

**St. Charles Parish Library**  
Special Board of Control Meeting  
November 30, 2021 at 6:00pm

MINUTES

A special meeting of the St. Charles Parish Library Board of Control was held at 6:00pm on Tuesday, November 30, 2021, in the large meeting room at the East Regional Library in Destrehan.

Members Present: Celeste Uzee, Beverly DeLaune, Lori Lyons, and Randy Matherne

Members Absent: Tammy Windmann, Annie Harmon, Charlene Alexander-Armstrong, and Holly Fonseca

Staff Present: Leann Benedict and Amy Duke

Others: Ann Montgomery

Mrs. Uzee called the meeting to order and asked all to stand for a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Uzee asked for approval of the minutes of the July 20, 2021 meeting. Mr. Matherne moved that the minutes be approved as e-mailed and the motion was seconded by Mrs. DeLaune. The motion passed unanimously.

The attendance report for board members was completed.

The next agenda item was Public Comment. There were no requests for public comment.

The next agenda item was the Librarian's Report. Mrs. Benedict read the following report:

It has been an eventful 4 months since we last met. We wrapped up our Summer Reading Program at the end of July. We had a total of 1,887 people register for the program and 1,173 who completed it by reading at least 360 minutes. That includes children, teens, and adults. We had a 62% completion rate. We held 200 programs with a total of 2,686 attendees.

We then moved into the Fall, which we were excited for, but then Ida happened. More details about Ida will be shared later in the meeting.

Programming resumed in October with drop-in crafts, movies, and cookbook clubs. Some highlights include:

- On Wednesday, October 6th, Allemands Elementary held a school uniform drive and served hot meals to the community at the Paradis Branch Library. 382 people attended this event.
- The Ochsner Bloodmobile was at the East Regional Library on October 12th, and they were quite busy the whole time they were here.
- On October 23rd, the St. Charles Parish Girl Scouts partnered with us and held a Trunk or Treat in the parking lot of the East Regional Library with over 360 in attendance.
- Lawyers in Libraries were back at the East Regional Library in October with 2 programs: an Ask-Lawyer Session was held on October 26th and a free legal Workshop on what to do after a motor vehicle collision on October 27th.
- German Coast Farmer's Market began holding their Saturday Market at the East Regional Library on September 26th. They also held a Wednesday afternoon market the day before Thanksgiving. They will also hold Wednesday markets on December 22nd and 29th since both Christmas and New Year's Day fall on a Saturday.

We were recently selected to host two programs sponsored by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities:

- Prime Time Family Reading will take place this spring for 8 weeks. This program engages families in weekly reading and discussion sessions. It enhances interest in reading through positive interactions and family bonding and builds a foundation for a lifelong love of reading.
- Beginning in February, we will host "Witness to Change: Conversations on Coastal Impacts," a new reading and discussion series for adults. The series incorporates history, memoir, and fiction, and is intended to engage the public in conversations on the beauty of and challenges faced by coastal communities. Two local experts on this topic, Dr. Gary LaFleur, the Director of the Center for Bayou Studies at Nichols State University, and Ted Jackson, a local Pulitzer Prize winning-photojournalist and author, will lead the discussions. We are one of only ten sites around the state chosen to host this discussion series.

We have a new reading challenge kicking off on December 1, 2021. The "Cozy Reading Challenge" will be held in the month of December. Patrons can go into BeanStack to register for the programming. This is a minutes-based challenge and patrons will earn digital badges and a brag tag once they have logged 180 minutes

In 2022 we will hold a year-long reading and activities challenge called "10 to Try". Pre-registration opens Monday, December 20. Patrons can mix and match books and activities to add up to 10. For example, they can read 2 books and do 8 activities; do 10 activities; read 6 books and do 4 activities, etc. This encourages patrons to explore new genres as well as get them to know their library resources better. Once patrons have earned 10 digital badges, they will earn a brag tag.

In staffing news, we welcomed the following staff to our team:

- Ashley Cotton – Part-Time Circulation Assistant at East
- Zamion Robertson – Page at West
- Blake Termine – Page at East
- Myranda Cantrelle – Page at East
- Quiana Brown – Part-Time Custodian at St. Rose
- Ashley Lay was promoted to Circulation Librarian at the East Regional Library. Ashley received her master's degree in Library and Information Sciences from LSU in August

The next agenda item was Communications. There were no communications.

The first item of unfinished business taken up was the status of the Norco Branch construction project. Mrs. Benedict informed the board that she didn't have anything new to report. She is still working with the parish legal department to try and close out the project. They are trying to determine what paperwork needs to be done to formally close out the project.

The next item of unfinished business was the Hahnville Branch Library project. Mrs. Benedict informed the board that we did close on the property at 15090 River Road and now own it. She also informed them that we did receive a credit in the amount of \$21,530.00 for some of the trees that fell during Hurricane Ida that had not been removed by the seller. Mrs. Benedict informed the board that she would like to move forward with having the house demolished in order to remove that as a liability. Mrs. DeLaune made a motion that the board authorize Mrs. Benedict to move forward with having the house demolished and Mr. Matherne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next item of unfinished business was a proposal from the parish about beginning a discussion regarding entering into a cooperative endeavor for a building project on the new property purchased for the Hahnville Branch. Mrs. Benedict informed the board that she had been invited to a meeting with Parish President Matt Jewell where he expressed interest in having a discussion with the library about possibly doing a joint building project on the property. Some discussion followed and the board agreed that they are open to having this discussion. Mrs. Benedict expressed that she would like to include Mrs. Uzee and Mrs. DeLaune in that discussion with the parish officials when it happens.

The next item on the agenda was new business. The first item of new business was Hurricane Ida Recovery. Mrs. Benedict shared the following information:

- The library closed to the public at 3pm on Friday, August 27<sup>th</sup> to allow staff time to go home and prepare for the storm. The storm hit on Sunday, August 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Monday, August 30<sup>th</sup> – the day after the storm, staff who had stayed in the parish were out assessing the buildings they could get to.
- Communications began immediately with the parish as the library's building insurance is under the parish policy. The library carries a separate policy for content.

- The West Regional Library had the most damage. One exterior wall on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor came down and half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor roof blew off. This caused major damage to the entire second floor of the library. All other branches had minor damages.
- On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, staff began removing items from the LA Room collection with the assistance of Quality Cleaning Equipment and Supplies. 3706 items were pulled from the LA Room. These items were carried down the stairs, inventoried and put into a freezer truck then sent off to United Drying where, after being dried through the freezing process, they will be cleaned and irradiated. We anticipate having the LA Room Collection returned to us sometime in the next month. Dehumidifiers were also brought into West and installed throughout the West Regional Library. This definitely saved the whole building! Our Facilities Maintenance team also used a dehumidifier at all of the other branches to help keep the moisture from damaging those collections.
- Out of 60,225 items in West's total collection, about 3200 items were lost. We saved 13,853 items that were pulled from the 1st floor of the damaged section of the library. Some library staff came in while the library was closed to assess all of the materials and to pull the undamaged materials. These items are being boxed and stored until repairs can be made to the building.
- All staff returned to work on Monday, September 27<sup>th</sup>
- The East Regional, Hahnville, Paradis and St. Rose Branches re-opened to the public on Tuesday, September 28<sup>th</sup> (East and Hahnville closed at 5pm and Paradis and St Rose closed at 6pm). These 4 branches resumed normal hours the next day (on September 29<sup>th</sup>).
- Norco Branch reopened on Wednesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>
- No Internet or phone services were available at any branches until the middle of October when Cox was finally able to restore services. During the time without Internet and phone, patrons were able to come in and check out and return items and use the photocopiers. We had one hotspot at each branch running one of the staff circulation computers so that staff could check items in and out, but the hotspot service was not good, and staff still had to do some transactions the old-fashioned way.
- The library is not charging fines for materials damaged by Hurricane Ida. Patrons just need to call, message, or stop by a branch to let staff know if they lost library materials due to Ida and we will waive any fines for those on their account. Patrons may discard damaged materials themselves. They do not need to bring damaged materials to the library.

The board expressed thanks to the library staff for all of their hard work and dedication during this time and Mrs. Benedict expressed how proud she was of her team!

The next item of new business was a proposal for the German Coast Farmer's Market to permanently hold the Saturday market at the East Regional Library. Mrs. Benedict introduced Mrs. Ann Montgomery and let the board know that Mrs. Montgomery had contacted her at the end of September asking permission to temporarily hold the Saturday Farmer's Market at the East Regional Library because they were not able to hold it at their previous location yet. Mrs. Benedict gave them permission to temporarily hold the market at the library. It has been working

out well and the German Coast Farmer's Market would now like to permanently move the Saturday Farmer's Market to the East Regional Library. Mrs. Montgomery spoke on behalf of the Farmer's Market. Mrs. DeLaune made a motion to approve the proposal to have the German Coast Farmer's Market permanently hold their Saturday market at the East Regional Library. Mrs. Lyons seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The next item of new business was a resolution to amend the 2021 budget. Mrs. Benedict gave a brief explanation of the proposed budget amendment. Mrs. Lyons moved that the board accept the amendments to the 2021 budget as submitted. Mrs. DeLaune seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The next item of new business was the proposed revision of the Holidays policy. Mrs. DeLaune made a motion to adopt the proposed revision to the Holidays policy. Mr. Matherne seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The next item of new business was the proposed revision of the *Special Leave* policy. Mrs. Benedict gave a brief explanation of the proposed changes to the policy. Mrs. DeLaune made a motion to adopt the Special Leave policy and Mrs. Lyons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next item of new business was the public hearing and adoption of the 2022 budget. Mrs. Uzee gave a brief overview of the main items of anticipated expenditure growth and Mrs. Benedict provided some additional information. Some discussion followed. After the budget review, Mrs. DeLaune moved that the library board approve the 2022 library budget as presented and Mr. Matherne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The last item of new business was the annual evaluation of the Director. Mr. Matherne moved that the board go into executive session for the purpose of the annual evaluation of the Director and Mrs. DeLaune seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Following the evaluation, Mrs. DeLaune moved that the board end the executive session and Mrs. Lyons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The final agenda item was Public Comment. There was no public comment.

There being no further business, Mrs. Lyons moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Matherne seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:

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Celeste Uzee, President  
St. Charles Parish Library Board

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Leann Benedict, Secretary  
St. Charles Parish Library Board