



New Orleans Public Library
Board Meeting
Main Library Board Room
Tuesday, March 10, 2020
4:30 p.m.

MINUTES

I. **Call to Order** — (Board Chair Phala Kimbrough Mire, 4:36 p.m.)

II. **Roll Call** — (Executive Assistant Tammy Hanson, 4:36 p.m.)

III. Phala Kimbrough Mire, Board Chair- Present
Vonda Flentroy-Rice, Vice-Chair- Absent
Laurance Eustis III, Secretary- Present
Bernard Charbonnet- Present
James K. Chassee- Not Present
Raquel Dufauchard- Not Present
Mary Moran- Not Present
Andrea Neighbours- Present
William Settoon- Present
A quorum was present.

Non-Staff Present: Dixon Stetler and Jennifer Kitner of Friends of NOPL

Staff Present: Dr. Gabriel Morley, Tammy Hanson, Laura Bevins, Ross Matthews, April Martin, Kate Martin, Christina Bryant, Tony Barnes, John Marc Sharpe

IV. **Public Comments** — (Phala Kimbrough Mire, 4:37 p.m.)

A. There were no public comments

V. **Approval of Consent Agendas** — (Phala Kimbrough Mire, 4:38 p.m.)

A. Approve December 30th minutes with revisions

1. Board Secretary, Laurance Eustis recommended that a more detailed account of board meetings such as the original draft of December 30, 2019 Board meeting be adopted as a model for future board meeting minutes. Many board members conferred that having a detailed version of minutes – not a transcript- was preferred so that absent members would be more informed. Secretary Eustis made a motion to have more detailed minutes. Mr. Charbonnet seconded the motion and having a detailed account of minutes was unanimously approved.

B. Approve February 11th Regular Board Meeting minutes

1. Secretary Eustis moved to adopt the original version of the September 30th, 2019 minutes and the February 11th Regular Board meeting minutes and Ms. Neighbours seconded the motion. Consent agenda was passed by unanimous vote.

2. Ms. Kimbrough Mire clarified that the minutes were not to be a transcription from the recording of the meeting but more than the action items of the board.
3. There was a brief discussion regarding acquiring an audio amplification system for the board meetings. Dr. Morley is working on this for May's board meeting.

VI. Information Items

A. Executive Committee Meeting – (Phala Kimbrough Mire, 4:45 p.m.)

1. The NOPLF met with Executive Committee members on February 26th and discussed the issue of the current bylaws. The Foundation attorney, Gray Sexton provided prior NOPLF minutes and these have been forwarded to the city attorney and they have followed up acknowledging receipt. The two groups also discussed three possibilities on how to proceed forward. Mr. Sexton stated that a third option to move forward is a reinstatement of the articles of incorporation can be pursued. The committee is waiting for a recommendation from the city attorney. As of now, there is not a definitive timeline.

VII. Discussion Items

A. Millage Update (Phala Kimbrough Mire, 4:47 p.m.)

1. Dr. Morley stated that there is strong support for bundling of millages from by the City Council. The report was previously sent to board members. It is unclear if prior percentages will be revealed or the amount will be a sum amount.
2. John Chratska's (Every Library) reaction to the bundling of millages is that he is opposed to changing the millage in any respect. Mr. Chratska had a previous telephone conversation with city members to establish what his role will be should the bundling of millages occur.
3. Mr. Settoon asked when the city has to have information submitted to put millage on the ballot. Ms. Stetler responded that the deadline is March 13th.
4. The board is officially on the record as being concerned about bundling versus a millage solely for the library. If bundling becomes a reality the board will explore options on how to respond. Ms. Neighbours asked if the March 13th paperwork needed to include individual millage percentages. Ms. Stetler responded that this paperwork originates from the mayor's office and is just an intention to renew, but there is an option to get a December election approved.
5. Dr. Morley recommended that the board wait and see what the intentions of the council and mayor are regarding the millage before they decide on any actions or statements. Perhaps, after we know more, a letter describing the library's needs would be most beneficial.
6. Mr. Eustis commented that the millage renewal expires December 2021 so there is time to request an additional ballot.
7. Mr. Settoon stated that the city requesting a \$10 to \$13 millage would be negatively perceived by voters. Mr. Charbonnet responded that the amount and details of the millage is at the discretion of the Mayor, thus it would be detrimental to the library's cause to oppose anything at this point.

8. Dr. Morley thinks that the library's strategic plan aligns with many of the Mayor's initiatives and that might prove positive in obtaining a substantial percentage of a bundled millage.
 9. Mr. Charbonnet commented that the Friends of the NOPL have historically helped us obtain millages and we want to retain that alliance.
 10. Mr. Settoon inquired on the library reserve amount. The library Business Manager, Michel Thompson replied that we currently have approximately \$7 million in reserves. Dr. Morley commented that one of our priorities is to find responsible ways to spend our reserves to a comfortable threshold (\$2 to \$3 million). He thinks that this is an opportunity for the city to obtain monies for sewer and road improvements and that this situation is not unique; libraries tend to save and accumulate money for specific future endeavors.
 11. Ms. Thompson commented that purchasing challenges have contributed to our accumulation of reserves. Many items are awaiting approval from the city finance office. Ms. Kimbrough Mire responded that the board also needs to look at capital projects costs.
- B. Foundation update (Phala Kimbrough Mire 5:15 p.m.)
1. Ms. Neighbours inquired if another joint meeting with the NOPLF is planned and if it can be noticed so that all Board members have the option to attend. Ms. Kimbrough Mire will check with the NOPLF chair; however, Dr. Morley does not think that they plan to meet again. The understanding is that the NOPLF's intention is to move forward with restated articles of incorporation. Mr. Sexton will complete a draft with a number of specifics that were determined by the Executive Committee members at the previous meeting. Mr. Eustis commented that without a decision from the City Attorney, the NOPLF does not have the authority to restate the articles. Mr. Kimbrough Mire responded that this is just a progression until an opinion from the City Attorney is received. Her hope is that the library's fundraising needs will take precedence.
 2. Mr. Settoon commented that if there is another meeting, the library needs to post a notice and not the NOPLF.
- C. Executive Director Report – (Dr. Gabriel Morley, 5:20 p.m.)
1. We are following the City Health Department's lead as it pertains to the Coronavirus situation.
 2. A soft launch of the NOPL Tool Library occurred this week. Library card holders can check out catch basin equipment (wheelbarrows, rakes, shovels, etc.) from the New Orleans East Library. This was made possible by a grant from Keep Louisiana Beautiful and the Sewerage and Water Board.
 3. Dr. Morley and Kate Martin are working on developing the NOPL Strategic Plan into a narrative to include where we are, where we want to be and why. Key initiatives, with who is in charge and deadlines will be included. A challenge is to not only employ new technologies for improved customer service, but help our customers use new technology as well. If we do not develop our own technologies, other companies will and attempt to sell them to us. Mr. Eustis inquired if specific costs will be tied to each Strategic Plan objective. Dr. Morley responded that the costs are ambiguous so it is not likely. Ms. Kimbrough Mire

responded that costs will be tied to the budget narrative that will be tied to the Strategic Plan.

4. Different demographics view libraries in ways that do not always align with the programming we do and we have to change that perception in order to shape a library that caters to all needs in the future. Staff and Board input will be solicited throughout the next two months. We are looking at similar library systems as a model for what the NOPL goals are. We know that childhood literacy and efficient use of enterprise zones align with the Mayor's initiatives. Mr. Settoon inquired what the library enterprise zones were. Dr. Morley explained that these are unfinished areas in some locations that were earmarked for outside entities to generate revenue for the City. Many of these areas remain unused due to lack of equipment or space. The Mayor has asked us to implement a standard RFP application process.
5. The Board of Directors decided to hold a Saturday half-day retreat to discuss and help develop the Strategic Plan. Executive Secretary Tammy Hanson will solicit dates to the Board.
6. Jennifer Kitner was introduced as the new president of the Friends of the NOPL and gave the Board a brief overview of the Algiers Regional enterprise zone and its yearly profits.
7. Mr. Settoon inquired whether the Mid-City branch has re-opened. Dr. Morley responded that it re-opened two weeks ago with new carpeting and sanitized furniture and shelving.
8. Ms. Neighbours posed the question of why the YMCA was granted library space when other literacy groups were not. Ms. Kimbrough Mire responded that research into the history and original intent of enterprise zones may shed light on that question. Ms. Neighbours suggested that one enterprise zone could be set up as a Business Center for patrons.

VIII. **Attachments**

IX. **Adjournment**

- A. Board Chair, Phala Kimbrough Mire adjourned the March 10, 2020 meeting at 5:42 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Secretary, Laurance Eustis III

DATE: _____