

**MEDINA COUNTY DISTRICT LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

October 19, 2020

The Medina County District Library Board of Trustees met in regular session on Monday October 19, 2020 via Zoom. With a quorum present, President Kyle White called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Roll call: The following members teleconferenced (in accordance with the March 13, 2020 opinion from the Ohio Attorney General's Office): Ryan Carlson, Dr. Griffiths, Sharon Jenks, Mary Ogden, Gail Ostrowski, Mary Schultz and Kyle White.

Library staff members in attendance via teleconference: Julianne Bedel, Director; Kelly Kroll, Fiscal Officer and acting as recording secretary.

Additional individuals were also in attendance by phone (about 30 attendees at different times during the meeting).

Approval of the Agenda: Mr. Carlson moved, Ms. Ostrowski seconded to approve the agenda. **Roll call vote:** Mr. Carlson – Aye; Dr. Griffiths – Aye; Ms. Jenks – Aye; Ms. Ogden – Aye; Ms. Ostrowski – Aye, Ms. Schultz – Aye; Ms. White – Aye. **Motion carried.**

Recognition of Guest and Comments from the Public: Ms. White welcomed all in attendance. Mr. Jonathan Harris spoke before the Board with comments concerning American Library Association membership. Aleen Olee read a petition dated 10/1/2020 signed by some employees regarding concerns of the reduction of support staff hours as approved by the Board at their September meeting. (See Resolution# 20-39: Approval of Shared Work Ohio)

Disposition of Meeting Minutes: Dr. Griffiths moved, Ms. Jenks seconded to approve the September 21, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. **Roll call vote:** Mr. Carlson – Aye; Dr. Griffiths – Aye; Ms. Jenks – Aye; Ms. Ogden – Aye; Ms. Ostrowski – Aye, Ms. Schultz – Aye; Ms. White – Aye. **Motion carried.**

Ms. Ostrowski moved, Ms. Ogden seconded to approve the September 24, 2020 Emergency meeting minutes as presented. **Roll call vote:** Mr. Carlson – Aye; Dr. Griffiths – Aye; Ms. Jenks – Aye; Ms. Ogden – Aye; Ms. Ostrowski – Aye, Ms. Schultz – Aye; Ms. White – Aye. **Motion carried.**

Approval of Financial Report: Dr. Griffiths moved, Mr. Carlson seconded to approve the September 2020 financial report. Fiscal Officer Kelly Kroll reported that September 2020 revenues totaled \$1,027,677 and expenses were \$721,568. The unexpended cash balance of \$15,526,838 less outstanding encumbrances of \$2,139,922 left an ending unencumbered balance of \$13,386,916 in all funds. Ms. Kroll noted that Real Estate Tax and Homestead/Rollback revenue came in above the budgeted amount while General Fund expenses were at about 53.6% of the budget. She noted that the 203 CARES Act Fund accounts are now on all the reports after Board approval at the September meeting. October investments earned \$10,923 with a principal balance of \$15,625,307 in bank accounts and investments, at an average weighted return of 0.747%. Year to date interest on

investments totaled \$133,266 but is down \$75,000 or 36% from this time last year. Ms. Kroll noted that interest rates are continuing to drop due to the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the economy. October 2020 PLF was lower than prior October's by \$558. Ms. Kroll noted that the federal stimulus packages are now either discontinued or winding down and that we expect the effects of COVID-19 on the economy to affect the PLF revenues in the future. She reminded Board members that the Ohio Department of Taxation released the preliminary 2021 estimated PLF revenue and it shows a significant reduction for the library at about \$400,000 compared to 2019. She is currently working on the 2021 Budget and will incorporate this lower figure. **Roll call vote:** Mr. Carlson – Aye; Dr. Griffiths – Aye; Ms. Jenks – Aye; Ms. Ogden – Aye; Ms. Ostrowski – Aye; Ms. Schultz – Aye; Ms. White – Aye. **Motion carried.**

Director's Report: Director Julianne Bedel reported library statistics as follows: total circulation down 17.81% while e-media circulation was up 19.96%. Door count was down 58.36%. Overall computer utilization was down 66.85%. Anytime Locker usage was up 310.57% compared to this time last year with Saturdays being the busiest day. Ms. Bedel noted that 48 virtual programs were held that were attended by 1,571 people and that statistic continues to climb. 93 curbside pick-ups were accomplished and 112 online reference conversations were conducted online using Chatra software. She highlighted several events that were held in the past month, including Keep On Truckin', and One Community/Many Stories is just getting started.

Ms. Bedel reported that we began our next phase of service today, shifting from 30 hours to 42 hours open weekly in all branches. Newly expanded times are: M/W 10 am – 5 pm, Tu/Th 12 pm – 8 pm, and F/Sa 10 am – 4 pm. She also noted that small study rooms have been reopened at the branches for individual use and monthly Zoom storytimes are being planned with daycares. Ms. Bedel also reported that she and Ms. Muniak are considering resuming passport service while staff are completing training and recertification to hopefully begin again sometime in November with modified routines. She did note that this is tentative as community spread of COVID-19 continues to be a concern.

Congratulations to Gail Ebey (ME) who has been selected as one of the finalists for the Northeastern Ohio Regional Library System's Shooting Star Award, and Roxana Rathbun (LO) who has been a finalist for the Rising Star Award. Congratulations also to Aimee Adams (ME), who has been appointed as Assistant Program Chair 2021 of the Ohio Library Council's Annual Convention and Expo, which means she will be Program Chair in 2022.

Congratulations to Jamie Stilla who has been selected as Lodi Manager, effective 10/12/2020. Jamie has been with MCDL as Seville's Manager since December 2014 and was hired as a Librarian in July of 2014.

An enthusiastic thanks go to Mary Olson who is celebrating 24 years, Charlene Smiley with 23 years and Kathy Osborne with 20 years at MCDL. Congratulations for achieving those milestones!

Communications: Pamela Miller's letter dated 10/19/2020 regarding American Library Association membership was emailed to the Trustees (follows the minutes as it was rather lengthy to read aloud during the meeting).

Approval of Personnel Report: Ms. Jenks moved, Ms. Ostrowski seconded to approve the Personnel Report. Ms. Bedel reported that September 2020 had one retirement (Diane Dermody), one posting for Library Manager at Lodi, two more staff who have chosen to reduce their hours, and no new hires for the month. **Roll call vote:** Mr. Carlson – Aye; Dr. Griffiths – Aye; Ms. Jenks – Aye; Ms. Ogden – Aye; Ms. Ostrowski – Aye; Ms. Schultz – Aye; Ms. White – Aye. **Motion carried.**

Board Committee Reports:

Finance Committee: No meeting

Personnel Committee: No meeting

Policy and By-Laws Committee: No meeting

Building Committee: No meeting

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

Resolution #20-45: Dr. Griffiths moved, Ms. Ostrowski seconded that the Medina County District Library Board of Trustees approve revised Policy BRD-03 Board Members. Ms. Bedel noted that this policy has been updated with new email addresses for trustees that will now have the format of ‘lastname@mccl.info’ as their email addresses. It was noted that Ms. Ostrowski’s email address has a typo in the spelling of her last name. Ms. Schultz asked if the Board members could see documents like this before they are provided in Board packets. Ms. Bedel noted that this will be done in the future. **Roll call vote:** Mr. Carlson – Aye; Dr. Griffiths – Aye; Ms. Jenks – Aye; Ms. Ogden – Aye; Ms. Ostrowski – Aye; Ms. Schultz – Aye; Ms. White – Aye. **Motion carried.**

Recruitment and Hiring Process of Fiscal Officer: Ms. Bedel noted that the Board’s meeting packet includes some documents for information purposes on the process, including the job posting and salary survey information that Ms. Kroll provided from other libraries with similar budget size to MCDL. She noted that the posting will be done in November, interviews will be scheduled for December, and hopefully an offer to the successful candidate can be made by the Board before Christmas. This will allow time for the successful candidate to work with Ms. Kroll the last week or so before she retires at the end of February. Ms. Schultz asked if it is indicated anywhere that this position reports to the Board of Trustees. Ms. Bedel noted that this is noted on the job description.

Resolution #20-46: Mr. Carlson moved, Dr. Griffiths seconded, to approve the Resolution Accepting the Amounts and Rates and Authorizing the Necessary Tax Levies as determined by the Medina County Budget Commission for 2021. Ms. Kroll noted this is a requirement in order for the County Auditor to collect real estate taxes for the library next year. **Roll call vote:** Mr. Carlson – Aye; Dr. Griffiths – Aye; Ms. Jenks – Aye; Ms. Ogden – Aye; Ms. Ostrowski – Aye; Ms. Schultz – Aye; Ms. White – Aye. **Motion carried.**

Donation: Ms. Ogden moved, Ms. Jenks seconded, to approve with gratitude the following donations:

1. Lodi American Legion Post 523: \$500 for Student Printing at Lodi Branch
2. Lodi American Legion Auxiliary Unit 523: \$250 for Student Printing at Lodi Branch
3. Candice Herman \$100 for VWM Family History and Learning Center
4. Darrell and Carolyn Waite: \$100 for Grief Kits

Roll call vote: Mr. Carlson – Aye; Dr. Griffiths – Aye; Ms. Jenks – Aye; Ms. Ogden – Aye; Ms. Ostrowski – Aye; Ms. Schultz – Aye; Ms. White – Aye. **Motion carried.**

Trustee Comments:

Ms. Jenks thanked everyone for the donations. She congratulated the staff who have been finalists for awards and who have hit milestones with service to MCDL. She noted that it is wonderful that we hosted 48 virtual programs last month and is grateful to staff for their hard work.

Ms. Ostrowski agreed with Ms. Jenks' comments. She appreciated the comments of those who spoke and noted that the Board does listen to concerns.

Ms. Schulz passed on any comments.

Dr. Griffiths thanked Mr. Harris, Ms. Olee and Ms. Miller, noting that the Board values their input. She congratulated our finalists for Shooting and Rising Stars and noted that we had quite a milestone list of staff. She also congratulated Ms. Adams.

Mr. Carlson passed on any comments.

Ms. Ogden thanked staff for their innovative ways of providing service and for taking the library into the future.

Ms. White agreed with the other trustees' comments, thanked staff for their service, and congratulated those with milestones of service.

Executive Session: None

Adjournment: There being no further business, Ms. Ogden moved, Ms. Ostrowski seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 pm. **Roll call vote:** Mr. Carlson – Aye; Dr. Griffiths – Aye; Ms. Jenks – Aye; Ms. Ogden – Aye; Ms. Ostrowski – Aye; Ms. Schultz – Aye; Ms. White – Aye. **Motion carried.**

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Monday, November 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. via ZOOM

Kyle White – President

Sharon Jenks – Secretary

October 19, 2020

To the Board of Directors of the Medina County District Library:

At your most recent Board meetings you first voted to disengage from the American Library Association and then rescinded that vote. I applaud you for the decision to take another look at your stand regarding the ALA.

I am communicating with you as a long-time library friend and supporter. I was President of the Friends of the Library many years ago and served on the Board when the first book sales took place. I co-chaired the library's first levy campaign in 1992 that began a string of winning levies. I chaired the successful levy campaign in 1997 in the midst of pressure from a citizens group calling for censoring use of the Internet. Library Journal named us "Library of the Year" in 1998 and I appeared in the Library Journal's cover photo with staff, Board members and other volunteers. I also fought to maintain the library's headquarters here on the Square. As Chair of the Medina Diversity Project, we've used the library for our meetings as well as the "Conversations on Race" that we've conducted for the past 5 years, and we've partnered with the library on various programs dealing with diversity and inclusion.

As I watched the September 21st Board meeting, I was dismayed at the comments that were made with respect to Black Lives Matter and whether the ALA was adhering to its mission. The argument against the latter seemed to be aimed at the ALA's selection of speakers at its annual conferences.

Let's look at the objection to the conference speakers. Four women – Michelle Obama, Hillary Clinton, Sonia Sotomayor and Stacey Abrams – were headline speakers among the 10 or so speakers at each of the last four conferences. Each of those women had a bestseller on the charts in the year she spoke; each of their books would have been in great demand at all libraries; their mainstream publishers would have been heavily promoting their books; and they would have been in high demand on the book tour circuit. The choice of these speakers is typical of those asked to speak at any major association conference. The speaker offerings at these conferences enhance involvement at the event and offer a variety of listening opportunities which most participants would be enjoying with open minds.

One of you stated that you don't see the "ALA mission statement as including a standing on Black Lives Matter." According to the ALA website, the stated purpose of the ALA is "to promote library service and librarianship" and its mission statement is "To provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all." In 1998, the ALA Council voted commitment to five Key Action Areas as guiding principles for directing the Association's energies and resources: Diversity, Equity of Access, Education and Continuous Learning, Intellectual Freedom, and 21st Century Literacy." The Key Action Areas expanded as years went by and in 2015 the ALA Council adopted a new Strategic Plan and

voted to affirm that “ALA will apply a social justice framework to the ALA Strategic Directions for the next three-to-five-years.”

The four strategic directions as amended in 2017 are:

- Advocacy
- Information Policy
- Professional & Leadership Development
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

The ALA website includes extensive resources for libraries, “using a social justice framework to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives within [the] profession and association to best position ALA as a trusted, leading advocate for equitable access to library services for all.” It provides resources on continuing education, diversity in the workplace, programming to promote diversity, outreach to underserved populations and workforce development. All of these resources are directed at both improving services as well as providing educational tools for librarians and their staffs. None of this could possibly be construed as straying from the ALA’s mission.

In June of this year, the ALA issued a statement after the killing of George Floyd “condemning violence and racism towards Black people, Indigenous people and all people of color.” The ALA urged members to “support initiatives to end police violence against Black people, to combat the systemic racism that infects our society, and to speak out against all attempts to restrict First Amendment rights.”

The Public Library Association (PLA), a division of the ALA, then issued a statement calling on “public library workers to commit to structural change and to taking action to end systemic racism and injustice.” The statement goes on to say “The PLA shares the nation’s anger, sadness, and frustration over the epidemic of violent acts perpetrated against Black people. We demand justice for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless others...We stand in solidarity with Black people engaging in collective action against systemic racism, oppression, and injustice. Across the country, the pattern of police violence in response to protests – coupled with a pandemic that is disproportionately impacting communities of color – further reveals our country’s disgraceful legacy of state-sanctioned violence against Black people. We join the chorus of voices demanding an end to this violence and insisting that Black Lives Matter.”

The PLA listed several steps to advance this call to action. One of those is to “Study, amplify, and align with the policy demands of the Movement for Black Lives. Ask yourself: What can the movement’s call to divest from punishment and policing – while investing in long-term safety strategies such as schools, libraries, employment, health, and housing – mean for your library and your community?” Another step to consider is “Change library policies that punish and criminalize patron behavior. Invest in alternatives to policing and securing guards within library spaces.” These steps are a way of opening discussion, reviewing whether policies are appropriate, and looking for alternatives that can improve the relationship between libraries

and their patrons. At no time does this PLA statement endorse the idea of “defunding the police.” At no time does the PLA advocate that the ALA join the Black Lives Matter organization itself.

The ALA – and most large organizations, both for-profit and non-profit – is accepting the challenge we face in America today as we not only fight a pandemic but also come to grips with the legacy of 400 years of structural racism against Blacks, Indigenous people, and all people of color. All these organizations are examining their policies, re-thinking their priorities about equity and inclusion. Cities, including Medina, have declared “Racism a Public Health Crisis” because of its insidious effect on all social determinants of health, from education and healthcare, to housing, employment, health outcomes, longevity, and more.

At the same time, here in Medina, there were seven different peaceful demonstrations on the Square. Hundreds of people of all colors, religions, ages, political persuasions and backgrounds -- including City and County leaders, the police, and the clergy – came together to call for an end to systemic racism, to push for police reforms, and to proclaim that “Black Lives Matter.”

For the Medina County District Library Board to consider leaving the ALA would be to turn a blind eye at what is a positive moment in American society today – a new awareness that we must address systemic racism if we want our country and community to thrive, that we have an opportunity to come together and tackle this prodigious task. Indeed, with all the resources the Library has at hand, you are uniquely poised to take a leadership position in this effort.

Thank you.

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