

MAHOMET PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING AUGUST 9 2021 6:15PM AT THE LIBRARY

Members Present: Susie Baker, Carrie Heimann, Kevin Kelsey, Chris Moore, Rebekah Rhode, Kristen Streeter (arrived during Building and Grounds Committee Report) **Not Present:** Jeanne Campion **Also present:** John Howard, Kate Smith

Approval of the Minutes for July 12, 2021

Rebekah Rhode moved to approve the minutes from July 12 2021. Carrie Heimann seconded; the motion passed by general consent. There was no discussion.

Treasurer's Report

Kevin Kelsey moved to approve the preliminary financial report for July 2021. Susie Baker seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion.

Chris Moore asked why the line item for booklists and newsletters was already 118% above budget. John Howard explained that it was an annual payment for the Book News subscription, which was higher than expected.

Carrie Heimann asked why the amount in the line item for the director's salary was negative. Kate Smith explained that the first payroll in July is always adjusted so that wages earned in June are charged to the previous fiscal year, which creates a negative entry for each payroll line item. In addition to this, the first \$10,000 paid to the director in the new fiscal year is charged to the Risk Management line item in the Tort and Liability fund.

Kevin Kelsey moved to approve the check register for July 2021. Susie Baker seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion.

Chris Moore asked if all the "transfer" checks were for inter-fund transfers. Kate Smith said that they were, and explained for the benefit of newer board members that all bills are paid from the General Fund, which means that other funds end up owing the General Fund. Roughly twice each year, the library moves money from other funds to reimburse the General Fund.

Director's Report

John Howard submitted the director's report before the meeting.

He added that since the report was written, he had hired Becca Maree to replace Sherry Waldrep as Adult Programming Coordinator. He gave the board a brief summary of her background. He added that he had received a number of good quality candidates for the position and there were at least five he could have hired. Rebekah Rhode asked when Becca would start and John said that she would be training over the next couple of weeks, with full hours beginning the week of August 23.

Chris Moore told John that he wanted to provide encouragement for closing the library the morning of August 21 to allow staff to provide input into the strategic plan.

Chris Moore said that he loved the idea of having U of I students help with a marketing plan and he asked if it could help feed the strategic plan. John Howard said that, in general, probably not, but that if anything interesting came out, he would be bringing it to the board for the strategic plan. Carrie Heimann observed that usually the strategic plan feeds the marketing plan. John said that the library may get some good information through this process and some not as good, but it also provides an opportunity for students to learn. Carrie said that she thinks the partnership is great and fits the library's learning mission.

Chris Moore asked if John's Library Think Tank was still meeting. John responded that they hadn't been able to meet for a while, but will meet soon.

John Howard pointed out the library card numbers in the statistics report, showing that the library assigned almost 120 new cards in July, due in large part to the school district's placing a link to card registration in their own online registration.

Kevin Kelsey asked for more information about the executive coaching possibility raised in the director's report, specifically asking what John meant when he said the current rates quoted were unaffordable. John explained that he had been quoted \$400 per hour. Kevin stated that he knew someone who provided this service who might charge less. John explained to the board that he thought this might be a better use of professional development funds than sending John to a conference this year, but that he is just exploring the idea at this point. Rebekah Rhode commented that her husband has done this through his work and that it is very expensive and her husband and his colleagues wondered if books would be just as effective, though the executive coaching was good.

John Howard told the board that he was nervous when he put out the message on social media about returning to mask use at the library, but he was pleasantly surprised at the positive response.

Audience Comments – no comments

Committee Reports

Policy Committee

Chris Moore told the board that the Policy Committee met on July 20 and reviewed an updated financial policy, to be voted on later in the agenda.

Building and Grounds Committee

Chris Moore told the board that the Building and Grounds Committee met on July 20 and completed a walkthrough of the grounds and building as required annually. He reported that they found some items needing repair, most notably flaws in the structure supporting the new electronic sign.

He told the board that the committee also discussed moving ahead on the building expansion and proposed the following steps:

1. Since Fred Schlipf has agreed to a cap of \$1500 to finish the building program document, the committee will stay engaged with John Howard and Fred Schlipf to bring a final draft to the full board for approval. Chris stated that this keeps trustees involved in the process without requiring all trustees though, of course, any trustee may attend the committee meetings and participate.
2. After the full board approves the document, the committee will partner with John Howard to interview architects and make a recommendation to the full board.

John Howard told the board that he and Kate Smith had spoken with two architects to get an idea for costs to create a pre-financing package, with plans and cost estimates. One architect told Kate that they would charge approximately \$10,000 and another told John that they would charge \$1 per square foot which would mean that the library would pay approximately \$15,000 with current size estimates. Rebekah Rhode asked if this included costs for changes in the current portion of the building and John said that he believed so, but that he would confirm that with the architect.

Chris Moore told the board to expect to finish the building program document in September-October, choose an architect during October-November, and have a plan by early spring in time to meet the April grant application deadline.

John Howard explained that the State of Illinois has a program for construction grants for libraries. They will accept applications, even if the General Assembly hasn't appropriated funds for the program. Once funds are appropriated, libraries that have submitted applications already have a good chance of getting funds. He also said that the new federal infrastructure plan may have money for this program. John told the board that, under the current system, if the library qualifies for an award, they would receive 49% of the estimated construction costs. He explained that this is why he feels it is worth the effort to get drawings and estimates done and an application submitted. If the library receives an award, the board will have 12 months to raise the matching funds through savings, fundraising, and a possible referendum.

Carrie Heimann told the board that the main point she took away from the committee meeting was that this accelerates the timeline, but the library would have to spend this money [for the architect] anyway to build an expansion. She added that the committee had been told that these plans would have a shelf life of 5-10 years.

Kevin Kelsey said this seemed to be the logical next step.

New Business

A. Adoption of Revised Financial Policies

The Finance Committee presented the revised financial policy to the full board for approval.

Carrie Heimann asked for specifics on the changes. Kate Smith explained that most of the information had been rearranged to provide a logical, coherent whole and that most of the changes were made to procedures, to reflect how the library now handles financial tasks, and to roles, to make the roles and responsibilities of groups and individuals more clear. A member of the finance committee shared the list of changes they'd used to review the document.

Chris Moore also told the board that the finance committee agreed to provide assistance with reviewing investment choices when the director requests additional support.

The motion passed unanimously.

B. Adoption of Ordinance 2021-2 Building and Maintenance Ordinance

Kevin Kelsey moved to approve Ordinance 2021-2. Carrie Heimann seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion. There was no discussion.

Strategic Plan Update

Review of Community Input So Far

Library staff submitted a summary of community survey responses before the meeting and the board discussed them.

Chris Moore listed several positives he found in the responses, including comments about programs in general and book clubs specifically and support for the idea of a building expansion. He added that the survey gave the board some input, but that he didn't feel it gave the board clear, overwhelming direction for the strategic plan.

There was some discussion regarding comments about the library's collection.

Chris Moore observed that if the library is going to provide a wide swath of materials, sometimes people will be offended.

Rebekah Rhode told the board that she hasn't talked with people about library materials, but she has had conversations with neighbors about books in the schools and many people comment that books for students always need to have a moral lesson and they wonder what happened to reading just for fun.

Chris Moore said that with younger children, he would expect parents to be lockstep with their children as they choose what to read.

Kevin Kelsey stated that he wants the library to offend sometimes because if all books are no-conflict, then the library isn't doing its job. He added that when the library gets in the business of censoring, it also isn't doing its job.

Susie Baker noted that not many people get to experience certain things and the library should provide options that [help them learn about things they can't experience.]

Chris Moore stated for the record that he fully supports John Howard and will own responsibility for the collection. Kristen Streeter agreed, saying that she wants the librarians to feel supported in their choices in the collection.

Suggested Library Websites to Review in Preparation for Planning

John Howard presented the board with a list of library websites, as suggested by the library leadership team. He asked trustees to review a couple of the websites in preparation for continuing with strategic planning.

Board Advocacy

John Howard brought the shift schedule for the library's Music Festival booth to the meeting to remind trustees when they had signed up to serve. Kevin Kelsey asked if it could be emailed to the board. Rebekah Rhode added a request that library staff send a reminder a few days before the event.

Trustee Comments

Kristen Streeter and Carrie Heimann both stated they would be a little late for the strategic planning meeting on September 18.

Adjournment

Kevin Kelsey moved to adjourn the meeting. Kristen Streeter seconded; the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 7:13pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Kate Smith, Business Manager