

**St. Tammany Parish Library
Board of Control Meeting
April 22, 2024
St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers
21490 Koop Dr.,
Mandeville, LA 70471
6:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Rebecca (Becky) Taylor, President. Kelly LaRocca, Director, called the roll and declared that a quorum was present.

Present: Bill McHugh, Anthony Parr, Ann Shaw, Becky Taylor
Absent: Carmen Butler

James Bolner with the Civil Division of the District Attorney's Office was also present as legal counsel for the library.

B. Taylor explained the rules for public comment. A three-minute time limit is established for each member of the public wishing to speak (for or against) an item on the Agenda. In the case of a Statement of Concern (SOC) decision, the person who filed the SOC is given 5 minutes to speak.

1. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Library Board of Control (LBOC) that was held on March 25, 2024

Discussion: B. McHugh suggested adding a phrase to the sentence discussing the telephone system in the last paragraph of page seven. He asked for the sentence to read as follows: "The Telephones and Telephone System line is increased to match the cost of our new telephone system installation, which will be significantly less expensive and more functional to operate than our current system."

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Vote: B. McHugh moved to approve the minutes with the stated addition. It was seconded by A. Parr. All were in favor, none were opposed, and one was absent. Motion carried.

2. NEW BUSINESS

A. Financial Reports – March 2024

Discussion: K. LaRocca reported that \$3,142,396.07 in Ad Valorem Revenue was received in March. A total of \$88,100.47 in State Revenue Sharing was received in February. Two more equal payments of State Revenue Sharing are expected throughout the year. The budget percentage for this point in the year should be 25%. Revenues are at 27.58% and expenditures are at 25.32%.

K. LaRocca gave explanations for lines that are over or under budget. Most of the lines that are over budget are expended early in the year and lines that are under budget are expended later in the year. Some of the lines discussed were Maintenance Supplies, Office Machine and Equipment Repair, PC Network Maintenance and Repair, Plumbing, Heating, and AC, Consultants, Web Design Consultant, Insurance and Claims, Vehicles, Integrated Library Automation System, Microfilm, Lease/Purchase Books, and Internet Database Subscription.

B. McHugh commented that it has been stated by people that the library has a \$14 million-dollar budget. He asked K. LaRocca if the library has ever had a \$14 million-dollar budget. K. LaRocca stated that this year's budget of \$12,713,572.04 is the highest it has been. B. McHugh asked if the budget will be \$14 million next year and K. LaRocca stated that it will not. B. McHugh stated for the record that the library has never had a \$14 million-dollar budget and we do not foresee having a \$14 million-dollar budget any time in the near future.

B. Taylor stated that B. McHugh brought up a good point and added that the library does not receive all of its budget and contributes to other governmental departments. K. LaRocca confirmed that in any given year we do not receive all of our millage, as funds are deducted from our disbursement for mandatory expenditures to other governmental expenses and agencies, such as the Assessor's Office. K. LaRocca stated that we do our very best to estimate how much we are actually going to receive so that we can budget appropriately.

B. Taylor asked K. LaRocca to briefly explain the amount of funds we must have at the start of the year to cover mandatory expenses. K. LaRocca explained that we have funds set aside in savings to cover expenses for the first part of the year until we receive the first Ad Valorem payment. There are also funds set aside in savings for deductibles, should we have a major storm or a situation where we have to pay out-of-pocket for repairs before reaching our deductible. K. LaRocca referenced the recent storm that produced damage at the South Slidell Branch. The deductible is 2% of the cost of the building or \$250,000 – whichever is greater. K. LaRocca stated that the amount dedicated to operational reserves in savings is \$2,500,000 and another \$1,475,000 is dedicated for disaster and emergency funds. These funds are not budgeted to be spent, but are held in reserve for those specific purposes.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Vote: A. Parr moved to approve the March 2024 financial reports. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and one was absent. Motion carried.

B. Director's Report

K. LaRocca reported on the damage to the South Slidell Branch due to a severe storm that produced a tornado on April 10, 2024. The damage primarily affected the building's roof, air conditioning units, windows, ceiling, and stucco façade. Immediate action was taken to assess and address the damages to ensure the safety and functionality of the library. The South Slidell Branch was closed after the storm and reopened on April 15th at noon. We are awaiting further information from the Parish and are obtaining pricing for repairs.

Staff met with an architectural consultant to work on details for a carpet and furniture refresh at the Causeway Branch, office furniture for the new Outreach building, acoustic work and rearranging of the computer lab and Reference collection at the Covington Branch.

K. LaRocca reported on marketing, outreach, and professional development efforts. Staff produced a Storywalk® for “A Storybook Kind of Day: Pirates and Princesses” event at Heritage Park. Staff promoted the Summer Reading Challenge and other library services at the Kiwanis Youth Wellness Fair in Covington. Staff promoted Library Week, Food For Fines, and Story Swap on The Lake and The Highway radio stations. Staff offered outreach to the Junior League Girls Health Day in Covington, St. Tammany Commission on Families meeting at the Coroner’s Office, Earth Day event in Lacombe, and the Northshore Food Bank’s Community Celebration and Resource Fair in Covington. Staff attended the following webinars and workshops offered by the State Library of Louisiana: Sensory Accommodations, A.I. in Your Library, Leading from Within, and Confidence in the Workplace. Staff attended the Fay B. Kaigler Children’s Book Festival at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

Over 6,000 eclipse glasses were distributed prior to the total solar eclipse that occurred on April 8th. Food for Fines was held in celebration of National Library Week. Each nonperishable food item donated equaled \$1 in waived fines. This year, the library also accepted canned pet food for the Animal Services Public Pet Food Pantry. Due to the strong storm system and tornado that hit the Slidell area on April 10th, the library waived system-wide fees until April 27th. All coordinators and other staff have been preparing for Summer Reading programming this past month. Two Summer Reading kick-off parties are planned. The first party will be at the Slidell Branch on May 23rd, and the second party will be at the Madisonville Branch on May 24th.

T. DiMaggio reviewed contract renewals and E-Rate agreements. K. LaRocca reported that the 2023 year-end audit was conducted and no issues were found. The Phase I Environmental Study for the Lacombe Library Replacement Land came back clean and a basic survey was also conducted. If the Parish Council makes final approval of the purchase at its May meeting, we will close on the Lacombe land at the end of May.

K. LaRocca reported that no new public records requests (PRR) have been received since the last meeting. The only remaining open PRR is a large request that dates from August of 2023 with over 100,000 results that was previously collected and turned over to the District Attorney’s office for review and redaction. This request was suspended by the requestor. There are 42 active statements of concern on 38 titles. Two more titles will be decided this evening. The remaining statements of concern are still pending review. Committees and work groups continue working together to implement strategic planning goals. K. LaRocca gave an update on the transition of materials. The title *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson was reviewed and determined not to contain sexual conduct and will remain in the YA/Teen Fiction section.

K. LaRocca noted that the LBOC meeting scheduled for May 20, 2024 is being rescheduled for May 30, 2024. K. LaRocca reviewed the service statistics for March 2024 and the year-to-date (YTD) statistics. In March 2024, the total circulation was 78,995, total computer usage was 6,883, door count was 48,131, wireless internet inside was 7,096, and wireless internet outside was 6,667. Total number of patrons registered for library cards was 523. K. LaRocca referenced the updated YTD statistics for January to February 2024, as the Slidell Branch statistics were inadvertently not included at the March LBOC

meeting. The YTD January to March statistics show that total circulation was 236,137, computer usage was 21,048, door count was 137,094, wireless internet inside was 21,025, and wireless internet outside was 19,876. The YTD total patrons registered was 1,906.

B. McHugh asked when the salary study report from Gallagher will be presented. K. LaRocca stated it will likely be at the July LBOC meeting. A. Parr asked if there is a tentative date for the study room pod to be purchased. K. LaRocca stated that the furniture project has to go through the bid process and that typically takes around five months.

A. Parr asked T. DiMaggio for an update on the event she attended relating to a sensory accommodation room. T. DiMaggio explained that the workshop she attended was focused on programming. T. DiMaggio stated that it was geared towards children, but she learned things that can be applicable to teens and adults. She noted that for several years libraries offered programs specifically for families with children on the sensory or autism spectrum, but she has learned that families want regular programming with accommodations. She stated she learned about what kind of accommodations can be made going forward.

A. Parr asked if there is an additional fee for the Uniti Fiber main feed upgrade under E-Rate Agreements. T. DiMaggio said she can check the detailed invoice and report back to him. A. Parr asked if there will be an Outreach line item in the budget. K. LaRocca said that there is currently a line for an Outreach Opening Day Collection and a line for the purchase of the Outreach Vehicle. K. LaRocca said that they may create a separate supply line for Outreach so that postage and other supplies can be tracked separately. There will be a budget amendment in May and that may be when those lines are added to the budget. K. LaRocca explained that after a year or two of tracking the expenses, the lines could be combined with the regular supply lines.

A. Shaw asked about the amount of grant funding that the reference staff is looking for under Goal 5 of the strategic plan. K. LaRocca stated that the reference staff are looking for grants that will help accomplish our goal of creating a calming room and any amount of funding will be helpful. K. LaRocca explained that the Board could approve the funding in our budget if we are unable to find another way. She noted that the project is not expected to be costly and includes purchasing items such as furniture and calming lights.

A. Shaw asked about the Maker Space. K. LaRocca stated that a Maker Space is much more expensive. She noted the varying costs of 3D printers and explained that it will depend on what patrons want to see in the Maker Space. K. LaRocca explained that it could include high tech items like a 3D printer, but can also include a serger and sewing machine or multiple sewing machines for a class. She stated that there will be a survey conducted to learn what patrons would like and then we can gather pricing and move forward. A. Shaw suggested putting packets together that represent the plan for each phase to use when approaching companies about their products and pricing. T. DiMaggio agreed and explained that is why staff has been visiting different spaces at other facilities to determine what is possible to accomplish in the physical space that we have. T. DiMaggio noted that the button maker, serger, and sewing machines were the most used resources at one of the libraries she visited with a comparable sized space.

B. Taylor welcomed James Bolner with the Civil Division of the District Attorney's (DA) Office as legal counsel for the library. B. Taylor reported that she was made aware of an Attorney General's opinion dated July 13, 2018. She stated that the opinion is in reference to appointing Library Board members in West Feliciana Parish, pursuant to a Home Rule Charter. B. Taylor stated that it appeared to present a different interpretation or view of that type of appointment. B. Taylor stated that she sent the information to the St. Tammany Parish Council members in case they were not aware of this alternate type of opinion. B. Taylor also noted that she shared the information with fellow board members.

B. McHugh asked J. Bolner if he believes that the current LBOC members are serving illegally, as claimed by Councilman Cogle in his January 27th position paper and at the March Parish Council meeting. J. Bolner stated that the DA's Office has researched the issue, reviewed Attorney General opinions, and has looked very carefully at the allegation. J. Bolner stated that they do not believe the Board members are serving illegally. B. McHugh asked J. Bolner if the Parish Council has been informed of that position. J. Bolner stated that he cannot speak to that question at this time, but will follow up with an answer.

B. McHugh asked J. Bolner if he thinks that the Parish Council's resolution to appoint seats to a Board that is already legally occupied is legitimate. J. Bolner stated that he does not have the resolution in front of him, but the DA's Office has looked at this issue in detail and has done a forensic analysis to try to understand how the Board got to this present point in time.

J. Bolner explained that this goes back to the 1974 Louisiana State Constitution, which gave parishes and municipalities the power to adopt Home Rule Charters. In 2000, when St. Tammany Parish adopted a Home Rule Charter, the provisions that were enacted were less than ideal. The provision pertaining to commissions and appointing terms was drafted as a temporary "band aid." It was stated that Commissioners shall serve until they are asked not to serve anymore instead of following the mandate in LA R.S. 25:214(B), which calls for staggered terms of five years.

J. Bolner explained that in 1978, legislation was enacted that called for a Board with staggered terms, in connection to Library Boards of Control. When a political subdivision was empowered to create a library, in order to do so, they had to create a Board with members that had one, two, three, four, and five-year terms at the onset of the Board. He stated that the St. Tammany Parish Police Jury did that in 1984 and followed that process until the Home Rule Charter was enacted. It stated that current members of the LBOC would continue to serve temporarily until reappointed or removed by resolution of the Council. The ordinance was written so that the LBOC terms would run concurrent with the terms of the Parish Council, which are four-year terms instead of the five-year terms envisioned by LA R.S. 25:214(B). It has been operated this way since that time.

J. Bolner referenced the Attorney General's opinion that B. Taylor previously cited. He stated that it is an opinion that addresses whether a Home Rule Charter provision, which calls for a two-year Library Board of Control term, is enforceable in light of LA R.S. 25:214(B). The Attorney General concluded that the Home Rule Charter takes precedence over the LA R.S. 25:214(B) in that instance.

J. Bolner clarified that the opinion was in reference to a Home Rule Charter provision, but the point at issue relates to resolutions appointing board members. He stated that a resolution is not an ordinance, it is not a Home Rule Charter provision, and it is not law. He stated that a resolution does not supersede

LA R.S. 25:214(B). A resolution cannot supersede a constitutional provision or a Home Rule Charter provision.

J. Bolner does not think our position is inconsistent with the Attorney General's opinion. He explained that it supports the position that we have taken, which is that the Parish Council does have the authority to fix the problem and to pass an ordinance to reappoint the board members currently serving, especially those who have only served a portion of their term. The Parish Council also has the authority to appoint new members and to fill vacancies. He noted that it is up to the Parish Council to decide how to go about doing so.

B. McHugh asked if their authority includes the ability to replace board members. J. Bolner stated that it is a hard question to answer, but his office has concluded that is correct and the Parish Council does have that authority. J. Bolner explained that one would have to go back and trace the genealogy of each term that is being served until we reach the point in which someone was serving a full five-year term. J. Bolner explained that he is unaware of any records being available to accomplish that.

B. McHugh asked J. Bolner if he has gone over this information with the Parish Council. J. Bolner stated that he has not. B. McHugh asked if anyone in the DA's Office has gone over this with the Council. J. Bolner stated that he is unaware if anyone else has gone over this with the Council. B. McHugh asked if any councilmember has asked the opinion of the DA's Office on the matter in a public meeting. J. Bolner stated that he is unaware of that and explained that he is here in his capacity as a member of the Civil Division representing the Library Board of Control. He clarified that he does work for the Parish in the context of civil litigation, but he does not represent, advise, or communicate with the Parish Council on a regular basis.

B. McHugh asked J. Bolner if he knows whether or not there is a legal definition of the term "community values." J. Bolner asked if the question is within the context of free speech regulations. B. McHugh explained that there has been discussion about whether or not the current library operation and the board members represent community values. He added that it has been implicitly discussed whether or not the library's collection reflects community values. B. McHugh stated that when he was interviewed for reappointment, one of the first questions asked was, "What is your definition of community values?" He stated that this term has been tossed around for nearly two years in discussions about the library, but he has yet to see a definition of community values in the law or anywhere else. He stated that it seems as though some people are saying that community values are "my" values, not "yours." He stated that it is an ill-defined term.

J. Bolner stated that in his experience the term "community values" is associated with free speech cases. He stated that the term has perhaps been misused in the context of what B. McHugh is referring to. J. Bolner stated that he is not prepared to give a definition at this moment, but he can follow up and provide a definition. B. McHugh apologized for putting J. Bolner on the spot and asked if it is a conflict of interest for the DA's Office to advise both the LBOC and the Parish Council while there are some councilmembers who want to replace the LBOC. J. Bolner stated that he cannot answer that question and will have to consult with outside counsel to determine if there is a conflict of interest. J. Bolner noted that he is unaware of any conflict. J. Bolner stated that if B. McHugh could articulate what he perceives to be the conflict, he would be happy to take it to the DA's ethics counsel and get an answer.

B. McHugh explained that the DA's Office advises the Parish Council and also advises the LBOC. He asked if it puts the DA's Office in a conflict when the goals of the Parish Council and the LBOC seem to be in conflict with each other. He noted that there is a lot of contention right now about the LBOC and most of it is centered at the Parish Council level. He wonders how the DA's Office can represent both sides in this situation. J. Bolner offered to seek an answer to that and will follow up.

C. Report and Resolution on Evaluation of YA materials – Classifying and Location

Discussion:

K. LaRocca spoke about the resolution that was adopted at the last board meeting on March 25, 2024. The resolution directed Library Administration and staff to investigate and ascertain what would be required to review the Young Adult (YA) collection for sexual conduct as defined by LA R.S. 25:225. Library Administration and staff worked to come up with a solution to this endeavor and developed three options for the Board to consider. K. LaRocca reviewed an outline and timeline of the three options. The options are as follows:

Option 1: Keep YA Fiction as it is. Minors with a Full Restriction card cannot check out YA Fiction. Minors who have permission from a parent or guardian and have a Semi Restricted, Juvenile, or Unrestricted card may check out YA Fiction.

Option 2: YA Fiction titles with sexual content defined by LA R.S. 25:225 are moved to Adult Fiction with no labeling or other means to identify the title as being written for a teen audience. Minors with a Full Restriction or Semi Restriction card cannot check out Adult Fiction. Minors who have permission from a parent or guardian and have a Juvenile or Unrestricted card may check out Adult Fiction. While the review is taking place, YA Fiction remains accessible to a Semi Restriction card.

Option 3: Split the YA collection and create a "New Adult" Fiction collection as part of the Adult collection for YA items with sexual content defined by LA R.S. 25:225 and change the name of YA Fiction to Teen Fiction that will house items without sexual content defined by LA R.S. 25:225. Minors with Full Restriction or Semi Restriction cards will not be able to check out New Adult Fiction. Minors who have permission from a parent or guardian and have a Juvenile or Unrestricted card may check out New Adult Fiction. While the review is taking place, YA Fiction remains accessible to a Semi Restriction card.

K. LaRocca reviewed the employee time that would be required to effectuate Options 2 or 3. It would take staff approximately 1,071 hours to review all 4,762 titles in YA Fiction. The total number of items in YA Fiction is 8,960, as most titles have multiple copies in our system. It will take staff approximately 373 hours to process all 8,960 items in YA Fiction.

K. LaRocca noted that there are other YA collection components, such as books on CD, YA Non-Fiction, and YA Graphic Novels. Any of the YA books on CD that would move to Adult or New Adult would need to be processed. The Teen Department is working on creating a new Teen Non-Fiction collection. Adult Non-Fiction titles that are written for teens would move to the new Teen Non-Fiction collection. Examples of these titles are teen cookbooks and ACT study guides. The items that will be moved will not contain sexual content as defined by LA R.S. 25:225. The Teen Department is also working to review titles in the YA Graphic Novel collection for sexual content defined by LA R.S. 25:225. Any titles found will be moved to the new Adult Graphic Novel collection or to Adult Non-Fiction. Any titles found to

contain sexual conduct defined by the LBOC Resolution of February 2023 will be moved to behind the circulation desk. Graphic novels in the Adult Non-Fiction Collection that are written for teens will be moved to the Teen Graphic Novel collection. These items will not contain sexual conduct defined by LA R.S. 25:225.

K. LaRocca discussed the potential timeline for reviewing the YA Fiction Collection. The bulk of the work could begin in August 2024 after the Summer Reading Challenge, which ends in July. The essential staff that will need to review the titles in an efficient and thorough manner are necessary to the production of the Summer Reading Challenge. If the teen librarians work on this project 10 hours a week while continuing their normal duties, it will take approximately nine months to complete the review. Items with sexual conduct defined by LA R.S. 25:225 that are brought to our attention will be prioritized. The prioritized list review could start immediately with the remainder of the review taking place after summer reading.

K. LaRocca reviewed the cost associated with Options 2 and 3. For Option 2, staff time for reviewing the items is calculated to be \$28,745.64. This is based on 1,071 hours at \$26.84 (average of Teen Department salaries per hour). Processing, cataloging, and supply costs will vary based on how many items are moved. For Option 3, staff time for reviewing, processing and cataloging the items, plus the cost of supplies is calculated to be \$36,642.37.

K. LaRocca stated that staff recommends Option 3, as this option provides more clarity to parents about what is contained in each library collection and leaves the decision about access firmly in their hands. Collections designated for minors would not have sexual conduct and collections designated for adults could have sexual conduct. K. LaRocca noted that Option 3 enables all of the books classified as New Adult to be kept together, much like our Biography collection and the Mystery and Western collections at some of our branches. K. LaRocca added that the concept of a New Adult category has been part of the publishing industry since 2009.

A. Parr noted that he has seen New Adult sections in bookstores. He agreed that with Option 3, the books would stay together and would not get lost in the Adult section. A. Parr referenced the LBOC Resolution of February 2023, which places graphic novels containing sexual content (as defined by the resolution) behind the circulation desk. He asked why those titles could not be put in the New Adult section.

K. LaRocca explained that there are two competing directives in this situation. The resolution that the LBOC adopted in February 2023 contains a higher level of sexually descriptive terms and criteria that define sexual conduct. The resolution directs the library to place graphic novels containing such conduct behind the circulation desk. Conversely, LA R.S. 25:225 contains a different definition of sexual conduct and includes a lower level of sexually descriptive terms and criteria. Titles that meet the criteria of LA R.S. 25:225 would be moved to the Adult or New Adult collections. K. LaRocca estimated that there are approximately 62 graphic novels currently behind the circulation desk.

B. McHugh asked if people can file SOCs to challenge the placement of these books. K. LaRocca confirmed that is correct. She explained that the plan is to keep a list of items that are moved based solely on the content defined by LA R.S. 25:225. The list would be available on the website and would include the page numbers that contained sexual conduct.

B. McHugh clarified that none of this is required by state law and this is our way of improving the categorization of the material based on state law. K. LaRocca stated that in order to meet state law there needs to be one area or collection of the library that does not have sexual conduct and a card system to restrict content. K. LaRocca stated that we do not have sexual conduct in the Juvenile collection and we provide a Full Restriction card option that only allows checking out materials from that collection. K. LaRocca noted that this option would make it clearer to parents what is and what is not in each collection. She stated that the majority of parents have chosen unrestricted access to materials for their child. Approximately 14% of juvenile cards have restricted access.

B. McHugh stated that we are trying to be proactive and take action in advance. A. Parr asked T. DiMaggio about the staff's feedback on Option 3. T. DiMaggio stated that staff were glad about the fact that the material would be designated as being meant for a younger audience. T. DiMaggio explained that books such as *Twilight*, *Harry Potter*, and *The Hunger Games* really changed the publishing world. This was especially true for *Twilight*, as the series contains some sexual content and has garnered both teen and adult readers. She noted that part of what was traditionally considered YA or Teen Fiction has become more mature.

Public comment:

Lisa Rustemeyer – Mandeville, LA. Spoke about no children being harmed by reading a book. Spoke about 65% of parents choosing unrestricted library cards for their kids. Asked if the concerns have come from the "very vocal group" or from parents with actual concerns. Stated she is in favor of Option 1, because she feels it harms kids to put certain books out of their reach. Stated she is not opposed to a New Adult section, but considers it overkill to review thousands of books when the library is already in compliance with the law. Asked why the library is using a different metric for reviewing graphic novels.

Ruth Terry-Sipos – Abita Springs, LA. Asked about which section the statement "not to purchase sexual content" refers to. K. LaRocca explained that the current criteria for selection states that we will not purchase items with sexual conduct as defined by LA R.S. 25:225 for the Juvenile or the YA collections. R. Terry-Sipos asked what would be the point in creating a New Adult section if those items would also not contain sexual conduct. K. LaRocca clarified that the New Adult section would be part of the Adult collection, but shelved separately like the Biography, Mystery, and Western sections.

T. DiMaggio clarified that we are not discussing what the library will purchase or not purchase, but rather where we are locating books and who has access to them based on the card system. T. DiMaggio clarified that we are not saying that we will not purchase the books at issue. R. Terry-Sipos asked the Board to revisit the resolution of February 2023 regarding graphic novels. She stated that there is now a place for them in New Adult and they should not be hidden behind the counter.

Rebecca Bohm – Mandeville, LA. Supports Option 1. Stated that 65% of the population who use the library are happy. Stated that the library is trying to appease a small percentage of the population and note that none of them were in attendance of the meeting. Asked how many kids have gone to the library, found books with sexually explicit material, and then sat down to read them in the library. She noted that they could not be checked out with a restricted card.

There were three comment cards from members of the public who did not wish to speak. They were not in favor of moving the YA books to the Adult or New Adult sections.

A. Parr asked for confirmation that if Option 1 is chosen, some books in question will be shuffled into the Adult section anyway. K. LaRocca confirmed that is correct. She explained that Option 1 leaves the books where they are currently located, but as items with sexual conduct as defined by LA R.S. 25:225 are discovered, they will be moved to the Adult section. There would be no indication that they are written for an audience other than adults.

B. McHugh stated that he sympathizes with the comments in favor of Option 1, but reiterated that as books are identified as containing sexual conduct they would be automatically moved to the Adult section with no categorization that would lead patrons to the materials. He stated that Option 3 is the better option because it sets a clear standard that can be easily explained and does not require any change to the card system. He acknowledged that it will take money, time, and work, but once complete there will be a clearly delineated collection.

A. Shaw asked about waiting to review the items until after Summer Reading. K. LaRocca clarified that the titles that we have reviewed so far that contain sexual conduct as defined by LA R.S. 25:225 and have been moved to the Adult collection could become the first titles in the New Adult collection. K. LaRocca stated that any additional titles that are brought to our attention and are confirmed to contain sexual conduct as defined by LA R.S. 25:225 can be moved to the New Adult collection promptly. She stated that a systematic review cannot happen until the summer is over. She explained that our teen librarians can do this much more efficiently, as they are familiar with teen literature and know what to look for in reviewing the materials.

A. Shaw asked if there is money in the budget to offer additional hours to staff to review the books sooner. K. LaRocca stated that she can look into that and added that full time staff would have to work overtime, which would affect the budget. K. LaRocca noted that the salary study will be complete soon and is going to affect the budget as well. K. LaRocca reiterated that items that were moved to the Adult collection can be moved into New Adult promptly. Additional items brought to our attention that contain sexual conduct will also be moved to New Adult promptly. K. LaRocca stated that if someone has concerns about books, they can provide us with a list of books that includes the page numbers where the sexual conduct defined by LA R.S. 25:225 is located. Those titles could be reviewed and moved to New Adult promptly. This would not require a Statement of Concern, just the titles and page numbers identifying the sexual conduct. We would make a spreadsheet available on the website that shows all 4,700 items in the YA collection. It would be noted whether or not sexual conduct was found and what page(s) it was found on for each title.

A member of the public asked how a series would be handled. K. LaRocca stated that items in a series would be kept together in the same collection.

Vote: B. McHugh moved to adopt the Option 3 resolution regarding evaluation of YA materials. It was seconded by A. Parr. A. Parr asked to add discussion of the February 2023 graphic novel resolution to the next board meeting. B. Taylor said she would make a note of his request.

Roll call vote: Butler: Absent McHugh: Yes Parr: Yes Shaw: Yes Taylor: Yes

Motion carried.

D. Statement of Concern – *Burned*

Discussion:

K. LaRocca presented the Statement of Concern for the book *Burned* by Ellen Hopkins. The statement was submitted by Frances Smith, representing the St. Tammany Library Accountability Project. K. LaRocca read the statement aloud.

The recommended action by F. Smith is to: “It needs to be place [sic] in a restricted area where children and young teens cannot read it or check it out without parental consent. What’s it a resource for?” Reason given: “The book is clearly not for young readers or teens. It promotes a life style [sic] that is not healthy. In your library a 12 year old can read this book.”

K. LaRocca reviewed the book résumé which includes the publisher’s summary, number of print copies STPL owns (3), total circulation on all print copies (286), number of audiobooks on CD (2), total circulation on all audiobooks on CD (52), number of E-audiobook digital resources available (2), total circulation on digital E-audiobooks (25), comparable library system statistics, reviews by *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, *Hornbook Guide to Children*, *Kirkus Reviews*, and *Publishers Weekly*. Also noted are awards and lists featuring this title. The publisher’s recommended age group is 14 to 17. A total of 700 public libraries across the nation own copies of the book. The title was previously shelved in the YA Fiction section at STPL, but has been moved to Adult Fiction with Fic Hopk as the call number.

K. LaRocca reviewed the committee’s evaluation of the title which includes demographics of the committee members, the committee’s report, and the committee’s recommendation. The complainant does not explicitly cite Louisiana Revised Statute 14:91.11. However, because the statute was implied on the complainant’s form, the book was evaluated based on the criteria set forth in the statute. K. LaRocca stated that legal counsel has advised the Board that all four criteria in LA R.S. 14:91.11 must be true to be a violation of the statute. The committee did not find a violation of the statute.

Summary of Committee Report: There are only two scenes with sexual content. The scenes are brief and accurately depict first love and the teen experience. The book is primarily about the main character’s questioning of her faith, her religious beliefs, and about her relationship with her abusive father. The book shows a positive female/male relationship that promotes consent and respect, contrasting it with the dysfunctional relationship of the main character’s parents. The book was written for an older teen audience.

The committee believes that the book is not harmful to minors as described in LA R.S. 14:91.11. However, because the book contains conduct defined in LA R.S. 25:225 (p. 122- touching of female body parts listed in the statute) and alludes to the ultimate act (p. 372-373), the book was moved from YA Fiction to Adult Fiction where it is not accessible to minors holding a Restricted or Semi-restricted card. Options for the Board: The book is currently shelved in Adult Fiction. The Board can remove it from the library, restrict the book behind the circulation desk, leave it shelved in Adult Fiction, or move it to the newly approved New Adult collection.

Committee Recommendation: The book should remain in Adult Fiction. The New Adult collection was not an option at the time of the review.

A. Parr noted that the book is currently in Adult Fiction with no identifying information that indicates that it is meant for teens and young adults. T. DiMaggio stated that the subject heading in the cataloging record of the item indicates that it is meant for a YA audience, but there is no indication of that for books on the shelves.

B. McHugh stated that the complainant does not seem to understand the difference between promoting and portraying something. The complainant claims that the book promotes bad behavior and an unhealthy lifestyle. B. McHugh explained that the book portrays a lifestyle which may include bad behavior and may not be healthy, but these lifestyles do exist. The fact that a book portrays a lifestyle does not mean that it is promoting that lifestyle.

A. Parr stated that when he worked in behavioral health, many kids would request books by Ellen Hopkins. He stated that it helped them cope with a lot of things they were experiencing.

Public Comment:

Frances Smith, the patron who submitted the Statement of Concern for *Burned*, was offered five minutes for public comment. F. Smith was not in attendance and did not appear for public comment.

Lisa Rustemeyer – Mandeville, LA. Spoke about the book being located in the YA section of other libraries. Stated that the author is a very good writer. Stated that she does not believe teens are convinced to try behaviors because they read about them in books. Stated that she has not finished the book yet, but has noted the mentioning of one body part so far that she thought may fall under LA R.S. 25:225. She noted that is only one page out of the entire book. Stated that the book should be in the YA section.

There were three comment cards from members of the public who did not wish to speak. They were in favor of moving the book to the YA section.

B. McHugh agreed with L. Rustemeyer that it is unreasonable to judge a book by one page and noted that *Burned* has over 500 pages. He stated that it is unfortunate, but the state law is explicit and requires the action that has been taken.

Vote: A. Parr moved to reclassify *Burned* as New Adult and to shelve the title in the New Adult section. It was seconded by A. Shaw. A. Parr asked if all the Ellen Hopkins books will be shelved together in the New Adult section. T. DiMaggio stated that some of her books are written for an adult audience and those will stay in Adult Fiction.

Roll call vote: Butler: Absent McHugh: Yes Parr: Yes Shaw: Yes Taylor: Yes

Motion carried.

E. Statement of Concern - *A Court of Frost and Starlight*

Discussion:

K. LaRocca presented the Statement of Concern for the book *A Court of Frost and Starlight* by Sarah Maas. The statement was submitted by Frances Smith, representing the St. Tammany Library Accountability Project. K. LaRocca read the statement aloud.

The recommended action by F. Smith is: "Restrict from minors from [sic] reading this book/get it off the shelves for children to read." Reason given: "It is obscene. Children should not be allowed to read it. Goes against the Law."

K. LaRocca reviewed the book résumé which includes the publisher's summary, number of print copies STPL owns (2), total circulation on all print copies (70), number of E-book digital resources available (1), total circulation on E-book (23), number of E-audiobook digital resources available (2), total circulation on E-audiobooks (179), comparable library system statistics, reviews by *Kirkus Reviews* and *Hornbook Guide to Children*. The publisher's recommended age group for this title is 17 and up. A total of 2,069 public libraries across the nation own copies of the book. The title is shelved in the Adult Fiction collection at STPL with Fic Maas as the call number.

K. LaRocca reviewed the committee's evaluation of the title which includes demographics of the committee members, the committee's report, and the committee's recommendation. Since the complainant cites the Louisiana Criminal Law Revised Statute 14:91.11, the book was evaluated based on the criteria set forth in the statute. K. LaRocca stated that legal counsel has advised the Board that all four criteria in LA R.S. 14:91.11 must be true to be a violation of the statute. The committee did not find a violation of the statute.

Summary of Committee Report: The committee believes that the book is not harmful to minors as described in LA R.S. 14:91.11. However, the book does contain sexual conduct as described by LA R.S. 25:225, including a description of the ultimate act on page 201. The committee believes the placement of the title in Adult Fiction where it is only accessible to an adult or to a minor whose parent has given them access to the Adult collection is appropriate.

Options for the Board: Remove it from the Library, restrict the book behind the circulation desk, or leave it in Adult Fiction.

Committee Recommendation: The committee recommends that the book remain in Adult Fiction.

A. Parr asked if the title could be moved to New Adult. K. LaRocca stated that it could, as the publisher's recommended age group is 17 and up. A. Shaw spoke about the publisher's recommended age groups not always being appropriate. K. LaRocca stated that we have always made our own decisions about what collections items are placed in the library and we do not rely on the publisher's recommendation. K. LaRocca clarified that if the book was placed in the New Adult section it would still be part of the Adult collection and not available to minors with restricted library cards.

B. McHugh stated that he wonders why the Board was asked to consider a SOC about a book that has always been in the Adult Fiction collection. He noted a similar situation occurred with another book

previously challenged by the complainant. He stated that it shows tremendous prejudice towards content no matter where it is located, which is antithetical to the purpose of a library and the First Amendment. He stated he is in favor of leaving the title in Adult Fiction or moving it to New Adult. B. Taylor stated she is in favor of leaving the book in Adult Fiction.

Public comment:

Frances Smith, the patron who submitted the Statement of Concern for *A Court of Frost and Starlight*, was offered five minutes for public comment. F. Smith was not in attendance and did not appear for public comment.

Lisa Rustemeyer – Mandeville, LA. Read a comment from a member of the public named Rachel who could not attend the meeting. Stated that the book is part of a New York Times Best-selling series, which means that there are people who like it. Did not care for the series, but does not want it off of the shelves. Stated that there are steamy and flirty moments and a mention of a sex scene, but it was vague and not in great detail. Stated that it is an adult book, not a children's book. Asked for the book to remain on the shelves.

There were three comment cards from members of the public who did not wish to speak. They were in favor of keeping the book in the library in the Adult or YA collections.

Vote: A. Shaw moved to affirm the committee's recommendation for *A Court of Frost and Starlight* to remain in the Adult Fiction collection. It was seconded by A. Parr.

Roll call vote: Butler: Absent McHugh: Yes Parr: Yes Shaw: Yes Taylor: Yes

Motion carried.

F. Rules and Regulations – Disaster Recovery Policy Update

Discussion:

T. DiMaggio reviewed a change in the I.T. Disaster Recovery Policy. A penetration test will be conducted every three years instead of annually, as the test is quite costly and is not required by our insurance policy, by law, or by the Legislative Auditor. A penetration test is a security test where an external cyber-security expert attempts to hack into our I.T. systems. The I.T. Department has purchased vulnerability assessment software and is regularly conducting assessments throughout the year. The I.T. Department is confident that having a penetration test every three years will be sufficient to keep us up to date on security.

A. Parr asked about tests on outside servers such as our databases and website, and whether or not those companies report their results to the library. T. DiMaggio stated that they do run their own tests, but their servers do not touch ours in terms of accessing vulnerable information. K. LaRocca clarified that databases can access a patron's card type, but not any personal information.

B. Taylor asked if staff could check to see if we are paying double for anything that we are already getting, relative to cyber insurance. K. LaRocca explained that we only have one Cyber Security

insurance policy and the library pays for that separately. K. LaRocca noted that we are not required by law to have Cyber Security insurance, but we obtained it because there is a cost to recover from an issue if affected.

B. McHugh noted that he is a former I.T. professional and suggests doing a penetration test any time there are major changes in the system. He suggested a change in wording in Section B4 of the policy to read as follows: "An external penetration test is conducted at least every three years or more often at the Director's discretion." He suggested an additional sentence at the end of Section B4 of the policy that reads as follows: "The Assistant Director of Support Services will notify the Library Board of Control of the results."

Vote: B. McHugh moved to approve the Disaster Recovery Policy update with the stated additions. It was seconded by A. Shaw. All were in favor, none were opposed, and one was absent. Motion carried.

3. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by A. Shaw and was seconded by B. McHugh. All were in favor, none were opposed, and one was absent. Motion carried.



Anthony Parr, Secretary