

St. Charles Parish Library

Board of Control Meeting

July 20, 2021 at 6:00pm

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the St. Charles Parish Library Board of Control was held at 6:00pm on Tuesday, July 20, 2021, in Council Chambers at the Courthouse in Hahnville.

Members Present: Celeste Uzee, Beverly DeLaune, Lori Lyons, Randy Matherne, and Charlene Alexander-Armstrong

Members Absent: Tammy Windmann, Annie Harmon, and Holly Fonseca

Staff Present: Leann Benedict, Amy Duke, and Lauren Pitz

Others: K. Alexander, LaSandra Gordon, Gaynell Coleman, Trudy Alexander-Love

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 May 18, 2021 meeting. Mrs. DeLaune moved that the minutes be approved as e-mailed and the motion was seconded by Mr. Matherne. 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:

We are more than halfway through our summer reading program and branches have been enjoying seeing more patrons back in the branches. While we still aren't back to pre-covid numbers, we do think that it has been a successful summer so far. As of June 30th, we had a total of 1770 patrons signed up for the summer reading program with 696 completions. Last year we had 827 signups with 625 completions and in 2019 we had 2326 signups with 1409 completions. For programming during the month of June, we held a total of 46 virtual programs with a total of 843 attendees a total of 75 live programs (this includes in branch, planetarium shows, and outreach programs) with a total of 1006 attendees.

There is still time for patrons to sign up for and participate in the summer reading program. All reading must be completed and logged by July 31st. 360 minutes of reading will earn you a completion prize and an entry into our grand prize drawing. Patrons can

learn more and signup either by visiting their local branch or on our website at myscpl.org/summer

We will be closing out our summer reading program on July 31st at 6pm at the East Regional Library with an End of Summer Celebration that will feature a family concert by the amazing artist Staci Gray, and free snowballs (generously sponsored by the Friends of the Library). Staci is an Austin-based Children's entertainer who has been performing since 2006 in Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. She has three studio albums of original music, and she puts on an amazing show. We invite everyone to bring their blankets and chairs and join us for some great music and snowballs as we close out this amazing summer!

The State Library of Louisiana was allocated a little over 3 million dollars in American Rescue Plan Act funds through the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which they in turn distributed evenly amongst all of the Louisiana parish public libraries. In June we received a check in the amount of \$47,064.84 from these funds, which we will use to expand digital access for our library patrons. We are grateful for these funds and will be using them to help us continue to grow our access to electronic resources for our patrons.

We are in the process of working with the St Charles Parish School System and our automation vendor to create digital student cards. These cards will give every student in the St Charles Parish School system access to all of our digital resources even if they don't have a regular library card. We are hoping to be able to roll this out to the students sometime in the next couple of months.

In staffing news, we welcomed Maria Bilello to our team last month. Maria is our new Adult Programming and Outreach Librarian. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Relations with a Minor in Business and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science. We are excited to have her on our team.

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 we are continuing to work with the parish legal department on trying to close out this project. There is a little over \$19,000 in work remaining on the punch list. At this point, we must decide whether to pursue further legal action in the form of a lawsuit to try and get the bond company to complete the remaining punch list items, or offer to release them from the contract, keep the remaining funds, and make the repairs ourselves. A lawsuit will be time-consuming and expensive with no guarantees of the outcome. Mrs. Benedict recommends that the library offer to release them from the contract and take care of the remaining punch list items ourselves. After some discussion, Mrs. DeLaune moved that if we can obtain a mutual release to where the board doesn't face any exposure for unpaid funds, that we go forward with the release. Mrs. Armstrong seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The next item of unfinished business was the Hahnville Branch Library and discussion of possible future plans. Mrs. Benedict had given each board member a summary sheet of properties in the Hahnville area for sale. All properties being considered are within the municipal core of Hahnville. The board discussed the pros and cons of each of the properties listed. Mrs. DeLaune asked about the need for more administrative spaces. Mrs. Benedict explained that administrative staff is growing and, as outreach activities grow, she anticipates the need for additional staffing will as well. As the library has taken on doing more outreach and programming (both in-person and virtual), there is a need for more space. The library is currently using the small meeting room and the children's activity room at the East Regional Library for program preparation and recording of virtual programs. These activities need to be relocated into staff spaces, but the library is already outgrowing the administrative areas at the East Regional Library. One idea would be to relocate the Technical Services Department to a new Hahnville Branch. This is the department that orders, processes, and catalogs all materials purchased for the entire system. By moving them to Hahnville, it would open up space in the administrative area of the East Regional Branch to grow our outreach and programming services. Another idea is to move the Louisiana Room collection to the Hahnville Branch. This would open up space at the West Regional Library for additional meeting/activity room space. The larger property would also allow the library to have some outdoor programming space that we just don't currently have at any other library on the West Bank of the parish. After additional discussion, Mr. Matherne made a motion to make an offer on property 1, located at 15090 River Road with a second by Mrs. DeLaune. The motion passed with Mrs. Uzee, Mrs. DeLaune, Mrs. Lyons, and Mr. Matherne voting yes and Mrs. Armstrong voting no. Some additional discussion followed about what price was to offer on the property. Mrs. Lyons made a motion to give Mrs. Benedict the authority to negotiate the purchase of the property that the board has agreed upon. The motion failed without a second. Mrs. DeLaune moved that Mrs. Benedict be given the authority to act on behalf of the board to negotiate a purchase price on the property located at 15090 River Road not to exceed the amount of the appraisal of the property. Mr. Matherne seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was new business. There was no new business.

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

There being no further business, Mrs. DeLaune moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Armstrong seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:

Celeste Uzee, President
St. Charles Parish Library Board

Leann Benedict, Secretary
St. Charles Parish Library Board