

St. Charles Parish Library

Board of Control Meeting
September 19, 2023 at 6:00pm

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the St. Charles Parish Library Board of Control was held at 6:00pm, Tuesday, September 19, 2023 in Council Chambers at the Courthouse in Hahnville.

Members Present: Tammy Windmann, Annie Harmon, Charlene Alexander-Armstrong, Robin Robicheaux, Sara Sacra, and Holly Fonseca

Members Absent: Beverly DeLaune and Randy Matherne

Staff Present: Leann Benedict

Others: None

Mrs. Windmann called the meeting to order and asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silent prayer.

Mrs. Windmann asked for approval of the minutes of the May 16, 2023 meeting. Mrs. Harmon moved that the minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Armstrong and 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 gave the following report:

The library completed another very successful summer reading program. Program attendance and reading challenge participation and completion saw some very high numbers, including a record-breaking number of patrons completing the reading challenge. Take a look at the handout I have given you for some highlights:

- We held a total of 277 programs throughout the months of June and July, with a total of 7,323 patrons attending. We increased the number of programs offered by 2% from last year and saw a 19% increase in program attendance.
- 2,364 patrons signed up for the reading challenge. This is the highest number of patrons we have ever had sign up for the reading challenge.
- 1,446 patrons completed the challenge of reading at least 360 minutes. This is a 19% increase in the number of completions compared to last year, with a record-breaking number of adults completing the challenge.
- A total of 2,556,392 reading minutes were logged by our patrons during the summer reading challenge! Great job reading St. Charles Parish!!

Grand Prize winners of the summer reading challenge have been awarded to the following patrons:

Kids

Kids Tablet - Maverick Ward
Squishmallow - Jeremiah Veltsos
Bike and Helmet - Brooks Battle

Teens

Tablet - Mia Lian
Record Player - Riley Dubois
Polaroid Camera - Baily Gerdes

Adults

Kindle + Holder - Lisa Lentini
Fitbit - Rachel Gill
Keurig K Duo - Christie Cox

Special thanks to the St. Charles Friends of the Library for once again sponsoring all of our grand prizes!

As we closed out summer reading, we were excited to learn that our Library was named a first runner up in the 2023 Beanstack Summer Reading Challenge. Beanstack is the program we use to track our community's summer reading progress, and this was out of all libraries that use this program. Winners were determined based on overall participation, total minutes logged, and community engagement.

Our partnership with the Lafon Performing Arts Center will continue through this season. Our first partnership for the Mutts Gone Nuts show on October 6th also includes The St. Charles Parish Animal Shelter. We are accepting donations for the shelter at all our library locations and the animal shelter will bring dogs over for a special storytime at the East Regional Library on October 7th. Keep an eye on our website and social media for more information about this partnership and programs.

We also received a Louisiana Project Grant from the Bayou Regional Arts Council for \$4,710 to continue providing programming for all ages with the Lafon Center through September 2024.

The St. Rose Branch hosted Dino Fest last Saturday. Over 500 people visited the library to see The Dinosaur Experience, enjoy “ice-age” sno-balls sponsored by the Friends of the St. Charles Library, and participate in many other activities and crafts around the library.

The library will have an informational booth at the Alligator Festival, which is this Thursday through Sunday. We will have information about library resources, services, and events to share with attendees. We will also be giving away some fun alligator hats.

I want to give an update on Act 436 and its impact on our library. There are two deadlines tied to this new law. The first is that the library must adopt a policy to limit the access of minors to “sexually explicit materials”, as it is defined in the law. This policy must be adopted by January 1, 2024. The second deadline requires the library to implement the adopted policy by June 1, 2024. The policy must include a requirement that community standards for the population served be considered when acquiring material, which we already do, and to provide a library card system that requires a minor’s parent or guardian to select whether the minor can check out “sexually explicit” material physically in the library and whether the minor is permitted to check out digital content. The policy must also include a procedure which allows a library patron to request the reconsideration of whether a library material should be included in a library collection accessible to a minor. We already have this part in place. It also requires that any request for reconsideration made because the patron claims that it is sexually explicit be reviewed by the library board of control and the board will decide by majority vote in an open meeting if the material meets the definition of sexually explicit. We are working on making the necessary policy changes and will bring those proposed amendments to the policy to the board for consideration at the November meeting.

In staffing news, two long-time staff members retired recently. Anne St. Pierre, Paradis Branch Circulation Supervisor, retired in July with 28 years of full-time service and almost 30 years total. Kenny Breaux, Facilities Manager, retired this month with 23 years of service. We wish them both a well-deserved retirement. We have several new staff that have joined our team. Elizabeth Guilbeau is our new human resources manager, Rachelle Matherne is a part-time floater, Candice Larosee (a former team member), has returned as a part-time circulation assistant at East, Lorraine Faucheux is a part-time circulation assistant at West, Francesca Adams is a part-time circulation assistant at Paradis, Sydney Dufrene (also a former team member) is the new circulation supervisor at Paradis, and Terry Rome is our new facilities manager.

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

The first item of unfinished business was the Hahnville Branch Library project update. Mrs. Benedict informed the board that she and her administrative team, along with Library Board President Beverly DeLaune, recently met with Parish President Matt Jewell and Parish Attorney Corey Oubre to discuss the recent Attorney General’s opinion regarding library board’s needing to bring architect contracts to the parish council for final approval. The parish attorney’s office has reviewed the Request for Qualifications for the Hahnville Branch Library Project and Mrs. Benedict is in the process of making some minor revisions to it. She anticipates publishing the RFQ within the next week or two and estimates being ready to bring architect recommendations to the board in January. As discussed at a previous meeting, the plan is to invite the top two or three architects, as recommended by the library administrative team, to present to the board and then the board will select the architect to hire. Once the board has selected an architect, the Director would work with the architect and the Parish Attorney’s office on contracts and the contract would then be presented to the Parish Council for final approval.

Mrs. Fonseca asked about the maintenance and upkeep of the Hahnville property and Mrs. Benedict let the board know that the new facilities manager is working on getting regularly scheduled maintenance of the property in place.

The next item of unfinished business was Hurricane Ida Recovery Update. Mrs. Benedict informed the board that construction is almost complete at the West Regional Library and that she would be meeting with the architect the next day to do a walkthrough and determine what still needs to be completed on the punch list. Bookshelves have been installed on the first floor and all of the books that were in storage for the last two years have been brought back to West and the staff are in the process of unboxing and shelving those. Mrs. Benedict informed the board that the library is still waiting on insurance reimbursements from Hurricane Ida for building repairs. She was informed that the Parish has filed a lawsuit against the insurance company, and they are awaiting the outcome of that. Most of the library's building repairs were paid from library funds. As of the meeting date, the library has expended \$1,329,145.46 on building repair expenses and has only received \$108,600 in reimbursements. The Library has received a total of \$560,286.70 for content losses.

The next item on the agenda was New Business. The only item of new business was the annual evaluation of the Director. Mrs. Robichaux moved that the board go into executive session for the purpose of the annual evaluation of the Director and Mrs. Harmon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Following the evaluation, Mrs. Armstrong moved that the board end the executive session and Mrs. Robichaux 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. Harmon moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Armstrong seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:

Beverly DeLaune, President
St. Charles Parish Library Board

Leann Benedict, Secretary
St. Charles Parish Library Board