

Evangeline Parish Library Board of Control Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2018

To be approved at May 22, 2018, Board Meeting

The Evangeline Parish Library Board of Control met on Tuesday, May 15, 2018, at 1:00 p.m. at the main library in Ville Platte (916 West Main Street).

Present were Vice President Gaynelle Coates, Board Members Faye Langley, Sandra Salazar, Sandra Jacobs, ex officio member Ryan Williams, and ex officio alternate Eric Soileau, Library Director Mary Foster-Galasso, Staff Members Suzy Lemoine, Angela Henry, JoAnna Miller, Wesley Saunders and Tina King. Others in attendance were Linda Lebsack, Paula Lafleur, Carla Deville and Beth Vandersteen. Also in attendance were the two finalists for the library director position, Jessica Norris and Margaret Mealer.

Profiles of both candidates are attached to these minutes.

Vice President Coates called the meeting to order.

Coates welcomed the guests to the meeting, and thanked the Friends of the Library members present for their support.

Next on the agenda was public comments.

Wesley Saunders, a part time employee at Evangeline Parish and a full time employee (assistant director for support services) at Rapides Parish Library spoke in support of Margaret Mealer, one of the candidates for Library Director. Beth Vandersteen, retired library director for West Baton Rouge Parish, also spoke in support of Margaret Mealer.

Friends of the Library members, Linda Lebsack and Paula Lafleur both spoke in support of Library Director candidate, Jessica Norris.

Jacobs made a motion to approve the agenda. Langley seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Salazar made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 20, 2018 meeting. Williams seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Coates reported on the April 17, 2018 Search Committee meeting. She thanked the members of the Search Committee, and ex officio member Foster-Galasso for their dedicated work during the search for a new Library Director. She also thanked staff member Tina King who did the Search Committee meeting minutes for her assistance in making copies and getting supplies together for the committee.

Williams made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2018 Search Committee meeting. Langley seconded, and the meeting carried unanimously.

Next on the agenda was a resolution to move \$12,000.00 from the Library's Building Fund passbook savings account into the Library's capital project budget for the new Chataignier Branch (to help cover costs of new shelving for the branch).

Jacobs made a motion to approve a resolution to transfer \$12,000.00 from the Library's Building Fund passbook savings account into the Library's capital project fund for the new Chataignier Branch to help cover costs of new shelving for the branch. Williams seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Coates reported that there were six applicants that applied for the Library Director position. Each of the applicant's information submitted was evaluated, and the Search Committee has six folders with each of the applicant's information, and every piece of information and worksheets that the Search Committee used in the evaluation. Along with minutes from each of the committee meetings, this information is being preserved as a public record. She

reported that the two finalists, Margaret Mealer and Jessica Norris, have additional papers from the final steps of the evaluation.

Coates stated that the applicants had agreed who would go first in the interview process and that the one waiting to interview would wait in a separate room since the same questions would be asked of both applicants.

Foster-Galasso was selected to ask the interview questions while all board members took notes. Foster-Galasso stated that the interviews would take about forty-five minutes each. She asked ten questions of each applicant.

Mealer was the first to be interviewed. Following a short recess, Norris was interviewed.

The Board then voted to go into executive session to discuss the qualifications of each applicant at approximately 2:20 p.m. Williams made the motion to go into executive session. Langley seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

At approximately 2:55 p.m. Soileau moved that the Board go back into regular session. Langley seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Soileau complimented retiring director Mary Foster-Galasso for her dedication. He then moved that the Board appoint Margaret Mealer as the new library director to replace the retiring director. Salazar seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Coates complimented and thanked both finalists and stressed that it was hard to make a decision. She also praised Norris and encouraged her to continue to pursue her dreams.

Jacobs moved that the salary for the new director be \$48,000 per year. Langley seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Langley moved that 1) the following persons be deleted from the Library's passbook savings account and checking account effective July 1st: Jennifer Vidrine and Mary Foster-Galasso, plus Wade Riley for the savings account; and 2) that the following persons be added to both the Library's passbook savings account and checking account effective July 1st: Margaret Mealer, Sandra Salazar, and Sandra Jacobs. Soileau seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Langley moved that the credit card issued for Mary Foster-Galasso be terminated and that two credit cards be issued for a \$2,000 credit limit each to Margaret Mealer and to the library's business manager Yvonne Lavergne. (all banking business and changes to be effective July 1st). Jacobs seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Soileau moved that the retiring director's cell phone be terminated effective 6/30/2018 and that a cell phone be authorized for the new director to be effective 7/01/2018, options to be discussed with new director during June. Salazar seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Langley moved to give the new director authority to sign staff time cards, leave requests, purchase orders, approve invoices, and other basic business items of the position. Jacobs seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Jacobs moved to make the new director the Library's records officer, effective July 15th. Salazar seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Soileau moved that a meeting be set for Tuesday May 22 at the main library at 11 a.m. Langley seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Salazar moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Langley seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

MEET THE FINALISTS FOR LIBRARY DIRECTOR: MARGARET MEALER

Margaret (Margie) Mealer lives in Alexandria and currently is **Head of Children's Services for the Lincoln Parish Library (Ruston)**, a position she has held since June of 2015. Before that she was employed by the Rapides Parish Library continuously since September 1999 in a variety of different positions, most recently (April 2009-June 2015) as the Branch Manager for the Boyce Branch. She was Rapides Parish Library Outreach Van Service Manager (July 2004-April 2009), worked as a Library Clerk at the Glenmora Branch half time and half time as the Red Carpet Outreach Clerk to senior citizen day care centers and other special facilities (May 2001-July 2004) and was a substitute clerk throughout the Rapides Parish Library system (Sept. 1999-May 2001). Overall she has eighteen years of public library experience in progressively more responsible positions.

Ms. Mealer earned her **associate's degree in English (LSUA 2006)**, **bachelor's degree in General Studies with a concentration in Business (LSUA 2010)** and her **Masters of Library and Information Science (MLIS, LSU 2014)** while employed with the Rapides Parish Library. Her bachelor's degree includes successful completion of **four accounting courses** plus "Business Law," "Principles of Marketing," "Technical Writing," "Small Group Community Problem Solving," and a variety of other courses. Her Master of Library and Information Science degree (MLIS) coursework included "Principles of Management for Libraries," "Public Libraries," "Information Technology," and ten other graduate courses, **42 credit hours total**.

Ms. Mealer belongs to the American Library Association, the Louisiana Library Association, and the Library Support Staff Association of Louisiana. She has served as president and vice president for the Staff Association Board. She has also served on the board of the Friends of the Rapides Parish Library.

She speaks and reads some Spanish and is originally from the East Coast.

In her answers to the Search Committee's essay questions, Ms. Mealer identified **three particular strengths** that she would bring to the director's position as 1) "computing, bookkeeping and budgeting skills"; 2) "a talent to train and motivate people," and 3) "my temperament." She describes herself as an optimist who can "see the good in people and the possibilities for great things to happen in every situation." She also says she is "tenacious; I like working hard for something then achieving that goal. . .I like knowing I made a difference, and bettered a place and the people there by using the skills I have, the knowledge I've acquired and the hard work I put in." She identified the **two most significant challenges facing public libraries today** as "ever-tightening budgets and proving relevance to those who are not frequent library users." She identified the **following three particular experiences as ones which she feels would help her to deal effectively with these challenges**: 1) "managing the Boyce library," where she worked to successfully revive what seemed to be a dying library branch and 2) working for and with well-known present and former Louisiana public library directors who have taught her to "trust and empower your people," to remember "you work for the voters," and to understand that "your library board wants to help you. They will not always allow you to do everything you want, but they are there because they care about both the library and the community." Her third experience listed was, 3) "attending the 2018 Public Library Association Conference" in Philadelphia where she attended sessions on such topics as "Building Meaningful Relationships through Community Engagement" and "The Wonderful World of the First-Time Director."

Ms. Mealer's references who were interviewed by members of the Search Committee were Wesley Saunders who lives in Pine Prairie and is a former Evangeline Parish Library director and the current assistant director for support services for Rapides Parish Library as well as Evangeline's part-time senior cataloger/assistant director, retired West Baton Rouge Parish Library director Beth Vandersteen, and current Lincoln Parish Library director Vivian McCain. All three recommended Ms. Mealer highly.

MEET THE FINALISTS FOR LIBRARY DIRECTOR: JESSICA NORRIS

Jessica Norris is from Ville Platte and currently teaches junior high students history and theology at Sacred Heart in Ville Platte. She also mentors other teachers through a school-wide program. She is enrolled in the online Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program at LSU and has an expected graduation date of August 2019. She has completed courses in "Information & Society" and in "School Library Management" and is currently completing the following courses: "Information Technologies & Systems" and "Information Technology & Public Policy." She will have 12 graduate hours completed toward her MLIS at the conclusion of this semester (36 total required). Her undergraduate degree (2009) is in English Education with a minor in French. In 2010 Ms. Norris successfully completed four networking specialist courses at South Louisiana Community College.

Ms. Norris worked as a staff accountant for the firm of Darnall, Sikes, Gardes, & Frederick CPA from Dec. 2011 to August 2013. In this capacity she audited governmental entities, non-profits, and local businesses and prepared financial statements for governmental entities, non-profits, and local businesses. During this period she also successfully completed seven accounting courses and a Principles of Management course through LSU's distance learning program. Through her work during this period Ms. Norris is familiar with regulatory issues facing local governments, including the Local Government Budget Act and Public Bid Law.

From June 2009 through the present Ms. Norris has been the state officer trainer for Louisiana Future Business Leaders of America. Each year she coaches state officers in leadership, business, and presentation skills. Ms. Norris also helped with the library's fall 2017 library Book Fest and is the current president of the Friends of the Library.

In her answers to the Search Committee's essay questions, Ms. Norris identified three particular strengths that she would bring to the director's position as "my experience with governmental accounting, aptitude in working with technology, and strong communication skills." In discussing these strengths she highlighted, among other points, her knowledge of bid law, her ability to "learn very quickly how to use new hardware and software," and her training and ability to communicate "a clear, structured message to readers" and to an audience with public speaking: "I am comfortable speaking in front of a large number of people or in small groups, which will help me represent Evangeline Parish Libraries well at various functions." She identified the two most significant challenges facing public libraries today as "budget constraints and staying relevant in a rapidly changing environment." She noted that "Changing cultures and environments can also make certain library services seem outdated, and libraries either have to rebrand these services to show their utility to patrons or adapt to the changes." Ms. Norris identified the following three particular experiences as ones which she feels would help her to deal effectively with these challenges: 1) Her experiences as an advisor for Sacred Heart's junior high chapter of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) including creative fundraising to cover students' conference costs via sales of beef jerky sticks as an unusual product to help the sale stand out from the more traditional candy and other school sales; 2) Her "experience with technology as a classroom teacher and deciding what is relevant and what is not," including her evaluation of Google Chromebooks as "cheaper and more useful" in the classroom setting than "expensive Windows laptops... slow, constantly updating, and bloated with software the students did not use"; and 3) Her "experience dealing with relevant technology and rapidly changing environments through my nine years as a state officer trainer with FBLA," which includes helping state officers set goals and steps to achieve them each year.

Ms. Norris' references who were interviewed by members of the Search Committee were Julia Fontenot, former Sacred Heart Teacher and former Evangeline Parish Library Board President, Steve Moosa of the firm of Darnall, Sikes, Gardes, & Frederick CPA, and Andrew Ducote from Sacred Heart and also FBLA. All three recommended Ms. Norris highly.