The West Baton Rouge Parish Library Board of Control held its **Regular Meeting on Tuesday, September 17, 2019**, in the Library Meeting Room at 830 N. Alexander Ave., Port Allen. Board President Joanne Bourgeois called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and asked all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance. Staff librarian Luis Interiano, taking minutes, called the roll.

**Roll Call: Those present** were Joanne Bourgeois, President; Scarlet Callicoatte, Vice-President; Andrea Kent; Brenda Morgan, Treasurer; and Kelson Swancy. **Absent** were Chris Kershaw, Ex-Officio; and Gina Lemoine. Roll call showed five present and two absent; one board position is currently unfilled. President Joanne Bourgeois declared that a quorum was present.

In attendance were Dannie P. Garrett, III, Attorney at Law, legal counsel to the Board, and senior library staff members Judy Boyce, Youth Services Librarian; Cyndi Jones, InterLibrary Loan; and Luis Interiano, Adult Services Librarian.

**Public Comments Policy:** President Joanne Bourgeois asked the Board to consider adopting the proposed **Public Comments Policy**. She asked attorney Dannie Garret for comments. Mr. Garret outlined his experience working at the Louisiana State Legislature where he drafted the Public Comments law, and later drafting public comments policies for many boards and government entities in the state. This policy is standard in that the law requires that public comments be allowed before the Board votes on a matter. Highlights of this policy: 1) Public comments are allowed only on an agenda item; not an opportunity for the public to introduce topics not on the agenda. 2) Public comments are limited to three minutes per person. 3) Exceptions: if there are many people wanting to speak, the Board can vote to reduce that time to accommodate everyone. 4) If many people are planning to make similar comments, on motion of the Board, they can be asked to select a designee to make public comments for the group. The law allows the Board to adopt reasonable rules. 5) Once three minutes are up, the chair can instruct the speaker to sit down. 6) By law, the purpose of the policy is to allow the public to provide Board officials with information prior to voting on a measure. 7) The Public Comments section does not allow a member of the public to question a Board member nor to hold the floor until all questions are answered. 8)
If a Board member wants to respond to a question, they may ask to be recognized by the chair and do so, but they are under no obligation to do so. 9) If a Board member is recognized by the chair, and that member wants to pose a question to the member of the public, that is acceptable too.

Mr. Garrett said the policy also has provisions about decorum, against using foul language, and making personal attacks. If all are treated the same, the meeting flows more smoothly, and the Board is more productive in conducting public business. Ms. Bourgeois commented that the policy can be framed and posted on the walls of the Meeting Room. Ms. Bourgeois asked for a motion to adopt the Public Comments policy.

Ms. Kent asked if a member of the public makes threatening comments, at what point does the Board put a stop to it and how is this done? Mr. Garrett said that it is up to the Chair person to rule a person out of order, and it is up to the Board to support the Chair’s decision. If the Chair abuses that power, it is up to the Board to curtail the Chair. The Board can call law enforcement or building security to escort a person out of the room or can stand at recess until the problem is solved. Ms. Bourgeois noted that the Library does have security officers available.

Ms. Bourgeois asked if Ms. Kent wanted to add the word “threatening” to the text of the policy. Ms. Kent said yes. Mr. Garrett explained the procedure for adding new language to the existing proposed policy: 1) a Board member would make a motion to amend the proposed policy to insert new language in the appropriate place in the text, 2) another Board member would second the motion, 3) the Chair would ask if there is any opposition, 4) the Chair would ask if there are any public comments, 5) if no objection, motion may be voted on by acclamation (voice vote) because the motion is not to pass the policy but to make a change before voting on the policy as amended.

Motion by Ms. Kent to insert the word “threatening” into the text of the Public Comments policy at bullet point three to read: “… using racist, demeaning, abusive, threatening language as determined by the chairperson…” Motion seconded by Ms. Callicoate. Ms. Bourgeois asked if there were any public comments, and there were none. Ms. Bourgeois asked if there were any other questions or requests to change the wording of the policy. Without objection the motion passes.

Ms. Callicoate asked to clarify whether there would be public comments immediately preceding each agenda item. Mr. Garrett explained that the proposed policy allows public comments to be allowed either way by the Board: a section for public comments at the beginning of the Board meeting or allowing public comments to be delayed until immediately preceding the item to be voted on. Ms. Bourgeois then asked for a motion to adopt the
public comments policy as amended.

Motion by Ms. Callicoate to adopt the public comments policy as amended was seconded by Ms. Swancy. Ms. Bourgeois asked for public comments, and there were none. Ms. Bourgeois called for a voice vote. By unanimous voice vote, motion passed to adopt the public comments policy as amended. Ms. Bourgeois stated that the adopted policy would be posted in the Meeting Room and eventually framed.

Ms. Bourgeois brought up the next item for consideration by the Board: approval of the minutes of the July 16th regular Board meeting. These included a report from the auditor, and the appointment of an interim library director. Ms. Bourgeois asked for a motion to adopt the minutes of that meeting as presented.

Motion by Ms. Kent to adopt the minutes of the July 16th regular Board meeting as presented was seconded by Ms. Morgan. Ms. Bourgeois asked for any comments, questions, or objections, and there were none. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Bourgeois brought up the next item on the agenda: to adopt the minutes of the Special meeting on Sept. 11th.

Motion by Ms. Morgan to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting of Sept. 11 was seconded by Ms. Callicoate. Ms. Bourgeois asked for any questions or opposition and there were none. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote to accept the minutes of the Sept. 11th Special meeting as presented.

Ms. Bourgeois asked for any other public comments at this time, and there were none.

Ms. Bourgeois asked the Board to consider next item: the financial reports compiled by Interim Library Director Lauren Jung. Those include the Visa credit card bill, a profit & loss report, the Business First Bank checking account statements and the check register, the LAMP account and certificates of deposit which are the Library’s investments. For the LAMP account, the Board contacted those representatives about the fact that the Library’s Assistant Director, Sarah Colombo, is now on maternity leave. Before she left on maternity leave, Ms. Colombo transferred the funds for the September payroll, and authorized Ms. Bourgeois as a signatory on the LAMP account so Ms. Bourgeois could then add the new director, Ms. Tamie Martin, when she starts work at West Baton Rouge Library. Ms. Bourgeois asked for any questions regarding finances, and there were none, so she asked for a motion to accept the financial reports. Without opposition, the motion passed.
Ms. Bourgeois asked Ms. Judy Boyce, Youth Services Librarian, to summarize the statistical report for the Board. Ms. Boyce did so, highlighting an increase in both adult and juvenile circulation, especially in ebooks, interlibrary loans, number of programs, and attendance. There was a decrease in in-house database use, but a large increase in Louisiana Library Connection database use.

Ms. Bourgeois said Board officers met with the Interim Director in August to compile the Director’s report. One major project is going to be replacement of old ceiling tiles and a change from fluorescent to LED lights throughout the building. The lowest bid was $63,953. The Board is finalizing its relationship with the current webmaster for the Library’s website. The new director will address that issue. The Board approved a change to lower the price of the Library’s patron printing and faxing to align with prices in neighboring parishes. Board officers will soon be meeting with the new director to review the budget before the Board meeting to adopt a budget to send to the parish Council.

Ms. Bourgeois again asked Ms. Boyce to summarize for the Board recent programs and events by the Youth Services Department. The many programs and events hosted by the Library were detailed.

Ms. Bourgeois said the Food for Fines program in November requires a motion by the Board. Mr. Garret commented that the Board could choose to pass a motion for the program for just this year or for every year ongoing.

**Motion by Ms. Callicoate to adopt the Food for Fines program this November so patrons can bring in packaged food to the Library in lieu of fines to benefit area food banks was seconded by Ms. Morgan.** Ms. Bourgeois asked for questions, and Ms. Callicoate asked for clarification on a comment made much earlier by Asst. Dir. Sarah Colombo that in 2018, the Library counted cans for this program. But Ms. Colombo suggested the Library count the cans’ weight. Ms. Morgan said the reason was that the food bank last year counted pound of food donated, so Ms. Colombo thought the Library should adopt that measurement. **By unanimous voice vote, the motion passed.**

Ms. Morgan mentioned the earlier vote on the Public Comments policy and asked if the **Public Records policy** was also going to be considered. Ms. Bourgeois replied that the item was listed farther down this meeting’s agenda. Ms. Bourgeois also mentioned that the Board had approved extra hours for security officers in the Library, and that Interim Director Lauren Jung had asked the City of Port Allen to repair a broken sewer line on the corner of Michigan Ave. and No. Alexander Ave. at the end of the Library’s parking lot, and the City did address the project. She also said the revision to the Library’s Policy Handbook needs to be completed, and that the project would involve Board members as well as staff, so if
any Board members were interested in working on that project, they should volunteer.

Ms. Bourgeois said the next item on the agenda was the report on the self-checkout machine (Envisionware Kiosk). Mr. Garret said he asked the Envisionware company to refund the lump sum of the cost of the self-checkout kiosk. Envisionware’s attorney responded that the company would accept the $7,300 refund if the Library would be responsible for shipping. Mr. Garrett told Envisionware that library staff did not feel qualified to pack and ship this equipment, and the Library did not know by what means to ship the item nor where so the total cost of shipping could not be calculated. He is still waiting to hear a net number from Envisionware’s attorney.

**Public Records policy:** Ms. Bourgeois said the next agenda item was consideration and adoption of a Public Records request because there are governmental procedures for such a request, but the Library has not had such a policy in place. Mr. Garrett gave his opinion that the proposed public records policy is standard in that it meets several requirements such as 1) designating a Custodian of Records. The custodian is usually the Library Director. 2) Designating a second custodian in case the Director is absent or the position is vacant. The second custodian is usually the Chair Person of the Library Board. 3) Anything deemed a public record is available for review by anyone who requests it. 4) Certain things are not public records such as confidential portions of personnel records. 5) Mr. Garrett recommends that all public records requests be mandated to be made in writing. 6) There should be a charge for printing records, and for scanning documents into an electronic document to be emailed. 7) The request should not unduly interfere with the ordinary operating procedures of the Library. 8) If the request is very large, an extra charge for staff work time should be assessed, and work can be done after hours. 9) If the request is likely to exceed $50, there should be a provision to require that a patron must put up a deposit before work on the public records request begins. 10) The custodian(s) should be identified by title not by name: i.e. Library Director. 11) The policy should be posted on the website.

Ms. Bourgeois said the policy can be attached to the minutes and that the policy itself can have a statement at bottom stating what date the policy was adopted by the Board. Ms. Kent asked if the policy should already have a deposit dollar amount stated in the policy. Mr. Garrett said the proposed wording would allow the custodian of records to estimate how much a large public records request may cost and adjust the required deposit accordingly. Ms. Bourgeois asked for a motion to adopt the policy.

**Motion by Ms. Kelson Swancy to adopt the Public Records policy as drafted by the Board’s attorney, Mr. Dannie Garrett was seconded by Ms. Andrea Kent.** Ms. Bourgeois asked for public comments, and there were none, so she called for a voice vote. **Motion passed unanimously by acclamation.**
Ms. Bourgeois reminded the Board and public that regular meetings of the Library Board of Control are held the third Tuesday of every other month at 4:00 PM in the Library Meeting Room at 830 N. Alexander Ave., Port Allen. There will be a special budget meeting on October 1 at 4:00 PM, and the next regular meeting will be Tuesday, November 19 at 4:00 PM. Ms. Bourgeois asked for any other questions. Ms. Callicoate asked to confirm the dates of the meetings.

Ms. Bourgeois thanked staff persons present: Ms. Judy Boyce, Ms. Cyndi Jones, and Mr. Luis Interiano for their help during the interim period between directors as well as staff persons Mr. Jim Bridges and Mr. Jerry Durden. Ms. Bourgeois expressed her sincere thanks on behalf of the Board to all library staff who “...diligently and conscientiously do the high-caliber work that they have always done to keep the [library] going smoothly and to serve our citizens. I think they all deserve a great round of appreciation, and I know that other Board members join me in expressing that because we have been through extenuating circumstances that were totally unusual for all of us. [Board members approved unanimously], Speaking for every Board member because nobody ever wants to shut the doors of a public building, and everybody here knows what to do... But then you have to have the structure behind the people. We appreciate everyone. And we thank our attorney for helping us get on the right track with our policies.”

Motion by Ms. Morgan to adjourn the meeting was seconded by Ms. Swancy. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting ended at 5:10 PM.

/s/ Joanne Bourgeois  
Library Board of Control, President

/s/ Luis Interiano  
Luis Interiano, Secretary
PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY
WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH LIBRARY

In accordance with LRS 44:1, et seq, the West Baton Rouge Parish Library Public Records Policy is as follows:

- The custodian of public records for the records of the West Baton Rouge Parish Library shall be the Director of the Library or the designee thereof; in the event that the position of Director is vacant the custodian shall be the chairperson of the Board of Control.

- Records deemed public records in accordance with Louisiana law\(^1\) shall be available for review by any person of the age of majority, during regular business hours of the Library, upon the request of such person, which request shall include providing the name and address of the person making such request, unless the records are in active use in the ordinary course and scope of business of the Library; the custodian may require the requester to provide proper identification.

- If the custodian questions whether records requested for examination or copying are public records, the custodian shall promptly consult with Library legal counsel.

- In the event the records are in active use, the custodian shall provide a date and time when such records would be available for inspection, within 3 business days of the initial request for inspection.

- Any person of the age of majority may request copies of any records that are deemed public records in accordance with Louisiana law, as follows:
  - Any such request shall be in writing, delivered to the custodian of records;
  - Such request shall include the requester’s name and home address and the requester’s telephone contact number or email address;
  - Such request shall include a statement that the requester agrees to pay the copy charges provided for in the Public Records Policy.

- Copy charges for public records are as follows:
  - $1.00 per page up to 25 pages, then $0.50 per page thereafter;
  - $10 for each thumb drive onto which electronic records are saved to be provided to a requester; no thumb drive provided by a requester shall be used by the custodian.

- Copy charges shall apply to both physical photocopies and to the scanning of records into electronic format to be provided to the requester by email or by use of a thumb drive.

- If a copy request is so large as to be unduly interfere with the operation of the Library, there may be an additional charge for staff time outside of ordinary business hours to complete the copy request.

- The custodian or his/her designee shall contact a requester within 3 days of a request for copies to provide an estimate of the time as to when the copy request can be completed, and, if the request will unduly burden the operation of the Library, the custodian shall include an estimate of the staff time charge.

- When, in the opinion of the custodian, the aggregate charge is likely to exceed $50, the custodian may set and notify the requester of a reasonable deposit to be prepaid by the requester before the copy request shall begin.

---

\(^1\) Louisiana law provides that certain records are not a public record, including certain privileged documents, documents that contain confidential information and certain library records exempted by LRS 44:13