



Approved Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Administrative 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, Mrs. Imelda Brown, Mr. Ricky Nations, Dr. Alferdteen Harrison, and Rev. Wayne McDaniels

Trustees Present via GoToMeeting/Virtual Conference: Dr. Earline Strickland, Mrs. Mary Garner, Mr. Chester Ray Jones, Mrs. Rosalyn Sylvester, and Mrs. Sue Berry

Trustees Absent: Rev. Danny Ray Hollins.

Also Present via GoToMeeting/Virtual Conference: Ms. Patty Furr (Executive 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), Mr. Joe Schutt (IT Technician), and Mrs. Judith Turnage (Executive Secretary)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF (1) SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF MARCH 16, 2020; (2) REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF MAY 19, 2020; AND (3) SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF MAY 29, 2020:

Having read the draft minutes of the Special Called Meeting of March 16, 2020, the Regular Board meeting of May 19, 2020, and the Special Called Meeting of May 29, 2020,

Mr. Nations referred to a meeting that occurred at which an attorney was engaged and asked if there would be more information about that. Chairman Jones replied that there would be discussion of that matter as the meeting continued.

Dr. Harrison moved, second by Dr. Strickland, to approve the draft minutes of all three meetings: the Special Called Meeting of March 16, 2020, the Regular Board meeting of May 19, 2020, and the Special Called Meeting of May 29, 2020; the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: ***Dr. Harrison moved, second by Rev. McDaniels, to add under New Business "Information regarding the June 11, 2020, Finance/Budget Committee meeting" and, with that addition, to accept the Agenda as otherwise proposed. The motion carried.***

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS:
Financial Reports: Finance Director, Justin Carter
*Financial Report – June 2020
*Check Register – May 11, 2020 to June 16, 2020
*Gifts and Donations Report for June 16, 2020

Mr. Carter began his financial reports by distributing a report, as requested by Chairman Jones, of the fund that is held as the 501(c)3, the funds that are held at Bancorp South as the Community Foundation for Mississippi. The report states that, with the Board's approval to spend, there is \$15,276.65 in that fund currently.



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Mr. Nations questioned if there is a stated amount that can be taken out at one time or in a stated year, and Mr. Carter said the only condition on using the funds is that it be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Chairman Jones questioned whether there have been contributions made in this fiscal year. Mr. Carter replied that funds from Metro Center Mall book sale (\$1,297.05) would be sent to the Community Foundation. Mrs. Furr added that the book sale has been closed for several months and, replying to a question about the name of the fund, said that the fund used to be Greater Jackson but, now that it is for the whole state, the name has been changed to Community Foundation for Mississippi. Mr. Carter continued to explain accounting details relating to the Foundation, mentioning that the income from the fund would not appear as a line item on the Statement of Income and Expenses each month because it is not “functioning money,” but has restrictions for its use for buying books or other library materials.

Mr. Carter continued his presentation by discussing the Statement of Income and Expenses through May 2020 by line item and expressed his opinion that for everything that has gone on so far this fiscal year, the accounting is looking good.

Mr. Carter also distributed a forecast, at Chairman Jones’s request, based on figures through May 2020 and what he can reasonably anticipate, for projected budgets for FY2021 and FY2022, showing that the budgets will still finish in the black, that he is not depending on any revenue stream coming from any of the branches.

Rev. McDaniels asked what line item is for the debit card the Library System has. Mr. Carter replied that the debit card is recognized as the expense occurs; if a debit card is used to purchase program supplies, that purchase will be reflected as a budget line item according to what the actual item/expense is. Rev. McDaniels concluded that the Trustees really cannot know what is being spent with the card.

Mrs. Furr stated that the debit card has never been used as a debit card, but as a credit card, and is used for many subscriptions. Rev. McDaniels opined that having a debit/credit card is “dangerous” in that the Trustees cannot easily determine how it has been used or for what expenses.

Chairman Jones stated that this matter had come up during the Finance/Budget Committee meeting on June 11, and that the Committee had requested the matter be brought before the Board as to whether to proceed with having debit cards or to come up with some other type of policy. Chairman Jones called upon Dr. Strickland (attending via computer) to discuss the point of the debit/credit card, and asked if she is ready to bring the matter to a motion.

Mrs. Furr asked to speak and give the Trustees another option that the Library System has, rather than using a debit card.



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Dr. Strickland replied to Chairman Jones that it was the recommendation of the Finance/Budget Committee that the Library System cancel the cards and make purchases through the established requisition and purchase order models. She suggested that specific vendor cards may be available, but the objective should be to cancel the debit card.

Mrs. Furr continued her support of having a debit/credit card capability by means of obtaining a State Procurement card. The State of Mississippi has a procurement card that is designed for state agencies and local governments to use; it has very strict controls on it, and it is something that MLC has suggested libraries should use. Mrs. Furr stated that State Procurement Card would fill the need for having the ability to make on-line purchases while still having the accountability for it. She proposed the debit card go away, and the State Procurement Card come into play, that the Library System could provide a list of expenses to the State Procurement Card every month; she reiterated that there are things that must be purchased on-line, and it would be impossible to establish everything the library needs with a vendor accounts.

Dr. Strickland (speaking on video) made several comments that were inaudible, and Mrs. Furr replied that the debit/credit card had never been used as a debit card – it has been used, as a credit card, to order supplies on-line.

Dr. Strickland moved, second by Rev. McDaniels, to cancel the debit cards and make purchases through the established requisition and purchase order model. Mrs. Berry stated she believes the Library System should have a credit card but abstained from voting; Mr. Nations also abstained from voting; Mrs. Garner opposed the motion. Six of the ten Trustees in attendance voted in favor of the motion, and it carried.

Mr. Nations discussed with Dr. Strickland his understanding that she recommended replacing the debit card with a credit card, and she agreed that that was her intent. Mr. Nations stated he thought that was a good idea. Dr. Strickland said that she had attempted to capture that intention in the previous motion and asked Chairman Jones if the motion could be amended. Mrs. Berry clearly informed the Board that the motion could be amended. Chairman Jones, however, stated that he preferred the motion be carried by itself because what a debit card represents is completely separate from what a credit card represents, and that the credit card situation should be examined more thoroughly.

Chairman Jones asked Dr. Strickland to have the Finance Committee to consider the credit card option and make recommendations to the Board, to which Mrs. Berry responded that emergency situations arise that need immediate solutions. Chairman Jones called a Point of Order, and Mr. Nations said that he would like to ask Dr. Strickland if she would like to make the motion. Chairman Jones replied that such a motion would not be recognized without the Finance Committee convening; Mr. Nations pointed out that “the Committee has already convened.” Mrs. Berry at the same time called a Point of



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Order, but Chairman Jones directed that the meeting continue with Mr. Carter's Finance Report. Intense and heated discussion among several Trustees followed regarding the permissibility of amending motions and how, and by whom, the meeting should be conducted; there was significant disagreement, several Points of Order were called, and there was no apparent resolution to the matters in dispute.

Mr. Carter continued with his presentation of the Financial Report, concluding that the Balance Sheet represented that the Library System is in good financial shape.

Dr. Strickland mentioned that during the Finance Committee's meeting on the budget, she was surprised to find that the Library System is paying a temp service (TempStaff) for almost what it would have paid three or four regular employees. Mrs. Furr interjected that it was not the same amount. Dr. Strickland continued her remarks, stating that Mrs. Furr had hired a temporary staff person for a position for which the Trustees had recommended a staff person to be employed. Mrs. Furr denied that the position had been offered to another candidate/applicant, and Mrs. Nichols (Human Resources Director) asserted that it had been.

Mrs. Furr responded that she had reviewed the employment notes that she had kept regarding the position in question and stated that it had been decided at one point that the position could possibly be covered by the facilities staff. Soon after, three of the six facilities staff resigned, and the temporary staff person was required. Mrs. Furr explained to Dr. Strickland that the Library System had never promised the position to anyone, that the Library System would interview other people. Dr. Strickland responded that it was her impression that a regular employee had not been hired because the Library System did not have sufficient funds to hire at that particular time; she asked Mrs. Furr if her impression was true or not. Mrs. Furr replied that it was not true; she stated the Library System had been trying to save some money, that the potential new employee was told that interviewing would continue, and that the Library System would attempt to get by without hiring anyone for that position.

In time, the Library System lost another facilities employee (reducing facilities staff from six to two employees) and hired a temporary employee to assist with moving libraries; concomitantly, it was determined, partially because of the tremendous problems of water leakage at Welty Library, that another facilities employee was required, a position filled by the temp worker, although the temp worker had been hired originally just to work with getting the books and shelving transferred in and out of two libraries, an enormous physical undertaking.

Dr. Strickland pointed out that, in the Finance Committee's meeting, she learned the Library System was paying \$15 an hour for a temp worker while paying a new staff member \$7.50 an hour, and she had a concern about paying significantly more for a temporary worker. Dr. Strickland asked why, if the Library System is paying \$15 an hour for a temporary worker, the Library System cannot hire a person for \$7.50 an hour.



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Mrs. Furr replied that she recommended several times over the past winter that the Library System be allowed to hire someone but was told repeatedly, without exception, that a hiring freeze was in place. Mrs. Berry stated that she had heard of the purported hiring freeze also.

Dr. Strickland suggested moving on with the agenda, but several Trustees vigorously disagreed. Mrs. Furr contended that, given the absolute necessity to have someone at Welty Library to empty 35 70-gallon trash cans of leaked water continually and her inability to hire because of the hiring freeze, she had no choice but to engage a temporary worker, especially considering that the facilities staff had declined to only two employees for the entire Library System. Dr. Strickland then asked why the Board couldn't authorize hiring another person for that same \$7.50 rather than a temporary worker.

Chairman Jones announced that the matter would be taken up in Executive Session, but he agreed that paying \$15 an hour for a temporary worker, compared to paying \$7.50 an hour for a staff employee, is not the most appropriate method of dealing with the strain of the physical management situation.

Mrs. Berry asked how long it takes to employ somebody and for details of the procedure. Mrs. Furr replied that the position had to be advertised and candidates had to be interviewed – the process could take four to six weeks to hire someone. Mrs. Berry asked what would happen with the water damage in the meantime, and Mrs. Furr answered that the damage would continue because two people cannot physically handle emptying the 35 70-gallon trash cans of accumulated water leakage around the clock. Mrs. Berry stated that sometimes emergencies call for different tactics.

Mrs. Garner pointed out that staff being paid \$7.50 or more an hour are also being compensated with significant benefits in the categories of Social Security, PERS, health insurance and sick and personal leave time, none of which benefits accrue to a temporary worker or are paid by the Library System to a temporary worker. In short, considering the benefits compensation for a staff employee earning \$7.50 and hours, the actual compensation would come close to the \$15 an hour. Chairman Jones disagreed vehemently; there was no resolution to the matter.

Chairman Jones addressed the issue of the purported hiring freeze and described the reason behind it as being attributable to miscommunication at last year's budget meeting in September. Based on the information given on the 23rd of September 2019, the Finance Committee recommended giving everybody in the Library System a raise of \$1,000. The following day, the Board got the information it could not give anyone a raise. Also, looking forward two months, the Board got the notice that showed the Library System would not be able to make payroll at that time. Both developments led Chairman Jones to the conclusion that the Board had to do whatever was necessary in order to get "real basic, real numbers" in order to make quality decisions. Chairman Jones, in consultation with Dr. Strickland, Mrs. Garner, and former Trustee Brenda Bethany, stated they all agreed



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the Board needed to find out exactly what was going on before moving forward; hence, the *de facto* hiring freeze. Chairman Jones said, “We have yet to get those numbers; we have yet to find out where we are.”

Mrs. Furr said that the Board had been given those numbers; Mrs. Nichols had sent her the salary sheets, and Mrs. Furr instructed her to send them to Chairman Jones. Chairman Jones disagreed, stating he had not received the information requested, a report of two months of employee payroll in real, plain numbers.

Dr. Harrison questioned what the difference between hiring a temp worker or a regular staff member and,

Dr. Harrison moved, second by Mr. Nations, to hire a regular employee for the facilities staff at an appropriate maintenance technician’s salary rate. The motion carried.

Mrs. Nichols and Rev. McDaniels suggested doing a job analysis of the position in question to determine its duties and commensurate compensation. Chairman Jones thought the matter should go to the Personnel Committee for review. Mrs. Brown asked Mrs. Nichols to send the current job description. Mrs. Berry pointed out that until a new employee is hired, the problem continues of there being no one to handle the physical maintenance situation.

Mrs. Berry moved, second by Mrs. Garner, to extend the employment of the temporary worker and to continue paying TempStaff for his services until a permanent hire is accomplished. The motion carried.

Rev. McDaniels asserted his belief that the TempStaff employee is “somebody’s friend.” Mrs. Furr denied that assertion. Rev. McDaniels maintained that someone in the Library System wanted that particular TempStaff employee to have a job as opposed to hiring a regular staff employee.

Mr. Carter concluded his Financial Report with the Gifts and Donations report.

Before the meeting could proceed, Rev. McDaniels asked when the Board was going to be notified that the Library System’s checking account had been hacked. He stated that he had found some charges against the debit card and, when he questioned Mr. Carter, he was told that the account had been hacked.

Mrs. Furr replied that the account was not exactly hacked. The number was used in Atlanta, the Library System was notified immediately, and the charges were removed. Rev. McDaniels maintained that the Board should have been notified, nonetheless, in the Financial Report or as a verbal report. Mr. Nations informed the Board that hacking occurs only when one’s money is seized and not recouped, which was not the case in this instance. Rev. McDaniels recast his question accordingly. Mrs. Berry asked how it was



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that Rev. McDaniels was aware of the matter, and he refused to divulge that information, explaining that he is a private investigator and is privy to such matters. The thrust of his comments was that the Board had not been notified of the unauthorized activity in the checking account. Mr. Carter explained to the Board that the Branch Manager of the bank had told him that thousands of such errors had occurred during the initial days of the pandemic and that the bank had given the Library System provisional credit immediately. The entire matter was resolved completely, at no detriment whatsoever to the Library System, within a few days.

Dr. Harrison moved, second by Mr. Nations, to accept Mr. Carter's Financial Report as presented. Rev. McDaniels abstained; the motion carried.

ADMINISTRATION Human Resources Director, Mrs. Brenette Nichols
REPORTS:

Human Resources Mrs. Nichols reported that there had been a total of 85 employees, (68 full-time and 17
Report: part-time), there have been no hires, resignations or promotions in this reporting period. Also, there are no job opportunities listed on the report.

Dr. Harrison asked how long it would take to hire a new person to replace the TempStaff worker. Mrs. Furr replied that the position would have to be advertised to the staff for 10 days, while Mrs. Garner stated the job position would need to be fleshed out and the salary would need to be determined. Mrs. Furr and Mrs. Nichols informed the Board that there is an existing job description and salary component for a maintenance technician in the Library System. After advertising in-house, the position would need to be advertised publicly. Dr. Strickland recommended following the existing hiring procedures and standing protocols as described. Mrs. Brown suggested that Mrs. Nichols begin the hiring process immediately.

Echoing the motion made and carried earlier in the meeting regarding retaining the current TempStaff worker until a hire is accomplished, Chairman Jones advised Mrs. Nichols to proceed apace on hiring a new staff maintenance technician.

Mrs. Brown moved, second by Rev. McDaniels, to accept the report of the Human Resources Director as presented. The motion carried.

ADMINISTRATION Technical Services Director, Mrs. Miao Jin
REPORT:

Technical Services Chairman Jones asked Mrs. Jin if the Hoopla account is still in existence; the question had
Report: come up during the budget meeting. She replied that Hoopla is controlled by MLC and will continue for a year – the Library System has not paid for anything. If MLC decides to continue subscribing, the Library System will continue to have the service.

COMMITTEE Dr. Strickland presented a report of a meeting of the Finance Committee on June 11 to
REPORTS: review proposed budgets for FY2021 and FY2022, and stated that her committee



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Budget Committee: recommended accepting the proposals as presented, having requested and been given assurances that the budgets are adequate and that the Finance Committee would be notified immediately of any requested changes.

Rev. McDaniels moved, second by Dr. Harrison, to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee and to approve the proposed budgets for FY2021 and FY2022. The motion carried.

Facilities Committee: Chairman Jones stated the committee has begun the process of composing a letter to the City of Jackson regarding the buildings that require attention. Bolden-Moore and Richard Wright Libraries are at the top of that list. Also, the committee will revisit the conversation regarding the Tisdale Library space. Rev. McDaniels requested that Eudora Welty Library be added to that list.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Mrs. Furr announced that a break-in had occurred at the west side door of the Tisdale Library. She met the police at that location and explained to them that the building had been relinquished to the City of Jackson as of September 30, 2019, and the Library System, therefore, could not repair the door. The police told her they would convey the request to board up the door to the City along with a request that the City inform the Library System of its action; there has been no response to date.

A dispute developed over whether and what contents of the Tisdale Library had been relinquished along with the building; Mrs. Furr said she would have her staff produce a copy of the letter of relinquishment. The books remaining at the location have deteriorated so as to be unusable, and the expense to remove them would be prohibitive. Mrs. Berry supported Mrs. Furr's position that she had informed the Board that Library System staff had removed all of the books, paintings, and other tangible property that was actually retrievable and that Mrs. Furr had already begun a collection of books for the new Tisdale branch.

Mrs. Furr announced that of all the library systems in the state, Jackson Hinds Library System had received the most money, in the amount of \$14,549, from the CARES Grant, the fund authorized by Congress for COVID recovery programs. One of the proposals for spending the money is that the Library System proceed to buy scanning technology so that patrons could scan and fax their own documents, eliminating the need for staff to do so.

Chairman Jones said he thought the scanning technology was already in process through a contract with RICOH. Mrs. Furr replied that the RICOH technology was too complicated for patrons to use and that the machines have been converted back into copy machines which are being used and generating income. Chairman Jones asked what savings were accrued through the failure of the RICOH technology, relating to the original contract for scanning/faxing technology. Mrs. Furr replied that she had requested an adjustment from the company and would report the results at the next meeting. Chairman Jones requested that it be noted clearly in the meeting minutes that the Board is expecting a follow-up



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from RICOH regarding an adjustment to the contract that the Library System originally entered into for scanning and faxing technology.

Continuing her report, Mrs. Furr stated that the System's five largest libraries were open and running, and that Raymond, Terry would open within the week. The new Byram library would be opened at a special ribbon-cutting on July 1, an event to which all the Trustees were invited. The remaining libraries are scheduled to open soon, but it is a struggle to staff all the libraries because so many staff are considered "vulnerable" under government definition and unable to work with the public, at least at this stage of the pandemic. Much of the public is reluctant to use the libraries, and curbside delivery services are expanding to meet the needs.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Chairman Jones requested an RFP for auditing services to be sent to Finance Committee for its review and recommendation to the Board and, ultimately, to be posted. He said he had not received a response from Attorney Adams about his working on the necessary audit letter.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Chairman Jones announced that there were personnel and other legal matters to discuss, and he requested a motion for consideration for going into Executive Session.

Mrs. Furr requested, before it entered Executive Session, that the Board vote on the Farmer's Market request to set up at the Medgar Evers branch parking lot to sell fresh produce at no expense to the Library System and carrying its own liability coverage. Accordingly,

Dr. Harrison moved, second by Mr. Nations, to permit the Farmer's Market to sell fresh produce in the parking lot of the Medgar Evers Library on Tuesday, June 30, and on four subsequent Tuesdays throughout the summer. The motion carried.

Mr. C.R. Jones moved, second by Rev. McDaniels, that there was a need for the Board to consider a need to enter into Executive Session to discuss legal and personnel matters. The motion carried, and the Board entered Executive Session at 5:50 p.m.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION: *Dr. Harrison moved, second by Mr. Nations, that the Board return to Regular Session. The motion carried, and the Board returned to Regular Session at 6:55 p.m.*

Mr. C.R. Jones moved, second by Rev. McDaniels, that there was action in the Executive Session to confirm previous action of personnel and legal matters as enumerated at previous Executive Sessions, that there was no confidence in terms of the current Library System leadership and, also, that the Board go in another direction in terms of said leadership. The motion carried.

Adjournment: *Dr. Harrison moved, second by Mr. Nations, that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.*