

Elk Rapids District Library Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 8, 2021
Governmental Center, 315 Bridge St. Elk Rapids, MI

approved as corrected at the 8/12/21 meeting

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. This meeting is being held in person at the Elk Rapids Governmental Center. There are 8 people in the audience at the start of the meeting.

Members absent: None

2. Approval of Agenda:

Motion: Schuler/Johnson to approve the agenda as presented
Motion carried.

3. Public Comment:

Rick Bellingham gave an update on the 13 Ways Steering Committee. We've been able to raise enough funds to begin the contract signing process and that should be done in the next week or so. We hope for Doug (Griffiths - author of the book 13 Ways) to get started in early August. Miller asked whom the contract is with? The Chamber of Commerce and 13 Ways. Atkinson asked if the original level of service was dialed down? Bellingham said the initial proposal was \$160K for five phases. The committee felt we had expertise to three phases and scaled it down to \$100K. We raised \$60K and we are starting and committing to the first two phases. Atkinson asked who the supporters were? \$10K from the ER Village Council; \$10K from Elk Rapids DDA; \$10K from Chamber of Commerce; \$10K from Rotary Charities; \$20K individual donors.

4. Trustee Education:

Trustees watched a video for educating library trustees from United for Libraries Short Takes for Trustees titled "What it means to be a Trustee".

5. Approval of Minutes: June 10, 2021

Corrections: from the secretary #12: Friends Report not Fiends Report, from Johnson Meeting Agenda to Meeting Minutes

Motion: Atkinson/Geddes to approve as amended
Motion carried.

6. Treasurer's Report and Approval of Bills:

Geddes reviewed her report for June for 12 checks from the general fund.

Motion: Johnson/Schuler to approve the bills

Roll Call:

Johnson: Yes

Pollister Amos: Yes

Hults: Yes

Schuler: Yes

Geddes: Yes

Simpson: Yes

Atkinson: Yes

Stephenson: Yes

Motion carried.

Geddes reviewed the additional bills

Motion: Atkinson/Johnson to approve the additional bills

Roll Call:

Pollister Amos: Yes

Schuler: Yes.

Johnson: Yes

Hults: Yes

Simpson: Yes

Geddes: Yes

Stephenson: Yes

Atkinson: Yes

Motion carried.

Approval of Foster Swift Bill from Expansion Account:

Motion: Hults/Atkinson to approve the Foster Swift Bill dated June 23, 2021

Question by Pollister Amos: Why are we being billed for something that happened in September in June? Is there a reason? Miller said they never billed us for all of the calls made about the foundation made by Simpson. Now they've billed us. They just didn't get around to it before. Hults said he reviewed the bill regarding what he had input to and he believes it's reasonable. Johnson said this is all for the expansion? The entire lease goes under the expansion? Yes.

Roll Call:

Simpson: Yes

Stephenson: Yes

Schuler: Yes

Hults: Yes

Atkinson: Yes

Geddes: Yes

Johnson: Yes

Pollister Amos: Yes

Motion carried

7. Correspondence:

None

8. Unfinished Business:

A. Friends Financial Review: As submitted by Laura Savoie

The 990 was submitted to the state and we got an email back from the Attorney General's Office saying we needed to have a financial review for the solicitation registration form. I contacted Aaron (Mansfield of DGN CPAs), who is doing the audit, to see if this is a part of his review. It does not. In order for us to keep our 501(c)3, I had to get another letter of engagement to retain DNG to perform a financial review for the Friends for year ending 6/30/20. We had to have it submitted by June 30th to have the work done to get an extension. The reason you have to do the financial review is...if you raise more than \$275K you are required by the state to do a financial review. If you raise more than \$500K you have to do a professional audit. The Friends of the Library approved this last week. Aaron (Mansfield) is working on it. This should be done within the next couple of weeks. The estimated cost is \$5-10K. I don't think it will be on the high side since he has the information needed to do the professional review. Moving forward we will get quotes with other firms, but because the timeframe was so short, we had to go with DGN.

9. New Business:

A. Suspend Capital Campaign

Stephenson said this was discussed at the last meeting.

Motion: by Atkinson/Geddes to discuss and decide if we will suspend the Capital Campaign.

Atkinson supports the idea of suspending the capital campaign. It's already been suspended on its own. Stephenson, if we do it officially, we can look at the letter and then we can notify the donors and look at what direction we want to go. Schuler asked what if someone wants to give money now? They could make a donation to the library now, but not the expansion. Does that mean you can't take money out asked Schuler? Miller said there might be bills. The campaign is suspended, not the expansion fund. Discussion about how much was in the fund before the campaign was formed and what portion is being used for legal bills. Miller stated that \$750K was in the fund before the Capital Campaign Committee was formed. Johnson asked how long the campaign would be suspended. Geddes said it should be suspended until ownership of the library building is determined between the village and the township. Johnson asked what is taking so long to get answers about the deed. Stephenson said there is a full legal process going on. Pollister Amos said no one can answer that right now and we are getting off topic. Hulst said in another meeting, we are on the waiting list for a survey. The township won't take action until they know what they do or don't own with a survey. It should happen in the next 60 days. That will be the start of the process. The township will pay for the survey. Schuler asked who is paying for that? The ER Township is paying for that. Discussion about the survey fee. It could amount to a substantial sum? This is coming from the general fund or the legal fund. Schuler discussed why this bothers him. Simpson said she's had a lot of conversations with a lot of donors and a lot of potential donors and stakeholders and all those kinds of people and one of the common threads was that we just need to stop doing what we are doing. The lease and the deed are not the only questions. There have been questions about this project from the very beginning that we haven't answered. And, we need to stop, we need to start working as a board, we need to

get all of our things, all of our questions resolved and get our strategic plan into place the way it's supposed to be and really be working as a board and then put a project together. That's been the common thread from the folks that I have spoken to. And I just think it's time to do that. Stop and reassess, reengage the community. We've talked about how times have changed certainly, with the pandemic as well as the number of years that have gone by and we need to reassess what the community needs and wants in a library. Hults called the question.

Roll Call:

Simpson: Yes

Stephenson: Yes

Schuler: Yes

Hults: Yes

Atkinson: Yes

Geddes: Yes

Johnson: Yes

Pollister Amos: Yes

Motion carried

B. Equipment Disposal Policy (Request for a new policy)

Miller said we will be replacing our laptop computers and we've had people inquire about purchasing them. I will look at a policy for this. I want permission to get a new policy for review for disposing of unneeded property for review. Simpson asked if it could be donated?

Stephenson said depending on the program used, they have different requirements based on how they were acquired i.e. tax dollars vs. grants etc. Simpson asked about the reason for replacement? The laptops still work but they are six years old. The desktops are five years old and it's time for them to be replaced.

Motion: Pollister Amos/Simpson that we go forward with having Foster Swift create an equipment disposal policy.

Motion carried.

10. Director's Report

As presented by Miller

The library of Michigan is administering \$4m ~~Arbor~~ ARPA Grants and we decided not to apply because the minimum is \$25k and we couldn't come up with needs that would qualify for that amount. Discussion of other grants coming up that will be used to replace the computers and money that can be used for conferences and education. The Ethics webinar that several board members attended was considered most worthwhile. Miller will send out the note taking guide from that program to all board members. The audit is scheduled for July 19, 2021. Miller will hire a new program coordinator. Aaron (Hill) will focus on technology. We have nowhere to hold programs. This is a real problem. Discussion about where to have programs. The kickoff at summer reading was great. We had over 100 people. Miller got an email from Village Manager Bryan Gruesbeck regarding repair of the restrooms, which will start on July 19th. Update on other maintenance issues. The insurance adjuster will send someone to check on air quality testing. You haven't gotten a financial report on the expansion fund for two months now and that's because I don't have the bank statement. Last month I couldn't do one because I didn't have the bank statement, but they shifted everything May 24 and apologized because they hadn't posted

the interest to the account. They are supposed to be sending a corrected statement . Because of all this, I couldn't reconcile. We should be getting a corrected statement this month and I can give you a report next month. Simpson asked if we could get it by email. Miller said we are not set up for online banking with Independent.

11. Standing Committee Reports

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

The personnel committee is meeting next Thursday to discuss coming up with a new evaluation for the director. This will be a public meeting. We will post the meeting notes afterwards. There are lots of different options to consider and therefore we likely won't make a decision on what to recommend to the board at that meeting. If you have suggestions, please get them to us before next Thursday at 11 am at the Governmental Center in the conference room.

We will also be updating the personnel policy which is basically the employee handbook. Pollister Amos contacted Mike Blum at Foster Swift. He asked for a copy of the current handbook which was last updated in 2015. Once we know for sure what the scope will be, we will ask for approval to hire him to do it.

B. Financial Committee: Geddes, Schuler, and Miller

No report. Stephenson said he sent out the DGN reengagement letter and they set the date. We will have that by the 31st before the next board meeting.

12. Ad Hoc Committee Reports

A. Capital Campaign Committee: Simpson

Has been suspended. Simpson said regarding the letter to donors, within the next few days you will get a final for review. The board will meet to approve this final letter. Looking at having a special meeting next week to approve this. July 15th at 10:30 will be the special meeting. It will be at the ER Governmental Center if the meeting room is available. Atkinson asked what some of the suggested changes are? Simpson said she will send them out. Pollister Amos said she would check to see if the room is available. (8/12/21 note: the July 15th meeting was cancelled)

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

Hults said there was a meeting on June 15th and meeting notes have been provided to all. The building committee agreed that we would should produce a plan B that encompasses the feasibility study and a search for another piece of property if that option should be used. Chuck and Liz supported that. We are open for discussion.

Motion: Hults/Atkinson that the board authorizes the building committee to move forward with a secondary plan for building the library on a different location and the feasibility and acquisition of the land accordingly

Discussion: Simpson said she feels that we have a lot of work to do before we can go out and even consider looking at another project. We need to work on our strategic plan first. We need to do community engagement and see where they want us to go. We should wait and see. Pollister Amos said the discussion has been out there among certain portions of the community that we should be looking at a different location anyway. This is the time to be doing something, let's

find out if it's at all feasible. Atkinson said it's a perfect time to run parallel to the other options. Miller pointed out that the draft letter says that we would look at other options. Johnson said we've made a commitment to the village and we shouldn't be looking at other location options right now. People want the library in town. They love our library. We made a commitment to the people in this town and to change it now is not the right thing to do. Atkinson disagrees. It's the perfect time to present alternatives. We aren't saying we going to go with a specific plan, we are just going to do our due diligence and look at options. Stephenson said it's our responsibility to look at other ideas right now. Geddes said one of the considerations on deciding to renovate the island house was cost and it was the best most cost effective way. Unless we get property donated, I don't know how we can do this. We promised our stakeholders that we wouldn't ask for a bond issue so we have to raise all the money ourselves. Pollister Amos said the estimate was \$5 million; the cost will be way more to do it right now. Things have changed. Designs have changed and will change more in the future. We have the time to look now. We don't know until we try. And we don't know if someone will donate property until we ask. Why not? We are deciding to investigate, not make a decision. Hults said the building committee is willing to put in the time and effort to see if there are donors for land and do our due diligence regarding the cost of a new structure. As a retired contractor, I feel that we will come up with a number that is substantially less for a new construction building than the cost of the proposed expansion was two years ago. It might be doable if we do a new building. We don't know what the updated projected cost of the renovation of the old building is at today's costs - it's probably at least between 5 and 6 million today. There are a lot of what ifs in the game here. We agreed that we need to look at a plan B. We may not come up with anything feasible. Geddes asked what the need for space would be? Hults said he's not sure right now. Geddes asked how much land would be needed. Hults stated that an 8,000 sq ft building with parking could likely be constructed on 2 - 2.5 acres. It's not like we need a massive amount of land. Johnson said what do we say to the people who already donated. Hults said we would have to ask them to consider if they want to leave their money in the game. Simpson stated that she thinks we are right about the costs as she was speaking with a developer last week he said it would be about 6 - 6.5 million for the current plan. She said we are putting the cart in front of the horse and we said that we want to explore options and we want to assess what our community needs and that's what we should do first. Johnson said we held public meetings and that is very important. Stephenson said it would be the same process. All we are asking to do is explore said Stephenson. Atkinson said it's shortsighted to not look at the options out there. Schuler said he's given it a lot of thought since the meeting and he's changed his mind and if we start exploring other options it will be very controversial in the community. What are the parameters around this? People will be very upset over this. We just froze the capital campaign. I want to hear about the audit and deed and lease. Who looked at the document being sent from the village to the attorney? Others asked: What document? Is this a lawyer communication? Schuler stated it was a response to the attorney from ER Township and asking what the Village had done and was given to the attorney and I don't know what happened to that. That's all under discussion. It's not public. Miller said it was on the village website for a while. Schuler said he has a question about the vote in 1970. Hults said we have the vote. The deed wasn't recorded. They took an advisory vote and no action was taken. Pollister Amos asked why that makes a difference? Schuler says we have been told this will take six months or longer and it shouldn't take that long. Pollister Amos said that makes no difference at all. The question becomes is it the best place to spend money to expand the library or look at a new spot. Schuler said he wants to know the answer to the audit and how this

will be settled. I'm in the village and pay taxes in both. The village was told not to spend another dime for the library expansion. Here we have the township spending the money. I don't understand this whole thing why this can't be settled quicker. Hults said this is a discussion for the township board meeting. Schuler stated that he wanted to bring this topic up at a later date, but not today. Miller said the village isn't spending money on the library expansion. The library rents the island house. They aren't spending money on the expansion. The citizens of the district own the library. The township and the village are spending money on a property dispute regarding the building where we house the library. Regarding the commitment we made to the people, we told them we want to give them a bigger and better library. We didn't promise we would renovate and expand the village's building. We didn't seriously consider other ideas and so that's how it went. What we owe this community is a bigger better library and it doesn't have to be at the current location. We should at least see if there are any other options out there at this time. Atkinson, Pollister Amos and Stephenson agreed. Stephenson clarified that we have to look at all options. Schuler restated that he may be open to looking at other options later, but not at this time. Pollister Amos asked him if he would not support looking at any other options until his concerns about the audit and the deed are answers that would mean that we couldn't look other options for how long - a year? Schuler stated he feels it could be done in a lot less time than that. This search should be suspended for a time being. What if you do find the land? He called the question. Atkinson stated that what she heard him saying was that we would not be allowed to look at what the options are. It was restated that the question had been called. Stephenson called for a roll call.

Roll call vote

Johnson: No

Schuler: No

Hults: Yes

Geddes; No

Pollister Amos: Yes

Simpson: No

Atkinson: Yes

Stephenson: Yes

Motion failed on a 4-4 divided vote.

C. Strategic Plan Committee: Stephenson, Johnson, Simpson, and Miller

No report - Stephenson stated that things have to settle before the committee meets.

13. Friends Report

None

14. Public Comment: Same rules as previous public comment

Char Gretel lives in the village and appreciates four of you being willing to look at other options. The two proposals suggested when this first started were for size of library, not location of a library. I would like to see a better library. The people I have spoken to do not see that to be an issue. Do I have problems with how the village spends money? I do. But that's my choice to live in the village and be a member of the township and I am very proud to be that. I would like to know that the best interest of the library is being considered, not the best interest of the building. If the owner(s) of the building want to improve it for another use that would be fine as long as it

remains available to the public. Unlike the harbor Pavilion where we were promised that we could use it and that's not happening. Thank you for trying to move forward. I sincerely hope this will be considered again and the board will be allowed to look and at least bring us, the public, a choice.

15. Board Comments:

Discussion of educational video. Miller asked everyone to keep the chart and keep it in their binder since it shows the roles of each person.

Geddes said she voted no because I'm afraid that the building committee was going too far and being too specific. I've heard rumors that the building committee is actually speaking to property owners about possible purchase. I don't know if that's true or if it's just a rumor. I expected a list of ideas, not specifics. What kind of ideas asked Pollister Amos? Geddes stated like how far out we might go. You should have clarified that rumor before you voted said Atkinson. Pollister Amos stated this is a small town and there are rumors all the time. A prayer group that had suggestions approached Stephenson. Hults said he didn't speak to anyone references purchasing land. Atkinson said she didn't and Schuler didn't. You should have clarified during the discussion.

Pollister Amos said we are leaving a certain portion of this community out of this discussion. We are not letting them hear if there are other options or not. As many people think that the location should stay where it is, there are many people who think it should be someplace else, but they aren't allowed to find out if a someplace else is available. We are favoring one part of the community over the other and that's not fair

Discussion by Johnson about previous decisions and expressed her opinion that trustees are supposed to respect and not talk against an opinion on a vote of the board.

16. Adjournment

Motion:Schuler/Simpson to adjourn at 6:35

Adjourned by order of the chair.

Respectfully,
Julia Pollister Amos
Secretary, Elk Rapids District Library