



Minutes of the Administrative Board of Trustees at its Regular Meeting on May 19, 2020
APPROVED at the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees on June 23, 2020

VENUE: Eudora Welty Library / Virtual Meeting

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rickey Jones called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

MEDITATION: Mrs. Sue Berry gave the Invocation.

ROLL CALL: **Trustees Present at Welty Library:** Chairman Rickey Jones and Rev. Wayne McDaniels

Trustees Present via GoToMeeting/Virtual Conference: Dr. Earline Strickland, Mrs. Mary Garner, Dr. Alferdteen Harrison, Mr. Ricky Nations, Rev. Danny Ray Hollins, Mr. Chester Ray Jones, Mrs. Imelda Brown, Mrs. Rosalyn Sylvester, and Mrs. Sue Berry

Trustees Absent: None.

Also Present via GoToMeeting/Virtual Conference: Ms. Patty Furr (Executive Director), Ms. Kimberly Corbett (Deputy Director), Mr. Justin Carter (Director of Finance), Ms. Brenette Nichols (Director of Human Resources), Ms. Miao Jin (Director of Technical Processing), Ms. Shannon Presley (IT Administrator), Ms. Judith Turnage (Executive Secretary)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES BOARD MEETING, FEBRUARY 25, 2020: Having read the draft minutes of the Regular Board meeting of February 25, 2020, the Trustees suggested two minor revisions.
Rev. McDaniels moved, second by Mrs. Garner, to approve the draft minutes, with revisions, of the Regular Board Meeting held on February 25, 2020; the motion carried.

MINUTES OF SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF MARCH 16, 2020: The minutes of the Special Called Meeting of March 16, 2020, were inadvertently omitted from the Board Packet for the Trustees' review. It was, therefore, agreed to review the minutes for consideration for the next Regular Meeting of the Board on June 23, 2020.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: ***Dr. Strickland moved, second by Rev. McDaniels, to accept the Agenda as proposed. The motion carried.***

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS: Director for Finance, Justin Carter
Financial Reports: *Financial Report – March, April, May 2020
*Check Register – February 18, 2020 to May 11, 2020
*Gifts and Donations Report for March, April, May 2020

Mr. Carter presented his Financial Reports to the Trustees, noting that the funding from the City of Jackson reflected in the Statement of Income and Expenses, did not show that most recent payment from the City. Mr. Carter stated that the funding level is correct and payments are coming in, often irregularly, as expected.

Chairman Jones requested a Statement of Income and Expenses for February 2020. He also questioned a check disbursed for cleaning services during a time when JHLS was



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closed due to COVID-19. Mr. Carter explained that no cleaning services occurred nor were charged during that time, and that the check in question was for payment of a late invoice for services provided prior to the COVID-19 hiatus.

Dr. Harrison moved, second by Mrs. Berry, to accept the Financial Reports as presented. Rev. McDaniels opposed the motion. The motion carried.

Human Resources Report: Mrs. Brenette Nichols began her report with an announcement that Ms. Angel Longino, JHLS' payroll clerk and Mrs. Nichols' assistant, recently earned a PhD in _____ at _____ University.

Mrs. Nichols presented her report for the period 2/16/2020 through 3/16/2020 and stated that there had been personnel changes, save one voluntary resignation, during the COVID-19 hiatus. Mrs. Nichols also discussed the Families First Corona Recovery Act (FFCRA), rather like a family leave act, and what benefits may be available to employees qualifying for them. Finally, she requested a new laptop with advanced security to allow her to work from home.

Mrs. Garner asked about employees who may have problems with child care for whom it may be necessary to work at home. Mrs. Furr explained that there are many projects that can be sourced to JHLS employees forced to work at home, including preparations of COVID-19 materials for when the public returns to the libraries, and various other projects relating to the Summer Reading Program. Mrs. Furr added that it may be necessary to hire new employees to work in the libraries since many employees may be considered "vulnerable" and need to work at home. Chairman Jones asked Mrs. Furr to prepare a proposal as to what may be needed.

Technical Services and Public Services Reports: ***Rev. McDaniels moved, second by Mr. C.R. Jones, to approve the Human Resources Report as presented and moved, further, to accept and approve the Technical Services Report and the Public Services Report – both reports for the months of March, April, and May 2020 -- as written and included in the Board Packet. The motion carried.***

COMMITTEE None.

REPORTS:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Mrs. Furr's extensive report pertained to her proposed four-phase plan for reopening JHLS branches and returning to full operations. She explained that JHLS employees returning to work in the branches would require extensive training for COVID compliance as to how to establish and maintain a safe environment for both staff and patrons, and she explained the COVID compliance training in detail. Mrs. Furr also described new services to protect both staff and patrons, such as a phone-in and curb-side pick-up service for books and materials that will provide a no-contact safety. She explained that book drops will be open and the quarantining that will be necessary for those books. Finally, Mrs. Furr stated that it may not be possible to open the smaller branches owing to a lack of non-vulnerable employees to staff them, but she is hoping to provide services at the larger libraries first, starting with Eudora Welty, Quisenberry, Willie Morris, and Medgar Evers.



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Mrs. Garner suggested that current Human Resources policies are in line with the proposed phase-in plans and stated that the medical condition policy needs to be in writing; that this would be a task for Mrs. Nichols as Director of Human Resources.

Chairman Jones asked what would occur if an employee contracts the virus. Mrs. Furr explained that an area of the branch is designated to be cordoned off, and the sick employee would remain there until he or she could leave. Then, the facilities staff will immediately steam clean the area, and the employee will need to provide medical certification that he healthy and safe to return to work. Mrs. Furr also stressed that employees would be cleaning and disinfecting the environs all during the day and that none of them could begin work each day without a temperature check at the door.

Chairman Jones asked Mrs. Furr to prepare a budget outlining expenses for cleaning supplies, masks, gloves, the fogging machine (used for deep steam cleaning), etc.

Mr. Nations enquired as to why the Welty branch is still being used, considering the extremely negative report of the Mr. Elliott, of the City of Jackson Fire Marshal's office, including issues with doors being blocked off, etc. Mrs. Furr replied that the Welty branch has not experienced the significant rain deterioration as had been the case previously and that, with its 44 computers, which are a huge draw for the public, the Library System would suffer a huge inconvenience if Welty could not reopen.

Mr. C.R. Jones asked Mrs. Furr what communication has been presented to the state legislature, the Governor, and the City and County funding authorities. Mrs. Furr explained that the Mississippi Library Commission has received a grant for this purpose and is consistently lobbying for libraries in all jurisdictions. Mrs. Berry concurred with Mr. C.R. Jones.

Chairman Jones noted that the libraries will be closed through May 22 and requested recommendations for prospective opening dates. When Mrs. Furr assured the Board that the JHLS staff wants to come back, Chairman Jones stated that he has concerns about compliance with OSHA standards, that the staff needs time for training, and further noting that there is no need to err in haste both for the public and JHLS employees. Mrs. Furr, acknowledging Mrs. Garner's professional experience in human resources, asked if she would work with the Administration staff to develop plans, and Mrs. Garner agreed; Mrs. Nichols will e-mail a copy of the employee handbook to Mrs. Garner.

Mr. Nations moved, second by Mrs. Garner, that the target date for reopening the Library System be June 1, and, to that end, the Administration staff will present more detailed plans to the Board by May 29. The motion carried.



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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Chairman Jones announced that members of the Executive Committee had met in an Emergency Called Meeting on April 20 to discuss a recent complaint to the Ethics Commission, personnel, and other legal matters not further specified. He noted that the Executive Committee had retained an attorney, Tony Gaylor, for representation relating to the Ethics Commission matter.

Mrs. Berry declared that Executive Committee cannot hire an attorney for any matter because that is under the purview of the entire Board of Trustees, and Mr. Nations agreed with her.

Mr. Nations inquired as to what Trustees were on the Executive Committee, and Chairman Jones replied that he, himself, Chairman; Mrs. Garner, Vice-Chairman; Dr. Strickland, Treasurer; Mrs. Sylvester, Immediate Past Chair; and, the chairmen of all of the Board's committees comprised the Executive Committee but specifically, in this case, Rev. McDaniels and Mr. C.R. Jones.

Mrs. Berry and Mr. Nations contended vigorously that the By-Laws provided the Executive Committee be comprised of only the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary (currently vacant since Mrs. Bethany's recent resignation from the Board), and Immediate Past Chair. Although Rev. McDaniels is the chairman of the Planning and Development Committee, his position does not place him on the Executive Committee, and Mr. C.R. Jones, as Board Parliamentarian, is the chairman of no Board Committee; in short, neither gentleman should have been included in the Emergency Called Meeting.

Chairman Jones' reply was succinct: "The deal is done."

Mr. Nations questioned: "What do we do about that?" He posed the questions to Chairman Jones to clarify the nature and definition of the complaint to the Ethics Commission, and to confirm that the Board of Trustees is paying an attorney.

Chairman Jones responded: "We have 'engaged' an attorney to address legal matters."

Both Mrs. Berry and Mr. Nations disagreed vehemently with Chairman Jones' cavalier attitude about his authority and his incorrect decisions in calling, within fewer than 48 hours, an Executive Committee meeting which included Trustees not properly seated on the Executive Committee, to clandestinely review significant legal matters of concern to the entire Board of Trustees, and to "engage" an attorney without the approval of the entire Board of Trustees.



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Chairman Jones' explanation was that the matter, yet undefined, had to be conducted expeditiously, and the information about the complaint will be shared with the entire Board of Trustees at an appropriate time.

Mrs. Berry retorted that, Chairman or not, Chairman Jones could not twist the Board's rules through its By-Laws as he pleased, and Mr. Nations questioned: "Which rules do we go by and which do we not?"

Chairman Jones abruptly changed the meeting's attention to a recent EEOC Complaint against the Library System, and stated that Mrs. Nichols would be the JHLS point of contact.

Again, Mrs. Berry and Mr. Nations attempted, unsuccessfully, to obtain information about the Complaint, to which Chairman Jones replied he would not provide information inappropriately; the matter would be shared with the entire Board of Trustees at another time. Both Mrs. Berry and Mr. Nations protested that Chairman Jones' essentially singular proprietorship of the legal matters in question was "putting the whole Board on the hook."

Mrs. Brown moved, second by Rev. McDaniels, to approve the Chairman's Report as presented; Mr. Nations, Mrs. Berry, and Mrs. Sylvester opposed the motion. A vote count showed that the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS: **A. Approval of new federal mileage rate of \$0.575, effective January 1, 2020.**

Mrs. Furr provided, for the Board's review and approval, a copy of the IRS Notice 2020-05, issuing the 2020 standard mileage rates at \$0.575 for the use of a car (van, pickup or panel truck) for business use. The mileage rate would not accrue for employees driving to and from their assigned libraries but would apply for any trips between libraries or for other business-related trips during an employee's assigned working hours.

Rev. McDaniels moved, second by Mr. Nations, to approve the new federal mileage rate of \$0.575, effective January 1, 2020, as proposed by IRS Notice 2020-05 and presented by Mrs. Furr. The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS: **A. JHLS Reopening Plan/Proposal COVID-19.**

This matter was covered and approved in the Executive Director's Report section above.

B. Approval of Annual Accreditation Report for MLC, signed by the Executive Director and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

This being an annual matter with which all the Trustees are familiar, there was no discussion. Mrs. Furr did point out, though, that the library had achieved 85 of 88 possible points for the fiscal year, which is one point higher than last fiscal year.



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Rev. McDaniels moved, second by Mr. Nations, to approve the Annual Accreditation Report. The motion carried.

C. Annual Audit Extension until June 30.

Chairman Jones announced that the annual audit, lacking an updated Pending Litigation letter to the auditor, had been granted an extension until June 30. Mrs. Furr explained to Chairman Jones that the auditor had said the former Board attorney, Mr. JoJo Adams could possibly provide that legal service, but Chairman Jones retorted that the auditor will handle the attorney matter and asserts that JHLS is delaying progress, a charge Mrs. Furr and Mr. Carter refute, stating that they have always responded quickly to the auditors.

D. Response to Board of Trustees to City's refusal to provide physical maintenance and repairs to library branches (particularly the Richard Wright and Bolden branches).

Mrs. Furr provided a copy of an e-mail correspondence to her, dated March 24, 2020, from Robert K. Miller, Director of Public Work for the City of Jackson, stating that:

“ . . . the City is not required under the existing agreement or state law to provide the requested maintenance. We believe that the existing agreement places responsibility for maintenance of the facilities on the Library Commission. As a result, the City will not provide the repairs requested. . . ”

Mrs. Furr's initial correspondence to Mr. Miller cited Section 39.3.3 of the *Mississippi Code* which seems to be quite clear as to the responsibility for maintaining libraries:

Where any public library of public library system is established under this article, either by the County Board of Supervisors of the governing body of a municipality, “. . . the cost of purchasing land, erecting buildings and equipping and maintaining such public library or public library system shall be paid for in whole out of the general funds of the county of municipality.”

The issue seeming clear, there was little discussion among the Trustees, and Chairman Jones said that he would look more deeply into the matter and report to the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

APPROVAL OF DATE, TIME AND LOCATION FOR NEXT MEETING: There having been established a need for a Special Called Meeting on May 29 to review and authorize reopening plans, and a Regular Meeting to be set in June,

Mr. Nations, second by Mrs. Garner, approved a Special Called Meeting at Welty Library on Friday, May 29, 2020, at 4:00 p.m., and a Regular Meeting (Mrs. Garner requesting that attention to By-Laws be addressed at the Regular Meeting) at



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Welty Library on June 23, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. The motion carried.

Adjournment: *Mrs. Brown moved, second by Rev. McDaniels, that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.*