

Elk Rapids District Library Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
August 12, 2021
Governmental Center, 315 Bridge St. Elk Rapids, MI

approved 9.9.21

note: minutes follow the agenda

1. Call to Order: By President Tom Stephenson at 5:00 pm

Members Present: Barb Johnson, Liz Atkinson, Tom Stephenson, Julia Pollister Amos, Chuck Schuler, Dick Hults, Karen Simpson, and Diane Geddes

Also Present: Director Nannette Miller and Friends of the ERDL chair Sharon Bacon. This meeting is being held in person at the Elk Rapids Governmental Center. There are 22 people in the audience at the start of the meeting.

Members absent: None

2. Approval of Agenda:

Motion: Johnson/Schuler to approve the agenda.

Motion carried.

3. Public Comment:

Trisha Perlman stated that she was hopeful we will all be more skillful as we move forward in dealing with the newly discovered deed and the survey results and try to be more accurate, and kinder as we communicate with each other. Her wish list included:

Having a copy of the 1960 deed that was discovered with the title search placed on the website so people can review. : The donor letter should explain there was no referendum and it should be clear that the library does not own the building. : The Friends meetings should be open to all. : This board should develop an ethics policy for behavior for board members. : The Village is a council manger form of government. No one trustee, or officer, may speak for the Village. We can accomplish so much more when we work together with accurate information and fair representation of intentions.

4. Trustee Education:

A short video from United for Libraries "Short Takes for Trustees" titled Board of Trustees was played.

5. Approval of Minutes:re: July 8, 2021meeting minutes

Correction: Director's Report: ARPA Grants not ARBOR Grants.

Secretary will also add a note that the July 15th meeting was cancelled.

Motion: Simpson/Johnson to approve the minutes of July 8, 2021 as amended.

Motion carried.

6. Treasurer's Report and Approval of Bills:

Geddes read the report and the checks written against the general fund.

Motion: Schuler/Hults to approve the reports and checks from the general fund.

Roll Call:

Pollister Amos: Yes

Stephenson: Yes

Hults: Yes

Atkinson: Yes

Geddes: Yes

Johnson: Yes

Schuler: Yes

Simpson: Yes

Motion carried.

Geddes read from the list of checks that need additional approval

Motion: Simpson/Atkinson to approve the additional checks from the general fund.

Roll Call:

Schuler: Yes

Pollister Amos: Yes

Simpson: Yes

Stephenson: Yes

Johnson: Yes

Atkinson: Yes

Hults: Yes

Geddes: Yes

Motion carried.

7. Correspondence:

President Stephenson received two requests for refunds from the Capital Campaign. One for \$5,000 and a second one for two donations: one for \$100,000 and a second one for \$400,000 both from the National Christian Foundation. The refund checks are ready and need to be approved. Stephenson said he spoke with the attorney to make sure this process is being done correctly and how donations/refunds to the library can and should be handled.

Stephenson also received an email request from the Village president to update the council on the operations of the library. He will do that on September 7th. He will also go to the both Elk Rapids and Milton townships and will bring Director Miller to all three meetings in case there are any operational questions. He also wants to talk about programs and how those could be handled this year.

8. Unfinished Business:

A. Friends Financial Review:

At the last meeting we had a discussion about how to pay for the Friends financial review. Now we need to vote if we want to pay for that.

Motion: Schuler/Atkinson to pay for the costs of the Friends financial review

Roll Call:

Atkinson: Yes
Pollister Amos: Yes
Schuler: Yes
Geddes: Yes
Johnson: Yes
Hults: Yes
Stephenson: Yes
Simpson: Yes
Motion carried.

Johnson asked if the financial review had been completed yet. Stephenson said it was not complete since there were a few questions on transfers that needed to be resolved. Stephenson also explained that Laura Savoie , the new Friends treasurer, had spent a lot of time helping to provide information to DGN and had contacted the State of Michigan to get them to accept a financial review as opposed to a full blown audit which will reduce the cost to the Friends.

Motion: Hults/Atkinson to approve four checks to be paid from the Expansion account , the three refund checks and one check to DGN the CPA firm handling the Friends review:

Geddes: Yes
Simpson: Yes
Schuler: Yes
Pollister Amos: Yes
Hults: Yes
Atkinson: Yes
Johnson: Yes
Stephenson: Yes
Motion carried.

B. Letter to Donors:

A letter was drafted last month and was discussed at the July 8, 2021 meeting. It was then sent to our lawyer at Foster Swift for his suggested changes. An updated letter with the attorney's suggested changes was in today's the board packet. Stephenson suggested that there may be more changes to make before it's sent to donors. Members discussed the those possible changes and agreed on an updated version.

Pollister Amos read the updated draft as follows:

Donor Name
Address

Dear Donor Name,

The Elk Rapids District Library Board of Trustees is committed to improving our facilities and amenities to serve future generations. It has been our honor to share a vision for the restoration and expansion of our beloved Island House Library. So many Board Members, staff, generous donors, and volunteers have worked hard to move this special project forward. Many supported the project because of a personal connection to the historic property. Others were inspired to help realize a modern, updated Library that functioned as the heart of the community. **However, after a lengthy period of research and analysis, the Elk Rapids District Library Board of Trustees**

has decided to suspend the project and related fundraising efforts. This decision was not made lightly and is motivated by our desire to ensure that the ERDL facilities fulfill the needs of the current and future residents. The pandemic has been a factor in our decision to pause the campaign. Foundations and donors were focused on critical and basic human needs. Many organizations have had to adapt, and the Elk Rapids District Library Board is no exception.

Our immediate hurdles are as follows:

- There are ongoing discussions regarding the lease and the underlying land, but additional time is needed to resolve any outstanding issues.
- The Board committed to a comprehensive financial review of the Capital Campaign and Friends of the Library. This review has been delayed but is expected later this summer.
- Construction costs have risen substantially since our original vision for the library was crafted. These added costs have prompted us to reconsider the feasibility of our original scope of work.

The needs and requirements of our community have changed. We have an obligation to our donors and community to take the time to clarify issues and answer questions before moving forward with a project for a Library that will be built in a collaborative, responsible and transparent manner. Our intent is to both honor your investment in the future of the community that we all love, as well as to instill confidence, and position us for future success. We thank you for your unwavering support and patience while we navigate this process. Your contributions will be retained as funds earmarked for this project, unless you direct us to refund your donation. Please feel free to email me if you would like us to refund your donation or if you have any questions.

Best Regards,

Tom Stephenson
President, ERDL Board
erlib.stephenson@gmail.com 248-404-7510

Motion:Simpson/Johnson to approve the updated letter to donors as read

Roll Call:

Johnson: Yes

Geddes: Yes

Schuler: Yes

Atkinson: Yes

Simpson: Yes

Stephenson; Yes

Pollister Amos: Yes

Hults: Yes

Motion carried.

This will be mailed on Capital Campaign letterhead and could be emailed to those who supplied an email address.

9. New Business:

A. None

10. Director's Report

As presented by Miller

We have been very busy, but our circulation is still down from two years ago. I think we are

getting as many people in, but they aren't checking out as much. Update on personnel and program coordinator position. Update on the successful summer reading program. Update on Kids Craft Day which was a lot of fun even though it rained. Update on report from Mackinaw Environmental regarding wetness from the leak. Update on Knox Box which is not in place because the fire chief wanted it relocated to a better protected position. Update on mechanical and construction issues. (Her full written report is part of the Agenda documents for this meeting available on the ERDL website.)

Miller stated that she has offered the program coordinator position to a person who expressed an interest in working at the library that Miller finds to be very well qualified. Simpson felt that the position should have been posted. Miller stated that if the person declines the job she will post it if it's confirmed that we can have programs.

11. Standing Committee Reports

A. Personnel Committee: Pollister Amos, Schuler, Stephenson, Miller

They met July 15th and notes are provided in your packet and on the website. We are meeting again on Monday in the Governmental conference room and are working on developing a new annual evaluation form for the director. We did get a suggested employment policy handbook from Foster Swift and so we will be working on updating the employment policy next. For the record, Miller objected to not having the meeting in the Governmental Center trustee meeting room. Miller asked that the meeting be recorded. Pollister Amos said she felt that taking such a large space for 4 people and an expected very small number of the interested public was unwarranted, and the meeting will be recorded.

Johnson asked if Miller's contract is part of the evaluation process? Pollister Amos said no. Miller stated that her current contract expired. Discussion between Miller and the board regarding whether the employment policy presented by Foster Swift covers the director.

B. Financial Committee: Geddes, Pollister Amos, Schuler, Miller

No report

12. Ad Hoc Committee Reports

A. Building Committee: Hults, Schuler, Atkinson, Miller

Hults said since the 4-4 vote, they have done nothing.

13. Friends Report

As provided by Sharon Bacon

You've received a copy of our financial report and despite the fact that we were mostly inactive we did have a small amount of net income. A budget was approved for the coming year which exceeds the small amount of net income which means we need to do well in our fundraising activities in the coming year. One of those is coming up very soon. She would like the board to participate in the Friends fundraising activities to show their support of the organization. She passed out fundraising forms for the upcoming "Glamour, Glitter & Glitz" fundraiser that will be held September 10-11 at the HERTH. Discussion of financial review and thanks to Laura Savoy for her help with this. The Friends have been participating at Evenings on River Street. Karin Beery is now handling publicity and is doing a wonderful job. Future meetings will be held in the

old chambers in the police building and everyone is welcome to attend. (Her full written report is part of the Agenda documents for this meeting available on the ERDL website.)

14. Public Comment: Same rules as previous public comment

Mary Lobisco asked about the donor letter as she was confused about the letter referring to the Island House expansion. Are you telling the donors you are only using their money for the expansion at the library? Stephenson stated that is what stands for now.

Diane Richer said she wonders what was promised to the donors? Where they told that the library didn't own the building and the current lease expires in 2038? Were they told that the concepts were only preliminary and still needed approval? She suggested putting a fact sheet in with the letter going to donors. There was a question about the \$400,000.00 donation and its use. Simpson said that donor who requested the refund was making reference to his \$400,000.00 that was being refunded not the first gift of \$400,000.00 that the library received from the Heffer fund. That gift has no restrictions

Inez Gotts said the community should be made aware of what is going on. I'm not blaming you for that, but people don't want to take the time to come to these meetings. It would behoove you to put some things in print—maybe in the newspaper to let the people know what is going on here. You have an obligation to these donors. She doesn't want to see the library put somewhere else but also doesn't want to see the expansion. Maybe we should take a step back and look at the problems right now. I hope you will communicate with the community.

Char Gretel wished everyone could have come to the Kids Craft Day. She thanked all of the volunteers and especially Mary Ann Priest who put so much into preparing for this event and yet asked for nothing in return except for happy faces. Richter also commented that it was a great event.

15. Board Comments:

Geddes announced her resignation from the board after 10 years and asked what the correct procedure was. Atkinson said a letter of resignation needed to be sent to Milton Township. Geddes asked how to transfer the work. Stephenson suggested a meeting with the Financial Committee. Miller said the board members would appoint a new treasurer at the next meeting. Everyone expressed thank yous to Geddes for serving.

16. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned by order of the chair at 6:23 pm.

Respectfully,
Julia Pollister Amos
Secretary of the Elk Rapids District Library Board of Trustees

note: the usual library recording was not available for this meeting
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