

Recent commentary by Jeff Sadow alleges that the Bossier Parish Police Jury is operating the Bossier Parish Library System unlawfully. Those claims rely on selective statutory reading, omit controlling legal authority, and ignore the factual context that required corrective action by the Parish. What follows is a point-by-point response grounded in Louisiana law and the public record.

Claim: The Police Jury unlawfully “eliminated” or displaced the Library Board of Control.

Response: Louisiana law has never stripped a parish governing authority of ultimate responsibility for institutions it creates and funds. Under La. R.S. 42:64(A)(1) and Article VI, Section 15 of the Louisiana Constitution, a local governmental subdivision may appoint members of its own governing body to boards and commissions it creates and over which it exercises general powers. This authority has been repeatedly recognized by the Louisiana Attorney General, including in formal opinions directly addressing library boards. The Police Jury did not abolish the library board in violation of law; it exercised its lawful authority to ensure governance consistent with statute, fiscal responsibility, and public accountability.

Claim: Parish jurors cannot serve as the library governing authority because of dual office-holding prohibitions.

Response: This assertion ignores the express statutory exception. La. R.S. 42:64(A)(1) explicitly allows local governing bodies to appoint their own members to boards they create. The Attorney General has confirmed—more than once—that parish officials may lawfully serve on library boards of control, even where the parish exercises budgetary oversight. The law could not be clearer on this point.

Claim: The Parish is violating library statutes by assuming policy and budget oversight.

Response: The governing authority’s role is defined by statute. La. R.S. 25:214–215 assigns the library board responsibility for internal policies while reserving to the governing authority appointment power, fiscal oversight, and approval of budgets and tax propositions. When a board ceases to function lawfully or effectively, the governing authority does not lose its statutory duties; it must fulfill them. Oversight of public funds and public policy is not interference—it is the job the law assigns to elected officials.

Claim: The Parish’s actions undermine transparency and public participation.

Response: The opposite is true. Previously, the library board met infrequently in library conference rooms with limited public visibility. Today, the library budget is presented publicly at the parish seat, discussed in open Police Jury meetings, livestreamed, archived, and subject to public comment. The Jury now conducts library business twice monthly in full view of the public, requires monthly reporting by the library director, and subjects operations to direct questioning by both citizens and elected officials. Transparency has increased dramatically.

Claim: The Parish acted for ideological or political reasons rather than governance concerns.

Response: This narrative omits the precipitating facts. In or around 2021, the Police Jury learned that the citizen board had been materially misled by then-executive library leadership. Policies had been implemented allowing minors access to materials widely regarded by the community as objectionable, parental consent rules were reversed from opt-in to opt-out, such materials were placed in common reading areas accessible to children, significant public funds were spent curating ideologically driven collections, and library operations expanded into social-service and

immigration-processing functions far beyond the statutory mission of a public library. These were governance failures, not political abstractions.

Claim: Budget reductions and staffing changes evidence improper control.

Response: Fiscal stewardship is a statutory obligation, not a violation. Since assuming direct oversight, the Police Jury has reduced staffing by approximately 25 percent, curtailed discretionary purchases, and imposed budget discipline consistent with taxpayer expectations. The Parish remains responsible for approving expenditures and ensuring public funds are spent lawfully and prudently. Exercising that responsibility is neither unusual nor unlawful.

Claim: The Parish is acting outside long-standing library governance norms.

Response: Louisiana law does not enshrine custom over statute. The governing authority that creates, funds, and answers to the public for a library system retains ultimate responsibility when governance breaks down. Attorney General opinions spanning decades confirm this principle. Democratic accountability is not a defect in the system; it is its design.

Conclusion:

Policy disagreements about library content and operations are legitimate subjects of public debate. But disagreement should not be mischaracterized as illegality. The Bossier Parish Police Jury acted within express statutory and constitutional authority, in response to documented governance failures, and with greater transparency than existed before. The law entrusts elected officials—not unelected administrators—with ultimate responsibility for public institutions and public funds. The Parish has fulfilled that duty.

Patrick R. Jackson
Bossier Parish Attorney