

**Pointe Coupee Parish Library
Board of Control
June 11, 2021**

Call to Order

Wylene Hurst, Library Board President, called the meeting of the Pointe Coupee Parish Library Board of Control to order at 2:00pm.

Roll Call

Present: Ms. Lucy Boley, Ms. Philomena Fontenot, Mrs. Grace Hebert, Ms. Wylene Hurst, Mrs. MaryHelen McCoy and Mrs. Kate Roy. Also present was Parish President Major Thibaut and State Librarian Rebecca Hamilton.

Absent:

Presidential Welcome

President Hurst welcomed the many individuals from the community and the public officials who joined us for the Grand Opening of the Livonia Branch Library. Her statement to the public included the following verbiage:

"The building that we present to you today is the final project of the October 17, 2009 millage renewal promise to the citizens of this area. Geraldine Martin, president of the Library Board at the time asked each citizen for their support of the millage renewal and in kind, all attempts would be made to provide a new building to the community of Livonia and its surrounding area.

It has taken the Library Board, along with representatives of the Parish government, 12 years of saving the necessary funds to purchase land, erect this building and fully equip the facility for the betterment of Pointe Coupee.

A debt of gratitude is extended to our current board members who have had the foresight to know the importance of this project and its impact on our community. I would like to recognize Library Board Vice President Grace Hebert, Mary Helen McCoy, Lucy Boley, Philomena Fontenot, Kate Roy and Mr. Donald Ewing for their dedication and service to our public library system.

I must express the Library Board's appreciation to Melissa Hymel, our Library Director and her staff for the many hours of tireless work in overseeing the completion of this project.

To the communities of Valverde, Livonia, Torbert, Grosse Tete, Fordoche, Lottie and Oscar: The Pointe Coupee Parish Library has today fulfilled its promise made in 2009 to your communities in providing you all with a public library that you can all be proud of calling your own."

Presentation of Colors

Boy Scout Troop 66 presented the Colors and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation

Library Board member Philomena Fontenot led those present in an invocation.

Remarks

Wylene Hurst spoke on behalf of the Library Board of Control.

Parish President Major Thibaut, on behalf of the Pointe Coupee Parish Government, stated how impressive this project was to the people of Pointe Coupee. He commended the Library Administration on its ability to save enough monies without having to ask the parish for assistance. President Thibaut also spoke of the significance of having a new library in the southern portion of Pointe Coupee, easily accessible to those in the neighboring communities.

Rebecca Hamilton, Louisiana State Librarian, commended the Pointe Coupee Parish Library and its Director on a job well done. She mentioned that she was raised in Erwinville and as a child of a farmer, she personally would have enjoyed using this new facility. Hamilton stated her fondness for Pointe Coupee and its dedicated library community.

Closing Remarks

Melissa Hymel, Director of the Pointe Coupee Parish Library System, had the following to say in closing: "We are honored to share with you a dream that has taken us nearly 15 years to bring to fruition.

Our new Livonia Branch Library has become affectionately referred to as THE BEAST by those of us who have dealt with its design and construction on a daily basis. We first had to save every extra penny in our annual budgets over a 15-year period to accumulate enough monies to actually afford this building. The Library Board of Control chose not to add a Bond burden on the tax payers – rather frugal spending over this time eventually lead to enough savings to construct, furnish and stock the shelves of the new library. I must note that when this building was first advertised, the bids were totally off kilter due in large part to what I often term “ARCHITECTURAL WASTE LAND”. We rejected the first bids, reduced the size and specialty items in the original plan and re-bid a more efficient floor plan that DID come into a workable budget.

If ever there is a severe weather condition such as a DROUGHT, just ask me to sign a construction project. In October 2019, we were experiencing an extremely dry period with No-Burn orders in affect at the time. The exact week documents were signed, it rained. And it continued to rain for 2 months. Then we had a severe cold period with Snow and ice. Mud, mud and more mud. The weather was nice for only a few months before the pandemic – yes, THE PANDEMIC hit. I’m telling you I felt cursed. The Electrical crew developed COVID, recovered, and then the AC crew developed COVID, recovered, and then the finishing crew developed COVID and recovered. Months went by as things slowly progressed. But the COVID pandemic wasn’t finished with us yet. VITAL components weren’t available, furnishings weren’t available, computers, computer components, windows, doors...all of the necessary pieces were back ordered because of COVID. Even to this day, we still have pieces that are not yet ready because we are awaiting product manufacturing and distribution. BUT we do have books on our shelves and we have programs ready to roll. The children of Livonia WILL have a Summer Reading Program this year!

I would be remiss if I did not thank a few people who have helped immeasurably with this project:

Brian Cifreo with Livonia Lumber who sold us this beautiful lot at an extremely fair price.

Scotty Lejeune and his mom Barbara Lejeune who helped solve a major problem.

Little Ricky David with the town of Livonia for everything he managed to accomplish and his ability to fix any and all problems. If we had a question about what was where – just ask Ricky.

Maurice Picard for his invaluable historic information on the area and its resources. His enthusiasm for this project was heartwarming.

Ed Sanchez who came into this project with one objective – to make sure it was done correctly and to specifications. His professionalism was and still is greatly appreciated.

Andy Chustz and Johnny Sparks for their dedication to detail and their assistance wherever and whenever needed. They were my eyes when I could not be on site.

Robert Bob Allen who worked miracles in finding and installing key components when no one else could. I have to admit that he solved one of our major problems with just a phone call.

Tommy Leonard who helped make sure that all codes were followed and was available with names, numbers and instant responses to sometimes dreaded situations.

David Mougeot with Mougeot Architecture who became our Professional of Record and took a crazy schematic and worked miracles to provide a quality structure.

Mark Wilson with MA Wilson Contractors who gave us a quality product.

Our Pointe Coupee Parish Council and its President Major Thibaut who were supportive of our endeavors throughout all phases of this project. Their patience and kindness were truly appreciated especially during the pandemic. Their continued support of our millage is extremely reassuring.

Eric Johnson with the State Fire Marshall’s Office who had our best interests constantly at the forefront and made sure all parties stuck to the rules.

Ronnie Collins who gave us a unique mural, depicting characters of favorite classic children’s books.

Henry Watson, Livonia’s native son, with his positive attitude and belief in his public library. His one of a kind pieces of art hang on our walls and stand to enhance the story of the people of this parish and particularly those who visit this library on a daily basis.

The staff of the Pointe Coupee Parish Library who worked constantly and efficiently to pull this building together and make it a library. They have moved the books in this building more times than even they want to admit.

To the Library Board of Control, I say thank you for believing in the vision when I said I knew we could provide a quality building with great resources that would last long beyond our lifetimes. And to those Library Board members over the years who had faith that with determination, with fortitude, with vision.... we CAN make dreams come true. This is truly a Place Where Magic Happens.

I hope and pray that the citizens of Pointe Coupee Parish will be proud of this facility. It belongs to the people and they have waited a long time for this day. Welcome to the Pointe Coupee Parish Library Livonia Branch. It’s yours. Enjoy.”

Ribbon Cutting

On behalf of the Pointe Coupee Parish Library Board, Director, Staff and citizens, the opening ribbon was cut by 5-year-old Junior Library Volunteer Miss Chloe.

Closing

President Hurst invited the public to join us in touring our new Livonia Branch Library. The crowd of nearly 400 people then proceeded to join all in opening the new library doors.

Melissa Hymel, Secretary
October 13, 2021