience working with libraries because we have specific policies. Two local organizations were considered, but they are very training oriented. We felt we need a structure and not just start throwing trainings at staff, but a framework. At ALA, we identified libraries who have gone through this process.
3. A librarian from the Calvert Library in Maryland recommended Widerstand Consulting. Calvert Library went through the process with them and were pleased with the results and intersectionality of the assessment they had.
4. Widerstand Consulting offers auditing, training, located on the east coast. Have worked with many libraries. Because they were referred to us, we received a discount. Fifty percent of their fees goes to the BIPOC organizations. Their board is primarily BIPOC and women led. Their goal is to analyze policies, finances, marketing policies, funders, organizational structure. It is an eight week process. The proposal includes an initial design phase where they meet with stakeholders, board members, staff, etc. to design what we want them to look at. Then there is a data-gathering phase where they look at the structure, policies, training materials, website, budget, mission statement, etc. of our organization.
5. Week four is the interview phase where staff, board members, stakeholders, and patrons are interviewed. Then there is a three week write-up phase where they will give us something that recommends next steps and benchmarks for one year, five years, and seven years with goals and suggestions for what trainings we use. And recommend accountability structures to the community. We will be able to align our EDI commitments with our strategic plan.
6. For the eight week process the cost is \$25,000 less the \$2500 referral credit. It includes all of the tools we will need. They are prepared to start the process in early 2023.

7. Ms. Flentroy-Rice asked if the trainings are included in the cost. Ms. Gray said that it does not include training but once Widerstand audits us, they will recommend what training is most appropriate.
8. Ms. Coverick suggested we create a summary of what we want to get out of the training and select a vendor based on that vision. We should not feel obligated to hire a local organization.
9. Mr. Ross-Hilliard is familiar with Beloved Consulting Group and does not recommend using them.

VIII. **Action Item: Vote to Approve Funding Widerstand Consulting**

- A. Ms. Flentroy-Rice made a motion to approve funding the Widerstand Consulting group to do an EDI audit. Motion seconded by Ms. Coverick. Motion passed unanimously.

IX. **Action Item: Vote to Approve 2023 Meeting Schedule -- (Vonda Flentroy-Rice, 2 minutes)**

- A. Ms. Flentroy-Rice made a motion to approve the submitted 2023 meeting schedule. Motion seconded by Mr. Ross-Hilliard. Motion passed unanimously.

X. **Adjournment**

- A. Ms. Flentroy-Rice adjourned the November 30, 2022 board meeting at 5:19 p.m.

APPROVAL:



Andrea Neighbours, Secretary

DATE:

1/30/23

