

MAHOMET PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OCTOBER 12, 2020 6:15PM VIA ZOOM

Members Present: Jeanne Champion, Chris Moore, Rebekah Rhode, Carrie Heimann, Kevin Kelsey, Brian Paragi, Kristen Streeter (arrived during Director's Report) **Also present:** John Howard, Kate Smith

Chris Moore opened the meeting with the following statement:

"For the record, the Mahomet Public Library District is able to conduct this electronic meeting because of Governor Pritzker's Executive Orders #2020-07 (March 16th, 2020) and #2020-08 (April 1st, 2020). These orders suspend the Open Meetings Act provision relating to in-person attendance by members of a public body. Specifically, they suspend the requirement that members of a public body must be physically present and they also suspend the limitations on when remote participation is allowed.

- An in-person meeting is not prudent due to the COVID 19 disaster.
- All members and guests must be able to hear all discussion to satisfy the Open Meeting portions.
- One member is physically present at the library (Mr. John Howard).
- All votes will be roll call.
- This meeting will be recorded.
- A quorum is still required.
- Trustees will refrain from using the chat feature in order to comply fully with the Open Meetings Act."

Approval of the Minutes for September 14, 2020

Rebekah Rhode moved to approve the minutes from September 14, 2020. Carrie Heimann seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion.

Approval of the Minutes for the Special Meeting October 1, 2020

Brian Paragi moved to approve the minutes from October 1, 2020. Kevin Kelsey seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion.

Treasurer's Report

Jeanne Champion moved to approve the final financial reports for June, July, and August. Brian Paragi seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion.

Kate Smith told the board that the most significant change between the preliminary and final statements was the increase in tax revenue. John Howard explained that the delay was due to issues at the county treasurer's office. Carrie Heimann asked the library had now received all it should expect by this point. Kate replied that this was so, but that more funds were still to come.

Jeanne moved to approve the financial report for September 2020. Carrie Heimann seconded. Chris Moore stated that he was unable to review the report before the meeting, so he would abstain from the vote. Roll call vote; Chris Moore abstained and all other trustees voted in favor of the motion.

Jeanne moved to approve the check register for September 2020. Rebekah Rhode seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion.

Director's Report

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

He pointed out that, while door count numbers continue to be disappointing, total circulation is only down by 13% and print circulation is only down by 8%. John said he considered that astounding, given the circumstances. He noted that DVD circulation was down by 50%. He attributes this partly to the lack of new releases, but believes the drop is largely due to the extended quarantine period, which affected DVDs with their shorter checkout periods more than other materials. He expects this statistic to improve with the use of the ovens to shorten quarantine time.

On the topic of the heat sanitization, he reported that library staff have established a good rhythm for this process and it has made good improvement in how quickly people get their materials.

John reported that over the past weekend, the library had a patron who was unhappy when she was told she could not sit at a table with a nonfamily member to assist a student with schoolwork. John told the board he had discussed this with library staff and would be contacting the health department before considering possible changes to the policy. Jeanne Champion commented that she loved that the library is expanding its Wi-Fi further into the parking lot and she wondered if people could meet outside. John told her that library staff does not supervise social distancing in the parking lot, since it is outdoors, so people could meet outside.

With respect to tutoring, Rebekah Rhode observed that she wants to support activities that go along with the library's mission, but she wondered if supporting what is essentially a small business is appropriate. John replied that he doesn't know of any library that bans

tutoring and pointed out that a library is a safe place for both tutors and students.

Rebekah asked if John had checked with other libraries regarding their policies at this time. John said that other library policies are varied. He noted that, in general, the library's response to the pandemic has been conservative as compared to the rest of society, but liberal as compared to most other libraries.

Brian Paragi commented that he was glad to see how the library took something no one was talking about months ago (disinfecting materials) and came up with a cost effective way to do it quickly and safely.

Carrie Heimann asked why the donation amount on this month's report was so much higher than the previous year. John told her that was due to donations in memory of Floyd Giles. He told the board he intended to use the funds to replace the dying tree originally planted in memory of Floyd's wife and to also purchase a new tree in Floyd's name.

Chris Moore noted that some metrics could be used to better focus library efforts going forward. He gave the increased YA circulation as an example, wondering if that was a demographic using the library more than others.

Rebekah asked for the Giles family address so she could send a note on behalf of the trustees. Kate Smith promised to send it to her.

Audience Comments – no comments

Committee Reports – no reports

New Business

A. Presentation of Audit and Acceptance of Audit

John Howard introduced Katie Bermingham of CliftonLarsonAllen, who presenting a summary of the audit process and findings to the board. She reported that it was a clean audit, with most of the recommended adjustments being related to the change in deferred revenues after the county treasurer sent out the reports in mid-audit. She told the board the library is in a strong financial position.

Chris Moore asked about the uncorrected misstatement for \$7,741. Katie told him they asked the village for any remaining TIF revenue owed to the library, but, because the county reports were delayed, the best the village could provide was this estimated amount. Because it was such a small amount and only an estimate, the auditors and library staff decided to not recognize it in FY 19-20, and instead record it as FY 20-21 revenue when it arrives.

Rebekah Rhode moved to accept they FY 19-20 audit. Kevin Kelsey seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion.

B. Public Library Construction Grant due April 2021 – Follow up from special meeting

Chris Moore reminded the board that they discussed and voted on this issue during the special meeting. After that meeting, it was determined that the board could not vote on the topic because it was not on the agenda. He presented it to the board again. There was no discussion.

Rebekah Rhode moved to instruct John Howard to cease pursuing this grant and instead work toward developed a long-range plan for building expansion. Jeanne Champion seconded. Roll call vote; Carrie Heimann opposed the motion. All other trustees voted in favor; the motion passed 6-1.

C. Discussion of Possible Library Closure for Election Day

John Howard told the board that the Governor of Illinois declared that Election Day will be a state holiday and that state and local government offices should close. John explained that there were conflicting opinions regarding whether this applies to libraries, with the library's attorney Phil Lenzini telling another library they should close and attorneys for the State Library saying that it should be a local decision.

John added that he polled library staff and seven members responded. Six of them believe that the library should remain open, observing that patrons will not expect the library to be closed. John himself had no strong opinion, but thought the staff response made sense, so his recommendation to the board was to remain open. He stated that he would arrange for staff members to be able to vote that day if they felt they needed to.

Each board member voiced an opinion on the topic, with all agreeing to remain open. Rebekah Rhode remembered patrons trying to access the library the day it closed for staff to discuss the building plan. Kristen Streeter added that she was in favor of remaining open as long as all staff members have the opportunity to vote. Brian Paragi asked if there were other state holidays that aren't national. John recalled that Pulaski Day was once a state holiday, but not a federal one. Kate Smith pointed out that the library is open on several holidays each year.

D. Per Capita Grant Requirements – Discussion of Reading Assignment from Serving our Public 4.0, Chapters 1-4

Chris Moore reminded board members that they are to review the entire *Serving Our Public 4.0* document as part of the Per Capita grant application process. He asked for comments from trustees based on what they read in chapters 1-4.

Chris asked about the recommendation that the library evaluate staff annually. John Howard told the board that during his first year, he had one-on-one meetings with staff members. He started to repeat this in 2020, but COVID-19 intervened. Now that he has been on the job for a while, he feels he knows the staff well enough to have formal evaluations in the coming year. Brian Paragi commented that this is his fourth year on the board and the first year he's seen back-to-back annual evaluations of the director and he is glad to see this.

Chris observed that the library is well above 80% compliance with the recommendations in *Serving Our Public*. Kevin Kelsey agreed, stating that he was surprised at how well the library already follows these recommendations. John gave former director Lynn Schmit credit for much of this.

Carrie Heimann asked if there was a written succession plan. John told her that there is one from before his tenure, but that it needs to be reviewed by the current board.

John highlighted the three responsibilities of library trustees as outlined in the document: to hire the library administrator,, to make library policy, and to approve library budgets. He also pointed out the recommendation for wayfinding signage, commented that he would like to see additional signage at the intersection of routes 150 and 47 to point toward the library, but that this might be a hard sell.

E. April 2021 Board Election

John Howard reminded the board that the seats of four trustees will be up for election in April 2021: Carrie Heimann, Kevin Kelsey, Brian Paragi, and Kristen Streeter. These will all be four-year terms.

He told trustees that, in order to run, they need to download and print the packet of materials from the County Clerk's website and gather 50 signatures from people who live in the Mahomet Public Library District. They can begin collecting signatures now. The signatures and other paperwork are due between December 7 and December 14.

Brian Paragi told the board he would not be running for reelection. He stated that he would like to serve again in the future, but that there are other things he needs to be doing right now and he will be taking a break.

John Howard encourage the board to talk to friends and neighbors who might be interested in running. He said that he would be happy to sit down with them to talk with them about what is involved in serving as a trustee.

F. Discussion of Library Foundation and Fundraising

Chris Moore asked Kevin Kelsey to summarize his proposal for fundraising and a library foundation.

Kevin told the board that the biggest obstacle to expanding the library building is funding and the pain of having a referendum. He stated that if the board can find other sources through fundraising, it would be a win-win situation: more community engagement and possibly no referendum needed.

He said that the first step is to create a foundation, which would be a 501c3 organization with its own board, working alongside the library's board of trustees, with a member from each board serving as an ex-officio member of the other board.

Brian Paragi commented that this is the next logical step for the library, noting that there are creative ways people can work with their financial advisors to give money to the library either while they are alive or after death.

Rebekah Rhode asked if foundation funds would be used solely for building expenses or if they could be used for other purposes. Kevin explained that would depend on whether or not the donor targeted the gift toward something specific, but that the foundation could have both a capital campaign for new construction, but also have ongoing fundraising efforts for other expenses.

Kevin stated that having a foundation builds community by letting people be part of the organization.

Carrie Heimann asked about the advantages of having a separate organization. Kevin explained that a foundation would have more flexibility than a government agency in the kinds of donations it could accept. He noted that it might also be more attractive to larger donors.

There was general consensus among the board members to proceed with plans for a foundation. John Howard volunteered to work the Kevin to identify the first steps.

Strategic Plan Update

John Howard presented is quarterly update on progress toward strategic plan action items before the meeting.

Chris Moore noted that a website update is included in the plan and wondered if board members were still interested in this. He asked if this would be high resource or just time intensive. John estimated that a complete redesign of the website would cost about \$5,000-\$10,000 if the library hired an outside designer.

Chris asked what library staff thinks about the website. John said that the website is easy to use and, while there are some things staff members would like to change, it is not a high priority.

After some discussion, board members felt that this is not one of the library's highest priorities at this time. They agreed to move the topic of a new website to the next strategic planning process.

Board Advocacy – no discussion

Trustee Comments

Jeanne commented about the pay raise schedule and asked why the finance committee was not involved. John Howard told her that in the fall of 2019 the board approved the strategy for how to address the minimum wage increases and this schedule applies that strategy. Kate Smith reminded the board that they originally planned to hold a joint meeting of the finance and personnel committee to discuss the strategy, but since the combined committees included all but one board member, the full board addressed it instead.

Kevin Kelsey and Kristen Streeter both thanked library staff for their efforts over the past few months.

Rebekah Rhode and Carrie Heimann thanked Kate for her work on the audit.

Chris Moore asked John to tell the staff he appreciated their inputs into the director evaluation process and that he found their comments to be very thoughtful and helpful.

Closed Session

Rebekah Rhode moved to enter closed session in order to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body [ILCS 120/2(c)(1)]. Kevin Kelsey seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion. The board entered closed session at 7:32pm.

Adjournment

Carrie Heimann moved to adjourn the meeting. Brian Paragi seconded; the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Kate Smith, Business Manager