

St. John the Baptist Parish Library

**Special Call Meeting Minutes
of the
Library Board of Control
Friday, September 15, 2017
LaPlace, Louisiana
11:00 am
Central Library Meeting Room**

Present: Virgie Johnson, Brannetter James, Dardnella Clark, Norris Millet, Jr., Lisa Tregre-Wilder, Leatrice Arlie

Absent: N/A

Attorney: Henri Dufresne, Esq., Legal Representative from the St. John the Baptist Parish District Attorney's office was present.

Board President, Virgie Johnson, called the meeting to order at 11:02 am. Roll Call was done by Library Director, Trina C. Smith, who stated that there was a quorum.

Mrs. Johnson asked to have a motion to amend the agenda for a recommendation to the director, to place our former Assistant Director and Human Resources Manager, Tammy Houston, as a part-time, interim, assistant director until the vacancy is filled. Mr. Millet moved that we amend the agenda, which was seconded by Ms. Leatrice Arlie. Roll Call was done by Ms. Smith.

Attorney, Henri Dufresne asked to be brought in to advise Mrs. Johnson to ask if there were any public comments on the change of the agenda.

Next on the agenda were Public Comments, in which none were made.

The amended portion of the agenda was placed and addressed at that time. She then recommended to the board that we hire Ms. Houston as the interim assistant director to cover human resources management duties. Mr. Norris Millet asked if the position required 24 hours service, when Mrs. Lisa Tregre-Wilder stated that as a retiree, Ms. Houston can only work two days a week, to not exceed 400 hours within a calendar year.

Mrs. Brannetter James asked Ms. Smith if she was in need of an assistant director immediately, which her response was no. She explained that after being with the library for a year, she has learned that human resource matters do not occur on a daily basis, and if a situation were to occur, there are resources that I can tap into such as the State Library of Louisiana, other public library directors within the state, and the official website for the federal Department of Labor and their Wage and Hour Division.

Mrs. James asked how long the position would be open, with Ms. Smith's answer being with the board's approval, it should be approximately one month. She further explained that the timeframe of having a part-time temporary assistant director to hiring a full-time one is not justifiable. Ms. Smith also stated that she was brought in to do a job, to where she would be trusted to make decisions and, as a librarian, to reach out to established resources and do research to find answers and solutions to human resource related issues. The position would be posted on the state library's website and at the library branches. Ms. Smith explained that the applications would be reviewed by the hiring committee that consist of Ms. Clark, Mrs. James, Mrs. Johnson, and Ms. Smith. The applications will be collected and include two previous applicants who applications are on still as of June 2017.

Mrs. Johnson reiterated that our legal representation was only hired for the library board, not the administration. The administration would have to retain a labor attorney to have all legal questions answered. She further explained that Ms. Smith is not in a position to hear employees' grievances as she is not experienced in human resources management. Mrs. Johnson mentioned that although the former director, Randy DeSoto, did fulfill HR duties for a span of time, he could not do so for a longer length of time. Therefore, he had to delegate some of the responsibilities to another staff member until he hired the appropriate member to fulfill those duties. Mrs. Smith explained to the board there are library systems across the state that do not have assistant directors, nor human resources managers to perform those exact duties, that are in compliance with labor laws. The work is done by the director. Mrs. Smith did not accept the recommendation.

Ms. Clark stated that the part-time employees do not have to have board approval, and if Ms. Smith does not have anyone in mind, that should be up to her. Mrs. Wilder interjected that Ms. Smith does not have anyone in mind. Ms. Clark further stated that when the library was without a business manager, then former board president, Mr. Millet, recommended that the former business manager return temporarily until a permanent one was hired. Mrs. Johnson further explained that the reason why we have meetings and recommendation is to suggest what is best for the entity, and that nothing was written in stone.

Mrs. Wilder asked if there was anyone that Ms. Smith had in mind as a part-time, temporary assistant director, in which she stated no. Mrs. Wilder stated that it would be extremely difficult for Ms. Smith, as a new director, to take on the responsibilities of an assistant director since she has only been here for a year, as it would be a detriment to the entity. Mrs. Wilder stated that it would set Ms. Smith up to fail as a director.

Ms. Smith asked Mrs. Wilder when the person who had previously been in the position to make HR decisions without being the manager at the time, didn't they have to reach out other professionals outside of the library to answer legal and HR questions. Mrs. Wilder stated that Ms. Houston had 28 many years of experience in HR, while Ms. Smith stated that was not true, she had less. Mrs. Johnson interjected that the director has made her decision, which was corrected by legal counsel to make the recommendation to the director to accept Ms. Tammy Houston back as the part-time, assistant director. Roll Call was done by Ms. Smith. Legal counsel stated according to *Louisiana Statute Article 4*, that in the event of a tie, the resolution fails and no recommendation is made.

Yeas 3 Nays 3 Abstain 0

Under New Business, the Pay Scale Adjustment Letters were recognized by Mrs. Johnson and passed on to Library Director Smith. Ms. Smith stated that she had written a letter to each board member and affected employee, to explain that the error was made by Ms. Smith and then Assistant Director, Jose Ocasio. Mr. Ocasio had given Ms. Smith the incorrect pay scale dated January 2017, which was not board-approved, instead of the board-approved November 2015 one. The recent hires, two professionals, and three paraprofessionals were informed that they needed to pay back the library, which was cumulatively, less than 50 dollars. The two professionals remained at their pay rate due to the years of experience they brought to the position. Mrs. Wilder asked what the difference in would be between Step 1 and Step 2, at the same grade, in which Ms. Smith stated roughly 70 cents. Mrs. Johnson asked if there were any questions.

The next item on the agenda was the resignation of Assistant Director, Jose Ocasio. Mrs. Johnson stated that she had received the letter, along with the other board members. Ms. Smith passed the letter on to Mrs. Johnson to respond to it. The COBRA letter was also submitted to Mr. Ocasio. She stated that he did not depart from the library on the date stated in the letter, which should have been, August 15, but instead his last day was August 8. The entity never received a separate letter stating that he would leave a week earlier. Ms. Smith stated that she could ask Mr. Ocasio to submit another letter with the last day of employment as August 8, 2017. Once Mrs. Johnson received that letter, she could then respond to his resignation. Ms. Leatrice Arlie asked why the board would receive the letter, in which Mrs. Johnson's response was because the board hires the director, which is in the Policy and Procedures Manual. The policy was amended before a director was hired. She also mentioned that policies can be changed with assistance from the board's legal counsel.

The vacancy announcement for the Assistant Director's position was the next item called by Mrs. Johnson. Ms. Smith asked if the title of the position should be changed since we no longer need someone with library experience, and more of someone with human resource management experience. She explained that the new Acquisitions Librarian is very hands on, system-wide, in updating all of the collections. The new librarian is in the process of training the branch supervisors some of the aspects of collection development, such as weeding and collection maintenance. Ms. Smith pointed out that her

suggested changes were highlighted in red, such as the years of experience that is required. Neither do they need to have public library experience.

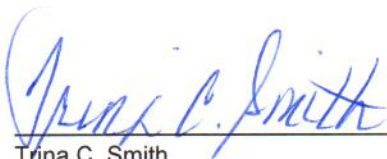
Mrs. Wilder said that the duties should remain the same, as Mrs. Johnson stated that those were the changes that had been made previously. She said she would prefer to have someone with public library experience. Mrs. James asked if we would need to change the title, as Ms. Smith stated that we would rather have someone with some library experience and preferably someone from within the parish. We are only hiring one person with the title of assistant director. Ms. Clark agreed with Mrs. Johnson that we should hire someone with library experience. Her suggestion was that the years of experience should be changed from 7 to 5+ years. Mr. Millet asked, in comparison to other library systems of our size, how is the pay? Ms. Smith answer was that the pay is very well for our library system.

Mrs. Wilder suggested that the job be posted on Indeed.com and NOLA's websites for job announcements. Mrs. Wilder made a motion to change the years of experience from 7 to 5+ years in a public library setting. Seconded by Ms. Clark and Roll Call was done by Ms. Smith.

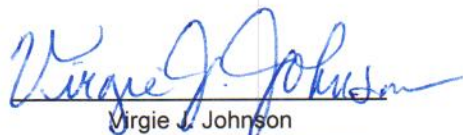
Motion passed. Mrs. Johnson stated that the posting shall be up from September 18 to October 16 and applications are to be sent to the hiring committee, Mrs. James, Mrs. Johnson, Ms. Clark and Ms. Smith. Mrs. Johnson stated that there was no rush. Ms. Clark expressed that no envelopes addressed to Mrs. Johnson are to be opened until all of the committee members meet for selection. She also agreed that it shall be posted to Indeed.com and NOLA as to have a wider pool to select from.

The next scheduled board meeting is Monday, October 16 at 6:00 pm at the Central Library Meeting Room.

Mr. Millet made a motion for the meeting to be adjourned, which was seconded by Mrs. Wilder. Meeting was adjourned.



Trina C. Smith
Library Director
St. John the Baptist Parish Library



Virgie J. Johnson
Library Board President
St. John the Baptist Parish Library
Board of Control