

## LETA Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 11, 2021

12:00 Noon

**This Board meeting was held by Zoom Teleconference**

**Members Present:** Ted Beasley, Valencia Burton, Conrad Comeaux, Eartha Cross, Julie Cherry, Belinda Davis, Nikki Godfrey, Dan Hare, Nancy Harrelson, Robert King III, Kathy Kliebert, Laura Lindsay, and David Tatman and Christopher Wegmann

**Absent:** Richard Hartley, Tina Holland, and Tracie Woods

**Staff Present:** Beth Courtney, C.C. Copeland, Kimberly Ducote, Linda Midgett, Colleen Spillane, John Tooraen and Nancy Tooraen

**Call to Order:** Valencia Burton, Chairwoman, called the meeting to order at 12:01PM, with a quorum present.

**Approval of Minutes:** Valencia asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2020 meeting sent by email in the Board packet. A motion to approve was made by Sonny Cranch and seconded by Christopher Wegmann. The minutes were adopted unanimously. The motion carried.

**Financial Updates:** Christopher Wegmann, Treasurer, presented the LETA and Foundation Finances sent by email in the Board packet. After Board discussion, Valencia asked for a motion to approve the financials. A motion was made to approve by Belinda Davis and seconded by Kathy Kliebert. The financials were adopted unanimously. The motion carried.

**Friends Update:** Bo Harris, FLPB Chairman, presented the Friends update sent by email in the Board packet. Updates were given including totals to date for the patio raffle, year-to-date and membership revenues, and the most recent transfer of funds.

The Friends Board is moving forward with the Louisiana Legends Gala on Thursday, May 6. New measures for the safety of guests are being put in place. Valencia asked for a motion to approve the Friends report. A motion was made to approve by Sonny Cranch and seconded by Nancy Harrelson. The Friends Report was adopted unanimously. The motion carried.

**President's Report:** Beth Courtney invited Board member Sonny Cranch to give an overview of the Homestart program announced this week as a project of the Baton Rouge Early Childhood Education Collaborative. The initiative seeks to introduce the use of technology in the homes of low income pre-K children so they may to access educational resources. Homestart will rely on LPB's programs, chief among them Bright by Text. The project is funded by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation and will engage 50 families in its first year. Nancy Tooraen, LPB Education Manager, and the Board offered positive feedback.

Beth asked Colleen Spillane, Public Information Officer, and Linda Midgett, Executive Producer, to present summaries of LPB Black History Month activities including LPB's preview screening of The Black Church from Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and LPB's production of Louisiana's Black Church. Linda also provided information on other upcoming news, public affairs, and education program content in the works.

Beth gave updates on a number of items including: the Young Heroes Call for Nominations, PBS has been voted the "most trusted" news source for the 18<sup>th</sup> consecutive year; Call the Midwife is back in production, Reel South is producing the film, Flat Town, about football uniting the town of Ville Platte;

and Hemingway will be the next documentary film from Ken Burns and Lynn Novick premiering in April. Upcoming local pledge programs include the new documentary, Finding Cajun, an encore of The Spirit of a Culture.

C.C. Copeland, LPB Deputy Director, reported on FCC License Renewals which we won't need to renew again until 2029. C.C. also reported on the damage of main antenna in Alexandria due to Hurricane Laura and that work is underway to replace it. In Shreveport, a new ice bridge was installed to protect equipment from falling ice.

Beth and Linda announced that Ben Johnson joins the LPB staff as a senior producer next week. Ben is a Louisiana filmmaker, who has directed/produced several documentaries.

### **Other Business:**

Board member Laura Lindsay introduced concerns that LPB should consider addressing: 1) young people being addicted to cell phones and 2) the packaging of news by cable and streaming services that do not include access to public television as a primary option, and Valencia expressed the need for improved communication within families outside of communicating through technology.

**Early childhood education:** Board members Nancy Harrelson and Julie Cherry stressed the need for computer literacy. Julie added that 20% of federal support for education is earmarked for learning loss. Beth suggested we meet the new Baton Rouge Superintendent. Belinda Davis added that the LDOE keeps 10% of Cares Act funds before the balance goes to districts. We should speak with Dept. Board about supporting LPB's educational initiatives. Nancy Tooraen hopes to add a staff position in order to expand services. LPB's Sesame Workshops in February and March currently have over 300 childhood educators registered. Beth suggested we explore inviting the teacher of the year to do series with LPB and the LDOE, perhaps on music and art which would tie into our new muppet series. Nancy Harrelson suggested partnering with First Lady Donna Edwards.

Valencia and the Board congratulated Beth on being recognized with CABL's Robert B. Hamm award for her public service and leadership.

**Adjournment:** Valencia adjourned the meeting at 1PM.