

**STATE LIBRARY OF LOUISIANA
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
January 20, 2022
Baton Rouge, La
10:00 am**

CALL TO ORDER

Due to COVID-19 restrictions in place regarding social distancing, the quarterly meeting of the State Library Board of Commissioners was held virtually.

The State Library Board of Commissioners meeting was called to order by Chair, Georgia Brown. Additional members in attendance included Louis Covington, David Johnson, James Lee, Dr. Argiro Morgan, and Gail Waters. Rebecca Hamilton was present as Executive Secretary. Absent from the meeting was Evelyn Valore.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Brown called for a motion to approve and adopt the agenda as presented. Motion was offered by Morgan, seconded by Johnson, and unanimously carried.

MINUTES

On a motion offered by Brown, the minutes were approved by Waters and Johnson.

QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Hamilton informed the board that the Lt. Governor's office informed all of the DCRT agencies that each agency will take a 1% budget reduction. This reduction is \$46,000 for the State Library. Chair Brown asked what the ramifications for this will be for State Library services. Hamilton responded that the State Library would have to reduce the number of digital resources that are purchased and made available to the public libraries. This would happen at a time when these very digital resources are being used more than ever by the public libraries and by Louisiana's citizens. Hamilton further reminded the board that State Library staffing and funding is currently at an all-time low while recent numbers reveal that the usage of State Library services and resources by both the public and the public libraries are officially at an all-time high, primarily due to the Pandemic and the shift to virtual work and virtual school.

Hamilton further reported that the Commissioner had proposed eliminating 3 of our unfilled positions due to the fact that they have now been unfilled for over 3 years in some cases. Hamilton said that she agrees with the reason behind this move because it is logical to assume that any agency performing without specific positions for an extended period of time might not really need them. This is not the case for the State Library and Hamilton presented

her response for the Commissioner explaining the reason that the positions have not been filled as well as the need that still exists for those positions.

Hamilton reported that unlike the other DCRT agencies and the Lt. Governor's office, turnover at the State Library is practically non-existent, with employees only leaving to retire or from illness and therefore there are not often vacancies; but positions do open up it is imperative that they be filled with qualified and experienced people. This sometimes takes re-advertising the positions.

Hamilton explained the series of events that created the current level of vacancies which includes recently receiving applications from candidates that barely meet the job qualifications with very little experience (necessitating that we re-advertise for the position—something that takes weeks to do), and not being allowed to fill the Public Information Director position back in 2019 even though we had the funding, a pool of very qualified candidates, and had spent hours in the interview process and made a solid choice for the position.

Hamilton stated that the State Library is unique in that the pay is not competitive for similar positions in other states which she intends to address with HR. Hamilton stated that an effort will be made to speak to the Lt. Governor regarding a policy for the State Library to hire someone that doesn't live in Baton Rouge to work remotely and be housed offsite at a sister DCRT agency with facilities across the state. This could also enable the State Library to conduct more site visits in other parishes while we are still under staffed.

Hamilton shared with the board how the virtual LA Book Festival has received nearly 5,000 views since the end of October and that the 2022 festival will be planned for in-person unless something changes with the status of the Pandemic.

Johnson shared an article from the Washington Post about the extra burden placed on libraries to perform multiple functions (such as giving out Covid tests) and discussion ensued about lawmakers needing to see this, but how there is no elected official bringing light to the subject. He mentioned that former Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu would be overseeing the President's infrastructure plan and Hamilton pointed out that this would be very good for libraries and library services as Mitch always understood the value of public libraries and the work that they do in communities.

Johnson discussed the upcoming Tennessee Williams Festival being ready to finalize, with in-person festival planned, but ready to go virtual if needed. Hamilton shared that Folklife Commission has opened up nominations for Tradition Bearers. .

Morgan shared information regarding her new neighbor, Chadwick Wells, trained by Walker Percy and the author of 3 books. A discussion was held regarding potential consideration for next book festival.

OLD BUSINESS

Morgan stated that the St. Tammany library is working on their strategic planning with challenges due to Covid. Hamilton responded that that the State Library is working on

creating workshops for libraries embarking on a strategic planning process since many libraries want to do this and most have never done it before.

Waters thanked Hamilton for sending State Library staff to Tensas Parish Public Library to give a presentation on museum archives and collection and preservation policy for their library and museum housed in a historic building. Hamilton explained that the Louisiana Department staff are uniquely qualified and are both librarians and archivists which adds tremendous value to what the State Library is able to accomplish.

NEW BUSINESS

Hamilton reminded the board that Johnson, Lee and Valore's terms will expire on June 30, 2022 and will start the renewal process.

Hamilton informed board that the members of the State Board of Library Examiners needed to be renewed and one change needed to be made. Dorothy White's term expired in 2021 and she needed to be renewed for a new 4 year term of 2021-2025 and Amanda Taylor's term expires in 2022 and she will need to be renewed for a new 4 year term from 2022-2026; and Jessica Styons, the new Associate State Librarian needed to be appointed to replace the previous Associate State Librarian Meg Placke for a term of 2022-2026. Brown made a motion to accept the recommendations and Johnson seconded and the motion unanimously carried.

Hamilton said that she wanted to set the dates for the Board Meetings for the entire year in advance and would send those dates out via email.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to discuss and Brown made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Lee; and Brown declared the meeting adjourned at 10:47 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Hamilton, Secretary
State Library Board of Commissioners

Georgia Brown, Chair
State Library Board of Commissioners