



New Orleans Public Library
Regular Board Meeting
ZOOM
Tuesday, July 13, 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.

Due to time constraints, public comment will be limited to 2 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

- I. **Call to Order**
 - A. Board Chair, Phala Kimbrough-Mire called the July 13, 2021 Regular Board meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

- II. **Roll Call — 4:31 p.m.**

Board Members Present: Phala Kimbrough-Mire, Vonda Flentroy-Rice, Andrea Neighbours, Rocky Dufauchard, Bill Settoon, Kathleen Coverick, Dana Henry, and Daniel Tapia

NOPL Staff Present: Dr. Gabriel Morley, Tammy Hanson, Michel Thompson, Emily Painton, Jane LeGros, April Martin

Others Present: Dixon Stetler, Emily Wolf

- III. **Public Comments** — 4:32 p.m.
- A. Shannan Cvitanovic asked when Dr. Morley’s formal performance evaluation will be conducted by the Board of Directors.
 - B. Amanda Doss asked when the staff will be engaged to begin the millage campaign, if John Chrastka/Every Library will be involved, and when they will receive details.
 - C. Anne McKinley urges all to support the upcoming millage vote. She feels that running the library like a business is counterproductive. While she supports increasing services for children and adult learning, she does not favor reducing core library services. She would like to see more digital and physical resources for patrons.
- IV. **Approval of Consent Agendas** — 4:35 p.m.
- A. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
 - B. Approval of March 9th minutes
 - 1. Mr. Settoon made a motion to approve the consent agendas and Ms. Dufauchard seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- V. **Information Items** – 4:36 p.m.
- A. Friends of NOPL Update – Dixon Stetler
 - 1. The Algiers enterprise zone is nearly complete. Volunteers are prepared to unload over 600 books as soon as shelves arrive. The Friends are working on a CEA for the enterprise spaces.
Friends of NOPL have received nearly \$30,000 in grants in 2021 with \$60,000 still pending.
A filmmaker from New Orleans is making a documentary about libraries called “Free for All.” Friends received a cross-sector grant to have the filmmaking team come to New Orleans and do a project with teens and utilize the Best Buy Teen Tech Center. They will show the film and conduct a workshop series where teens interview senior citizens in the community. No date has been set. The Friends plan on holding a fundraiser this fall to sponsor a private screening.
Mr. Settoon asked the filmmaker’s name. Dixon responded that her name is Dawn Logson. Mr. Settoon asked the book sale hours. The latter sale is Monday, Thursday, Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Algiers is not yet reopened.
 - B. NOPL Foundation Update – Vonda Flentroy-Rice, William Settoon, Kathleen Coverick
 - 1. Mr. Settoon reported that the Foundation members are enthusiastic about their mission of helping the library.
 - 2. Ms. Coverick added that they received an update on the Markham/Mayfield trial. The Foundation Board and its attorneys are committed to recouping any stolen funds. Mr. Settoon added that the last vacant Foundation board seat was filled by the director of the Corpus Christie Church. The Foundation’s attorneys gave detailed reports from the assistant U.S. Attorney who is handling the court case and from Villere and Company who manages the Foundation’s finances.
Ms. Neighbours asked if the Foundation has started fundraising activities again. Ms. Coverick responded that once financial procedures are established and infrastructure rebuilt, fundraising will resume. After observing previous year’s audit findings, Ms. Coverick made recommendations for record keeping

procedures and day-to-day accounting and is implementing these in new financial policies.

C. Executive Director Update – Dr. Gabriel Morley

1. The NOPL's current webhosting site will no longer host us starting October 1st. The website committee began developing a new website in January and it will be implemented by the deadline. The new site is a WordPress site that will allow more flexibility and offsite storage capability. This is necessary due to increased hacking and ransomware occurrences.
2. Termite issues at the Alvar branch are being resolved. Work continues at the Nix and Hubbell branches but weather has caused some delays. Enterprise Zone work at Algiers and Norman Mayer branches are continuing. Norman Mayer's Enterprise Zone will open as a space for the District Attorney and Office of Business and External Services outreach site. The City is using the space two days per week, allowing us the flexibility to use this space if needed.
3. Even though the Board approved the modification to the Astor Crown Hotel lease, the City Attorney and hotel attorneys continue to work on contract language. The details should be finalized prior to the next board meeting.
4. NOPL submitted Capital projects requests to the City. The Main Library Modernization Project include elevator updates, added security equipment and general building improvements will potentially include a back loading dock. A new space for the Archives Department and the Keller expansion project were also included on the list. A study was completed to potentially move the Archives to the new City Hall location. We are working with the CAO's office to identify potential locations or vacant city buildings that we can repurpose.
5. The diversity and equity librarian has identified a space that could house a special collection and programs (REACH Center). The Corpus Christie Epiphany Church has a three-story community center that they lease to non-profit organizations. This location has security, parking, elevator access and a gymnasium with a stage. Plans to contact the city to fund leasing this space and determine specifics is underway.
Ms. Neighbours asked whether the library could expand into the rear parking lot to house the Archives and provide staff parking at nearby hotels. When this was discussed previously, importance was placed on housing the Archives at the Main library. She also asked why every branch will not have an equity and diversity collection and if the Equity and Diversity Committee still meets. Dr. Morley responded that our acquisitions manager audited all branches to determine the extent of our collection. The REACH Center will not only house a special collection, but can publish needed materials. As Ms. Gray develops programming, she can develop a collection that enhances that programming. We do not anticipate this will be a lending library but more of a cultural centerpiece that focuses on other prospects other than lending books. NOPL would not have the money to fund moving the Archives alone, so we are looking at ways to keep expenses at a minimum so the project reaches fruition. Ms. Neighbours asked if any federal money the City receives could provide funds for this project. Dr. Morley responded that discussions with the City Economist determined that even with the additional federal money, the City anticipates a four to five year

deficit. Ms. Kimbrough-Mire added that after discussions with the Mayor and her staff, the administration is aware of what is in the Archives and the issues surrounding its location.

D. Budget Department Update – Michel Thompson

1. The Finance Committee meeting notes will be submitted in a new packet and added to the next meeting's Consent Agenda.
2. As of the end of Quarter 2, we have received 98% of millage dollars expected in 2021. Personnel costs are low. We have spent 30% of our yearly operating budget and POs continue to be processed. Trust Fund balances remain at \$947,000. Approximately \$1 million Trust Fund dollars have been earmarked. Ms. Neighbours asked if overage in personnel costs could be transferred to operating expenditures. Ms. Thompson responded that this could be done, but requires an ordinance and would take six weeks to process. Ms. Neighbours also asked how close we are to meeting the expected budget. Ms. Thompson stated that we are on cue to spend most if not all of our budgeted dollars for 2021.
3. Our 2022 budget is due to the City by the end of August. We are meeting with the City Council on August 2nd or 3rd. A special meeting is planned for the Board to approve the 2022 budget prior to this date.
4. Staff who were employed as of June 13th were reimbursed for furloughs the week of June 28. This totaled \$242,000 for library staff.

VI. **Discussion Items – 5:18 p.m.**

A. Millage Update -- Phala Kimbrough-Mire/Dr. Gabriel Morley

1. Ms. Kimbrough-Mire and Dr. Morley are meeting with John Chrastka on July 15.
2. The City Council plans to propose a resolution Thursday to set our millage rate and term for the upcoming election in November. The wording of the proposed resolution allows a millage rate up to 4% and gives us the flexibility to roll forward if needed based on assessments. This refers to the millage that expires at the end of this year not the supplemental millage. Mr. Settoon asked what City Council member is sponsoring the resolution. Dr. Morley responded that it is Councilwoman Helena Moreno. Ms. Kimbrough-Mire added that she is establishing a subcommittee to focus on the millage.

B. Operations Update – Dr. Gabriel Morley

1. We established goals for each objective under each of the three main pillars, and then identified tasks to complete the goals along with the estimated cost of each task. Costs will come from our fund balance.
2. Due to the COVID hiring freeze, new positions were in limbo. Dr. Morley met with the City HR managers to remove the freeze in order to hire the following needed positions: ECE Librarian III and Library Associate; Youth Librarian III and Youth Librarian II, ADE Librarian III, Workforce Librarian I, Digital Literacy Librarian I, REACH Librarian III, Archives Librarian I, three additional maintenance staff, and one additional engineer.
3. Ross Matthews, the NOPL HR Manager, is working to get the requisitions through quickly. The Strategic Plan begins in January 2022 so we have five months to fill needed positions along with our current 20 vacant positions.

4. The first year will mainly be procuring resources and staff and assessing if our goals and objectives are worthwhile in the community.
5. Paperwork to procure money from the American Recovery Act is being initiated. We received money from the State Library that was passed through the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Our goal is to procure 450 laptops and tablets with hotspots to circulate into the community. We need to apply for funds and then once awarded, work with a vendor to furnish the products and services.
6. Mr. Settoon asked if funds could be used for things other than laptops/tablets. Dr. Morley responded that hotspots or book vending machines are possible other uses. The money has to be used for education purposes/remote learning.
7. Ms. Neighbours asked if a new mission and vision statement has been adopted. She was in a group that worked on them. Ms. Kimbrough-Mire thought Ms. Thomas addressed restructuring the mission/vision statements because they would remain essentially unchanged.
8. Via the bylaws, the July meeting is when the board elects new officers, and a slate of officer nominations was sent to the board. Each committee has a minimum two people. The city has structured the 9-year term for board members so that one appointee will leave each year. Going forward, Ms. Kimbrough-Mire would like the board of directors to have more input in who the city nominates so that specific talents can meet the goals of the Board. Bill's appointment ended this year on June 30th, and Ms. Kimbrough-Mire thanked him for all he has done while serving. Mr. Settoon was fundamental in updating the Foundation Bylaws.

VII. **Action Item: Board of Trustee Officer Elections** – 6:02 p.m.

1. Mr. Settoon made a motion to approve the slate of new officers as presented. Motion was second by Mr. Henry. Vote to approve was unanimous.
2. Ms. Kimbrough-Mire added that as chair of the governance committee, she plans to update the NOPL board bylaws (last updated in 2016). Mr. Henry volunteered to assist with this.

VIII. **Attachments**

- A. Board Packet

IX. **Adjournment**

- A. Board Chair, Phala Kimbrough-Mire adjourned the July 13, 2021 regular board meeting at 6:11 p.m.