

**New Orleans Public Library**

Executive Committee Meeting

ZOOM Teleconference

Tuesday, July 6, 2021

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\***

**NOTICE OF TELECONFERENCE MEETING:**

This meeting is being conducted via teleconference per Executive Order 59-JBE-2020 Section 2.C, which states: “All state agencies, boards and commissions, and local political subdivisions of the state shall continue to provide for attendance at essential governmental meetings via teleconference or video conference and such attendance shall be allowed during the pendency of this emergency. All efforts shall be made to provide for observation and input by members of the public. Before any meeting conducted pursuant to this section, the state agency, boards and commission, or local political subdivision of the state shall first provide a written certification that it will otherwise be unable to operate due to quorum requirements. Such certification shall be posted at the same time and in the same manner as the agenda for the meeting. Nothing in this order shall be interpreted to waive any notice requirements.”

**MINUTES**

1. **Call to Order**
   1. Committee Chair, Phala Kimbrough-Mire called the July 6th Executive Committee meeting to order at 4:38 p.m.
2. **Roll Call** — (4:38 p.m.)

Committee Members Present: Phala Kimbrough-Mire, Vonda Flentroy-Rice, Andrea Neighbours, Dana Henry

Staff Present: Dr. Gabriel Morley, Michel Thompson, Tammy Hanson

1. **Public Comments** — (4:40 p.m.)
   1. There were no public comments
2. **Executive Director Update –** (4:41 p.m.)
   1. The Alvar branch is closed due to termite remediation. The Nix branch is still closed to continue ADA updates. We continue to work with the city to resolve plumbing issues.
   2. Hubbell branch work continues but has slowed due to manual repairs and bad weather; however, Hubbell remains open while maintenance takes place.
   3. The enterprise zone at Norman Mayer is almost complete and the District Attorney’s office will be able to do outreach at that location soon. Final work on the enterprise zone at Algiers should be complete within 6-8 weeks.
   4. Capital project requests for 2022 have been submitted. We are awaiting funds for the Keller branch expansion and have discussed this expansion with the city’s capital planning team. Moving the city archives is on the capital projects list.
   5. Another capital project is the Main Library Modernization Project to update elevators, improve lighting, and implement security measures to prevent non-authorized people to access the administrative offices. The city has a master capital projects list and we are placed on this list based on financial need. Some projects have been on the list for many years.
   6. The Astor Crowne Plaza lease has stalled while their attorneys formalize the language with the city attorneys. Our preference was to extend the lease with a substantial increase in the monthly payment. The hotel is considering not extending the lease unless the city meets certain obligations.
   7. The school where the MLK branch is housed is not planning to reopen until fall. We are looking at moving to an alternate location in the ninth ward so we can better manage the technology.
   8. Last year we created the African American Resource Center with Shukrani Gray as the equity and diversity librarian. We are considering other facilities that have ADA accessibility and elevators for multiple floors and ample parking. There is a local community center across the street from Nora Navra at the Corpus Christi Epiphany Church that used FEMA funds to build a space that is dedicated to housing community organizations. It has a gymnasium, a cafeteria, and office space, and have the opportunity to house an African American collection, a children’s section, and provide office space for on-site staff. There is also room for a computer lab and ample space in the large gymnasium with a stage. It already has parking, an elevator, WIFI, and security.
   9. We have a team in place for the first operations plan. We wanted to have an operations plan ready from the strategic plan to use as we talk to the community about the millage and have specific approaches to provide.
   10. We need to meet with the city CAO because much of this is predicated on staffing and the need to relinquish hiring freezes. We have 40 to 50 fewer staff members than prior to the pandemic and are trying to fill the positions identified in the strategic plan.
   11. The Finance Committee discussed and drafted how to responsibly spend $14 million responsibly. For example, increasing the book budget by $200,000/year to improve early childhood literacy will reduced the $14 million by $2 million over 10 years. The committee also discussed allocating funds to specific proposals, or perhaps, earmarking specific dollar amounts towards emergencies or catastrophes. This will become part of our marketing piece as we work toward the millage election in the fall.
   12. Even though we have budgeted for promotions, the city has not approved them; thus, we cannot yet return to our normal operating budget. The city economist is predicting a 4 to 5-year deficit to return to pre-pandemic levels. Thus, they are undergoing a lean budget for the next several years while maintaining current obligations.
   13. The library has collected over 90% of millage funds, meaning we will not see a deficit this year.
3. **Finance Update** (5:03 p.m.)
   1. The regular board meeting packet will contain financials, the city’s budget schedule and a copy of the capital projects submission.
   2. The receipts for 2021 is 98% of what we have budgeted. We have spent slightly over 52% of the trust funds and have earmarked the rest of the money.
   3. The furlough payback occurred on June 28th. Michel has reached out to the accounting department for the actual dollar value as we cannot determine this in the ADP system.
   4. The city expects us to have the budget in the system by the end of August. Once we determine the budget, we can call a special meeting so the board can vote to approve it. The next meeting is in September when the budget hearings begin.
   5. Ms. Neighbours asked about the regular board agenda item to approve the budget and Ms. Thompson responded that she had originally anticipated a vote on the budget during the September meeting, but this will need to take place sooner.
   6. Ms. Neighbours also asked if the operating plan will be finalized by next week’s board meeting. Dr. Morley responded that he is currently imputing data into a spreadsheet with costs, a timeline, and quarterly updates to present in a PowerPoint.
4. **Review of Regular Board Agenda –** (5:15 p.m.)
   1. The vote to approve the budget and the marketing department’s dashboard presentation will be removed from the regular board agenda.
   2. An Operations Plan Update will replace the Strategic Plan Update with Dr. Morley presenting.
   3. Committee elections will be determined at a later date with Ms. Kimbrough-Mire presenting.
   4. Ms. Hanson will contact Ms. Mercadel of the Foundation and determine if she will present at next week’s meeting. Dr. Morley has attended some foundation meetings. They have been preoccupied with the Mayfield sentencing in August. The money Mr. Mayfield and Mr. Markham took from the foundation went through another organization resulting in some legal issues. The repayment of funds and the amount is, as of yet, undetermined and may take many years to materialize.
   5. The Foundation Board is at full capacity and safeguards were built into their financial operations bylaws to deter future mishandling of funds, such as requiring multiple signatures for payments and fund transfers etc.
5. **Adjournment**
   1. The July 6, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.