

WICHITA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Library Board of Directors
April 20, 2021.

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at the Advanced Learning Library with the following present: Ms. Abi Boatman, Ms. Donna Douglas, Dr. Justin Henry, Ms. Lauren Hirsh, 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 12:01 p.m., a quorum being present.

Staff Presentation

Programming Librarian Sara McNeil described the new library podcast Read, Return, Repeat: A #ReadICT Podcast, which has been created to complement and support the #ReadICT reading challenge. The ongoing Covid pandemic has forced library staff to think creatively as they search for ways to engage the community with this twelve-month, twelve-book reading program. The podcast dives more deeply into the twelve categories and recommends books to read for each. Thus far, it has received positive responses from both staff and the community. It is produced in the AV studio at the Advanced Learning Library and put together by staff from the Digital Services, Marketing, and Education and Engagement Departments. New episodes will be uploaded monthly (first Friday of each month) and listeners can stream them from any one of nine different streaming platforms. Each episode features experts from the community and promotes library services.

Approval of the Agenda

Jonathan Winkler moved (Littlejohn) to approve the agenda as published. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the regular meeting held on March 16, 2021 were presented. TaDonne Neal moved (Winkler) to approve the minutes as included in board packets. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Unfinished Business

Jonathan Winkler provided an update on the Evergreen Center naming process. A plan has been solidified for gathering potential names. A social media campaign will launch on May 3 to elicit suggested names from the public and will be additionally promoted through posters,

postcards, door hangers, and a presentation at the District VI advisory board meeting. All media materials are to be bilingual. Names will be solicited through June 30 and presented at the July Library Board meeting to narrow down to five candidates, which will then be presented to the public to rate. Mr. Winkler thanked Michelle Enke, Special Collections Manager, and Angela Martinez, Vice President, North End Hispanic Historical Society, for the extensive research on the history of the Evergreen neighborhood that had been provided in board packets, and also Sean Jones, Communications Specialist, and Ana Lopez, District VI Liaison, for a well-elaborated outreach plan.

New Business

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Kevin McWhorter moved (Winkler) to approve the March 2021 finance report and supplemental bills in the following amounts: General Fund bills of \$676,911.85; Grant Fund bills of \$38,535.57; and Gift and Memorial Fund bills of \$31,847.30 for a total of \$747,294.72. **Motion carried unanimously.**

The Library has received a 2021 State Grants-in-Aid payment in the amount of \$110,841.85. Staff propose using the majority of funds from this grant towards the cost of public internet connections for branch libraries, with the rest allocated to library materials and equipment, office supplies, and the Library's annual memberships in Edge and in the Urban Libraries Council. The budget includes administrative charges of 4.1% to be paid to the City for fiscal management of the grant. Kevin McWhorter moved (Littlejohn) to approve the budget as proposed by staff. There was no discussion. **Motion carried unanimously.**

The Library has received a proposed contract for the 2021 South Central Kansas Library System Grant in the amount of \$238,472.00. This is a 33% increase over the previous year, due to a greater number of out-of-district borrowers. This grant requires a contract that must be approved by the City Council. No administrative charges are allowed under the terms of the agreement. Staff propose using the grant for public computing in branch libraries, staff development, library materials, supply costs related to the processing of library materials, and contractual expenses related to cataloging materials and promotion of library collections, programs and services. Jonathan Winkler moved (Hirsh) to approve the proposed budget as presented and to authorize staff to submit the contract to the City Council for consideration. There was no discussion. **Motion carried unanimously.**

President McWhorter presented a letter from a community member concerned with the exterior appearance of the new Walters branch library. This customer suggested the new branch is not as attractive as the others in the system and proposed a number of enhancements to improve visual appeal, including adding flower pots around the building, placing a mural on the east wall, changing the color of the exterior paint, and taking out some of the concrete parking. Interim Director Dowell informed the board that since this branch is situated in leased premises, many of these suggestions are not feasible. Other suggestions of a similar nature have been received, so staff is looking into various ways to make the building more attractive, including hanging artwork and adding a bike rack. President McWhorter will draft a respectful response to the letter writer explaining the factors constraining the library's ability to change the exterior. A copy of this letter will be sent to board members as well.

Finance Committee Report

None

Operations Committee Report

None

Planning & Facilities Committee Report

None

Public Affairs Committee Report

None

Special Committee Reports

Friends of the Library – Amanda Shankle reported that over 180 bags were sold at the recent book sale, with 35 bags being donated. Plans are in place to reopen the Used Book Store at the Advanced Learning Library on May 5. It will be open Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 10:30 am to 5:00 pm, and customers can book a 30 minute shopping time online at the Friends website. Two customers and one volunteer will be allowed in the store at a time. A Plexiglas shield for the desk has been ordered and will be installed prior to opening. Donations are still not being accepted, but collection may resume in June.

Library Foundation – Kristi Oberg reported that the Foundation exceeded its goal of raising \$12,500 on the Library Day of Giving. These funds will be used to provide both virtual and in-person programs for children, and will help support the Kansas Reads to Preschoolers Program, Summer Reading Program, Young Artist Exhibits, and the purchase of Vimeo. Several grants have been received by the Foundation and will help finance provision of hotspots for the library, STEAM to GO! Kits, and Library of Things. Sarah Kittrell, Collection Development Manager, reported that the STEAM to GO! Kits will hopefully be available in mid-May to coincide with the launch of the Summer Reading Program. Each branch is to receive twelve different kits, and each set covers a wide variety of STEAM topics, from underwater exploration to geology to robots. The Library of Things (LoT) will launch in the coming weeks. First to be available for checkout will be radon detectors, sponsored by a local radon remediation company, with hotspots and telescopes to be added later.

Wichita Genealogical Society (WGS) – Julie Crawford reported that the new WGS website will now be launched in May. Genealogy 101 classes that were expected to begin in May have been postponed to a later date due to low interest. At the last two meetings, there were 37 attendees in March and 81 in April.

Director of Libraries Report

Interim Director Dowell reported that the west entrance to the Advanced Learning Library has developed ongoing issues with closing and locking; a part within the door assembly has been replaced, and it is hoped this will be a permanent repair. The sewer smell that comes and goes has once again come and gone; Public Works is still working on a diagnosis. Geese have been hanging around the west entrance to the Advanced Learning Library, occasionally menacing customers entering the building. A firm has been hired to encourage these waterfowl to relocate. Engineers have advised library staff that Sycamore Street will soon reopen.

City department directors have given orientations about their respective departments to Jared Cerullo, the newly appointed council member for District III. As part of this onboarding effort, Interim Director Dowell provided an orientation and tour of the Advanced Learning Library.

All city departments are working to determine what opportunities will be available through the American Rescue Plan Act that passed in March. There may be some competitive grants through the National Endowment of the Arts and the National Endowment of the Humanities. The Library Foundation will assist staff in pursuing any that seem feasible. It may also be possible to obtain devices such as hotspots or laptops for checkout through the E-Rate Emergency Connectivity Fund. Staff have already confirmed that a \$2.6 million allocation coming from IMLS to state libraries will be used to fund programs and services at the state level and will not be passed through to local libraries. Since staff are still monitoring information as it comes out and various entities are firming up their processes for distributing funding, Interim Director Dowell will be giving weekly updates to the City Manager.

Currently 15% of positions within the Library are vacant. Due to the uncertainty of factors affecting the budget, the City may fill no more than 50% of city-wide civilian vacant positions through 2022. Interim Director Dowell is using the critical positions list approved by the board in 2020 to prioritize Library vacancies for filling.

In-person services have been going well, with over 100 Book-A-Librarian appointments conducted in March. Although a general mask mandate is no longer in effect in Sedgwick County, the City of Wichita is still following CDC guidelines for social distancing, gatherings, and mask wearing. Returned materials will no longer be quarantined after May 3, the CDC having determined that surface contact plays no more than a minimal role in spreading Covid.

Ms. Dowell made a reminder to Board members to return officer and committee positions forms as soon as possible. These forms will be forwarded to the Nominating Committee, who will meet and make a recommendation for the slate of officers at the May annual Library Board meeting.

Announcements

None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:13p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be May 18, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Dowell
Interim Director of Libraries