



New Orleans Public Library
Regular Board Meeting
MAIN 3RD Floor Conference Room
September 12, 2023
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.

Due to time constraints, public comment will be limited to 2 minutes per individual

MINUTES

I. **Call to Order**

A. Board Chair, Dana Henry called the September 12, 2023 board meeting to order at 4:40 p.m.

II. **Roll Call**

Board members present; Chair, Dana Henry; Vice-Chair, Kathleen Coverick; Treasurer, Andrea Neighbours; Secretary, Alexis Parent-Ferrouillet; Raquel Dufauchard
NOPL Staff present: Executive Director, Emily Painton; Associate Director, Tamyka Miles; Budget Director, Michel Thompson; Marketing Director, Jane LeGros; Regional Manager, April Martin; Regional Manager, Katy Hepner; Emilie Staat
Several patrons and community members attended.

III. **Public Comments**

A. Jennifer Garcia with AFSCME International deferred to other AFSCME officers who were present: Gregory Jean, a Library Associate at the Main branch and the African American Resource Center. August Smith and Mike Marina are looking forward to meeting with Ms. Painton in October. AFSCME is posting HEAT flyers and providing water throughout the branches until the end of October. The union will work on scheduled visits throughout October and November.

B. Emilie Staat stated that there will be labor management councils regarding safety at each branch. Dues will be reduced to a flat rate of \$20.65 per paycheck.

C. Junelle Otis introduced herself as AFSCME staff.

- D. Antoinette Scott, a community member who represents a number of other community members, is concerned with the ongoing lack of access and ease of access to NOPL services. Library patrons and workers need fully functional facilities where there is access to restrooms and A/C. She added the all branches should meet ADA specifications, foreign language access and remain free of all criminal activity.
- E. Mr. Henry added that we will need to call on the patrons in our community for advocacy in getting these issues addressed and create urgency.

IV. **Approval of Consent Agendas** — (Dana Henry, 2 minutes)

- A. Approve September 11th Executive Committee Minutes
- B. Approve July 18th Regular Board Meeting minutes
 - 1. A motion to approve the consent agenda was put forth by Ms. Neighbours and seconded by Ms. Coverick. Board passed this motion unanimously.

V. **Information Items**

- A. Friends of NOPL Update – (Shannan Cvitanovic, 2 minutes)
 - 1. Primetime in New Orleans East is a program that that gives children and parents access to early literacy with meals. This program is full and has a waitlist. Due to the success of this program, the Youth & Teen department of NOPL has asked the Friends a Primetime Family Grant to pursue a Primetime Reading Program in the spring of 2024.
 - 2. Friends is starting a partnership with the Juvenile Justice Center where Friends will be providing free books to their Lobby Library. With the recent passing of Judge Stewart, the court asked that in her memory to expand the amount of books for kids and caregivers.
 - 3. This semester, nine people have applied for the MLIS scholarships and \$7k will be distributed equally to those candidates.
 - 4. Friends is starting a strategic planning process beginning on Monday.
 - 5. With the closure of the Latter library, Friends will be doing abbreviated hours. (10 to noon).
 - 6. Ms. Dufauchard asked how many are enrolled in the Primetime Program and how many are on the waiting list. Ms. Cvitanovic responded that there are five families on the waitlist with ten families enrolled. Transportation continues to be a challenge.
 - 7. Ms. LeGros heard it was a patron at ENO who shared the program with a mom group which stirred up interest. Marketing is following up with an impact story.
 - 8. Mr. Henry added that The East New Orleans Neighborhood Advisory Commission meets monthly and is an umbrella organization for 26 neighborhood organizations so that is a great resource for getting information out to the community.
- B. NOPL Foundation Update
 - 1. No one was available to represent the NOPL Foundation. Ms. Coverick stated that she signed checks to Scholastic and Baldwin Publishers.
- C. State of the Library – (Emily Painton, 2 minutes)
 - 1. We are still struggling to keep all facilities open. Latter's central unit is down. Keller is open. Central City is closed due to mold remediation.

2. REACH Center at Corpus Christy soft opening with pop-ups this month to introduce it to potential partners and the community. Planning for a Grand Opening in January.
 3. Closures are always listed on the website and we will also send the board weekly emails. Library email accounts should be updated as soon as possible.
 4. 10k spending without bid that the Council passed has not been clarified by the Purchasing department and we cannot yet use it.
 5. In the next Board meeting, it will be imperative that we review and approve an updated policy to satisfy the requirements of Act. 436 Ms. Neighbours asked if the State library has a template we might follow. Ms. Painton responded no but she has contacted the Jefferson Parish library and their lawyer is perusing their policy.
 6. Mr. Henry handed the chair to vice-chair Kathleen Coverick.
 7. Ms. Neighbours asked about the HVAC issues and if there are any creative solutions that could speed up fixing the issues. Ms. Painton responded that temporary fixes will not necessarily be faster. Ms. Miles added that the delays are typically out of our control as they are supply chain issues and when the vendor is able to fix it. Ms. Painton added that at least five of our branches are on the assessment list to be upgraded.
- D. Budget Department Update – (Michel Thompson, 2 minutes)
1. We have budgeted \$21 million for our millage and have received all funding. Personnel costs are at 49% due to open positions. Total operating costs are near 50%. In 2023 the amount of purchase orders fulfilled is \$7.6 million out of \$9 million prospected. \$4.1 has been paid to our vendors. We have large purchase orders for books that will be paid out in November or December. The remaining encumbered budget is \$1.3 million. The unaudited reserves are at \$18 million.
- E. Q2 Performance Report – (Jane LeGros, 2 minutes)
1. Physical circulations are up due to the success of online recommendation carousels. Digital circulations are low but we are being very strategic in how we market our services in this area. Therefore, each new e-resource is highlighted monthly.
 2. Computer sessions are down due to the HVAC issues and closures. We have had more programs and program attendance.
 3. New library accounts are down. Perhaps this is due to closures.
 4. The New Orleans Tribune is one of our new advertisers. They are posting our REACH pop ups.
 5. We have a back-to-school ad that people are enjoying.
 6. Ms. Coverick asked if more Summer Fun numbers will be included in the Q3 report. Ms. LeGros responded that we do have those numbers and there were 1.9 million minutes read.
 7. Ms. Neighbours asked if we advertise in other places. Ms. LeGros responded that we advertise in several places: New Orleans Mom, Gambit, Where Ya At, Offbeat, Country Roads, WWNO, WWL, and also have celebrity endorsers.
 8. Ms. Neighbours asked if we have had any free signage from the RTA busses. Ms. LeGros responded that we have not had free signage but have purchased it which began with Summer Fun. We are looking to doing an annual campaign.

VI. Action Item: Board Vote on 2024 Board Meeting Schedule

- A. The Board meeting calendar was changed due to Election Day. The executive committee for November 2024 will now be held Monday, November 4.
- B. A motion was made by Mr. Henry to move the November 5th Executive Committee meeting to November 4th, and motion was seconded by Dr. Ferrouillet. Board approved unanimously.

VII. Action Item: A & E Company Approval for Elevator Renovation

- A. Ms. Thompson explained each line item of the proposed 2024 budget. A motion was made to approve \$36 million for 2024 was made by Ms. Coverick asked if we have heard from Capital Projects on when a decision will be made on our requests. Ms. Thompson responded that probably not until December when the Mayor presents it to the council. Mr. Henry asked for clarification on if we are using reserve funds to fix the boiler, elevator, and HVAC issues at the Main library. Ms. Thompson responded yes, we will use \$9.5 million of our reserves.
- B. Ms. Neighbours asked if we will need to go back and negotiate with Capital Projects so that we can fulfill our obligation to strategic plan initiatives as well as maintain our other branches. Mr. Henry asked after the cost of a boiler, HVAC, and elevator repairs how much will be left in our reserves. Ms. Thompson responded that approximately \$18 million would be left and another \$2 million will roll over from personnel due to open positions. Overall, it would leave \$6 million in reserves.
- C. Ms. Neighbours asked for clarification as to whether we will benefit on moving ahead and not waiting on Capital Projects. Ms. Thompson responded yes, we have already begun the process in 2018 to assess the equipment and facilities issues and the research has been complete. The next step is for to ask the A & E Company to write the specs so we can put it in an RFP to bid. These items are considered to be building equipment so Property Management will oversee this. Ms. Neighbours asked if we have a timeline for completion. Ms. Thompson responded that it may take beyond a year. The goal is to follow each issue to completion before the next. We are aiming to minimize the amount of closures needed.
- D. A public member commented that because there is an emergency issue, why those options have not been perused. Ms. Thompson responded that the assessment has already been done and hopefully we can have a RFP completed by the end of the year. As soon as timelines are complete, we will make them available, but we are working with urgency. Mr. Henry added that to get these critical issues fixed in a timely matter, using reserve monies is essential. Ms. Neighbours added that the Governor had an emergency order that makes money available and wondered if there was a pathway that we can take to expedite some of the red tape. Mr. Henry responded that the normal procurement procedure has to be followed unless we can establish there is an emergency where we can take that avenue. Ms. LeGros added that since we have daily calls about the heat emergency, and they are demobilizing. Ms. Thompson added that the emergency procurement avenues are being taken advantage of. The City has a great track record of paying our vendors and give them references.
- E. A patron asked if the reserve request was only for the Main library and Ms. Thompson responded yes, as a result of what we found in the assessment.
- F. Ms. Neighbours asked for a recap of the timeline of when this will be presented. Ms. Thompson responded that it will be presented to City Council on our scheduled presentation date in October.
- G. Ms. Coverick asked if the proposed millage was being deferred by City Council. Ms. Thompson responded that we will do a resolution that we wish it to remain the

same and not rolled forward; however, due to property tax increases, we will see a slight increase in millage funds.

- H. Ms. Coverick made a motion to approve the 2024 NOPL budget as proposed. Motion was seconded by Dr. Ferrouillet. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. **Attachments**

- A. Board Packet

IX. **Adjournment**

- A. A motion to adjourn the September 12, 2023 regular board meeting was made by Andrea Neighbours and seconded by Alexis Parent-Ferrouillet. The September 12, 2023 regular board meeting was adjourned unanimously at 5:46 p.m.


ALEXIS PARENT-FERROUILLET, SECRETARY

3/12/24
DATE

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