

LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, JULY 18, 2023
WALT BRANCH PUBLIC LIBRARY
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Sloan, Lisa Hale, Donna Marvin, Joe Shaw, Jackie Ostrowicki, Morgan Gerteisen, Nichole Bogen present. Absent: Rhonda Seacrest

CALL TO ORDER AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF POSTING OF OPEN MEETINGS ACT

President Dan Sloan noted that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. He announced the Open Meetings Act was posted and available for review.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

President Sloan noted that the Agenda and Meeting Notice were posted according to the Open Meetings Act of the State of Nebraska. Sloan moved a change in the order of the agenda to accommodate the BVH architects attending the meeting via Zoom for a short time. He proposed moving agenda item #6 to *after* #7 *New Business*. Marvin seconded. There was no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Sloan, Gerteisen, Hale, Marvin, Ostrowicki, Shaw – AYE. Motion carried 6-0.

Sloan asked for a motion to approve the re-ordered Agenda. Hale so moved. Marvin seconded. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Gerteisen, Hale, Marvin, Ostrowicki, Shaw, Sloan – AYE. Motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

President Sloan asked if there was any public comment on items on the Agenda. Jessica Wersky, 1330 N. 79th St. spoke in support of the appeal to the Request for Reconsideration before the Board.

APPROVAL OF June 20, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

President Sloan noted the Minutes of the June 20, 2023 meeting had been submitted. Shaw asked for a change of wording on page two, to clarify that his assistance on the South Branch mural project was requested owing to his position as Executive Director for the Lux Center for the Arts. Sloan concurred. Hale asked for a change in the paragraph on the vacancy process, changing “approve the Committee’s choice at the August meeting” to the “July meeting”. Sloan concurred. There was no further discussion. Sloan asked for a motion to approve the corrected Minutes. Ostrowicki moved approval. Gerteisen seconded. There was no discussion. Sloan asked for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Hale, Marvin, Ostrowicki, Shaw, Sloan, Gerteisen – AYE. Motion carried 6-0.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee on Administration

Recommendation for Appointment to the Library Board

Sloan reported that he, Marvin and Hale met, reviewed the of nominees, good discussions were had. Four finalists were chosen, one withdrew due to an unexpected move away from Lincoln. The committee interviewed the three remaining candidates. The unanimous decision is to recommend Patty Beutler for the open Library Board position. Sloan asked for a motion. Marvin so moved. Hale seconded. Ostrowicki expressed support for the nomination, saying Beutler is passionate about the work of the library for a long time and will do good work. Director Wieber noted that Beutler's name will go before the City Council in July and be submitted for final approval in August. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Marvin, Ostrowicki, Shaw, Sloan, Gerteisen, Hale – AYE. Motion carried 6-0. Sloan noted that although Board Member, Rhonda Seacrest was unable to attend this evening, she had shared her support of the nominee with him prior to the meeting.

Request for Reconsideration Appeal

President Sloan noted that the Request for Reconsideration of the title, "Being You: A First Conversation about Gender" was submitted first to the Library committee, who brought their findings to the Director. The Director determined that the book in question should stay in the collection and should stay shelved in youth nonfiction. Ms. Wersky appealed that determination to the Library Board. Sloan reported that the Committee met to discuss the appeal. They all read the book and had a robust discussion. This request necessitated much thought, discussion and research which finally resulted in the committee's decision to deny the appeal and keep the book in the juvenile non-fiction collection.

Sloan reiterated that the library's position is to support freedom of information, and that it is the responsibility of parents, not the library, to guide their own children's reading. Sloan moved to deny the appeal and keep the book in the collection. Hale seconded. Discussion: Hale noted that while this book isn't written like a traditional children's book, it was written by an early childhood development professional. Similar to the last book discussed, the library collection holds materials on both sides of the topic discussed in the book, and all have been maintained in the collection. She noted that the Board members play no favorites and take no sides, we are upholding the freedom of information. Marvin commented, I believe in democracy and freedom of speech, and I'm not afraid of books. She noted, Many of books have been challenged in our lifetime, and although this book isn't one I'd choose to read personally, I have the right to make the decision of whether or not to read a book. We can't be afraid of different points of view. Sloan expressed his reluctance to make black and white choices for everyone. He said, Just because the majority of people have a certain point of view, that doesn't necessarily make it true for everyone. Alternate and minority points of view need to be protected inside safe boundaries, and I don't find this outside those boundaries.

Sloan called for the vote, YAY to retain the book, NAY to remove the book. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Ostrowicki, Shaw, Sloan, Gerteisen, Hale, Marvin – AYE. Motion carried 6-0.

Committee on Buildings and Grounds

No meeting. No report.

Committee on Finance

Approval of Monthly Recap of Expenditures for June 2023

Marvin reported total Operational Expenditures of \$1,031,201.70 and total Expenditures from Other Funds of \$154,578.26 for a total of \$1,185,799.96. Marvin moved approval. Shaw seconded. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Shaw, Sloan, Gerteisen, Hale, Marvin, Ostrowicki, – AYE. Motion carried 6-0.

Finance Committee Report

Sloan reported that the Committee met. Sloan attended for Marvin, who was away. Director Wieber and Library Accountant Paul Jones presented the Year-to-Date budget report. He noted, all spending looks well within the budget. The report was emailed to the Board, if you have any questions, Jones is available. Bogen thanked Jones for his skillful and transparent work.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Contract with BVH Architecture for Phase 1 Services: Public Engagement for Future Libraries Planning

Sloan shared that he'd read through the contract, and invited Director Wieber to introduce the guests from attending via Zoom. Wieber introduced Cleve Reeves, and Mark Bacon from Architectural firm, BVH (offices in Lincoln, Omaha and Denver) and Matthew Krontorad from partnering firm, MSR Design (offices in Minneapolis, Ogden and Palm Springs).

Wieber shared that the contract reflects a request for up to \$184,000 for Phase 1 architectural services to include assessing facilities, and engaging in robust public engagement phase throughout the fall. We will go out to the community, very visibly present the needs of the library: What we're doing, what we can do better. We'll get feedback from community and library users and take a wholistic look at the library system, then come back at the end of fall with a full proposal. BVH and MSR together have previously been involved and are excited to restart future plans.

A four-month process July-Oct is planned to complete background and research A space needs analysis and use assessment will follow. In August architects will be on site at each location to identify needs and desires for future programming. Regarding Task C engagement – the plan sets aside one 8 hour day each week in September at the four quadrant libraries, to engage with the public. An exploratory committee has begun with Sloan, Ostrowicki and Hale, Glass, Project Control and Architects. Important decisions will be made with help from staff and branch managers, on who to consider for community engagement. Wieber expressed, we can't do it alone, need to get the right folks around the table. This part of the process will conclude, ideally near the end of October, with a report from BVH on what direction to go. Wieber invited the architects to elaborate.

Reeves: this will help the community change focus on JUST the central branch and open up possibilities to what the future might be for the whole system. The conversation with the community is critical.

Krontorad: Allow the community to change the narrative, not be told what it is. Bacon: Great step forward. Context – initial phase is listening to the community – taking in current conditions – facilities and needs – interpret in context of what's going on nationally and worldwide – what services CAN be

provided. Plan to define all needs today and future, scalable and executable for what the community wants to do.

Shaw asked if BVH had worked on similar projects in other cities. Kruntorad shared, MSR Design has done this type of project nation-wide. Each community is unique, Cincinnati, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Utah – we see communities nationwide and can anticipate questions. They’ve also worked with public schools in similar ways.

Marvin asked if public outreach was early on in the process? Kruntorad explained, the plan is to acquire baseline knowledge first, so when questions come up there’s a knowledge of the current facility and what it can support. Does involve stakeholders, but it’s more focused on small group input. Marvin: What kind of outreach do we utilize so they can attend forums? Surveys, go where the people are, hold open conversations in a public forum – short focus groups are planned over four days plus extra session as needed throughout the month.

Sloan noted that the contracted fee falls within the normal budget, it’s not extra nor does it draw on Foundation funds. Hale moved approval. Marvin seconded. There was no further discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Shaw, Sloan, Gerteisen, Hale, Marvin, Ostrowicki – AYE. Motion carried 6-0. The architects present via Zoom left the meeting at this time.

Approval of Library Holiday Schedule FY 23-24

Sloan asked if there was any deviation from the norm. Wieber pointed out the date for the Inservice which varies slightly from year to year. Shaw noted that the library closes on Easter Sunday although it is not a paid holiday, and asked if similar accommodations were made for other religious holidays. Assistant Director Glass shared that all City employees are given two Personal Convenience Holidays annually to use at their own discretion. Ostrowicki motioned to approve the holiday schedule. Gerteisen seconded. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Sloan, Gerteisen, Hale, Marvin, Ostrowicki, Shaw – AYE. Motion carried 6-0.

Report on Security Incidents

Director Wieber stated that he wanted the Board to have information on how security incidents are managed. The data for this presentation is from January-December 2022. Administrative Aide Sarah Dale shared how the publicly available Behavior Policy breaks behaviors down into level 1-4 by virtue of their severity, and that staff responses to those behaviors are specific to each. Staff are trained to manage incidents using de-escalation techniques, relationship building, and empathy. Many situations never escalate to full-fledged incidents. Reportable incidents can also cover things like, wildlife removal, unattended minors, accidents or injuries, and bedbugs. Incidents are reported system-wide, and any behaviors or situations that rise to the level of a banning are identified for further review with the Manager, Administration, and the Law Department. Banned customers’ accounts are limited so they cannot check out books or use the Internet while banned. A banning might range from 30 days to 36 months, and customers have 30 days to appeal.

Sloan asked when a customer’s account is limited, can they still check out downloadable materials? Dale replied, no. Director Wieber reiterated the fact that staff, and in particular Bennett Martin staff, take seriously their goal to make the library a safe, comfortable place for everyone. Sloan asked if staff have

regular training on de-escalation techniques. Dale replied yes, and Walt Manager Jodene Glaesemann shared some of the most recent training events in which staff have participated.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Foundation Executive Director Report

Gail McNair shared some slides showing the history of the Foundation – over the past nearly 70 years they've taken over the work of special fundraising projects and managing donations. McNair was hired in 2009 as the first full time Director. The Foundation maintains office space at Bennett Martin. The Foundation Board of Trustees has two committees. The first is the Nebraska Literary Heritage Association, created in 1982 to support the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors. The second is the Friends of Lincoln City Libraries group was created in 2010 and has managed annual membership and the annual fundraising event that's gone from "Wine and Wii" to "Wine and Dine" this year, the Spelling BEE and running of the annual Book Sale. The Foundation relies on Memorials, Honorariums, Grants, Planned giving and Special events like Give to Lincoln Day.

The Foundation Endowment as of January 1, 2023 was at \$4,553,428. Individual Endowments can be begun with a \$10,000 minimum donation and the donors wishes are matched with library needs. Annual payouts to the library are disbursed at 5% of 12 rolling quarters. The fund is managed by the Foundation Finance Committee and Pettinger & Anderson (P&A). Donor restrictions include distributions to the Heritage Room, Polley Music Library and Youth Services. Unrestricted funds can be used for things like programs, continuing education for staff or furniture purchases. There are currently 12 Endowment Funds, Donor restricted, unrestricted and temporarily restricted with a total payout of \$214,306.16 in 2022.

The second quarter of 2023 included incomes from Wine & Dine, Membership Dues, Memorials and a \$5,000 grant for meeting room updates, and funds from Give to Lincoln Day. Please put the Spelling BEE on your calendars for November 1, 2023. Book sales for 2023 YTD include sales of donated items to ThriftBooks as well as sales from Book Nooks at the branches. Book sales have generated over \$27,000 so far in 2023. As of June 30, 2023, the Endowment is at \$4,707,764. The Foundation goal is to increase our donor base – we know there's lots of competition for dollars, and we appreciate everyone's support.

Ostrowicki asked how much in new major gifts come into the endowment – how does it grow beyond the market? McNair responded, This year we've received two new donations to the endowment – 1 for approximately \$20,000, 1- was for approximately \$10,000. Much of the communication with private donors has been around donations in support of a new Central Library. Ostrowicki asked about membership dues. McNair replied that those pay administrative expenses.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Sloan shared that when going through the applicants for board, they found a lot of people excited about the library. The committee talked about ways to involve those applicants on committee level – to provide them with experiences and information. It could perhaps act as a recruiting pipeline for new board members. It would provide interested folks with the opportunity to learn more about the

board and other ways to get involved. The committee on Administration will continue to explore opportunities for their involvement.

ASSISTANT LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Assistant Director Glass shared an update on the development of the new LCL website, approximately four months in. She reminded the board that the successful bidder was GHD Services and the timeline is April to December of 2023. Some of GHD's other website projects have been for the Port Moody, Guelph and Halton Hills Public Libraries.

Funds were allocated from the Library Technology budget. Glass reviewed the timeline, pointing out that year one will require the most spending to cover web design, implementation, content migration, hosting, support, and maintenance. GDH will build it and help the library migrate the information. There's plenty of education and support to get through the process. Years 2-4 will simply involve hosting, support, and maintenance. The last significant redesign/update to LCL's website was in 2014.

The committee's first task was to work with a Treejack survey, to identify how best to organize the site map. The goal was to learn exactly how to make the site as user-friendly as possible for staff and patrons. GovStack is the brand new software that will be used and it includes the latest and best Content Management System (CMS) features to build LCL's site. Committee members Glass, Public Information Specialist, Amy Huffman and Library Manager, Peter Jorgensen have received training on content writing for the website and will soon be rewriting the extremely text-heavy web pages to simpler and more accommodating language and clearer direction. We are on track for go-live in November. Glass shared some results from the Treejack survey that educated the designers as to how users navigated the site and showed what parts of the existing designed worked efficiently and what needed to be changed.

Library Card Contest – received over 200 entries. Voting is live through tomorrow on Facebook or the LCL website. 1,043 votes have been cast as of now. The top three were chosen by committee including Glass, Board Member Joe Shaw, Library Public Information Specialist Huffman, City Public Information Specialist, Emily Haney, and Administrative Aide Sarah Dale. Finalists were chosen to reflect differences in design and age of artists. Turnout and general engagement have been wonderful. Similar contests for teens and adults are planned. The winner will be announced on August 1st.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Wieber invited Eiseley/Williams/Bookmobile Manager Lisa Olivigni to introduce the system's summer interns. Olivigni noted this is the second year to have interns working in the library during the summer. Sam has been working at Gere/South helping with youth programs. Delana works at Walt and has been helping with youth and adult programming. Avery is working in summer outreach – has been going out to daycare programs to bring library to them. Alexia is working at Eiseley – helping with youth and adult summer reading programming. Olivigni noted that the program wouldn't be possible without Grant funding from the Nebraska Library Commission. Interns are high school students or college students. Brief discussion followed.

Director Wieber introduced Jodene Glaesemann, Walt Library Manager and this meeting's *technologist*, who is available for tours after the meeting if anyone is interested. Glaesemann expressed thanks that the interns were able to experience such a full and busy meeting.

Wieber provided an update on Williams Branch Library. Tentative opening date will be Monday the 24th. We're still waiting on a few last minute technology tweaks. That and the Lied/Library partnership will both have press conferences next week. Glass shared that The Lied/Library collaboration is called, "Page to Stage" and will involve library programming at Bennett Martin based on six of the Lied's performances this year that are inspired by books. The first is Hamilton, and a Q&A with cast and crew will be held on Friday, August 4th. The other five titles reflect a range of youth, teen, and adult interest: Show Way, Alice, Les Mis, To Kill a Mockingbird and Rainbow Fish. Ticket giveaways and other packages from the Lied will be presented.

Wieber shared that the Strategic Planning process will begin immediately following the public engagement portion of the work with BVH Architecture – October 2023 through February 2024 and will involve community and staff involvement in helping set the course for new priorities. There will be an online survey, three staff focus groups, and larger community forums. Summer reading registrant numbers are at 16,802. Not all critters are forbidden at LCL - Alpacas visited Bennett Martin, Gere and Eiseley and were wildly popular. Print circulation is up 3%, and digital is up 16% year to date. Overall circulation is up 6% and those numbers are holding steady. Visits continue to be up 16%. Computer usage is up 5%, and total library usage up 8%. Very healthy numbers. Brief discussion followed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jessica Wersky, 1330 N. 79th, Lincoln, NE 68505 spoke in her opposition to several books in the collection.

Luke Peterson, 5020 R St. #1518, Lincoln NE 68504 spoke in opposition to banning books from libraries.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.