

St. Charles Parish Library

Board of Control Meeting
January 20, 2026 at 6:00pm

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the St. Charles Parish Library Board of Control was held at 6:00pm, Tuesday, January 20, 2026 in Council Chambers at the Courthouse in Hahnville.

Members Present: Beverly DeLaune, Randy Matherne, Charlene Alexander-Armstrong, Sarah Sacra, Lindsey Tullier, and Holly Fonseca

Members Absent: Stephanie Mire and Robin Robicheaux

Staff Present: Leann Benedict

Others: Justin Aubert, Kelsey Rogers, and Lauren Stelly

Mr. Matherne called the meeting to order and asked all to stand for a moment of silent prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Matherne asked for approval of the minutes of the November 18, 2025 and December 17, 2025 meetings. Mrs. Armstrong moved that the minutes from both meetings be approved as e-mailed. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Sacra and passed unanimously.

The attendance report for board members was completed.

The next agenda item was Scheduled Public Comment. There were no requests for public comment.

The next agenda item was the Librarian's Report. Mrs. Benedict gave the following report:

We kicked off the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program at the beginning of January and as of January 12th we had 33 children already signed up for it. As I mentioned at our November meeting, 1000 Books Before Kindergarten is a reading program that encourages parents and caregivers to read 1000 books with their children before they start kindergarten. The goal is to help children develop early literacy skills like speaking, listening, and communicating, and to build their confidence as readers. It can also help parents and children bond through reading. When signing up, parents or caregivers will receive a packet that includes a fun booklet that can be used to track the number of books read, and for every 100 books read, children can come to the library to receive a milestone sticker and prize. When they reach 1000 books, they will receive a completion prize. Parents and caregivers can find more information on our website at www.myscpl.org/1000books.

The Library was closed on December 5th for an all-staff training day. This was also the day of the kick-off for the Americans and the Holocaust Exhibit so staff spent the morning learning more about the exhibit by experiencing the field trip experience that the students who would be visiting would go through. We also handed out service awards and then staff spent the afternoon working on special projects at their branches. That evening we held the opening reception for the exhibit which was attended by 60 patrons. We want to say special thanks to the Friends of the Library for providing refreshments and helping out with the reception.

The Americans and the Holocaust exhibit was on display and open to the public from December 5th – January 10th and it was very successful and brought lots of patrons to the library. We hosted field trips for 982 students, and 106 chaperones and school administrators from six St. Charles Public schools, two private schools, Homeschool groups and a Girl Scout group. There were 23 library staff members who helped run field trip stations, and the National WWII Museum Education Department hosted a station, bringing 2-3 members of their team to engage with the students. We also hosted nine different programs in conjunction with the exhibit with 241 in attendance at those. In addition to the programs and field trips, we complemented the exhibit with a local artifact display, curated by the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience. We featured two book displays and a local history display curated by Rachel Allemand that featured local servicemen and women as well as local news headlines. We offered passive programming through the Butterfly Project, which served as a reflection area and another way for patrons to engage with the topic and themes. The Butterfly Project allowed us to engage the St. Charles Art Guild for elevated pieces of art to get our project started, and visitors to the area could create their own butterfly with provided templates and colors. On November 8, The National WWII Museum hosted a professional development day for educators at the East Regional Library. This workshop was led by WWII Museum staff Angelle Meltz, MPA, Teacher Outreach Specialist and Sarah Wehlage, MA, NBCT, Assistant Director of Teacher Programs. All in all, it was a great experience, and we received great feedback from people who attended. I'd like to take a moment to thank Adult Programming and Outreach Librarian Maria Bilello and Assistant Director Lauren Pitz along with all our staff members who helped to make this so successful. This was truly a team effort!

In staffing news, we have several internal staff changes happening this month.

- Brenda Guillot retired from the library on January 5th after 16 years of service. Brenda began working at the East Regional Library as a part-time circulation assistant in January of 2010 and was promoted to a full-time circulation assistant in November of 2015.
- Claire Cermak, Supervisor at the West Regional Library, will be retiring from the library on January 30, 2026 with more than 50 years of service. Claire worked for the library from 1972 – 1981, left for a brief period and returned in 1982 as a part-

time assistant. She then became full-time and was promoted to Circulation Supervisor in 1988.

We are very sad to be losing both Brenda and Claire, but are happy for them and wish them all the best on their well-deserved retirements. With Claire's retirement we have had several transitions happening at the library.

- Destani Clement, who has been the circulation supervisor at the Hahnville Branch since 2021, will be replacing Claire at West as the Circulation Librarian. Destani recently received her master's degree in library and information science.
- Francesca Landry, who has been a full-time circulation assistant at Paradis since 2023, has been promoted to Circulation Supervisor for the Hahnville Branch.
- Monica LeBlanc, who has been working as a part-time circulation assistant at Paradis since 2024, is being promoted to full-time assistant at Paradis to replace Francesca.

The next agenda item was Communications. There were no communications.

The first item of unfinished business was the Hurricane Ida Recovery Update. Mrs. Benedict informed the board that at the beginning of December she met with Parish President Jewell and COO Darrin Duhe. At this meeting they were informed that the Hurricane Ida lawsuit with the insurance company had been settled and that funds had been distributed to the library. Mrs. Benedict confirmed with the parish finance department that the library had recently received \$293,431.94 from insurance fund. In 2022 the library received \$108,600 from building insurance, so this brings the total reimbursement for building repairs from insurance to \$402,031.94. The library also recently received \$60,420.97 from FEMA. Mrs. Benedict also informed the board members that she had been told that this is all that the library will receive from building insurance and that unfortunately no one was made whole in the settlement. The board asked how much the library had spent on building repairs. Mrs. Benedict told them that, according to library records, the library had spent \$1,495,014.96 on building-related expenses from Hurricane Ida.

The next item of unfinished business was the Hahnville Branch Library Construction project. The first item under this section was a presentation of the current design and renderings by the architects. Justin Aubert and Kelsey Rogers from Grace Design Studios presented to the board the current design plans, including flooring, paint colors, and other design elements that have been selected and answered any questions that the board members had. The second item under this section was review and approval of the early release package. Lauren Stelly from Woodward Design+Build presented the early release proposal and answered questions from the library board. After a brief discussion, Mrs. Armstrong made a motion to approve the early release pack. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matherne and passed unanimously.

The first item of new business was the election of Board officers for the 2026 term. Mrs. DeLaune declared all positions vacant and turned the meeting over to Mrs. Benedict. Mrs. Benedict asked if there were any nominations for the position of President for the 2026 term. Mr. Matherne nominated Mrs. Beverly DeLaune to serve as President for 2026 and Mrs. Sacra seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and Mrs. DeLaune was elected as President of the Library Board for 2026. Mrs. Benedict then asked if there were any nominations for the position of Vice-President for the 2026 term. Mrs. DeLaune nominated Mr. Randy Matherne and Mrs. Tullier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and Mr. Matherne was elected as Vice-President of the Library Board for 2026. Mrs. Benedict turned the meeting over to Board President, Mrs. Beverly DeLaune.

The next item of new business was the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire, Resolution 26-1. Mrs. DeLaune read the resolution, and Mrs. Benedict gave a brief explanation. Mrs. Armstrong made a motion to adopt the resolution. Mrs. Sacra seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was Public Comment. There was no public comment.

There being no further business, Mrs. DeLaune called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Matherne moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Armstrong seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:

Beverly DeLaune, President
St. Charles Parish Library Board

Leann Benedict, Secretary
St. Charles Parish Library Board