



Approved by the Board of Trustees at its Regular Meeting on December 1, 2020

VENUE: Eudora Welty Library / Virtual Meeting

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Rickey Jones called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

MEDITATION: Mrs. Sue Berry gave the Invocation.

ROLL CALL: **Trustees Present at Welty Library:** Chairman Rickey Jones and Mrs. Mary Garner

Trustees Present via GoToMeeting/Virtual Conference: Dr. Earline Strickland, Dr. Alferdteen Harrison, Mr. Chester Ray Jones, Mrs. Sue Berry, Mr. Ricky Nations, and Mrs. Imelda Brown

Trustees Absent: Rev. Danny Hollins

Also Present via GoToMeeting/Virtual Conference: Mr. Justin Carter (Director of Finance), Dr. A.S. Longino (Human Resources Assistant), Ms. Miao Jin (Director of Technical Processing), Ms. Shannon Presley (IT Administrator), Mr. Joe Schutt (IT Technician), Mrs. Ellen McLean (PR/Publicity Coordinator), Mrs. Judith Turnage (Executive Secretary), Mr. Scott Hodges and Ms. Jennifer Compton, of Tann, Brown & Russ Co., PLLC, Auditors for JHLS

AUDIT REPORT Chairman Jones, determining that all Trustees had a copy of the Annual Audit for 2019 performed by Tann, Brown & Russ Co., PLLC, introduced auditors Scott Hodges and Jennifer Compton. Ms. Compton stated that the audit had been completed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and reviewed the audit thoroughly with the Trustees.

With respect to the Management Letter portion of the audit, Ms. Compton pointed out flaws in the Bank Reconciliations section comments such that internal financial reports did not correctly reflect the cash balances. She explained that any unreconciled differences should be researched and corrected as part of the monthly reconciliation process, and outstanding items reflected on the bank account reconciliations should be reviewed for unusual items that may need to be investigated and resolved.

With respect to the Accounts Payable comments contained in the Management Letter, Ms. Compton noted that some previously paid invoices had not been properly removed from the accounts payable balance and some unpaid invoices were not included in the accounts payable balance; she recommended that the accounts payable aging reports be utilized to monitor and resolve these matters.

Regarding Friends of the Library, Ms. Compton recommended that the Library System's finance department work with the Friends organizations' offices to develop a standardized format a timeline for reporting necessary year-end financial information to the Library System.

No other significant flaws were noted, but Mr. Scott Hodges cautioned that the Library System's Fund Balance is steadily decreasing such that it has less than a month in reserve, and he suggested it would be a good idea to try to build up that reserve if it is at all possible considering funding restrictions.



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Mr. Chester Ray Jones confirmed from Chairman Jones the identities of the auditors and that they both are CPAs. Dr. Harrison asked how much time JHLS had to make the corrections suggested in the audit. Chairman Jones replied that the Board had debriefed the audit with Administration, the Finance Committee, Mr. Carter, and Ms. Corbett and would pose recommendations.

ADMINISTRATION Finance Director, Justin Carter
REPORTS: *Financial Report – October 2020
Financial Reports: *Check Register – September 15, 2020 through October 20, 2020
*Gifts and Donations Report for September 2020

Prior to Mr. Carter’s presentation of his report, Chairman Jones noted that during the debriefing regarding the audit report with Dr. Strickland, the Finance Committee, Ms. Corbett, and Human Resources, they had an opportunity to go through the Management Letter. He said he had anticipated a draft of notes of that meeting to distribute but that it should be ready before the end of the week at which point it would go the Finance Chair and then to the Board.

In the meantime, Chairman Jones said that during the meeting that occurred on August 19, 2020, those in attendance discussed several pieces of information that the Board was requesting during its Facilities and Finance Committee meetings. One of the pieces that was pointed out was the assurance there was a debriefing with the Board Chairman and the Finance Chair with the auditors. Also, there was a debriefing with the Administration to see exactly where they were based on meeting or exceeding the previous year’s expectations. Furthermore, they wanted to map out those pieces that are going to be critical for the Board to make decisions about, particularly where it finds itself currently. “There was a meaningful conversation regarding that meeting, and we can tell that in that meeting, some clarity was given.” However, based upon what the Board requires, many things still have to be addressed.

Chairman Jones expects to get that necessary information from the Finance Director and to move on from that point. He added that, in order for the Board to have a better understanding of who the Finance Director is, he requested a copy of Mr. Carter’s résumé as well as the requirements for his role (which information will be disseminated). Chairman Jones noted that this information has not been updated since 2008 and stated he would call upon Mrs. Garner, Chairman of the Board’s Personnel Committee, and Human Resources to look at a more up-to-date and more relevant position in terms of what is required because we have, as a nation, gone through two critical financial pieces during which there have been several changes made, so we will also call upon Mr. Hodges to provide any updated requirements needed for this particular position, for any feedback with reference to the work being required of the position.

Those are some of the things that they have reviewed as a team, Dr. Strickland and Chairman Jones, and he invited others to “chime in” with additional feedback from that debriefing or meeting post the audit. Chairman Jones added that during the meeting, no one went over any numbers as such as the auditors did; they just talked about the significant findings from the auditors, and they will have a detailed report to give the Board. He emphasized they went over processes and procedures, not numbers.

Chairman Jones then turned the meeting over to Mr. Carter for his report.



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Mr. Carter explained that the Financial Report was somewhat confusing since it lapped the prior year with the current month, especially with respect to budgeted references. Mr. Carter continued his report, stating that revenue for the end of the year was low for what had been budgeted for the year. He added, however, that while the shortfall was somewhat made up, the total balance could not be achieved during the COVID year. After all adjustments, Mr. Carter stated the System was under budget by \$386,152.99, resulting in a net income of \$231,000.00. Total expenses for the year ending September 30, 2020 were \$4,477,072.89, and revenue was \$4,279,117.03.

Mr. Carter continued his report, and passed out additional information; Chairman Jones noted that the information would go only to Board members.

Chairman Jones thanked Mr. Carter for his report and added his gratitude to Dr. Strickland for her work with scheduling a meeting the County Administrator and allowing for a very robust conversation. Because of her efforts, Dr. Strickland, the Board's Finance Chair, Chairman Jones, Ms. Corbett and Mr. Carter, were able to go over the budget, line by line. The County Administrator was able to advise the current Board of Supervisors' philosophy and their direction, and the JHLS representatives were able to share the financial difficulties they have been experiencing. The JHLS representatives presented a request for adjustment to get the System back to a minimum of coverage. Chairman Jones asked Dr. Strickland to recap the meeting.

Dr. Strickland said the meeting gave the JHLS staff an opportunity to engage in a conversation with the Board of Supervisors' staff. She thinks they appreciated learning that would help them to overcome obstacles that may have been, and might be, encountered. One thing that came out was that JHLS should sit down with County Supervisors and staff before JHLS does its budget, so that some agreement came be reached. It seems that the County believes that most of the budget problems stem from the JHLS management style, and Dr. Strickland said that, therefore, the Board will expect more frequent and accurate reports from the Administrative staff. Dr. Strickland reported that if JHLS runs short, it can go back to the Supervisors who have pre-approved fund, although she hoped that it would not be necessary to do so. She said that much of the content of the meeting notes would be distributed to the Board to review and approve.

Mrs. Berry asked about why the JHLS representatives have not approached the City of Jackson funding authorities as well as the County Supervisors.

Dr. Strickland replied that the budget had been cut differently on the County side who had scrutinized JHLS's spending habits. The County though JHLS needs more and better internal controls in place and more frequent reports.

Mrs. Berry asked why the City of Jackson had not similarly JHLS's spending while the County did, and that seems strange. Perhaps, going forward, both the City and the County should be involved. She also asked if the City would get copy of the audit.

Chairman Jones said the City would receive a copy of the audit. He continued that JHLS scheduled time with the County was part of the Board directives that had been given because of the amount of the cut in the JHLS budget. Further, as the Board has directed,



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the JHLS representatives are building a special piece with the City for review of our practice, and that would be part of that conversation.

Mrs. Berry repeated that both the City and the County need to be involved.

Another matter Chairman Jones addressed was that, since the last Board meeting, JHLS had to meet with our current insurance company, Mr. Cory Howell. In that process, the application was reviewed, and JHLS did find some areas and responses that are in the best interest of JHLS to answer and provide some feedback to the agent to report to the companies. At that time, we need to present an item to move ahead to make an initial payment to make sure JHLS has coverage. This payment is due by November 1, 2020. He noted that annual amount had gone down to \$69,609, and the portion that is due is \$13,927.40.

Mrs. Berry asked which insurance this is, and Chairman Jones replied that this is the risk management policy to cover the liability and clarified that while there are several different policies for different coverages, all are covered by one carrier. This payment is to cover liability for directors, workers compensation, and automobiles. He explained also that although the matter did not make the meeting agenda, it had been discussed and approved in the above-mentioned meeting with Mr. Howell, of Hubb.

Mr. Nations referred to the meeting described in Dr. Strickland's presentation; he stated that the County and some of the Board of Trustees had met together to discuss . . .

Chairman Jones interrupted Mr. Nations and said the meeting would come back to his observation, but Chairman Jones wished to concentrate on the motion regarding the insurance payment which was before the Board as a motion.

Dr. Strickland moved, second by Dr. Harrison, to approve the initial payment to Hubb, the insurance carrier, in the amount of \$13,927.40, but also to investigate opportunities with other carriers. With neither opposition nor abstentions, the motion carried

Mr. Nations asked what the difference was between what the County was going to fund JHLS versus this year.

Chairman Jones replied it was \$191,000.00.

Mr. Nations posed the possibility of going to the County and asking for the \$191,000.00 from the unallocated fund that contains over \$400,000.00.

Chairman Jones said that the question had been explored, and it was concluded that, based on extensive deep-dive and recalibration with the staff, that we are currently in position that JHLS could weather the payment. He repeated that the County had allow JHLS a certain amount to access above what had been budgeted if it became necessary.

Dr. Harrison moved, second by Dr. Strickland, to approve the Financial Reports as presented by Mr. Carter. With neither opposition nor abstentions, the motion carried.



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APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 22, 2020 *Mrs. Imelda Brown moved, second by Mrs. Mary Garner, to approve the Draft Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting held on September 22, 2020. With neither opposition nor abstentions, the motion carried.*

APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 27, 2020 MEETING With Chairman Jones's instruction to add Hamer Library and Welty Library to the "New Business" section of the Agenda,

Dr. Alferdteen Harrison moved, second by Mrs. Mary Garner, that the Draft Agenda be approved as revised. With neither opposition nor abstentions, the motion carried.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS: Human Resources Report, Dr. A.S. Longino

Human Resources Report: Dr. Longino reported that before she could get into the employee statistics, she had reports from the Director of Human Resources. The first report was that the HR migration to the Cloud is complete and everything is functioning properly. The second report was that the HR Director wants to raise the Board's attention that there needs to be consideration regarding the current handbook, policies and procedures manual (which has not been adequately revised since 2013, and JHLS' job descriptions (which have not been upgraded since 2008). These require updating with respect to departmental and branch reclassification and "restructurance." Also to be considered is that HR maintain what was discussed in meetings as to adherence to JHLS' budget and financial stability. She said further that some of the job descriptions and titles do not align with the current status of professional degrees for certification, etc. She explained that, as to herself, she holds a doctoral degree and other credentials, and the Finance Assistant holds a Master's degree in accountancy, while their job descriptions do not adequately align with what they hold currently in 2008.

Dr. Longino reported an employee census in October of 62 full-time employees and 11 part-time employees, totaling 73 employees. There were no new hires, but there was one voluntary resignation, the Branch Manager of the Lois A. Flagg library branch in Edwards. She stated additionally that the employee who resigned, in lieu of having an exit interview, left some last remarks that she wanted HR to share with the Board on her behalf. Chairman Jones requested that these remarks be forwarded to the Personnel Committee for review and dissemination in a more confidential manner – by mailing the remarks to the individual Trustees -- than in an open Board Meeting. She concluded that she had no volunteer information or promotions at this time and that there are no available employment opportunities.

Dr. Strickland noted that the entire census was only 73 employees, and she thought that the budget was drawn up with the notion of a staff of 82 employees – she questioned the significant drop in employees. Dr. Longino replied that several employees had left since the last Board Report, and the reason is that some of the employees are finding other employment that aligns with the degrees that they have, some are leaving because of pay,



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and some are leaving for other, personal reasons – personnel issues that will be addressed to the Board.

Dr. Harrison had concerns about the two employees who had additional degrees for the jobs they held, in that those degrees were not required for the jobs in the first place. She wants the Board to examine whether or not it is necessary to upgrade the job descriptions simply because employees have additional degrees or qualifications that are not required for those particular positions.

Chairman Jones replied that several employees have upgraded their status in terms of additional degrees. Dr. Longino said that HR will review job descriptions and analyze the requirements as to updating job descriptions.

Dr. Strickland stated that no job should function such that newly degreed staff can replace lower degreed but qualified staff. Additionally, she has concerns with how exactly “qualified” will be determined with respect to possible race and color implications. Dr. Strickland advised that there would be “serious trouble” when eliminating staff based only on degree status, that years of service and experience should also be considered. She advised that there are many serious considerations involved in upgrading or redefining job descriptions, especially with an apparent emphasis on professional degree status of staff.

Dr. Longino responded it was an inadvertent implication, by using her degree/qualification status and that of the Finance Assistant as examples, that such distinctions would apply to upgrading all job descriptions. She added that HR would take into consideration tenure and current responsibilities.

Mr. Nations asked if there are copies of exit interviews and suggested it might be helpful to review them for insight as to why employees are leaving – could they be reviewed over the past several years?

Chairman Jones responded that the exit process has not been fully utilized but will be in the future, that the matter had been considered in the budget talks with regard to retention of employees. He added that the exit interview information is available.

Mr. Nations wants data from the exit interviews. Chairman Jones replied that Dr. Longino said that was possible.

Mr. Nations had another question relating to budget concerns; he referred to all the unallocated funds of roughly \$400,000.00 currently held by Hinds County and posed the possibility that those funds may be used now to raise staff salaries to a competitive rate to staunch staff losses. He suggested that if the County, which cut the JHLS budget by \$191,000.00, is willing to assist JHLS in the event of an emergency shortfall, the emergency should be defined as occurring now, and that JHLS might approach the



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County to express its need for a certain amount of funds to do what the Library System needs to do with its staff.

Chairman Jones responded that the Finance Committee had reviewed that option but feel that, at this time, JHLS prefers to work with the minimum amount budgeted to “weather the storm” as well as to get some additional practices in place as were mentioned in the audit report. He said that JHLS is currently in the position of having to “tighten its belt” as well to look at some operational procedures to make sure JHLS is operating in an effective and efficient manner. It appears they may be some opportunities to reduce the expenditures to be more progressive and robust in operations as compared to the current status quo.

Dr. Strickland expressed to Mr. Nations that she would be glad, as the Chair of the Finance Committee, to review his concerns and any suggestions or recommendations that he may have.

Mr. Nations accepted her offer, but repeated that should a shortfall or emergency occur, the Board should recall that the County has roughly \$400,000.00 that it can put into JHLS’ hands.

Dr. Harrison moved, second by Mrs. Garner, to accept the Human Resources Report as presented by Dr. A.S. Longino. With neither opposition nor abstentions, the motion carried.

ADMINISTRATION Technical Services Director, Mrs. Miao Jin
REPORT:

Technical Services Mrs. Jin requested approval of payment of the OverDrive eBooks and eAudios annual
Report: purchase PO: \$11,000, but Chairman Jones said that the invoice would need to be reviewed by the Finance Committee before it can be approved.

Mrs. Jin also requested approval for payment of the invoice for EBSCO magazines and serials, in the approximate amount of \$8,975.44. This item had been presented to the Board at the last meeting.

Dr. Harrison moved, second by Mrs. Berry, that Mrs. Jin’s request for payment of the EBSCO Magazine/Newspaper and Serial Renewal invoice in the estimated amount of \$8,975.44 be accepted, not to exceed \$9,000.00. With neither opposition nor abstentions, the motion carried.

INTERIM EXECUTIVE Ms. Corbett reported her proposal to open the branches to having reserved time slots for
DIRECTOR’S REPORT: browsing and discussed the matter with the Board, which was receptive. As for the browsing appointments, Ms. Corbett explained that they would be for 30 minute periods, and she would type proposals and send them to the branches to both open the branches more and control patron traffic.



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Chairman Jones asked if there could be more computer access. Ms. Corbett replied that there are significant considerations – such as measuring the distances between computers -- with respect to social distancing and hygiene with respect to the pandemic. She said, though, especially with the larger branches, JHLS could move toward opening up more computers and time for patrons.

Ms. Corbett explained that she needs to hire a Branch Manager for the library in Edwards. Chairman Jones replied with he would confer with Human Resources on her request and later present recommendations to the Board.

Ms. Corbett reported that the funds from the CARES grant had been acquired and spent for COVID supplies. Additionally, she reported that the Mississippi Humanities Council is contributing a bookshelf to libraries in the state and has given JHLS \$1,500 for books for it.

Ms. Corbett ended her report with telling the Board what a good job the Public Services Staff has been doing in maintaining programming during the pandemic. One thing they have been doing, which Ms. Corbett lauded, is making videos for children, teens, and adults. LaTasha Willis was mentioned as having done an “unbelievably good job” with the videos. They can be found at the JHLS website and are on the JHLS YouTube channel. Other staff, also, are doing crafts that can be picked up at library branches to be taken home.

Ms. Corbett requested the Board’s attention to the proposed JHLS Calendar for 2020/2021 and explained the holidays requested.

Dr. Harrison moved, second by Mrs. Berry, to approve the proposed calendar for 2020/2021 as presented and explained by Ms. Corbett. With neither opposition nor abstentions, the motion carried.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT: Chairman Jones stated that much of what he had to discuss had been covered in the Audit Report and his report of the meeting with Jackson Hinds Administration and the meeting with the Hinds County Administration.

He reported that Hamer Library has gone through a major renovation, and one of the things that is needed at that library at this time is furniture that is befitting. He has received an estimate report of approximately \$10,000.00, and he requested a motion to permit that.

Dr. Harrison, second by Chester Ray Jones, approved the motion to furnish the Hamer Library, as is befitting, in an amount up to but not exceeding \$10,000.00 With neither opposition nor abstentions, the motion carried.



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Chairman Jones also discussed the lack of an employee with an MLS qualification at the Welty library. He is requesting guidance from JHLS staff and suggested they try to find someone “in house” to fill that position.

Chairman Jones continued his report by stating that reviews of the library branches for repairs, etc., are continuing. He concluded his report by stating there would be virtual training for the Trustees in their search for a new Executive Director.

OLD BUSINESS: 1. Election of Officers. This item was tabled from the September and October Board Meeting until the December Board Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: 1. Annual Audit for Fiscal Year 2019. The Auditors having presented the audit and having reviewed it with the Trustees,

Dr. Harrison Moved, second by Dr. Strickland, to accept the Audit for Fiscal Year 2019 as presented. With neither opposition nor abstentions, the motion carried.

DATE, TIME AND LOCATION FOR NEXT MEETING: Chairman Jones stated that the next meeting date is scheduled for Tuesday, December 1, 2020, at 4:00 p.m., at Eudora Welty Library.

ADJOURNMENT: ***Before the meeting adjourned, Chairman Jones asked that the work of the Board in this meeting be dedicated to the memory of Trustee Rev. Wayne McDaniels who died suddenly in October 2020.***

Dr. Harrison moved, second by Chairman Jones, that the meeting be adjourned. With neither opposition nor abstentions, the motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 6.58 p.m.