

WICHITA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Directors
March 19, 2019.

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at the Advanced Learning Library with the following present: Mr. Lamont Anderson, Ms. Erinn Bock, Ms. Jennifer Goheen, Mr. Randall Johnston, Ms. Shannon Littlejohn, Mr. Kevin McWhorter, Ms. TaDonne Neal, Ms. Shelby Petersen, Mr. Chuck Schmidt, and Mr. Jonathan Winkler.

Call to Order

President Kevin McWhorter called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m., a quorum being present.

Introductions

Matthew Warner, President of the Friends of the Library Board of Directors, presented a check for \$25,000 to Tom Borrego, President/CEO of the Wichita Public Library Foundation. The payment was a matching gift to assist the Foundation with its 2018 End of the Year Appeal. The appeal generated over \$53,000 to support the library and the immediate needs of the Foundation.

Approval of the Agenda

Shannon Littlejohn moved (Bock) to approve the agenda as published. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Public Comment

Craig Coffey stated that it is obvious the Library Board is catering to a progressive agenda and the anti-family programming policies of the American Library Association. He encouraged background checks for all program presenters. Attachment A provides a complete transcript of Mr. Coffey's remarks.

Virginia Miller stated that the Library is allowing the exploitation and endangerment of children by hosting programs like the Say YAAAS to Reading event. Children have a right to protection. Inclusion is an illogical possibility. She encouraged the Board to adopt guidelines to reflect children as a priority. Attachment B provides a complete transcript of Ms. Miller's remarks.

Elle Boatman thanked the Board for its work in preparing an inclusive programming policy. The policy is equitable for all and an opportunity for growth of the library. She encouraged the board to offer additional LGBTQ programming, noting particular opportunities during LGBTQ history month in October.

Joan B. Phillips stated that the library should focus on promoting literacy. The proposed policy is too vague, allowing anyone to present programs. Programs that could harm children should be open only to adults. She recommended changes to the library mission statement to include the phrase “to foster literacy” and the creation of an LGBTQ culture section in the materials collection rather than integrating resources throughout the collection. Ms. Phillips respectfully asked the Board to defer action on the proposed policies to enable a close review by Board members.

Jessi Wigdahl stated that there were many red herrings in comments offered by those who had spoken ahead of her. She stressed that the Library is not lacking in programs to suit the tastes of the majority, noting that just in the month to date, the Library had hosted 49 events that could be considered wholesome and suitable programming for children. The point is not to take away from what the Library is already offering but to add programs that are inclusive to everyone. The proposed policies take away nothing and will have no impact on the “traditional” family. They instead add protections for marginalized community members who are also taxpayers but are under-served. The policies, which are clear, unambiguous and aligned with the Library’s mission, offer opportunities for all in the community to share Library resources equally.

Consent Agenda

President McWhorter asked if there were items to be removed from the consent agenda. Mr. Lamont Anderson asked for Item 4.G., Proposed Changes to Policy REF-002, to be pulled in order to amend the language dealing with fees for copies. Mr. Anderson noted that the proposed draft did not address the cost of double-sided color copies, so an additional statement should be inserted to read “Double-sided color copies are available at \$2.00 per copy.” This change clarifies that there is a price difference between single- and double-sided color copies, as is also the case for black and white copies. This change to the policy was accepted by consensus. TaDonne Neal moved (Goheen) to approve the consent agenda with the noted amendment to Item 4.G. **Motion carried unanimously.** Actions taken through this motion included approval of:

- Minutes of the February 19, 2019 Library Board meeting
- February 2019 Revenue Report
- February 2019 Report 204 of General Fund Expenditures
- February 2019 Grant Fund Summary Report
- February 2019 Bills
- Proposed 2019 Grants in Aid Budget
- Proposed Changes to Policy REF-002 General Equipment for Customer Use as amended by the Board

Unfinished Business

President McWhorter asked board members for feedback on the proposed policies included in board packets.

Ms. Petersen requested a change to proposed policy REF-013 to remove a reference to the City of Wichita in the first paragraph on page 3. She noted that other references to the City of Wichita had previously been removed but this one had been overlooked.

Ms. Neal noted that in PHI-004.1 the word *sponsorship* is used. This term was removed from REF-013 after the February workshop and was replaced with the term *selection*. She recommended that *sponsorship* also be removed from PHI-004.1. Director Berner explained that since PHI-004.1 is a document of the American Library Association, it cannot be modified, but the Board can choose not to adopt it as policy. Mr. Anderson objected to excluding PHI-004.1 from the policy manual as it protects all Wichitans and guarantees equitable access to the entire community, not just the majority. Ms. Bock stated that the programming policy needs to align with PHI-004.1 with matching wording. Chief Deputy City Attorney Dickgrafe was asked if use of the different terms in the two proposed documents results in a policy conflict. It was her opinion that the two words are used as synonyms. The current language does not result in a conflict between the two proposed policies. Mr. Winkler said PHI-004.1 should be adopted as part of the policy package because it sets out the Board's position on the purposes of library programming. Ms. Goheen stated she agrees with Mr. Anderson and Mr. Winkler in adopting PHI-004.1. The word *sponsorship* is a synonym for *promoting* and does not necessarily imply funding. Ms. Petersen stated there needs to be consistency in wording and thus the two policies should match. Ms. Goheen stated she would not have altered REF-013 to remove the word *sponsorship*. Ms. Littlejohn stated she did not see a conflict, since PHI-004.1 is referenced in REF-013. If the two words needed to match, this should be done by restoring the word *sponsorship* to REF-013 and adopting PHI-004.1.

President McWhorter asked for a show of hands from members of the public wishing to address the Board on the topic of the proposed programming policy. Based on the number of people wishing to speak, Mr. Anderson moved (Schmidt) to allow members of the public two minutes to speak in reference to the three proposed programming policies. **Motion carried unanimously.**

The following members of the public made statements to the board:

Wayne Phillips stated his problem with the programming policy is that it does not lend itself to the majority of the community. It does not clearly state that programs will provide the information parents need to make educated decisions in regard to whether or not programs are appropriate for their children.

Ron Badger thanked the board members for their service. He suggested that the Library should seek to adhere to higher standards implicit in the words *noble, just, honor, and enriching*, which he views as less susceptible to twisting in interpretation. He strongly urged the board to not approve the draft policies but instead to amend them to be more concise, precise and uplifting in tone.

Marci Laffen asked the board to oppose proposed policy PHI-004.1, noting that it is not possible to serve people who are underrepresented in the community. In regard to proposed policy REF-013, when taxpayer dollars are involved, endorsement and sponsorship do mean the same thing. Drag queens should be in programs for adults only, not children. The library should promote literacy.

Lisa Tatum stated that the library should be open to all as a place to get information and to meet people where they live. She noted that separate but equal marginalizes those not in the majority. As the mother of a transgender daughter, she hopes the library continues on the path of equality and inclusion.

Monica Marks stated she is a member of the community who has kids and lives with her girlfriend. Her family has always used the library. To have labeled the Say YAAAS to Reading event as an adult program is a blemish on the library.

Craig Coffey suggested that there may be sufficient disagreement about the proposed policies to warrant the Board postponing action on the documents. He suggested that copies of the proposed policies be shared with all media. He recommended that the Board adhere to middle American community standards and re-emphasized that the LGBTQ community is preoccupied with indoctrinating children to their lifestyle choice. He asked the Board to act on facts, logic and common sense when dealing with the proposed policies.

Philip Fraser stated he strongly supports the proposed policies as written. They speak to the inclusion of populations that often go unheard. Contrary to suggestions from earlier speakers, he noted that there is nothing in the policy package that would prohibit the Board from selecting or not selecting programs based on the criteria outlined. He added his appreciation to the Board for their work and the direction set forth in the policies.

Lindsay Drees thanked the board for their work on the policies. As a mom, she states that she does not know what her children will become or need in their future, but knows that they need to see they are represented in the library. There are many under-served populations in the community. The library can bridge the gap by adopting these policies.

Liz Hamor stated that it was her child at the Say YAAAS to Reading event who had been spoken about in previous meetings. Her child asked to hand out bookmarks to people who requested them. As a child, he has seen the challenges faced by classmates. She is proud of his desire to stand with those who have been marginalized.

Bill Anderson stated that librarians are heroes. He encouraged the Board to stand for inclusion not exclusion, and reality rather than suspicion.

Roger London stated that he fears the heart and soul of Wichita is at risk by permitting children to be exposed to the perverse lifestyles promoted by LGBTQ activists who admit to wanting to indoctrinate children.

Jeanette Baldwin stated she is a lesbian and suggested that her identity is not locale-related. She loves the new library and comes in often. She should have the same rights and choices regarding library programs and services as others in the community. She thanked the Board for the variety and diversity of programming offered by the Library and encouraged adoption of the policies.

Rachel Hornbaker thanked the board for all of the work done on an amazing library. The next to last paragraph in proposed policy REF-013 talks about appropriate ages for program attendees. This should not be necessary. Libraries used to be focused on books and literacy. Programs such as the drag queen one cause confusion and those who think otherwise are not thinking realistically. She stated that she believes that the proposed policy pushes an agenda and that it should not be approved in its current version.

Jonathan Winkler moved (Anderson) to approve policies PHI-004.1 Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource, and REF-014 Library Partnerships as presented to the board and REF-013 Library Programming as amended by the Board to delete the phrase “City of Wichita” on page 3 of the draft policy.

Erinn Bock spoke in support of adopting the policies, noting that it is the job of the board to provide policies and to guide staff but not to make programming decisions.

TaDonne Neal emphasized that she does not oppose the intent of proposed policy PHI-004.1 but does continue to have concerns about the verbiage issue involving the use of *selection* versus *sponsorship*.

Randall Johnston made a substitute motion (Petersen) to postpone the vote for 30 days to allow for further review. This motion **failed** by a vote of 3-7 with Mr. Lamont Anderson, Ms. Erinn Bock, Ms. Jennifer Goheen, Ms. Shannon Littlejohn, Mr. Kevin McWhorter, Mr. Chuck Schmidt, and Mr. Jonathan Winkler opposed.

President McWhorter called for a vote to approve the proposed policies as amended. The motion **passed** by a vote of 8-2 with Mr. Randall Johnston and Ms. Shelby Petersen opposed.

Ms. Neal left the meeting.

New Business

None

Announcements

President McWhorter informed the board that he has selected Mr. Jonathan Winkler, Ms. Shannon Littlejohn, and Ms. TaDonne Neal to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Director Berner reminded the board that a joint workshop with City Council and the Library Board will be held on April 2 at 1:00pm at the Advanced Learning Library in the Conference Center.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:31 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be April 16, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Berner
Director of Libraries

Attachment A: Craig Coffey's full statement

Wichita Public Library Board of Directors
711 W 2nd St.
Wichita, KS 67203

Dear Board Members:

Please enter this Statement and the attachments into the meeting minutes in it's entirety.

I have reviewed this Board's history and current Drafts supporting the LGBTQ activist agenda. It is apparent the Board intends to submit to and actively court the radical 2% minority at the expense of the 98% majority of responsible taxpaying citizens. It is regrettable that this Board stands behind the anti-family programming policies of the American Library Association as it concerns the LGBTQ political and social agendas.

The direction you are heading is in spite of overwhelming evidence supported by real science that the LGBTQ lifestyle choice is dysfunctional in many ways and certainly not a healthy model for innocent children. Your proposed Programming Policy not only encourages such outrageous and dysfunctional behavior as seen in the Drag Queen Story Hour, it intends to continue to use taxpayer funding to front that program. Your proposal also has the clear intent to squelch opposing views, especially the evangelical Christian view and the Bible.

I have closely examined the City of Wichita's Code of Ordinances as it pertains to public lewd and lascivious behavior, sexual misconduct, and promotion of obscenity to minors. I am attaching those documents highlighting certain portions directly addressing the outrageous and immoral behaviors of the Drag Queen Story Hour.

I am also attaching a news report from Houston, TX showing one of their Library's drag queens was charged with child sexual assault. Since this Board's intent is to continue Drag Queen Story Hour programming, are you at least willing to perform background checks on the participants? All it takes is one time for a tragedy to occur. Taking into account the Library's own policies and procedures were violated at the last Drag Queen event, are you willing to publicly take that chance? Are you willing to assume the risk?

Myself and the majority of taxpaying citizens urge you strongly to re-examine your intent to implement such anti-family and anti-children programming under the guise of "inclusiveness, enlightenment, and open-mindedness" while promoting a far-left and misguided social and political agenda.

It is our expectation that this Board and the City Council will enact a sensible set of standards and accountabilities that accurately reflects the actual needs of our citizens vs. the advancement of and catering to a so-called "progressive" social and political agenda.

We urge BOTH this Board and the City Council to follow the examples of Houston, TX, Louisville, KY, and Columbus, GA in removing the offensive Drag Queen Story Hour from a taxpayer-funded Library. This event should NOT again be subsidized through taxpayer funding.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Pastor Craig Coffey

Attachment B: Virginia Miller's full statement

As I have listened to all of the discussion and debate surrounding this event, it seems to me that the most important, and most dangerous point, is that children were used. The entire event was planned to be presented to children. Outside advertising was heavily used to target children. During the event, the innocent enthusiasm of children was exploited. Children were employed to pass out flyers of which they could have no sufficient comprehension, and therefore could not give sufficient consent. Finally, children were invited to added participation, not in the declared activity of intent- which was reading- but in a form of adult, sexual exposure which is now being steadily denied. And so I have listened for the library's response, anxious to hear whether this lies as heavily on your hearts as it does on mine.

I look at the proposed program policy, struggling to find any indication that the library is determined to prevent the possible exploitation of children. The statement that adult accompaniment may be required simply tells me that an 18 yr old man can bring his 7 yr old neighbor boy with him, to be used. The fault would lie solely with the younger boy's parents, once he tells them they are headed to the library. How tragic for them if they do not realize that this is now a place where children face possible exploitation by whomever the library grants a venue.

Every source from which the library has drawn their basis of decision has emphasized the "rights" of the people. But insisting that the "rights" of children must be the same as that of adults is much like assuring a starving baby that they have every "right" to a steak dinner. Not only is it illogical, it is harmful. A key phrase in the "Freedom to Read" document reads: "Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad."

Can we honestly and justly apply this statement to children? Can "ordinary" children "exercise critical judgment"? Do they naturally "select the good and reject the bad"? The implication would be that we can simply throw our children out into the vast ocean of information, assuring both them and ourselves that the "ordinary" ones will learn to swim. This is the method that the library is proposing, meanwhile offering parents the assurance that they are free to opt out of the process. Many parents will opt out. Fine. Many parents, probably those here today, will insist they will be involved, guiding their children to swim. Good for them. None of that changes the fact that the danger is present that there would be children who drown. Children have the right to protection. Regulating manual labor for those under age 18 is not age discrimination. Restricting driving access to those under age 17 is not age discrimination. These boundaries are set for the protection of each and every child in our land. If we intend to fill our children's lives with the subjects and conflicts of the adult world, we might as well place them back in the factories- honestly assuring them they hold equal rights with us as adults.

The goal upon which the library has based not only this event, but a large part of their dialogue and intent, is the idea of "inclusion". I would like to argue that "inclusion" as an entity in itself is a logical impossibility. Every choice that we make is exclusive. Each word that we speak excludes all other words. By sitting in one chair you exclude all other chairs. The library regularly and rigorously practices exclusion- your used book store is a constant presence. Nearly every book written before 1980 has been excluded from your children's section. Inclusion and exclusion are simply a given of life and we have no choice in that. Our job, then, is to prioritize. When the library features on its website a novel about a sexual relationship between a 17 yr old boy and a 24 yr old man, the library has just given priority to that story and

those ideas. Some other book was excluded from the list in order to give it a place. And so my question becomes, can I trust your priorities? For to some extent, whatever you type up and print out as a final draft is subject to whatever interpretation you give to your own words. The reality is that you are going to do what you are going to do, and all we can do is watch from day to day, year to year, to see where your priorities really lie. Can you take this document as is and use it for the benefit of all? Of course. Does this document make any solid attempt to affirm a dedication to protect and safeguard the public trust? Not really. And so I ask that you possibly reconsider adding any guidelines that might be clearly understood by all who might stand in your place to reflect children as a priority of this community, and this library. My rights as an individual end where the rights of the person next to me begins. Our rights as adults end when we are able to acknowledge that the needs of all children take priority- and that is the time for us to clearly show restraint. For the greatest indication of our ability to earn and protect our own rights, is the way we administer over the rights of those who are wholly within our power.