



New Orleans Public Library
Board Meeting
New Orleans East Conference Room
Tuesday, March 18, 2025
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

MINUTES

- I. **Call to Order** — (4:35 p.m.)
 - A. Board Chair, Dana Henry, called the March 18, 2025 meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

- II. **Roll Call** — (4:35 p.m.)

Board Members Present: Dana Henry, Chair; Treasurer; Andrea Neighbours, Secretary, Alexis Parent-Ferrouillet; Clarice Kirkland; Monique Robinson; Joel Ross

Absent: Kathleen Coverick

Library Staff & Partners Present: Emily Painton, Director; Heather Riley, Jane LeGros, Michel Thompson, Tammy Hanson, April Martin, Shukrani Gray, Katy Hepner, Shannon Cvitanovic

Others Present: Karen Wills Henry, Jesse Duerr, Mauve Philel

- III. **Action Item: Approval of Consent Agendas** — (4:36 p.m.)
 - A. Approve February 11, 2025 board meeting/budget meeting minutes
 1. Ms. Kirkland moved to approve the consent agenda. Motion seconded by Ms. Parent-Ferrouillet. Board passed unanimously.

- IV. **Action Item: Approval of Emergency Fund** – (4:452p.m.)

- A. Clarification was made that remaining funds in fund balance after building projects are completed should maintain a balance of \$5m-\$6m and be used for emergencies such as facility emergencies, natural disasters, public health crisis etc.
- B. Ms. Parent-Ferrouillet made a motion to approve the Fine Free Policy. Motion was seconded by Ms. Neighbours. Motion passed unanimously.

V. **Information Items – (4:49 p.m.)**

A. Friends of NOPL

- 1. Ms. Cvitanovic is attending the upcoming LLA conference for any information about upcoming legislation that may affect the library.
- 2. Reminder that GenFest will be held on April 5th at Dillard and board members are encouraged to attend. Even though \$50k in Federal funding was approved, with current political uncertainties, that funding may not materialize.
- 3. 35 runners have signed up to benefit Friends at the Crescent City Classic. The goal was 25 runners.
- 4. Give NOLA Day is May 6; Latter Big Book Sale is May 10; the first Big Book Sale at ENO will be held June 10. Volunteers are needed from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

B. State of the Library

- 1. Nora Navra is currently closed due to HVAC equipment issues.
- 2. Our Black History Month Art Contest was held in February and the art opening will be held at the REACH Center April 3 from 5-7 p.m.
- 3. Mr. Minh Lê's book Drawn Together is the Reader 2.0 book this year. Readers 2.0 is for 2nd-graders across the city to read the designated book and take a trip to the Children's Museum and Library one day to discover issues relating to the book. The author participates on April 12.
- 4. The City has implemented a city-wide travel freeze. The library is not part of the city's general fund and can budget their intended travel to ALA and LLA conferences. Mr. Henry stated that if there is not a formal ban from the city, it is enforceable. Ms. Painton responded that the legal department is enforcing it. Mr. Henry had questions about whether the library is a city agency and was told that the library and staff are such. We have our own budget through a dedicated millage.
- 5. New positions were also frozen; however, the new facilities director position has been approved.
- 6. Ms. Neighbours asked if we had made any progress to appoint a surveyor for all the library facilities. Ms. Painton responded that we did not, but Mr. Ross met with our facilities manager and received a tour. Justin will be the person to reach out for quotes. Ms. Neighbours asked if there is a target date. Mr. Ross responded that the goal is by September of this year.
- 7. Ms. Neighbours inquired about an updated operational plan. Ms. Riley responded that we are still in the process of identifying agencies who we can partner with, and next steps are being formulated.

C. Financials Update

- 1. 2024 - We budgeted \$13.2 million from the fund balance and \$1.7 million has been spent. Once we receive all millage monies, we tap into the reserve. 82% has been returned to reserves. Those monies have been earmarked to replace

HVAC/building repairs. We budgeted \$23 million and received \$22 million in millage revenue. We are short 1%. Previously that number was 5%.

2. Other revenue, includes library fees, land use contracts and interest, etc.
 3. Total revenue \$36 million was budgeted and \$23 million was spent. Ms. Thompson reminded the board that any monies returned to the reserves are earmarked for building projects and included in the 2025 budget.
 4. \$16.5 million was budgeted for salaries and wages. \$15.3 million was spent.
 5. We budgeted \$20 million for operating expenses. We spent 90% of our millage funds for 2024.
 6. 2025 - We budgeted \$15 million out of fund balance which includes the \$13 million that rolled into the reserve from 2024. We again anticipate \$22 million in millage revenue for 2025.
 7. Mr. Henry asked if the assigned designation means that the funds are earmarked. Ms. Thompson explained that those monies are budgeted into each category.
 8. The personnel budget is \$17 million. Operating costs are budgeted at \$19m.
- D. Q4 Performance Update
1. Both digital and physical circulation numbers increased for 2024, as did programs and program attendance.
 2. Computer sessions and new card issues are down but this is typical due to the holiday season/cold weather prohibiting in-person visits.

VI. **Discussion Items (5:55 p.m.)**

- A. Board Chair, Dana Henry, opened the floor up to member discussion and questions.
3. Ms. Neighbours asked about an updated operational plan. Ms. Painton responded that we are in the midst of doing research, establishing guidelines, etc. Next year we will begin implementing the plan.
 4. Ms. Neighbours asked if we can still make adjustments. Ms. Painton responded yes and followed up with any feedback via email.
 5. Mr. Henry stated that he anticipated having a dashboard to visualize the strategic plan operational goals and a model that indicates where we are in comparison to our goal. Ms. Painton responded that we do have a dashboard, but it is not yet set up for the coming year. Mr. Henry asked if the library is on schedule for major tasks. Ms. Painton responded that the 1st quarter input meeting is in April, and it is then we can establish how the board might influence completing some of those goals. Ms. Riley added that staff have received their projects and now we are determining if they are on target.
 6. A member of the public asked if the year's salary increases were included in the budget salary and wage line item. Ms. Thompson responded that it is included for the 2025 budget. The patron also inquired about updates on 2nd floor branch closures. Ms. Riley responded that as soon as parts are delivered, we can open these areas. Another inquiry was made regarding emergency equipment funds. Ms. Thompson answered that it has been considered in the current budget. Our engineering staff as well as the company we contract with does routinely scheduled, preventative maintenance.
 7. The original funding from capital projects that was planned for to use for building upgrades will now be funded through the library's reserve.

8. A question was asked regarding a stand-alone facility in the 9th ward. Ms. Painton responded that we are still considering this endeavor. Ms. Neighbours added that follow-up discussions should be added to the next meeting's agenda. Mr. Henry clarified that blighted commercial buildings may be considered.
9. Ms. Neighbours reflected on a Councilmember suggestion of a city-wide HVAC director to address the issues with public buildings. Mr. Henry will follow up on this.

VII. **Attachments**

- A. Board Packet

VIII. **Adjournment**

- A. The March 18, 2025 Board Meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.