

PORTAGE DISTRICT LIBRARY BOARD
Minutes of the Board Meeting held on

October 26, 2020
Electronic Meeting via Zoom

- I. Start of Meeting - Board members and staff gathered virtually via Zoom and the board meeting started at 6:00 PM.
- II. Roll Call - Library Director Klien informed trustees of a new requirement for virtual meetings. Board members must now state that they are virtual and the city and state where they are currently attending from. For example: Hi, this is Christy Klien and I am attending virtually from Portage, MI.

Board Members Present:

Good evening. I'm Tom Welsh and I am participating virtually from my home in Portage, MI.

This is Michele Behr and I am attending virtually from my home in Portage, MI.

Hi, this is Carol Bale and I am participating virtually from my home in Portage, MI.

Hi, this is Jeanne Friedman and I am participating virtually from my home in Portage, MI

I'm Cara Terry and I am participating virtually from my home in Portage, MI.

Hi. It's Donna VanderVries and I am participating virtually from my home in Portage, MI.

Board Members Absent: Ted Vliek (excused)

Library Staff Present: Library Director Christy Klien, Jill Austin, Rolfe Behrje, Quyen Edwards, Rob Foti, Lawrence Kapture, Doran Lefaive, Abby Pylar, Andrea Smalley, Pam Triplett, Colin Whitehurst, and Laura Wright

Guests Present: Ken Baker, Tom Vance, Linda Whitlock, and Antoinette Yanni

- III. Comments or Requests from the Public, Board Members, or Library Staff
Board Chair Welsh welcomed everyone to the meeting. He then opened the meeting for any comments from the public, board members, or library staff. No comments were made.
- IV. Adoption of the Agenda for the Regular Meeting of October 26, 2020
Library Board Chair Welsh asked if there were any changes needed to the agenda for the October 26, 2020 board meeting before its adoption. None were requested. Welsh asked for a motion to adopt the agenda.

MOTION: It was moved by Trustee Behr and supported by Trustee Bale that the Library Board adopt the agenda for the regular meeting of October 26, 2020. Roll Call Vote: Bale – yes, Behr - yes, Friedman - yes, Terry - yes, VanderVries – yes, Welsh – yes. 6-Yes, 0-No, 1-Absent (Vliek). Motion carried.
- V. Consent Agenda
Library Board Chair Welsh asked if there were any changes needed to the consent agenda for the October 26, 2020 board meeting before its adoption. Trustee Behr requested the removal of Item B. Welsh asked for a motion to adopt the agenda excluding Item B.
 - A. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of September 28, 2020.
 - B. Review of Donation Policy.
 - C. Approval of Holiday Schedule for Library Hours of Operation in 2021.
 - D. Monitoring Report – Communication & Support to the Library Board.
 - E. Monitoring Report – Ends Focus of Grants/Contracts
 - F. Narrative Report for September 2020.
 - G. Report on Financial Condition for September 2020.
 - H. Marketing Update for September 2020.
 - I. Statistical Report for September 2020.

- J. Legislative Report for September and October 2020.
- K. Library Board linkage opportunities for November and December 2020.

MOTION: It was moved by Trustee VanderVries and supported by Trustee Bale, to approve the consent agenda excluding Item B. Roll Call Vote: Bale – yes, Behr - yes, Friedman - yes, Terry - yes, VanderVries – yes, Welsh – yes. 6-Yes, 0-No, 1-Absent (Vliek). Motion carried.

Item B – Review of Donation Policy – Trustee Behr asked for clarification regarding the donations policy as it only refers to financial donations. Library Director Klien said that this policy covers monetary donations and that there is language in the Heritage Room Policy which covers items donated to the Heritage Room including a Deed of Gift Agreement.

MOTION: It was moved by Trustee Behr and supported by Trustee Terry, to approve Item B – Review of Donation Policy. Roll Call Vote: Bale – yes, Behr - yes, Friedman - yes, Terry - yes, VanderVries – yes, Welsh – yes. 6-Yes, 0-No, 1-Absent (Vliek). Motion carried.

VI. Governance

A. Approval of Resident/Non-Resident Policy and Non-Resident Fee Amount for 2021.

Trustee Bale wanted to know how many non-resident users the library currently has and Klien said the Statistics show that there are 376. Board Chair Welsh reminded trustees that this amount is a \$5 increase from last year, so it isn't as large of an increase than the prior year when the new additional millage created an increase in what Portage residents pay and therefore the non-resident fee amount as well. Klien said we are using the same formula we have previously used to calculate the non-resident fee which we feel is fair to our community members who pay taxes towards use of the library. Edwards reminded trustees that Non-Residents would pay \$176 starting in 2021, and senior non-resident memberships (those 62 or older) are 50% of that amount, or \$88.

MOTION: It was moved by Trustee Behr and supported by Trustee Terry that the Library Board approve the Resident/Non-Resident Policy and the Non-Resident Fee Amount for 2021. Roll Call Vote: Bale – yes, Behr - yes, Friedman - yes, Terry - yes, VanderVries – yes, Welsh – yes. 6-Yes, 0-No, 1-Absent (Vliek). Motion carried.

B. Review of Investment Policy and Library Investment Listing.

Library Director Klien said that this is the annual review of the Investment Policy and page 51 of the board packet lists the library's current investments. Business Manager Foti said that investments are currently a roller coaster ride and the library is making what it can. Foti said he hopes the market will turn around at some point. Foti said some investments will come due early next year for cash for the building project. If we don't spend it all, we will be reinvesting. Trustee Behr asked about the investment labeled "Fed. Hermes Gov't Reserves" and Foti replied that it's a money market account and he takes the names of the listings right off the statement he receives.

MOTION: It was moved by Trustee Terry and supported by Trustee Friedman that the Library Board approve the Investment Policy and Library Investment Listing. Roll Call Vote: Bale – yes, Behr - yes, Friedman - yes, Terry - yes, VanderVries – yes, Welsh – yes. 6-Yes, 0-No, 1-Absent (Vliek). Motion carried.

C. Fines & Fees/Usage Policy and Fine Free Discussion.

Klien directed trustees to the new Circulation Policy which has been redrafted and renamed. Klien said it was written following recommendation from the library's attorney to reformat. For comparison, the existing Fines and Fees/Usage Policy was included in the packet behind it. All pertinent information transferred over to the new policy with the exception of the room rental fees, which are also covered in the Community Room Policy. Klien said this policy would just focus on circulating material.

Klien said that GoPros were added to the equipment list. They are not currently in circulation, but will be an additional tool for the Creation Station and we are very close to making them available.

Klien directed trustees to page 54 of the board packet for the wording in the policy that indicates that the library is going fine free. After consulting with other fine free libraries, we have decided that items will be considered "lost"

after being overdue for 28 days no matter the length of the specific item's loan period. Board Chair Welsh asked about renewals which had previously been discussed during conversations about going fine free. Klien said that renewals are covered in Section 1 Item B. The language there is purposely vague as there is no guarantee of renewal. As in our previous policy, if another patron has a hold on the material, it cannot be renewed, and specific items like Hot Picks and equipment are not renewable.

Trustee Behr asked for clarification regarding overdue MeL material. Circulation Supervisor Austin responded that MeL does not charge overdues and you can't charge patrons of other libraries overdue fines, but each individual member library can charge their patrons overdue fines for MeL materials. There is, however, a formula for lost items including specific values for certain types of materials. We are not in control of what we can charge another library for replacement of lost materials, but in addition to the pricing formula, we can include a "reasonable processing fee". Our library has to pay the bill for lost MeL materials on a 30-day billing cycle, then we have to collect it from the patron.

Board Chair Welsh had a question relative to implementation as the Board has already decided to waive overdue fees until the library can stop quarantining material. Klien said that our new process will begin in January and we can clear overdue fines on our patrons' accounts at that point, especially since we were not able to offer Food for Fines or an Amnesty Week in 2020. We will also start sending notices again reminding patrons that they have overdue items. Most of the libraries that we talked to regarding use of a library collection agency were not sending patrons to collections during the pandemic. We still need to decide as an institution how or when we would implement that.

Austin chimed in. If we get the go ahead to go fine free, we would spend time explaining the new system leading up to January 1, 2021 and encouraging people to return items in a timely manner before we switch to the new system. Austin said she ran some numbers from 2019, to give the board an idea of what things look like in a "regular year". There were 861 users billed for non-return or damaged items in the amount of \$40,000 worth of materials. In the past, within 28 days of billing them 481 patrons (more than half) either returned the item, paid for it, or talked to us about their specific situation and had their fines waived. That equals approximately \$21,000 of materials that came back or got paid for. Of the remaining 380 users, there is still \$19,000 worth of materials and only 80 of them would have qualified for collections under our newly proposed procedure (as the rest do not have bills over \$25).

Klien said that she wanted to follow-up on the questions the Board had about how the library collection agency works. Business Manager Foti investigated that and determined that there is not a contract for the Unique service. The library would pay a fee each month per person that was sent to them. We talked to libraries who used the service, and they had good things to say about the company including that they were responsive and easy to work with. They found that success rates (for return or payment for materials) varied from community to community. Some libraries had better success when their strategy included a strongly worded last letter prior to sending an account to collections. They found that patrons were occasionally upset, but once it is explained that the library collection agency doesn't show on your credit rating and that the library is just trying to get materials back for others in the community to use, there was more understanding. We feel it is important to show that the library is taking this seriously and making an effort to get materials back as a good steward of taxpayer dollars. Foti said both Troy and Kalamazoo Public Library thought that having language like the following example in the letter was important. "If this bill is not paid within – days, it is subject to collection with a fee." Trustee Terry agreed with including strong language.

Foti said currently Unique charges \$9.99 per account sent to them and recommended not removing the block on a patron's card until the total amount is paid off. He said that he feels the service makes sense because library staff do not have the time to call and keep following up with patrons. Many libraries charge that \$9.99 fee to the patrons (even if the material is returned) and he proposes that we would charge that to the patron as well.

Trustee Behr asked about a communication plan to explain changes to patrons. Marketing Manager Whitehurst said that we are in a good position because many other libraries have already successfully made the transition and we can follow with what worked for them. Once a decision is made, we will spend more time fully flushing out a marketing plan for going fine-free.

MOTION: It was moved by Trustee Behr and supported by Trustee Terry that the Library Board approve the proposed Circulation Policy to replace the Fines and Fees/Usage Policy to go into effect on January 1, 2021. Roll Call Vote: Bale – yes, Behr - yes, Friedman - yes, Terry - yes, VanderVries – yes, Welsh – yes. 6-Yes, 0-No, 1-Absent (Vliek). Motion carried.

VII. Ends Development

A. Library Director's Accomplishment of Personal Goals for Fiscal Year 2020

Library Director Klien said that there was an abrupt change in focus this year due to the pandemic. This is why some goals were not fully realized, but she will continue to look at those in the future. She said that she is proud that the library made great progress as an organization, with the building project coming up and on target, library cards for all PPS students, and lots of other great changes.

Klien asked if there were any questions or concerns to address. Trustee Friedman said that one of the qualities of a good leader is the ability to pivot. She wanted to recognize and have on record how Klien has led the library staff and covered the details. Klien thanked Friedman for her comment and said that the team has helped her get there. Trustee Behr added that we have a director that has risen to lead in a crisis.

DISPOSITION: The Library Board acknowledged the Library Director's Accomplishment of Personal Goals for Fiscal Year 2020.

C. Third Quarter Strategic Planning Statistics.

Library Director Klien asked if there were any questions regarding the Third Quarter Strategic Planning Statistics which started on page 61 of the board packet. She added that just like with her own personal goals, our staff has made some adjustments to strategic planning projects this year. Some collections aren't circulating so we can't count statistics on them. Some projects were hit out of the park, for example the number of videos created well exceeded what we were planning. Staff continued programming in the best way they could.

Trustee Bale had a question about "Implement devices to create and learn". Klien said this refers to the Creation Station which was launched at the beginning of this month.

Trustee Friedman asked if staff is collecting statistics or running reports of use on the new PASS cards. Systems Administrator Behrje said that the library has collected additional information on students including school and grade level so there are a variety of ways we could report information. Austin asked if there were particular data points Friedman was looking for. We would want to collect data now so that we could run comparatives. Friedman said she is interested to know if there is an increase in students using the card. She said if the library doesn't see that students are using the card, what do we need to do to reach out to the schools to try to get it used.

Trustee VanderVries left the meeting at 7:00 PM. She said goodbye and wished good luck in the election to all candidates.

Behrje suggested collecting information such as: How many students checked out a book using their PASS card. How many circs are there by grade level or by school to determine who have we communicated well with? Austin recommended evaluating the PASS card program over a three year period. She felt that new programs take time to determine success.

Head of Youth Services Laura Wright said that youth staff have virtual tours planned for the 6th graders and said she'd like to track what that will do to PASS card use. This will be a good way to determine to what effect outreach has on a new initiative. Wright said that if the number of questions received is any indication, the program is going well so far as youth staff have gotten a lot more than expected. PPS and staff are very receptive and promoting the program well.

DISPOSITION: The Library Board acknowledged the Third Quarter Strategic Planning Statistics.

D. 3rd Quarter Financial Report for FY 2020 -

Business Manager Foti gave the Third Quarter Financial Report. He said that Fines and Fees are obviously down from what was budgeted for in 2020. He reminded trustees that the library budget is prepared for the change in fee amounts collected for 2021.

Foti said that Tax revenue is on target. Penal fines are approximately \$2,700 under budget. While the library was prepared for a smaller amount of penal fine revenue, the downward trend over the past few years is still a concern.

The library received \$20,000 in building insurance distributions this year and has for the past couple of years.

Under expenses, the library is going to be way under budget on salaries and wages. We have open positions and have made the decision to keep them open through the end of the year. We will look to hire for those positions in a predetermined priority order in 2021. Welsh asked where are the open positions? Foti said the openings are in several departments including Circulation and Adult Services, and are due to resignations or role changes.

DISPOSITION: The Library Board acknowledged the Third Quarter Financial Report for FY 2020.

Library Director's Comments

A. Building Update

Business Manager Foti, Facilities Manager LeFaive and I have been meeting with the architect and construction management firm to discuss additional questions about the new space. We have also been meeting with the interior designers in various groups to discuss what our furnishings needs are for various departments and staff spaces. They are creating some proposals to review and get feedback on.

We have also been working with a commercial leasing agent to look for a space that will accommodate the library. We have been looking at the commercial space that will be vacated by SteinMart. We are hoping to stay on a tight budget and we can use the existing carpet and walkways to help create public service spaces. We will also be moving our existing shelving to the offsite location.

We are looking for a location that includes meeting space for the board and staff. We are also hoping to have some space for programming, though we don't yet know if we will be able to use it in 2021 under the pandemic guidelines. There are some other vacant storefronts in the vicinity which may have potential for us. Foti said that the SteinMart space is approximately 36,000 square feet (the library is approximately 49,000 sq. Ft.) and the adjacent spaces (which are in very raw condition) are 8,500 and 5,000 square feet respectively). Foti said they are trying to get information about other costs including utilities. Foti said he did check with our insurance company, and all of that library's interior contents are covered no matter where we move them. Included in the lease is the option to put signage on the building and at the road (at the library's expense).

Klien said they are ready to move forward with a letter of intent. She asked if the Board had any questions.

Trustee Behr asked about bus access for the location. Klien said that she knew that there was a public bus that goes to Crossroads Mall across the street, but she would have to check if it goes along Romence Road. Behr asked how much of the collection will be moved offsite. Klien responded that we will take as much of the interior building contents as we can because we will not be able to store things in the building during construction. If we are not able to fit things in an offsite location, we will have to look for additional storage space.

Trustee Bale asked about parking for that location. Klien said that there is parking right in front of the building and that there is additional parking in the plaza. There is additional parking in the back of the building for staff. Klien said she is not concerned about parking for this location.

Board Chair Welsh asked about possible configurations in the offsite location. Klien said that for the foreseeable future, we will continue with limited seating spaces for public use.

Trustee Terry asked about the timeline for the move. Klien said that we hope to take possession of the building in January, make interior adjustments in February, and be moved out of our library building by March to begin construction.

Klien said that in our building renovation budget, we currently have \$200,000 allocated for a rental property with additional funds to make adjustments inside the building and for moving expenses and asked if trustees would be comfortable allocating more towards that during contract negotiations. Trustees agreed that the timeline is tight and that there might be need for some wiggle room. It's a big move with a lot of moving parts, and trustees did not want to overburden the process by delaying until the December Board meeting. Trustees were in agreement that Library Administrators always make frugal financial decisions for the library.

MOTION: It was moved by Trustee Terry and supported by Trustee Bale that the Library Board authorize Library Director to negotiate an agreement for an offsite location for an amount up to \$250,000. Roll Call Vote: Bale – yes, Behr - yes, Friedman - yes, Terry - yes, Welsh – yes. 5-Yes, 0-No, 2-Absent (VanderVries, Vliet). Motion carried.

Klien thanked trustees for the additional flexibility. She said that C2AE architects had put together a draft layout of library services in the SteinMart building which were projected for the group to see and she would forward the document to them for additional review.

B. Final remarks by Library Director for the October 26, 2020 Library Board Meeting

Klien said that the acceptable library capacity is now 50% according to the Michigan Health Department. Klien said that the library has never reached capacity even when we were at 25%. She said the Admin Team made the decision to stop handing out timers last week because most patrons are not staying anywhere near their 1 hour time limit. Greeters are still tracking movement and building capacity, but are using significantly less disinfectant since the timers don't have to be cleaned between uses.

Klien said Public Act 228, has made some changes to how Open Meetings should be conducted. One, is that virtual Board participants had to announce your name and where you are located. The library can hold board meetings virtually through 2020. Starting in January 2021, you have to be present unless you meet one of the following exceptions – military, health issue, or local emergency in your area. In 2022, there can be no virtual meetings except military or local emergency. They have put limitations on that flexibility of participation. These guidelines could change in the future. I will follow up with the library's attorney to continue to make sure that the Library Board Meetings are in compliance and will continue to communicate any changes to trustees.

MLA annual conference is virtual this year and we will have 10 staff attend on October 28 and 29.

Klien said that the Portage District Library got the CARES Act Grant which was facilitated by Facilities Manager LeFaive. With the money we received, we are doing a wifi program pilot with students who need computer access as identified by Portage Public Schools staff.

Klien said that our Friends of the Library volunteers have been coming in and sorting donated materials and putting items out for sale in the Circ area.

So you are aware, the library received a letter from a community member regarding our Teen LGBTQ group and disapproved of the library holding such a program. The community member ~~also sent~~ copies of the letter to Portage City council and the Portage City Manager. We plan to send a response that we have received their comments. We are proud to be able to support teen community members in a safe way and will continue to do so. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me.

Good luck to the candidates in the election on Tuesday, November 3, 2020! Library Board Secretary Edwards said that when voting has been completed, the County Clerk will send a Canvass of Votes and she would forward that official information as soon as it is available.

IX. Process Evaluation

A. Suggestions for Agenda Items to be included on the December 14, 2020 Board Meeting

1. Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on October 26, 2020.
2. Review of FOIA Policy
5. Approval of Annual Calendar of Library Board Activities for FY 2021
6. Adoption of Schedule of Library Board Meetings for 2021
7. Report on Financial Condition for October 2020
8. Report on Financial Condition for November 2020
9. Marketing Update for October & November 2020
10. Narrative Report for October & November 2020
11. Statistical Report for October 2020
12. Statistical Report for November 2020
13. Legislative Update for November & December 2020
14. Appointment of Nominating Committee Chair to Survey Trustees' Interest in Board Offices in 2021
15. Personnel Committee's Recommendation for Library Director's Compensation in 2021
16. End-of-Year Report on Accomplishment of all Ends in 2020

B. *Assessment of this meeting* – Trustees said it was a good meeting.

C. *Miscellaneous Items* – Board Chair Welsh asked if any of the candidates had any additional comments or questions at the conclusion of the meeting.

Linda Whitlock - Whitlock was interested in the webinar Klien attended called “Leading with Gratitude”. Klien said it was offered by the library’s ILS service and the content is based off of a book with the same name. She said it is about thanking your team all along the way.

Ken Baker - Asked what the library is doing to address the divisiveness in the country? Klien said that the library often has programming to address these topics such as “Agents of Kindness” for youth and teens, reading books with diverse themes that start community conversations, and programs like “Meet your Muslim Neighbor.” The staff often have discussions about equity and inclusion.

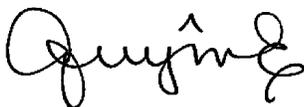
There is no Library Board Meeting in November. The next meeting will be Monday, December 14, 2020.

X. Adjournment –

Library Board Chair Welsh said if there was no further business to be considered, that he would adjourn the regular board meeting of October 26, 2020.

DISPOSITION: The regular board meeting of October 26, 2020 was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Recorded and Transcribed by,



Quyen Edwards
Library Board Secretary