

# MAHOMET PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING NOVEMBER 13, 2023, 6:15PM AT THE LIBRARY

---

**Members Present:** Susie Baker, Mike Cunningham, Kevin Kelsey, Scott Schaumann, Kristen Streeter (arrived during “Difficult Discussions”), Stevi Stutzman **Not Present:** Carrie Heimann **Also present:** Courtney Beasley, Tammy Caputo, John Howard, Kate Smith

Kevin Kelsey opened the meeting by reading the library’s mission statement: “Together we create a welcoming community that empowers everyone to learn, connect, create, and grow.”

### Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes for October 9, 2023

Mike Cunningham pointed out an error in his comment under Trustee Comments.

Scott Schaumann moved to approve the minutes for October 9, 2023. Mike Cunningham seconded. The motion passed unanimously. There was no discussion.

### Treasurer's Report

Scott Schaumann moved to approve the financial report for October 2023. Susie Baker seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion.

Stevi Stutzman moved to approve the check register for October 2023. Scott Schaumann seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion.

John Howard pointed out the high number for Furnishings and Equipment, explaining that it represented the purchase of the flip-front bins in the children’s section, paid for primarily by a Rotary grant and private donations. John also pointed out the high number for IMRF expense, and he and Kate Smith explained that the October expense was removed twice from the library’s bank account. They told the board that by the time they discovered the problem when reconciling the bank statement, they realized it would be simplest to apply the credit balance toward the November IMRF expense.

Kevin Kelsey asked about the check for \$300 to the Rotary Club and John said it was for his annual dues. Kevin also asked about the \$100,000 transfer check and John said that represented moving money from the Ehlers account to Fisher Bank.

Scott Schauman asked if there had been an increase in maintenance expenses, now that the library hired someone to help with maintenance. John said there had been a small increase in supplies, but he expects more increases as the library receives quotes for larger projects.

### Director's Report

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

He highlighted the statistics report, noting that the 18% increase in people counts over last year showed the library is getting very close to pre-COVID attendance numbers. He also pointed out the 14% increase in circulation and said he would be watching picture book circulation to see if the flip-front bins have an impact.

John told the trustees he’d been asked by Marketing Coordinator Heather Murphy to tell the board their bios are now on the website, and she will add headshots if they send her photos.

John said the Book or Treat program had extremely high attendance and Assistant Director Tammy Caputo has begun to ensure that there will be an additional staff member on hand when there are popular events scheduled for weekends and evenings. Kevin Kelsey told Tammy to include board members when she is looking for people to volunteer to be the extra person.

Scott Schaumann noted that website visits were up significantly and asked if John knew why. John said he assumed it was because of the new site.

Kevin Kelsey asked if the high cost of the printed program guides provided the library a good “bang for the buck.” John said the summer program, which is mailed to every home, is definitely worth it and the other issues are just distributed around town. He said the questions he asks to evaluate the effectiveness of the guides are (1) does it make people put a library program on their calendars? and (2) does it make people see that the library is doing a lot of good things, which they’ll remember when it’s time to vote on a building expansion? Mike Cunningham said that not everyone uses social media, so he is a fan of the print option. He suggested that one possible way to see how effective it is would be to add a coupon and see how many are turned in.

### Audience Comments – No Comments

### Committee Reports – No Reports

## **Unfinished Business – No Unfinished Business**

### **New Business**

#### **A. Welcome to New Business Manager Courtney Beasley**

John Howard introduced Courtney Beasley and summarized what impressed him about her and led him to choose her for the position.

#### **B. Discussion of Evening Hours between Christmas and New Year's**

John Howard reminded the board that the library closed at 5pm each evening between Christmas Day and New Year's Day last year and library staff would like to do it again this year. He said the statistics show there is usually only light traffic during those hours. He said he would like the board to approve this for this year and consider a permanent change at the next policy committee meeting.

Scott Schaumann moved to close the library at 5pm each evening between Christmas and New Year's. Mike Cunningham seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion.

#### **C. Succession Plan Update**

John Howard presented his proposed changes to the current succession plan, mostly replacing Kate Smith with Tammy Caputo. He added that the entire plan needs to be reviewed at the next policy committee meeting, but that these changes are necessary now. Mike Cunningham suggested replacing Tammy's name with her title, Assistant Director, and the other trustees agreed.

Mike Cunningham moved to approve the succession plan as amended. Scott Schaumann seconded. Roll call vote; all trustees voted in favor of the motion.

#### **D. Difficult Discussion Series at MPL – Proposed**

John Howard submitted a description of a planned Difficult Discussion program before the meeting. He reminded the trustees that the strategic plan includes a section on promoting information literacy and said this program is part of that. He said the program is not about contentious issues themselves, but about how to talk about contentious issues and how we as a community can have thoughtful discussions about these issues.

Kevin Kelsey told the board he asked John to bring this to the board because the topics will be contentious and the board should have a chance to weigh in, but he reminded the board that final programming decisions are John's responsibility and not the board's, unless the board has a compelling reason for not holding a particular program.

The board discussed this for some time, with several trustees expressing concern about how emotional responses at such an event could cause problems, but agreeing that this idea does seem to fit with the library's mission. Trustees agreed that nothing is without risk, but the intent of the program is to do something positive in the community. They promised their support for John; Kevin suggested trustees plan to attend the events.

#### **E. Review of Chapters 6-10 of Serving Our Public 4.0**

Board members read these chapters before the meeting and reviewed the checklists as a group to identify potential issues for the library. They did not identify any specific problem areas in these chapters.

#### **F. Date and Plans for Staff Holiday Party**

Kevin Kelsey told the board the holiday party would be held December 8 at 6pm in the Edgar Room. He said that he and Stevi Stutzman would be meeting with a couple of library staff members the next day to plan the event. He told the board that staff members are asking for a budget for the event, which could have as many as 50 attendees. After some discussion, the board agreed to a budget of \$750 from library funds and \$250 in donations.

## **Strategic Plan – No Report**

### **Board Advocacy**

#### **Murder Mystery Dinner Date and Location Update**

John Howard told the board he had reserved the Catholic Church for this event on February 10, pending final confirmation with the person who keeps the church's calendar. He said he met with the priest, who was 90% sure that date was available. He reminded the board that they had agreed to a 1980s theme and people could dress according to that theme if they chose.

### **Trustee Comments**

Kevin Kelsey asked if people could start donating books again, now that the book sale is over, and John said they could.

Kevin said the Facebook posts for the Stuffed Animal Sleepover were wonderful and asked John to thank Becca Strom for her hard work.

## **Closed Session**

Stevi Stutzman moved that the board enter closed session pursuant to Illinois Statute ILCS 120/2(c)(1) in order to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body. Susie Baker seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the board entered closed session at 7:34pm.

The board returned from closed session at 8:35pm.

## **Adjournment**

Kristen Streeter moved to adjourn the meeting. Susie Baker seconded; the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.

---

Respectfully Submitted by Kate Smith, Business Manager