



**New Orleans Public Library**  
Special Finance Meeting/Regular Board Meeting  
Nora Navra Conference Room  
Tuesday, February 11, 2025  
4:30 p.m.

**MINUTES**

- I. **Call to Order – 4:39 p.m.**
- II. **Roll Call – 4:39 p.m.**  
Members Present: Dana Henry, Andrea Neighbours, Monique Robinson, Joel Ross  
Members Absent: Alexis Parent-Ferrouillet, Clarice Kirkland, Kathleen Coverick  
Library Staff Present: Emily Painton, Tammy Hanson, Heather Riley, Jane LeGros, Michel Thompson, Shukrani Gray, April Martin, Katy Hepner  
Others Present: Shannan Cvitanovic, Colleen Ferguson, Andrea Scott, Justin Weyenberg
- III. **Action Item: Approval of Consent Agendas -- 4:40 p.m.**  
Public Comment  
A. Approve November 12, 2024 board meeting minutes
  1. Motion was made by Andrea Neighbours and seconded by Joel Ross. Motion to approve the November 12, 2024 board meeting minutes passed unanimously
- IV. **Action Item: Approve Fund Reserve Balance – 4:41 p.m.**  
Public Comments – none  
A. Ms. Thompson suggests that 30% annual revenues from the prior years' tax revenues be saved for the emergency fund. Ms. Neighbours preferred that be reduced to 20%. The language will be updated to say between 20 and 30 percent.  
B. A motion to approve the language to vote on during the March board meeting was made by Ms. Neighbours and seconded by Mr. Ross. Motion passed unanimously.
- V. **Information Items – 4:49 p.m.**  
C. Friends of NOPL
  1. Friends has secured 30k in grant monies to purchase a van. This will give them the ability to hold popup book sales and book sales at other library branches. The next book sale will be held at ENO on June 1<sup>st</sup>.
  2. \$184,880.10 of funds raised by Friends and grants has been spent toward library endeavors.
  3. \$14,765 of federal funds are used to fund GenFest and is a reimbursement grant.

4. Friends welcomed the Preservation Resource Center on January 27<sup>th</sup> to review the Main library Archives.
5. Friends will participate in this year's Crescent City Classic to raise funds.

**D. Director's Update**

1. Norman Mayer remains closed due to HVAC repairs. This is one of the five HVAC systems slated to be replaced.
2. There will be two board vacancies beginning in July as well as an open vacancy for a youth member.
3. We now have monthly ad space in Gambit and Lagniappe.
4. The second anthology of poems has been released and a reception was held on January 25<sup>th</sup>.
5. We are waiting for the next city budget meeting to approve the facilities coordinator position.

**VI. Discussion Items – 5:05 p.m.**

**A. Review of the 2025 Budget**

1. The unaudited fund balance total at the end of 2024 is \$13 million. \$173k was spent.
2. We budgeted \$22 million and have received \$21 million. Trust dollars are \$1.1 million which included non-deposited monies from 2023. \$14.6 million (16%) will be available to roll back into the reserve fund.
3. Ms. Neighbours pointed out that the board-approved millage amount was a
4. Operation costs budgeted were \$20 million and spent \$8 million. \$7 million are encumbered.
5. Total budget for personnel and operating \$36 million and \$23 million was spent. \$11.2 million will roll back into the reserve after encumbrances have been realized.
6. For 2025, we are projecting tax revenue of \$22 million with \$100k in fee revenue.
7. Personnel is budgeted at \$17 million: \$1.8 million in wage reserve and include the wage increase \$2.5 million and merit pay.
8. Operating budget is \$19.6 million and includes the capital budget.
9. Ms. Neighbours asked for a breakdown of the \$11 million. Ms. Thompson responded that it is split among several line items and will get that information at a later date. Ms. Neighbours asked if the \$15 million includes the facilities projects and one-time strategic plan expenses. Ms. Thompson added that it includes one-time operating expenses and supplements technology and books and others. She will expand on it at the next meeting.
10. Strategic planning investment is \$1.6 million. Ms. Neighbours inquired if the \$1.6 million was drawn from the fund balance. Ms. Thompson responded that it a mix of operating costs and fund balance.
11. Ms. Neighbours asked what expenses we did not have control over, i.e. the capital projects expenditures that have not begun and property management expenses we did not pay. How much was unspent that we did had direct control over vs. what we did not have control over. Ms. Riley responded that we will look into it and respond at a later date. Ms. Neighbours stated that she is more concerned about how much of the budget we have control over and how much

of that is underspent. Like the fund balance, we should have a target of 95% of that budget to be spent. Mr. Henry clarified in asking if most of the costs that we do not control are underspent such as vendors, cleaning, collections, etc. Ms. Thompson responded that she will calculate this and respond at a later date. Ms. Neighbours added that she would like to have a target spending level of items beyond capital projects costs. Ms. Robinson agreed that it would be beneficial to know what expenses beyond intended capital projects are not being used.

12. Ms. Neighbours asked Ms. Painton what she feels are the key responsibilities for the new facilities manager. Ms. Painton responded that the long-term health and functionality of the buildings' core systems. The position's responsibilities would include overseeing and planning major repairs and renovations, developing and implementing preventative maintenance strategies for long-term asset preservation, managing budgets for infrastructure projects and ensuring compliance with building codes and regulations, and often involved in strategic decision-making about building futures and attendance at council meetings. The current facilities manager would ensure the day-to-day upkeep of systems and routine maintenance.
13. The engineer position is a replacement position. Ms. Neighbours asked when the position will be approved and filled. Ms. Painton explained the process for requesting new positions through Civil Service. Ms. Neighbours requested hiring a consultant to audit the condition of our facilities and give a report to the Facilities Director upon their arrival. Ms. Thompson responded that the City has staff augmentation which is a contract agencies can go to and request architects to survey properties. Mr. Weyenberg added that they could draw up a contract to do a feasibility study. Ms. Thompson will continue to reach out and get more information on this endeavor. Mr. Ross suggested that the new position prepare a master plan of maintenance and operations budget. Documenting an assessment of each library branch would be helpful. Ms. Painton asked for recommendations of contractors to reach out to.
14. Ms. Neighbours recommends a facilities committee that would be chaired by Mr. Ross. She also asked if the former feasibility study done on the Main library is enough for a consultant to begin a thorough assessment. Mr. Henry suggests that the facilities committee review the most recent feasibility study and report to the rest of the board with recommendations. Ms. Neighbours added that the conversation may need to extend to the Mayor or City Council for funding for a new facility. Mr. Henry responded that if the needs extend to \$100 million to update our Archives, we may need to consider that
15. Ms. Neighbours recommends that we approach the incoming administration so they understand the needs of the library. Ms. Painton added that bringing councilpersons in to visit archives would be ideal.
16. Ms. Neighbours asked if there is enough staff to do a trial opening of a branch opening on Sundays, as when the millage was being considered, it was something we had promised our patrons. Ms. Painton responded that she and Ms. Riley have been discussing this possibility. Ms. Riley added that staffing a branch Wednesday-Sunday on a trial basis would work statistically. Mr. Henry suggested to open Sundays as needed, i.e. during school enrollments and outside of festival

season. Community listening sessions would help with this. The 2025 operational plan will be shared with the board tomorrow. Mr. Henry asked to be included on correspondence regarding community engagement as it pertains to library hours and staffing.

**B. How to Address Long-standing Facilities Challenges**

1. This item was addressed in the previous section.

**C. Aligning Strategic Plan Pillars with Budget Expenditures**

1. Ms. Neighbours inquired about the MLK branch and if there are still plans to relocate. Ms. Painton stated that until recently, we did not realize there was a contract stating we are required to connect the library with their facility. Ms. Thompson added that Toni Thompson in property management is updating us on previous agreements. Mr. Henry asked for a recap of the challenges surrounding the MLK branch. Ms. Painton responded that due to MLK being a school, it may not seem inviting to some patrons. Concern over purchasing facilities while we concentrate repairing many facilities is impractical. Ms. Thompson stated that we are currently renegotiating our lease on the Mid-City branch and have submitted a list of changes to the building owner. That lease expires next year. We are awaiting a list of vacant city buildings that could be used as operations centers that may make space for the Archives Department. Mr. Henry suggested to reach out to those council members in those specific districts. The board members need a script to campaign for the library's needs. Mr. Riley asked at what point we approach the board after not hearing back from council members. Mr. Henry responded that issues that take priority such as facilities need to be brought to the board's attention via Ms. Painton expediently. Ms. Neighbours added that the A/C repair schedule needs to be expedited. Mr. Weyenberg responded that he met with the architect today and he redlined a contract so he can begin designing the repairs. Moses Engineers designed the contracts and they have been accelerated and July is the target. Once the bid and award phase begins, it takes 120 days to get through City Hall. The pre-construction will not begin until January 2026. This includes replacing chillers, piping, etc. It will take at least 280 days to repair the HVAC. That puts the remodeling deadline at October 2026. The longest phase is the bid and award phase which will take at least until the end of 2025. Then, the contract is written. Construction will not begin until 2026. An alternate can be placed in the project to expedite but it will cost more money. Ms. Neighbours replied that it would be worth considering paying the extra monies to expedite. Also, is there any way a temporary A/C could be installed through the summer. Mr. Weyenberg replied that the biggest issue is getting the design submitted with alternates. Mr. Ross added that providing temporary cooling may be more cost effective than paying to expedite the project.
2. In summation, the bid process takes 30 days to be publicized. It takes 2 weeks to prepare the package of documents. Internal routing lasts 2-3 weeks and then the law office has 30 days to review the contracts. In total, it takes 70-90 days to route a contract. The Capital Projects department's collection of documents and internal review before being submitted to the law office. Once they have reviewed all documents, they are returned to the contractor for signatures. Then all documents are submitted to the Mayor's office for review and signatures.

3. Ms. Neighbours asked if these deadlines are locked in or if any time during this process, routing can be expedited. Mr. Ross offered to attend any of the early programming meetings to brainstorm on how best to get this project done as quickly as possible.
  4. Ms. Neighbours asked to that the one-year operational plan be submitted to the board for review. Ms. Painton responded that we have three years completed, but 2025 is finalized. Each year we can add and remove items as needed.
  5. Ms. Neighbours requested that more operational goals be directed to SMART goals. For instance, a 10% increase in attendance is vague in that it is subjective. Ms. Painton responded that we are still learning from the initial operational plan which was very basic.
  6. Ms. Neighbours requested that for the Workforce pillar, a meeting be planned between Ms. Painton and those in charge of our workforce programs. She also asked how the REACH Center became a workforce space. Ms. Painton answered that the Center's function, in part, is to use it as a community workforce space. Also, the gallery at the Center is considered a workforce space because it promotes those careers in the arts. Ms. Riley added that the plan for 2025 outlines how we partner with other organizations to serve community members.
  7. Ms. Robinson would like to see a focus on the 16-24 age group in workforce development
  8. Ms. Neighbours recommends to have the pillars of our strategic plan displayed at all branches.
- D. Determining a Baseline Target for the Emergency Fund
1. This item was discussed during action item IV.

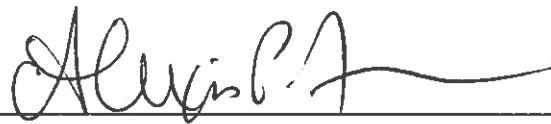
VII. **Attachments**

- A. Board Packet

VIII. **Adjournment**

- A. The February Board Meeting/Budget Discussion was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

APPROVED BY:



Alexis Parent-Ferrouillet, Secretary

DATE:

3/18/25

