

**Elk Rapids District Library Board of Trustees**  
**October 14, 2021, 5 pm**  
**Elk Rapids Government Center, 315 Bridge Street, Elk Rapids MI 9629**

approved 11.11.21

**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, Karen Simpson, Dick Hults, and Dave Kopkau

Also Present: Director Nannette Miller and Friends of the ERDL Liaison Sharon Bacon. This meeting is being held in person at the Elk Rapids Governmental Center. There are 12 people in attendance at the start of the meeting

**2. Approval of Agenda:**

**MOTION:** Pollister Amos/ Schuler to approve the agenda

Motion carried unanimously.

**3. Public Comment:**

Diane Richter said community members are asking why other options should be considered. She said it should be considered because everything has changed including the ownership of the building. Feasibility studies and cost analysis takes time. Let's get ready for a new beginning.

**4. Trustee Education:** United for Libraries Short Takes for Trustees Video addressing Library Advocacy was presented

Discussion: Stephenson said relating to online job searches, 80% of jobs must be applied for online now so access to broadband is essential.

**5. Consent Agenda**

The purpose of the Consent Agenda is to expedite business by grouping non-controversial items together to be dealt with by one board action without discussion beyond asking questions for simple clarification. Any board member may ask that any items on the Consent Agenda be removed and placed elsewhere on the agenda for discussion. Such requests will be granted. If an item is not removed, the Consent Agenda is approved by a single board action

A. Approval of minutes dated September 9, 2021

Pollister Amos has a change to the minutes detailed below:

under item 10, The Directors Report

Pollister Amos asked if there was a job description. Miller stated there was ~~and it can be discussed further next month~~ added: " Pollister Amos stated maybe if you would share that with the board it could be discussed further next month once we have a job description. Simpson agreed and asked to have it on the agenda for the next meeting."

B. Treasurer's Report and Approval of Bills

Johnson asked if we were voting on all of the bills and was told yes. She also asked about refunds and why those checks weren't approved. Miller reminded her that all refunds were

preapproved so they didn't have to be approved at each board meeting. Johnson stated that the balance in the expansion fund report included in the board packet must not be correct, Miller stated that it was - \$950,395.00 as of today is correct. Stephenson said this will be further discussed during correspondence

Simpson asked if we could try to not send meeting reports the day of the meeting. Miller explained that some bills have to be approved today since they have to be paid before the next meeting and some come in just before the meeting.

C. Personnel Committee Notes: September 20, 2021

D. Financial Committee Notes: September 20, 2021 meeting called to order time should be approximately 11:30am.

**MOTION:** Schuler/Atkinson to approve the consent agenda items

Roll Call:

Pollister Amos: Yes

Stephenson: Yes

Hults: Yes

Atkinson: Yes

Kopkau: Yes

Johnson: Yes

Schuler: Yes

Simpson: Yes

Motion carried 8-0 unanimously

## **6. Correspondence:**

Two letters were sent to the board and were included in the board packet - one from Marianne Priest and one from Ann McPhail. Per the senders requests, Pollister Amos read them aloud. (The letters are included in the posted board packet available online)

Stephenson said he's had 15 requests for refunds since the last board meeting totaling \$94,300.00 leaving roughly \$950,000.00 in the account. He made a mistake in his figures when talking with a reporter, but immediately corrected it.

Stephenson reported that the DGN accounting firm reported that the financial review for the Friends was completed on time ( by October 15th). Our portion had to be pushed back but the final review for the Expansion account should be done by the 20th per Aaron (Mansfield) at DGN. Stephenson will bring it to the board and then have it posted for the public. We can have a special meeting if needed.

Stephenson reported that Dan Whisler from Daniel's & Zermac got a hold of Miller and asked for an update on the project. Whisler reported building costs have gone higher. Stephenson then reached out to Tamara Burns. If the board would like to have a discussion with her, we can get Tamara, (from the architectural firm of Hopkins & Burns) to attend a meeting.

## **7. Unfinished Business:**

A. Surplus Equipment Policy

**MOTION:** Schuler/Hults to approve the new surplus equipment policy

Discussion: Stephenson said that we will be updating some equipment so there will be things to get rid of using this policy as a guide. Miller said she discovered one thing that the policy didn't cover. We have a lot of equipment that no one wants and we would like to send it to tech recycling. Stephenson said that was a good idea.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### B. Options for Library Improvement

**MOTION:** Hults/Atkinson that we authorize the building committee to look for options for other locations to build a new Elk Rapids District Library; this would include looking for available property, potential ideas for building plans, and a feasibility study. This does not mean that the current plan to expand the Island House location is to be discarded at this time. It simply means due diligence should be done to look at cost effective options and after consideration of various options, the building committee will present their findings back to the Board.

Discussion: Hults stated that the building committee will welcome anyone who has ideas to share with them. We want to be open and transparent as we work through this process as part of the community. Kopkau asked who is on the building committee? (Hults, Schuler, Atkinson and Miller). Will there be any professional services assisting you? Stephenson said we need an assessment from the community to determine their needs. Hults said he doesn't have the skill and hasn't done a feasibility study, so we may have to engage a professional firm to evaluate our options going forward. If that is necessary, the committee will bring it back to the board for review and approval. Atkinson said at this point it's information gathering. Hults stated this is just the starting of the investigation, we may be back to the board many times. Johnson said when we read the report from 13 Ways, it said we shouldn't be moving on right now. She doesn't believe we should do that. Pollister Amos stated that she disagreed. She didn't see anything that said that the Library shouldn't be pursuing it. That report stated that the Village shouldn't be pursuing it right now. She stated that there have been questions about this expansion from the beginning. That was actually stated by another board member several months ago in the paper. Some people don't want any changes to the building at all. Some are fine with improving the building, but they want the grounds to be left as they are. Some support the expansion as presently proposed. Some think there could be a better location to build a new building with state of the art technology and better options for people placement, parking, fire access, school bus access etc. In her opinion, the question of who owns the property is irrelevant, this is my personal opinion, since the fact remains that the Library doesn't own the building and the millions it would cost to renovate or expand it will be invested in a building that the Elk Rapids District Library does not own. Because of that, I am one of the people that think I would like to know what other options might exist in this community. If there are no other practical options - then we'll be back to Plan A and the feasibility thereof. We need to deal with the questions that members of the community have had that have gone unanswered since the very beginning. We have to be transparent, openly share the information and then we need to proceed in a logical, business-like manner to accomplish what will best serve the taxpayers of the Village of Elk Rapids, the Township of Elk Rapids, The Township of Torch Lake, and the Township of Milton, as well as the many, many other supporters that don't even live in any of those areas. We have a lot of them and we appreciate them. Why should we waste this time doing nothing? The time for us to do some research, once again in a business-like, professional manner, is long past overdue. That's why I support the motion. Atkinson agrees with Pollister Amos and she said we owe it to the public, and ourselves, to do our due diligence and have a comparison so we know we are

making the right decisions. Johnson said that would be great if we had started out with that direction. But, we started with the idea and sold it to the public, that we wanted to expand the current library because the library for this community is a gem. People love it, they want to come to see it, it's located in the center of town, and to move it somewhere else is not something we should be thinking about. There hasn't been a meeting to even bring the public in to discuss. It was not the main purpose when we went to do the library. We wanted a bigger better library, we wanted it on the Island, we wanted it to be larger for teens and children. We need to go back to that plan because that's what we originally said. A couple of times we went and looked at other locations but none were acceptable. So, what I am saying is that we promised the Village and the Townships that we would add on to the library and it wouldn't cost them any tax money. Now all of a sudden, in the middle of everything, we have people who want to change that and it's not acceptable. Pollister Amos said Johnson did a lot in the past and it's not to be discounted. But, times have changed. People's needs have changed. Everyone's opinions deserve to be heard and considered and that's what the building committee has stated they intend to do. Schuler said he sees this committee as being around for quite a while. There are a lot of things involved in this. What is the cost today of an expansion on the island? We need a current number. If we do find land someplace, what kind of building would we put up - two stories, one story? This committee will be in session for a while and they will come up with recommendations to the board. It will take time. I don't see us being realtors - we are not going out to say this is the property we want immediately. We have to come up with what the people and the municipalities want. He encouraged the committee to take their time and review carefully and hire professional help if needed. He doesn't think anybody knows all the answers. Simpson said with the motion, it could be a sentence or two and the rest are discussion points. Pollister Amos stated it was important to include the fact that the current plan is not yet discarded in the motion. Semi- colons and commas were suggested. Hults revised the motion to reduce the number of sentences. Simpson said she agrees with what people are saying about looking at options except doesn't agree that waiting is a waste of time. We haven't done any community engagement and that's important. There was a lot of engagement in the village, because the council had to vote, but not in the townships to see what the residents want us to do with the library. We need to build relationships and do engagements. Simpson said it does matter to a lot of people as to who owns the library and next week there is a meeting between the ER Village and ER Township to discuss the survey results. Pollister Amos stated that doesn't change the fact that the library doesn't own the building. Simpson stated that there are people who feel that is an important thing for us to address. Simpson said we are a group that continually has problems with behavior issues and because of that it's something we should consider doing some kind of board development and governance training, 13 Ways has recommended this kind of thing, before we move forward. We all know that a divided board going into a project won't work. It didn't work before and it won't work again. Maybe we need to think about what Miller said and decide if we want to make ourselves accountable but to try to find some common ground and work together. We just don't have the foundation to start a project and if we move forward without it, it will be a big problem. Johnson said we did go out to the townships and talk to people. We had interviews with citizens and almost every club in the area. We developed what we did from what they told us. Simpson said things have changed since that time. Stephenson said he'd like to see a professional assessment to earn the faith and trust from the community. Schuler said what Simpson is talking about is important, but it's not part of our committee (The building committee). Stephenson said he's hoping that the 13 Ways committee will have some recommendations based on the

conversations that he has had with us and what he is seeing in the newspaper etc. Schuler said we should have an ad hoc committee ready to go to tackle the things that Simpson discussed.

Roll Call:

Schuler Yes

Pollister Amos: Yes

Simpson: No

Stephenson Yes

Johnson : No

Atkinson: Yes

Hults: Yes

Kopkau: Yes

Motion carried 6-2

### **8. New Business:**

A. Torch Lake Funding Request

**MOTION:** Atkinson/Hults to approve sending the funding request to Torch Lake Township.

Johnson will give Stephenson a copy of letter that she has sent in the past.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Bank Signatures

Atkinson stated that the bank account signers should be consistent on all accounts.

**MOTION:** Schuler/Atkinson to designate Charles Schuler, Julia Pollister Amos, Liz Atkinson and Nannette Miller to be signers on all bank accounts.

Roll Call:

Stephenson: Yes

Johnson: Yes

Atkinson: Yes

Kopkau: Yes

Schuler: Yes

Pollister Amos: Yes

Simpson: Yes

Hults: Yes

Motion carried 8-0 unanimously

C. Director Evaluation Form

Pollister Amos said the personnel committee met and we went through several sample forms for the director's annual evaluation because the board didn't like the one we were using. This is our first attempt at a new method. It's not professionally prepared - it's copy and paste because the document we were using couldn't be edited. It will be officially given to the board members at next month's meeting. Director Miller will supply her summary of the activities for the year at the same time. The Board should return their completed form to the Personnel Committee chair for compilation by December 15th at the latest. (This is not a form that can be completed online, so it must be completed by hand and returned in person or scanned and emailed.)

**MOTION:** Schuler/Atkinson to approve the director evaluation form.

Motion carried unanimously.

Schuler compliments Pollister Amos on her diligent work.

## **9. Director's Report**

As presented by Miller

We've hired two new library assistants and other personnel updates. Update on take and make crafts. Update on programming. They are considering starting a library of things. Update on building issues including electrical, and bathrooms. In her report Miller stated " In my long career, working for many, many different boards, I have never experienced one this divided. I think we can all agree that is a problem because it is causing a lot of damage to the library and the community. 13 Ways discusses this issue, and will have recommendations I'm sure. In the meantime, I want to apologize for sometimes letting my frustration and anger get the better of me, which just fans the flames and makes things worse. And I want to ask the board to consider a reset. Let's go back to the beginning. Where do we all agree? I know that we always used to agree that we wanted a better library. That's where it started, we all agreed we wanted to improve the library and we called it the Library Improvement Plan ( LIP). And the page on our website devoted to that is called the Library Improvement page. So, my first question is, what does a better library look like now? Nothing is the same as it was in 2017 when these plans were drafted and nothing is the same as it was in 2019 and it will never go back. Change is happening very quickly. I believe our first step is to look at what the Elk Rapids District Library should be now, and as far ahead as we can possibly imagine. What will the community need from us in 2025? What do they need now? I have included the 2021 State of American's Libraries- Special Report: Covid-19 in your packets because information gathering is always the first step in any plan. It's put out every year by the American Library Association. I was hoping that it had a little more forward looking but it's a good place to start I think, and I hope it can start some discussion of where we agree instead of disagree, with respect and civility to everyone. A reset."

Pollister Amos asked what is a library of things. Miller explained it could possibly be tools, beach toys, or different things. Stephenson said we will probably need more hotspots. ( Miller's complete report is included in the posted board packet for this meeting.)

Simpson acknowledged Miller's report and thinks and we should be acknowledging the dysfunction and division on the board. Maybe that's a first step. I think we have to do community engagement and what success looks like in the future.

Stephenson asked if the board would like to meet with Doug of 13 Ways? Yes. He will try to schedule it for our November board meeting. Generally, all agreed we should. Stephenson will follow up.

Atkinson said as long as we have transparency and process and proceed professionally, it will go well.

## **10. Standing Committee Reports**

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

Pollister Amos said the committee met and went through the updated 34 page employee handbook revisions sent by Foster Swift . We had a few changes that we wanted to make on that and she sent them back to the attorney for final approval. We should have that next month.

B. Financial Committee: Schuler, Pollister Amos and Miller

Atkinson said there was a short meeting to get an overview from Miller and it will be a smooth transition. I look forward to carrying on what Diane Geddes achieved.

## **11. Ad Hoc Committee Reports**

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

Hults said we will be doing a lot more now.

## **12. Friends Report**

### **As presented by Sharon Bacon**

She distributed her report. Additionally, the last paragraph of the accountant's report stated "based on our review we are not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the accompanying financial statements in order for them to be in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America". It was forwarded to the Attorney General's office. They are back in business fully! She asked if the board has to approve new programs before it approves funding? (referring to the Director's Report that talked about the possibility of establishing a "library of things"). This is up to Miller. Bacon continued, there were two meetings on October 14th. One was the annual meeting, the first in two years, and the most important thing that happened there was election of officers. Bacon listed the officers. In the regular meeting, we welcomed the new members present. We've appointed a committee to create an investment policy for the future. We've never had a fundraiser like "Glamour, Glitter, and Glitz". Not all of the receipts have been processed but we are just thrilled with the results - looking like over \$20,000.00. There will be another fundraiser at Cellar 152 on December 16, 2021. Since the September 29th meeting, we've sent out membership renewals. Update on volunteers. Update on website design. (Bacon's full report is included in the board packet available on line)

Johnson thanked Bacon for the fundraiser. It was packed and it was a wonderful event.

## **13. Public Comment: Same rules as previous public comment**

No one wished to speak

## **14. Board Comments:**

Stephenson discussed the survey done by PLA (Public Library Association) regarding how Libraries responded to COVID-19. When you compare what our library has done to address programs and issues during COVID with other libraries our numbers have been terrific. As far as data is concerned, we can look at what other libraries have done and been successful. Kudos to the library staff for all they have done.

## **15. Adjournment**

**Meeting adjourned by order of the chair at 6:26 pm.**

Respectfully,

Julia Pollister Amos

Secretary of the Elk Rapids District Library Board

LibBdMin10.14.21approved