

Audubon Regional Library Board of Commissioners
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 15, 2026, 5:00 pm
11023 Bank Street, Clinton, LA 70722

Regular Board Meeting called to order at 5:12 pm by President Roderick Matthews. Invocation by R. Matthews and Pledge of Allegiance led by Martin Macdiarmid.

Roll Call. Present, Martin Macdiarmid, Larry Charles Freeman, Jermi Adams, Markell Lewis, Roderick Matthews, St. Helena Ex-Officio Quanika Muse, East Feliciana Ex-Officio Louis Kent. Absent. None. Quorum noted and established.

Approval of the Agenda. Motion, Jermi Adams. Second, Martin Macdiarmid and all approved. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment. Public comments made by Debbie Kent, Jim Moss, CPA, Marsha Kemp, April Newsome, Kathleen Womack, and Aubrey LeGette in support of keeping the library system as is.

Unfinished Business. Approval of previous meeting minutes dated May 20, 2026. Motion. Jermi Adams. Second, Martin Macdiarmid and all approved. Motion passed unanimously. Approval of Profit & Loss Statement, Financial & Investment Report. Tim Butler, Independent Third-Party Oversight, presented the balance sheet through June 30, 2026, noting the funds balances. He presented the budget vs. actual report and stated that there were no discrepancies and that the operating expenses are stable. He stated that the library is operating within the 5% budget variance, and he will meet with administration before the next regular meeting to amend, if necessary. He stated that the library financials are running smoothly and asked if there were any questions. Approval of Profit & Loss Statement, Financial & Investment. Motion, Martin Macdiarmid. Second, Jermi Adams and all approved. Motion passed unanimously. Approval of Credit/Debit Bank Expenditures. After the credit/bank expenditures were presented, Jermi Adams motioned to approve. Larry Charles Freeman seconded and all approved. The motion passed unanimously. Financials at Audubon Regional Library. Tim Butler stated that when the idea of separating the system was brought to him, he decided to educate himself on the question of who pays for Audubon Regional Library. He found that the ordinances & by-laws of both parishes for Audubon Regional Library only speak of funding the same amount of taxes in both, and the monies go into the general fund. He said that Audubon tracks the monies that come in, and not the expenses. Audubon Regional Library has three locations; the monies are shared to operate the three. He explained that the Jackson location lease is \$1865 a month and is in year four of a ten-year lease that covers all maintenance, sewer, water, & garbage. He continued that Clinton is in this beautiful building donated by the Clinton Presbyterian Church to the East Feliciana Police Jury for use by Audubon Regional Library and the library spent close to a million dollars to renovate it and they pay one dollar per year to the police jury on a long-term lease. The library pays all expenses and maintenance. He continued that the St. Helena Library acquired a building through a lease/purchase for \$1000 per month that was paid off in December 2025. That building will go to the St. Helena Police Jury when the new library project is completed in Greensburg by that police jury. He reminded the board that the library system cannot own a building, according to law. He said that the new library in Greensburg is funded by a Capital Outlay grant that started 10 years ago by the St. Helena Parish Police Jury and after many hurdles, is becoming a reality. Mr. Matthews said that the final figures were \$1.9 million capital outlay, and that police jury had to provide a \$700,000 match. Tim Butler moved the discussion to the assets of the library. He says that the system has no buildings but does have furniture and fixtures. He said that the figures show a million six in assets; about a million three and ½ half has been depreciated, leaving furniture and computers at about \$300,000. He said that the books are expensed at the bottom. They are not on a system of appreciation. The books are purchased and

cataloged to each branch and shared throughout the system. Next, Tim Butler explained the operating expenses. Over the past 2 years, East Feliciana contributed \$1.1 million and St. Helena \$145,000. The operation expense at the Jackson Library is currently \$141,000 a year, St. Helena's is \$154,000 which will be reduced by \$12,000 this year due to the payout of the lease/purchase. The operating expense of the Clinton Library is \$193,000 a year. The administration cost is split across the three branches. The total library expense budget is currently \$800,000. Tim Butler next explained that the federal E-Rate program for schools and libraries provides savings with a discount of 85 to 90% on the library system's technology, internet, Wi-Fi, voice phones, and computers. He said that e-rate is based on socio-economic indicators and square footage of the buildings. The libraries combined are 10,000 sq ft with the St. Helena branch having the most. This will increase when they move into the new library this year.

Finally, Tim Butler came to the original question of who pays for the library. He said after pulling historical records from the library and both parishes, there was not much of a difference between the two ad valorem taxes. The difference now is that the maritime companies which have made their domicile in East Feliciana might total 21 million dollars. He said that just this year, the top ten companies from out of state have contributed 13 million dollars to East Feliciana parish, roughly 61%. He reiterated, 61%. Tim Butler continued that there is a segment of residents that do not own property or pay ad valorem taxes, and there is a segment that are property owners and are getting a \$75,000 homestead exemption. He stated that if you live in East Feliciana, own a \$500,000 home with a \$75,000 exemption; your taxes for the library are \$25.50 a year. So, to answer the question, it's not the East Feliciana individual who is paying the bill. It is the outside companies domiciled here for the low tax rate who are paying. This allowed this system to grow. Tim finished by warning that statistically and financially, we are on a slippery slope and if one of these maritime companies decided to move out of East Feliciana parish, which is 25% gone. He said that the extra is a blessing for our parish to receive this money, and he thinks that Audubon Regional Library has taken full advantage of the extra money and really benefited but wonders if this can be relied on for the next 10 years. Finally, he said, "if it isn't broken, don't fix it."

2025 Audit Report by McDuffie Herrod. The 2025 audit report was presented in detail describing a clean audit indicating no material modifications needed and zero findings which were attributed to the diligence of the administrative staff and accountant. After answering a few questions from the library board, Mr. Herrod completed his presentation. Motion to accept the 2025 Audit Report. Jermi Adams. Second, Larry Charles Freeman and all approved. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION. Roderick Matthews stated that the library board wanted to do a review of strategies and planning for the system to move forward and asked the secretary to present motion for a roll call vote. Motion Roll Call Vote to Enter Executive Session. Roderick Matthews, yes. Martin Macdiarmid, yes. Larry Charles Freeman, yes. Jermi Adams, yes. Markell Lewis, yes. Louis Kent, yes. Quanika Muse, yes. Motion passed unanimously. Enter Executive Session with Tim Butler and Sam D'Aquila at 6:15 PM. Board Exited Executive Session 6:30 PM with a motion by Larry Charles Freeman and seconded by Martin Macdiarmid. Motion approved by all unanimously. Roderick Matthews stated that there was no action taken in the executive session. First Guaranty Bank Remove/Add Signors. Motion, Larry Charles Freeman. Second, Jermi Adams and all approved. Motion passed unanimously. Support Administrative Manager. Motion by Jermi Adams to have continued support for the administrative manager from the interim assistant director until a new director is hired. Second, Martin Macdiarmid and all approved. Motion passed unanimously. Director Recruitment Ad. Martin Macdiarmid asked the board for any suggestions to the Director Recruitment Ad in their packets. After discussion, Jermi Adams motioned to start the advertised starting pay as \$60,000+ based on education & experience. Second, Larry Charles Freeman and all approved. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS St. Helena Library Moving Quote from Quality Movers. Peggy Stafford presented the board with 2 scenarios for professional services from Quality Movers reminding them that as the job was under the \$60,000 Public Bid Law threshold and Audubon used Quality Movers on several previous moves with exceptional results; the job was not bid out. After discussion, Jermi Adams motioned for Scenario # 1 of moving the total collection, furniture, office equipment, kitchen, and managers office for \$36,779, plus the decommissioned current library shelving units and any other surplus furniture for final disposition for \$3,778.65. Second, Martin Macdiarmid and all approved. Motion passed unanimously. Library Furniture Quote. April Newsome presented Library Interiors' two quotes of furniture styles with the option of all new furniture and shelving or a mix of new and old shelving. After discussion, Jermi Adams motioned to choose the modern style new furniture at an estimated cost of \$150,000. Second, Martin Macdiarmid and all approved. Motion passed unanimously. Clinton Library Parking Lot & Playground Maintenance. Peggy Stafford presented the board with a price of \$5000, the best of 3 quotes for Tree Service at the Clinton library location. She also asked for approval to seek maintenance bids for the location. Jermi Adams stated that she should seek bids for Clinton and the new Greensburg location.

Martin Macdiarmid motioned to accept the \$5000 bid for the Tree Service for the Clinton library and to seek maintenance bids for Clinton and Greensburg. Jermi Adams seconded and all approved. The motion passed unanimously.

LOCATION, DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING. Wednesday, October 21, 2026, 5 pm at Jackson branch, 2637 LA-10, Suite B, Jackson, LA 70748

ADJOURNMENT Motion to Adjourn by Larry Charles Freeman. Second, Jermi Adams and all approved. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm.