



New Orleans Public Library
Regular Board Meeting
Main Library 3rd Floor Conference Room
September 17, 2024
4:30 p.m.

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

- A. Board Chair, Dana Henry, called the September 17, 2024 board meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

II. Roll Call (4:36 p.m.)

Board Members Present: Dana Henry, Kathleen Coverick, Andrea Neighbours, Alexis Parent-Ferrouillet (arrived late), Clarice Kirkland

Library Staff Present: Emily Painton, Michel Thompson, Jane LeGros, Katy Hepner, Tammy Hanson

Others Present: Shannan Cvitanovic,

- A. Mr. Henry welcomed our newest board member, Dr. Clarice Kirkland, to the board. Dr. Kirkland introduced herself and gave a brief description of her background in education.

* Agenda item IV was moved until Ms. Parent-Ferrouillet is in attendance.

III. Information Items (4:40 p.m.)

A. NOPL Foundation Report

1. Mr. Henry reached out to Ms. Mercadel who said the Foundation is going through a transition and discussing the possibility of working with the Friends of NOPL to provide critical resources to the library. Ms. Coverick added that the reallocation system has worked much better. Ms. Neighbours added that since there are three Foundation board seats and there is an account that has money that we should fill the two vacant seats, so the NOPL board members have a voice in where the money is

spent. Mr. Henry responded that he communicates with Ms. Mercadel but does not have the authority to tell the Foundation how the money is allocated; however, as soon as we have Mayor Cantrell approve more board members, we can get the Foundation seats filled. Grey Sexton is looking into

the bylaws to see how a partnership with Friends of NOPL will work. Dr. Kirkland asked if the Foundation raises money and determines how it will be used and if having NOPL board members on the Foundation board would conflict with the bylaws. Ms. Coverick responded that there is an investment account that can be used for library initiatives. Mr. Henry added that the bylaws have designated three NOPL board member seats to serve on the Foundation board.

Dr. Kirkland asked how Foundation funds are allocated to which Ms. Coverick replied that when the library makes requests that are outside of normal operating expenditures, the Foundation board votes to fund them without going through the City's procurement process (which can be lengthy).

2. For future board meetings, his agenda item has is tabled indefinitely while the Foundation refocuses its efforts.

B. Friends of NOPL – (President, Shannan Cvitanovic)

1. Ms. Cvitanovic provided Dr. Kirkland with a brief overview of the Friends' mission. Friends has expanded its mission to seek out larger donors
2. Friends has a partnership with Primetime and the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. Primetime preschool which is a family learning program held at East New Orleans, begins this week. Staff scholarships for the MLIS program has closed for the year and eleven candidates received tuition moneys.
3. Friends reached out to the Junior League for internship funding
4. Friends received \$100k to continue supporting the BBTC for 2024.
5. Friends received \$5k and applied for another \$14k from the state to fund GenFest for 2025.
6. Friends applied for grants to buy a van to do book sales, and programming money through the City Council Recreation and Culture Fund and Ceasar's Grant Fund.
7. Ms. Neighbours asked about Friends staffing and Ms. Cvitanovic responded that there is one full-time person, a part-time book sales manager, a part-time development director, and an AmeriCorps intern.

C. Director's Report - (Executive Director, Emily Painton)

1. Last week all locations were closed Wednesday and Thursday due to Hurricane Francine. All locations except for Nix had power by Friday morning. Nix regained power Friday afternoon. Latter is closed due to

minor mold remediation. Ms. Painton reached out to Dr. Avegno to get the safety standards concerning mold. Dr. Avegno said that as long as the mold is contained and not affecting the public areas, the branch can remain open. Updates are on the NOPL website. Keller is closed due to the HVAC damage during the hurricane. Main third-floor plumbing has been fixed. Ms. Painton added that some branches will have constant dehumidifiers at Central City. Mr. Henry asked for a timeline for the reopening of Keller and Ms. Painton responded that we are waiting for our contractor, CMC, for more information.

2. The NOLA Ride Opportunity Pass which provides free bus passes to 16-20-year-olds, has been a success. NOPL was central in the press conference that was attended by several council members and Mayor Cantrell.
3. We are participating in a series of focus groups with the office of Human Rights and Equity to further the city in being certified as welcoming. This is a formal designation of local governments that create programs and policies reflecting the values of immigrant inclusion. Ms. Painton is attending focus groups to see how the city and local non-profits can further this mission. The library was essential for NOLA receiving its one star.
4. Staff Development Day will be held on October 21st pending board approval, and our keynote speaker will be Loida Garcia-Febo. She will be discussing ways to embrace EDI values and strengthening our library community. Awards for the past five years will be given out and an EDI panel will be available. Ms. Coverick added that the speaker will be funded by the NOPL Foundation. She also asked if Widerstand will give their final report so a solid EDI plan can be made. Ms. Painton responded that the Inclusion Task Force name has changed to Access & Opportunities, and they have created a draft and a final update will be sent to the board prior to the next meeting. Ms. Cvitanovich added that Friends has been funding free bus passes for youth ages 11-18 and most passes are being used by 11–15-year-olds. They will continue funding passes as long as there is a need. Ms. LeGros added that by the end of the press conference, there were over 400 sign-ups.
5. Ms. Neighbours asked whether Ms. Painton had reached out to RTA regarding the disruptors. Ms. Painton responded that she has met with the director several times and things have calmed down, but the bigger issue has been vendors at the bus pickup location and whether the City polices that type of behavior. There are new RTA employees that are more receptive. Mr. Henry added that the City is monitoring vendors more closely via an inspection unit that checks vendors' permits. If the permits are not valid, citations are issued.

6. Ms. Neighbours also asked about updates on any repairs at the Main library. Ms. Thompson responded that an RFP writer was chosen in July and then it will be posted by Capital Projects for bids (on the A/C, plumbing, boilers, and elevators). She added that the feasibility study was needed to write the specifications needed for the RFP. They are staging equipment and determining what items will/will not cause closures. Major equipment will come next year. We have a contract to fix the boilers should they need repair. Ms. Neighbours asked if the A/C timeline will be operational by next summer. Ms. Thompson replied that the project will begin by that time. The most recent status update has been posted on the NOPL website. Ms. Painton added that this summer we prepared one of our cooling towers, and did not have any closures. Currently we have one in-house who can manage this project. Ms. Painton and Ms. Thompson just completed the job study for a summary of position's duties that will oversee the library's building projects. The title is Facilities Project Manager. Mr. Henry asked what the job description details were sent to the Civil Service department. Ms. Painton that this person will take over what Capital Projects is doing for us now. This will create an overarching plan and promote communication between the City, and our facilities department and be able to report on project statuses at board meetings. Mr. Henry asked if we anticipate that Civil Service will reject the new position request. Ms. Painton responded that the main concern is we will not be allowed to offer a competitive salary. After the Civil Service director, Amy Trepagnier, approves, the request then goes to the City Council for final approval. Ms. Neighbours inquired about the final Operational Plan. Ms. Painton responded that we, along with our facilitators, are editing the staff input. Ms. Painton will be emailing the plan to the board for feedback prior to the next meeting. The facilitation with staff that participated was useful in that many great ideas were suggested.
 7. Ms. Coverick asked which facilities are on the HVAC repair list. Ms. Painton responded that the most recent update listed it as 6% complete, as they are still in the RFP stage. Some repairs are not critical but crucial. Capital Projects inquired if any branches had post-hurricane damage, and we reported that the storm has exacerbated leaks.
- D. Financials Update – (Budget Director, Michel Thompson)
1. At the end of 2023 we received \$22.4 million. \$3 million was spent out of the reserves we removed for strategic planning and operating expenditures with the majority spent on supplemental funding for operating expenses. We budgeted \$130k for fees but received \$139k.

2. \$16 million was budgeted for personnel costs but \$14 million was spent. We budgeted \$9 million for operating expenses and actually spent \$8 million. Total funding is \$25,623,035. Taking out the fee revenue and expenditures, we had approximately \$3.2 million from personnel and operating expenses that were unspent and went back into the fund reserve.
3. We spent what was budgeted for strategic planning initiatives. Out of the \$3.7 million, we spent about \$515k on several initiatives, as some were not carried out.
4. By request, Ms. Thompson prepared a more detailed spreadsheet that includes all the different line items with the City's accounting codes. This helps produce financials more quickly.
5. As of August 31, 2024, we budgeted revenue of \$36 million and have received \$35 million. \$22 million was budgeted for the millage and we have received \$20.6 million. \$1 million is available in trust dollars; all is available to be used. The entire \$13 million that was budgeted in the reserves is available. \$70k was budgeted for fees and we have received \$104k.
6. There was a surplus in fees of \$34million so there is a deficit in the millage revenue and a surplus in the fee revenue which means that we have a total deficit of \$1.6 million due to a shortage in millage payments. Ms. Thompson reminded the board that we receive monies through until the end of the year.
7. The Operating costs we budgeted \$16 million and have spent \$9.8 million so there is \$6.7 million remaining as of August 31st. Any surplus will transfer to the fund reserves. At the November meeting, we will have a clearer picture of what, if any, money will need to be transferred to or from the library reserve fund.
8. Ms. Neighbours asked about percentages that were included in prior budget spreadsheets, Ms. Thompson stated that she will put the percentages back in for the next meetings.
9. We budgeted \$20 million for operating expenses. Year-to-date obligations such as purchase orders are at \$8.4 million; year-to-date expenditures such as checks, and purchase orders are at \$2 million. We currently have \$11 million that is available for new purchases. What is not spent will transfer to the fund reserve. Ms. Neighbours asked if this is outside of our strategic planning expenditures. Ms.

Thompson replied that there may be expenses that need to be reclassified such as expenses for personnel services and computer applications. Some invoices for security personnel overlapped into this year and is why the blanket purchase order is over what was budgeted.

10. At the end of 2023, the audited fund balance is \$9.2 million. \$3.7 million was earmarked for strategic planning initiatives. Year to date there are \$963k in purchase orders and year-to-date expenditures is \$285k. The remaining earmarked budget is \$2.8 million.
11. Mr. Henry noted that the board adopted the policy of maintaining a percentage of our reserve funds for six months of operating expenses should another pandemic or emergency occur.
12. Ms Neighbours asked if there is someone from the revenue commission that could speak to our finance committee. Ms. Thompson recommended that the committee review the conference to know what is being discussed in relation to the library's budget.
13. Ms. Thompson did an overview of what was submitted as the 2025 budget. Total revenue is \$37 million. \$17.4 million is budgeted for personnel costs. \$8 million is being spent on vacancies, new positions, and merit pay. \$11.7 million is earmarked for major building costs. Total operating budget is \$19.9 million. Out of the fund balance, strategic planning initiatives are \$1 million.

E. Performance Report Q2 – (Jane LeGros)

1. Physical circulations are up by 18%. Digital circulations have been up steadily since COVID. Computer sessions are down due to closures. Visits, program attendance, and new card issues have increased through our advertising through television and print. We now have an ad that runs on Tubi to reach areas that have access to TV streaming. Ms. Parent-Ferrouillet asked about partnerships with other television stations. Ms. LeGros responded that we will do as many partnerships as the budget allows. We do segments as the need arises.
2. We are working on doing live concerts via Crescent City Sounds.
3. Ms. Neighbours asked if we could align our performance numbers with our operational goals. Ms. LeGros responded that as we build out our new operational plan, we will be able to contextualize the numbers.
4. We have chamber music at Hubble next month and we are planning on live streaming it. Ms. Cvitanovich added that there is money available from the City for these endeavors with the caveat that it

needs to be planned. The Friends is a resource the library can use to get funding sources for all types of programming.

* Ms. Parent-Ferrouillet arrived at 5:08 p.m.

IV. Action Item: Approval of Consent Agendas (6:00 p.m.)

A. A motion was made by Ms. Neighbors to approve the consent agenda and seconded by Ms. Coverick. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Action Item: Proposed Budget (6:02 p.m.)

A. Ms. Parent-Ferrouillet moved to approve the 2025 proposed budget and seconded by Ms. Neighbours. Motion approved unanimously

VI. Action Item: Board of Trustee Officer Elections (6:07 p.m.)

A. This agenda item was tabled until the Mayor approves more trustees to the board. A motion was made by Ms. Kirkland to maintain the current committee officers and seconded by Ms. Neighbours. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Ms. Neighbours suggested that potential board members contact their councilperson to advocate for their approval to the library board.

VII. Action Item: Staff Development Day Approval (6:11 p.m.)

A. Ms. Painton gave the board an overview of the details of All Staff Day and advised that the library would be closed that day. The Foundation is supplementing payment for the keynote speaker. Ms. Parent-Ferrouillet asked when the announcement of the closure will go out. Ms. LeGros responded that it will go out immediately.

B. A motion to approve the October 21, 2024, Staff Development Day was made by Ms. Neighbours and seconded by Ms. Kirkland. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Discussion Items (6:12 p.m.)

A. Executive Director Evaluation Tool

1. The scoring method needs to be determined. This will be determined through a special board meeting or at the next board meeting.

IX. Attachments

A. Board Packet

X. Adjournment

A. Mr. Henry moved to adjourn the September 17, 2024 board of directors meeting. Ms. Kirkland seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously and meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

APPROVED:  DATE: 11/12/24
Alexis Parent-Ferrouillet, Secretary