

Elk Rapids District Library Board of Trustees

June 11 July 9, 2020 Meeting -

5:00 pm at the Government Center

1. **Call to order:** Board President Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM

Members present: Julia Pollister-Amos, Barbara Johnson, Jane Stauffer, Diane Geddes, Karen Simpson, Chuck Schuler, Chris Weitschat. Director Nannette Miller.

Members absent: Dick Hults

Members of the public in attendance Diane Richter, Paula Moyer, Char Gretel, Cindy Ciaravino, Jacquie Thiel, Laura Savoie, Marianne Priest, Gabrielle Hill, Rick Bellingham, Gary Stauffer, Paul Moyer.

2. **Approval of Agenda, as amended**

M/S: Schuler/Geddes - the motion carries

3. **Approval of Minutes 11 June**

M/S: Pollister-Amos/Geddes - the motion carries

Approval of Minutes 25 June, as amended

M/S: Schuler/Stauffer - the motion carried

4. **Treasurer's Report & Approval of Bills, as amended**

M/S: Simpson/Schuler

Roll call vote: Pollister-Amos – yes, Johnson-yes, Stauffer - yes, Geddes-yes, Simpson-yes, Schuler-yes, Weitschat-yes. The motion carries.

Per discussion on 11 June, Treasurer Geddes explained the Alden State Bank money market account, in the amount of \$200,000, will be opened on 10 July. The account will earn 0.025%. Director Miller will provide Treasurer Geddes with a check on 10 July.

5. **Correspondence**

President Johnson received an email from Paul Moyer with 2 questions.

1. The Traverse City, Interlochen, and Old Mission Libraries opened on 24 June and the Charlevoix Library opened on 22 June. What are the circumstances ERDL closed to the public and when is it expected to be open?

Director Miller explained that due to different libraries, buildings, and situations, they're currently doing what is best in our building. ERDL will permit, by

appointment, up to 4 patrons in at a time, for up to 15 minutes. Those buildings are vastly different than ours. and Peninsula and Interlochen Libraries are part of Traverse City's Library and it makes sense that all of them would open at the same time.

2. It was a hopeful sign that the ERDL Board of Trustees voted to support the ERDL project to renovate, restore, and expand the library. Can you please describe the specific plans going forward on how this project will be implemented. Aside from voting support for the project at the June 25 meeting what are the individual board trustee's roles and responsibilities with this project?

President Johnson explained the building committee is the head of that committee, no other committees at this time, but we'll be talking with the architects. The board's responsibility is to support talk up the library to the public as of now. That will be changing in the future.

6. **Director's Report**

Director Miller reports the statistics show the WiFi and Overdrive usages are up and the OPAC usage has greatly increased due to curbside service. The number of books checked out is down from this point last year. People are using things differently.

7. **Friends Report**

Gabrielle Hill reported the Friends are not opening the Cellar right now, but they're looking at social distancing stickers for the library, which they hope to have by Monday (13 July). They're not taking Book Cellar book donations, but they are getting the book cart out.

8. **Ad Hoc Committee Reports**

- a. Strategic Plan Committee – Karen Simpson, Chris Weitschat, and Nannette Miller

Presentation from Rick Bellingham – Need to revisit the objectives and ask how they need to change, based on changing conditions. Strategies are steps or tasks needed to implement the plan. A date to revisit the objectives needs to be set. A date needs to be set to determine which objectives need to be accomplished. After deciding what objectives, tasks, and steps are necessary, the tasks and steps need to be completed each month to reach objectives and a review of progress needs to occur monthly. The strategic direction is the message. The strategic plan committee needs to meet and review the objectives. The board members are responsible at the goal level and the Director is responsible at the objective level. The objectives, tasks, steps are about accountability, so the strategic direction is about messaging, and the strategic plan is about accountability. Fill out that process and revisit the objectives, tasks, steps, strategies and hold people accountable for meeting those and looking at ways you can help each other succeed.

- b. Capital Campaign Committee - Karen Simpson, Interim Chair, reports they've sent an email to donors and the Short's Brewery event is running, \$1 per Local's Light sale at the Pull Barn will be donated to the CCC, and will continue through mid-October. Ethanology is putting together special cocktails and \$5.00 per cocktail sold will go to the CCC. An anonymous donor has agreed to a \$50,000 matching pledge challenge this year and next year as well. An agreement between the CCC and the ERDL Board is in process.
- c. Building Committee - Dick Hults, Chair (absent) - Report from Trustee Pollister-Amos - Trustee Hults has not received anything yet from Bill Cooper to get the lease agreement on the agenda at this point.

10. **Unfinished Business**

Move to make the personnel committee a standing committee. M/S: Stauffer/Schuler

Roll call vote - Pollister-Amos-yes, Johnson-yes, Stauffer-yes, Geddes-yes, Simpson-yes, Schuler-yes, Weitschat-yes. The motion carries.

12. **New Business**

a. Refund Procedure

Laura and Nannette will create a procedure for refund requests and exempt the Becky Travis Memorial Fund donations from any refunds. M/S: Schuler/Simpson

Roll call vote - Pollister-Amos – yes, Johnson-yes, Stauffer - yes, Geddes-yes, Simpson - yes, Schuler-yes, Weitschat-yes. The motion carries.

Refund the request, via email on 15 June 2020, in the amount of \$3100. M/S - Weitschat/Pollister-Amos

Roll call vote - Pollister-Amos – yes, Johnson-yes, Stauffer - yes, Geddes-yes, Simpson-yes, Schuler-yes, Weitschat-yes. The motion carries.

b. Committee Requirements

Move that the Capital Campaign Committee posts their full committee meetings and takes minutes in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. M/S: Simpson/Pollister-Amos

Roll call vote - Pollister-Amos – yes, Johnson-yes, Stauffer - yes, Geddes-yes, Simpson-yes, Schuler-yes, Weitschat-yes. The motion carries.

c. Personnel Matter - ~~N/A~~ After discussion the complaint was withdrawn.

13. **Public Comment**

Several members of the public made comments.

~~Char Gretel is an interested and supportive member of the community and the library. Since the June 25th library board meeting was not recorded, when I read the draft minutes, there was no mention of the response to Dick Hults' request for a list of donors to the Capital Campaign. I believe that he was told that it could not be made available and there was discussion about an attorney's opinion of that and why should I as a trustee have to FOIA that and he was told that you didn't believe it was something that could be FOIAed and low and behold, last week we were told that there is such a list and it's on the Capital Campaign website and I'm confused why that was not mentioned by anyone at that meeting. I want to make the point that it was made quite clear that there wasn't a donor list to be made available and it was and no one came forward to say that. That is my first comment. My second comment comes after this just previous discussion. When I commented on the June 11th board meeting that I was happy, glad to see that the board was going to move forward. I meant to say in a more positive light. What I have seen here this evening is certainly not anything in a positive light from the board. That once again, the board feels compelled to bring the Director to task over matters of no consequences. Those opinions were asked at that board meeting and everyone commented on the board, including Nannette and yet hers were the only comments that were singled out. I'm sorry that was not the way that I had hoped this board was moving forward and so now I would also like to ask that the draft minutes be included in the agenda when it's posted so that anyone who is interested can see what is being brought forward. That's all, thank you.~~

~~Cindy Ciaravino - "My name is Cythia Ciaravino. I have worked at the Elk Rapids District Library since April of 2017. My duties include checking books in and out, yearly inventory, processing incoming and outgoing books on Melcat interlibrary loan program, assisting the Director with monthly bank deposits, board packets, organization, and any other area when called upon. I deal with patrons on the phone, in person, and on the internet. It is a frustrating job at times, but ultimately rewarding.~~

~~I agree with the assessment read by Marianne Priest at the board meeting on June 25th.~~

~~Living in both the Chicago and Detroit areas, I have been involved in many organizations. I have held the offices of secretary, treasurer, vice president and was the president of our secretary's union (part of the MEA) and led the re-writing of our contract for our members.~~

~~In all my experiences I have never seen such dysfunction, disarray, and fiff-gnawing amongst the board. Not inclusive of all members, but most. You make Congress look good. Do you have to like everyone you work with....of course not! You are the voice of the communities you serve and must fulfill the vision and purpose of the library. If you don't particularly like someone's personality, make the best of it for the community.~~

~~And When things aren't going your way, you blame Nannette Miller the Director. You pick on her unmercifully and unwarranted. She is the glue, the experience, the educated the~~

~~certified and she knows the governing laws and obligations of a library. She KNOWS what she is doing.~~

~~Nannette makes your job so easy. The library has been running smoothly for 10 years and continues to do so. The staff is happy with her. The community is happy with her. If there is some internal problem it is handled immediately. The board is not nor needs not to be involved. It is time you appreciate her and what she brings to this community.~~

~~Nannette has been the impetus behind the campaign for expansion. She has implemented the same for other libraries and been successful. She has always been for the expansion and has never undermined the campaign in any way.~~

~~Please let Nannette do her job as she does so well... and let the staff do their jobs as well.~~

~~Thank you.~~

~~Jacque Thiel stated First let me say how much I love this library and how much I personally feel this. I want the expansion. I have heard many people say they will not go down in that basement room and I totally agree with that because I feel it's a fire trap. You all know how I feel about that. I'm sad about this meeting. It went pretty much the same way as the last meeting I came to. I would like to recommend that the board do a retreat, learn the procedures, so that Julia doesn't have to be the bad guy and show a united front because you're not going to get your money if you don't. I was part of the millage that everybody said was not going to pass in 2000, it passed because our library board was united behind it, and the staff was united behind it. I will say again that I've not seen a more united staff and I was at the library for 10 years. There was always a scapegoat, always. There is no scapegoat in this staff, they stick together and they are doing a fabulous job I think. Having tried to do the job before, I think I can say that with some expertise. Transparency, if you're dealing with millions of dollars, you've got to have transparency. I appreciate what Barb said, you do have to be one and I don't know how you do that except to get a mediator, have a retreat, have someone come in from outside to show you how to work cooperatively because the anecdote to civility is cooperation. Please, we need that. I see the same division here that I saw the time I was here. I'm sorry, but I really want this and I know that it's not going to happen without this unity. So please, you know in a meeting if a person expresses an opinion it doesn't mean that it's set in gold and they're allowed to express an opinion, we have a Constitution here. So this business about the file, in her file, I just feel it's pitiful. Chuck, I'm surprised at you and you talk about negativity and you were negative the whole entire meeting. We can't do this, I'm sorry, but I love this place, I love this library. We need this library board needs to be the first one to stop this divisiveness. I've heard it about the River Street, I've heard it about the bike trail, you know it's been in the paper, it's embarrassing.~~

~~Diane Richter stated she has been involved with this whole thing from the very beginning, I've gone through Tom Vranich, John Ferguson, Jane Lund, Sarah Ward, Stuart Travis, Rowland Johnston, Thom Yocum, Judy Pasan, Alan Welch. These are all the board members that we've gone through since we've been starting this whole discussion when~~

~~we first got the initial donation to this library. They come and go for various reasons so it's hard to see how people can all work together, but I think having committee meetings that are public, trying to follow the Open Meetings Act as much as possible so people are transparent about what's going on really can go a long way to bringing everyone on the same page. Last night, it was interesting to play tennis at the Elk Rapids high school and a new resident in Milton Township asked, "Why do they think they need to build a bigger library?" The woman who answered has a home in Traverse City and one on Torch Lake, and she explained it's (the library) is so charming and it gives character to the community. Tonight I'm hearing we need to respond to changing conditions today. I'm hearing people are using technology in libraries differently. Reading in the newspaper that Covid is accelerating changes that may end up being permanent as far as the use of technology. So I would like to suggest we do survey the public once again and then we just ask after all these years and you're a whole new board and you didn't make the decision you live with today and see where everyone is at. Maybe everyone can get behind the 2000 square foot addition and can be achieved. I think everyone is for the library, so I'm offering that as a suggestion. I thank you for all of your work and I know Nannette works really hard. I know it's hard time right now and it will be better. Thank you.~~

Gabrielle Hill ~~stated she is disappointed that there wasn't a recording of the last meeting, but she was pleased to see the coverage in the Record-Eagle and the coverage and it was really good PR. People are getting behind the idea of the expansion. I've mentioned to a couple of you before, I did work at Oryana for 7 years as an administrative assistant to the general manager, served on the board, I redid all of the cooperative principles, managed the capital campaign that raised one million dollars, and I project managed their entire expansion. If it's not a conflict, I'd love to help out, I just don't have any way to get information about where the committee is at until there is open meetings... I don't want to have to FOIA emails to find out who has been talking to whom and what has been promised because I don't want to touch it if it's dirty. Not that I'm saying it's dirty, but I just don't think it's appropriate that there is over a million dollars and no record of it and it's going to the Friends. I think it's shady, I want that written and I hope this meeting is being recorded.~~

Laura Savoie ~~stated I take care of the data management for the Capital Campaign and I'd like to ask two questions. One, I think everybody in this room wants to move forward with the new library and it's really difficult to understand why we cannot all work together. The second question I'd like to ask is why is there a question about transparency and the list of funds when the money comes in, Nannette and I work together on that, we have a double check system and we work really good together with that and there has never been any question raised about that. I mean all the expenses, all the money that comes through, we have a great double check system, copies are made, Nannette puts in the information, I double check it, I run a report twice, I check it to make sure that it's right to the penny. So if there is any question about transparency, it just seems like there are a lot of assumptions made about a lot of different things and questions can just simply be answered, if you just ask the question.~~

~~Paula Moyer stated she was the CCC Chair of Fundraising. Just want to clarify for the Friends that Alice Rupert, Amanda Rupert, and Corrie Felker were all members of her committee and very active in the campaign. I also was in close contact with Susan Galkins to help set up with Evenings on River Street and Harbor Day. The Friends have been very active with the campaign.~~

~~Diane Richter stated I am just trying to understand, Laura are you an employee of the library and or how do you get in with the money and the donors. I guess I can't ask questions, I'm sorry. I think that the Capital Campaign Committee, I think this is a good first step to have the committee and everybody know who is on the committee and when it's gonna be meeting so that there is transparency, because this is a lot of money this isn't pocket change. It kind of like it should be an employee, I like Laura, it should be an employee or somebody on the board that has recourse. I'm having a hard time understanding that. I'm not understanding what Gabby just said. The only other thing I have a hard time understanding is that the library board raises the money, so why does it go to the Friends before giving it to the library. It's backwards. Okay, so that's okay, it's just a pass through. Thank you.~~

~~Jacquie Thiel stated in spite of my outburst I do appreciate the work the board is doing. I just want people to get together. I want cooperation. It's an absolute necessity that the board gets the money.~~

14. **Board Comments**

Trustee Weitschat - I'm resigning from my positions as the board secretary and board trustee. I'll complete and share the draft ~~minus~~ minutes with all of you and then submit my resignation to Village Council President Janesse. I'll continue to support the library restoration and expansion. I wish you all health and success.

15. **Adjournment:** President Johnson adjourned the meeting at 6:39 PM. The next meeting of the Elk Rapids District Library will be held on Thursday, 13 August 2020 at 5:00 PM at the Government Center, 315 Bridge Street, Elk Rapids.

Submitted by Chris Weitschat