

**Elk Rapids District Library Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
September 14, 2023, 5:00 pm
Elk Rapids Government Center, 315 Bridge Street, Elk Rapids MI 49629**

Approved 10/12/2023

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

Members Present: Liz Atkinson, Tom Stephenson, Emily Petrovich, Nancy Wonch, Julia Pollister Amos.

Members absent: Mike Weber, Dan McAuliffe, and Dick Hults, all excused

Also Present: Sharon Bacon Friends Liaison, Camille Campbell, Friends Chair, Laura Savoie Friends Chair, John Reid and John Hoover

1. Approval of Agenda:

MOTION: by Pollister Amos/Wonch to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

2. Public Comment:

John Hoover of Elm Street thanked the library board for their work. He's trying to learn more about the moving of the library. He applauds efforts to make things better, but not lose the special-ness of the library. His hope is that there could be a way to keep that building as a library.

Pollister Amos suggested Hoover go on a tour of the potential building and see the limits of the Island House. He's invited on a tour tomorrow at 10 am.

3. Trustee Training: Digital Collections

4. 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. Minutes of regular meeting August 10, 2023

B. Treasurer's Report and Approval of Bills

MOTION: by Atkinson/Wonch to approve the consent agenda

Roll Call

Atkinson: Yes

Stephenson: Yes

Pollister Amos: Yes

Wonch: Yes

Petrovich: Yes

Motion carried 5-0, 3 absent.

5. Correspondence:

Stephenson said we will be talking to Mark Morrow with the Bretton Group out of Grand Rapids regarding a capital campaign. He's helped 75 libraries. Pollister Amos said she got an email from Mike Blum regarding the employee handbook. This will go back to the personnel committee.

6. Unfinished Business:

A. Discussion of PR/Marketing Strategies: Petrovich went over the notes and went over the interview with Barb Lezotte. She reached out to Williams and discussed that we need to move forward with a communication needs assessment to include the PR and Marketing and any touch point of communication with the community. We created a master list of current communications and marketing tools that the library is using. On this document you will also see the communications touch points. The tools themselves are available and this is a tangible item. The touch points are the locations of the tools. You'll see some marketing goals and some of these overlap with the internal team. As we were exploring PR professionals, the traditional PR industry has evolved. It shouldn't be broken out from communications. PR is the foundation of everything you do and say. Based on her own experience who wears a PR hat, this drives everything you do and to break that out would be a disservice to the library at this point. We need a person who wears more hats and who can come alongside the library staff to create strategy and execute strategy. Pollister Amos said one of our staff has to tell them what we're doing. She agrees with Petrovich. Petrovich said this is a need all the time, always. Communicating all of the things consistently is important. Wonch asked if Petrovich is recommending hiring a communications director? Petrovich said this is an option we should explore. It should be someone local and perhaps not someone in house. It could be a local freelancer. There is room for growth. This person is more of a community manager. Wonch asked if there is an entity where we could advertise for such a person? Petrovich said there are groups and tools we can use. We could go more formal with a job description and/or have conversations with people locally we know who have this skill set. Petrovich will continue to explore this and have conversations with people. Wonch will assist Petrovich in the exploration.

B. Architectural Services Proposal: This has been updated. There is also a more complete electronic copy.

MOTION: by Wonch/Pollister Amos to approve the architectural services proposal by John Reid.

Discussion: Reid Discussed his services. At the end of the day, he's working on a program of requirements. From that we will hire an architect and they will run with that. Then, we could add the services of a design architect. Four candidates have been identified. You've sent the proposal out to your candidates. I will screen the candidates and highlight their strengths and weaknesses and then vet them down to three or two and then do interviews. Shortly thereafter the interview, we select the candidate and begin negotiations. Pollister Amos asked regarding his prior experience. He's a retired architect who lives in Elk Rapids. His specialty is programming, and

this is what he's proposing to do for you now. He's worked internationally. As a programmer, I'm trained to ask open ended questions. Through the interactive process I build consensus. We have to write out the statement problem. This is what needs to be solved for the library to be successful. Pollister Amos said this is similar to what we did when we hired Mortimer to help us find a library director. We were ready for him and we had a list. Are we ready to do this? Reid said yes. You're looking for someone who has experience with adaptive reuse. Stephenson said we are going into Phase 2 so they could do a prelim design to find a cost to build and operate to make the next decision to see if we can afford it. The deadline is not far away and this is the next important step.

Roll Call:

Stephenson: Yes

Atkinson: Yes

Petrovich: Yes

Pollister Amos: Yes

Wonch: Yes

Motion carried 5-0, 3 absent

Stephenson said we need to discuss whether or not we need a public hearing? Williams suggested once we have the reports back, then we will have more information to give people.

C. Building Updates

1. Inspection: Waiting for report on the roof
2. Title Search: Done
3. Environmental: Phase I is complete waiting for Phase II report

Pollister Amos stated due diligence costs money.

D. Material Selection Policy: Williams said last month she presented this policy. Our current policy is from 2016. It is before book-challenges and we felt we needed to beef this up and make sure it's clear what our policy and procedure is. Pollister Amos asked if Williams is happy with it? Yes. Pollister Amos has a few notes about interpretation of minor wording issues. Pollister Amos detailed her amendments to the policy

MOTION: by Wonch/Atkinson to approve the materials selection policy with changes articulated by Pollister Amos as well as the change to the request for consideration.

Motion carried.

7. New Business:

A. Audit: Williams provided the audit to board members for review. Pollister Amos congratulated Williams on streamlining the audit process. Stephenson had a question regarding segregation of duties. Williams talked to the auditor about this and this note will never go away because our duties must overlap due to the small size of the library.

B. Budget Amendment: Williams presented this to the board. There are a few changes to make to the budget. Regarding income are earning more interest. We got memorial donations which are

now accounted for. The transfer from Heifer is also noted. Williams discussed what this fund is and what it's for. Under expenses, you'll see the reciprocal from Heifer. MCLS was one of the things we are keeping in mind. We are paying them the remainder amount for the strategic plan. The only other thing is a change in office supplies. We are re-labeling the books in the library to be clear. It will require a lot more labels than we estimated. We also added the elevator test. Wonch asked about the cost of the elevator annually. Williams said she doesn't have those numbers in front of here, but she believes it's about \$700/year. Our elevator is pretty old and they can get very expensive. There are new rules coming down about elevators in public buildings.

C. Strategic Goals Progress: Williams provided a chart regarding the progress. It's been color coded to show what we have started, completed, and what we haven't started. We are doing pretty well. We need to work on setting the baseline strategic plan survey and within six months, we are going to start working on measurement numbers. We were hoping to secure money for one on one tech training but the state money didn't materialize. We want to start leaning into strategic plan and the comments we got but reach out to the community to see what we are lacking. We want to get a handle on that. We have completed updating our phone and fire systems. We have an easy to use website. We initiated a comprehensive reading program for all ages. We expanded the presence at community events and expanded collaboration with the Friends. We've achieved a lot in a few months. Pollister Amos asked Stephenson regarding the strategic plan. Stephenson said a needs assessment was done of the district including Milton and surrounding townships. MCLS did the survey and we had a series of questions where we asked people about their thoughts about the library. We got more than 500 responses, more than 10%, higher than TC received when they did a similar study. We also got more than 300 comments. Based on the info we created a strategic plan and this is the outcome of that. The schools were heavily involved in that too.

8. Director's Report

As presented by Williams

Stats: Aaron Hill discussed statistics

Staff: The library became a Corporate member of the Rotary Club of Elk Rapids this week. Rebecca, Aaron and Pam will be representing the library at meetings and socials. We are excited to be a part of this important organization that does so much good in our community.

Pam will be attending an outreach conference in Hershey PA during the second week of October. The conference is paid fully by grant money from the library of Michigan and the Northland Cooperative. She hopes to learn more about innovative outreach programming

Grants: We received a grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation for \$3000. This money is to be used for developing Reading Booster kits that will focus on reading skills. These kits will be a family friendly way for parents to help their children develop important skills for reading in a fun, interactive way at home. I have reached out the title 1 instructor in Elk Rapids in the hope to collaborate with her to complete these kits.

Working with Books from Birth to help identify and reach out to families with young children to help get them signed up for Dolly Parton Imagination Library program.
Programs

1. Miss Elk Rapids Story Time was a hit, fall Storytime is in session and takes place on Thursday afternoons or Friday mornings.
2. Write Here, Write Now with author Anne Marie Oomen was a success. Looking forward to hosting poet Keith Taylor in October.
3. The Digital Kit from Library of Michigan is in. We are offering 5 weeks of Digital Wednesdays for the public to scan. We are also exploring a way to offer digitization of VHS items.
4. Our first Destination Story Time is Friday Sept 22 nd at the Elk Rapids Historic Museum. We are hosting one Destination Story Time a month in our community.
5. Knitters are meeting on the porch again, every Thursday 2-4pm.
6. We are partnering with the FOL for Fall Fest and will have a table with library information and an activity.

Updates:

1. The Fiber is not connected yet. The Security System upgrade was installed on Friday. Beginning a cold weather project of relabeling books. This will help us look at our collection and find areas that need updating.
2. Working with Cherryland Middle School to get every child a library card through their student id. Students can order books online and get them delivered from the library. We would like to extend this to the whole district. Sora was also offered as a resource to the schools for ebooks and audio downloads curated for school aged.
3. Aaron has been working with patrons on Tuesdays and Thursdays and shared his statistics.

9. Standing Committee Reports

A. Personnel Committee: Pollister Amos, Atkinson, Petrovich

Pollister Amos said they met on the 24th to come up with a better evaluation form for the director. Petrovich had a lot of great input. We will use the same process as before in November and turn them in by the December meeting and will be reported in January. We will sit down with Williams at that time to go over the evaluation. Williams is doing really well. We will be following up on updating procedure for the employee handbook and reached out to the attorney. We will come back to you with a recommendation.

B. Financial Committee: Atkinson, Pollister Amos and Weber
Met on the 24th with the purpose of discussing the audit. We recommended the approval of the audit.

10. Ad Hoc Committee Reports

A. Building Committee: Hults, Stephenson, McAuliffe
Previously discussed.

B. Strategic Planning Committee: Stephenson, Weber
No meeting

11. Friends Report

As presented via email by Sharon Bacon.

We began our fiscal year in July 1. We are getting ready to welcome new board members. It would be great if trustees could come to our annual meeting at 4 pm Sept. 25th at the governmental center. We are wrapping up our membership campaign. We are over 100 members. Previously we had about 130 members before the pandemic. We've gotten the final distribution from the charitable trust fund which will fund the 1000 books before kindergarten. Our first fundraising event is October 18th Fall, Flannels and Friends. The cost is \$20 at Townline Cider 5-7 pm. Tickets go on sale next week.

Relating to our annual meeting, this is the time we elect a director and new board members and we give a report of our accomplishments. We would really like to see you at our annual meeting to share this with us. We are moving ahead with the board taking the fundraising role and looking for help in that area. With regard to tech help, it's wonderful to have Aaron Hill available. Regarding the PR report from Petrovich, it is important to involve the Friends in your training. We also lack a cohesive PR policy so we can support you in our efforts.

12. Public Comment:

None

13. Board Comments:

Petrovich said she got great feedback on Hill's tech help from the Garden Club. They said not only were you helpful, but they liked you as a person. Your steady and calm demeanor is so helpful when we are struggling.

Wonch said for her 50th wedding anniversary, we got \$50 and I'm donating it to the Friends.

14. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned by order of the chair at 6:34 pm.

Respectfully,
Julia Pollister Amos