



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2024

Attended by Rosemarie Gardner, Margaret Hartley, Josh Jacquard, Ted Mirczak. Also in attendance: Library Manager Marion Allan and Library Clerk Claire Spivak. Absent: Jason Hall.

Presiding: President Ted Mirczak

Ted Mirczak called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. After the Pledge and the observation of attendance, Mirczak asked for a change to the agenda to move up the permanent appointment of the library manager. Margaret Hartley moved to approve the agenda with that change, Rosemarie Gardner seconded. Carried. Josh Jacquard moved to approve the minutes of the April board meeting; Hartley seconded. Carried.

Mirczak noted that Library Manager Marion Allan passed the Civil Service exam and was in the Number 1 spot. Josh Jacquard moved to change Allan's appointment from provisional to permanent. Hartley seconded. Carried.

President's Report

Mirczak noted that the first budget workshop for fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025) was held on May 16, during which time the committee reviewed previous budgets and divvied up budget areas to research. Mirczak noted that the workshop meetings are public and are posted on the calendar on the library website. The next meeting is May 30 at 6 p.m. The goal is to have a budget in place by July.

Mirczak noted that he and Hartley had represented the board at SALS annual trustees meeting.

VP of Finance Report

Rosemarie Gardner reported monthly expenses of \$3,655.43, including \$100.50 to Mahoney Notify-Plus for quarterly monitoring; \$345.51 to Midwest Tape for Hoopla; \$308.34 to SALS for JA fees; \$325 to Green Acres; \$489.38 to Waterhouse Heating Oils; \$172.50 to DeLorenzo & Associates for bookkeeping; \$239.94 to Spectrum; \$178 to ADK Lock Inc. for locksmithing services; \$47.12 to NYIF for disability insurance; \$30.95 to North Country Janitorial; \$245.14 to Demco for library supplies; \$643.05 to National Grid; \$30 to the Conservationist magazine for a 3-year subscription; \$500 to Whiteman, Osterman & Hanna for the quarterly legal retainer.

Gardner noted that the National Grid bill was higher than normal because some earlier bills had been sent to a defunct email address. All bills are now being sent to the luz-dir account.

Mirczak moved to approve payment of the bills; Hartley seconded. Carried

Gardner reported that the library's two bank CDs were renewed on April 22 for 6 months at a rate of 4.81%. She noted that the library had struggled to manage all the FOIL requests, spending hours searching for requested information. She noted a lot of information is publicly available on the library website and can be accessed without filing FOIL requests, and further noted that many organizations charge copier fees and research fees to compensate for the time it takes to answer FOIL requests. RFPL has not charged to process FOILS, instead working to reduce the backlog. Jacquard noted that the public has a right to file FOILs, and Mirczak said the library is not discouraging people from filing.

Gardner brought up the issue of the library holding a credit card, noting that it's difficult to make certain purchases without one. For example, shelving approved by the board in March has still not been purchased because the company didn't have the item in stock; it was only available online. Gardner noted that there often is more selection, better prices and free delivery with online orders, which must be made with a card. She noted that most libraries use credit cards for purchases.

Library Manager's report

Marion Allan reported that summer programming is in the works, that the back door handles are being replaced, that the library started a new Facebook page. All but one FOIL request has been answered, and that one is awaiting feedback from the library's lawyer.

She said she has located the library's tax exempt form and is making sure purchases are untaxed. The library received book donations from the American Legion Auxiliary, and artificial flowers from the Wesleyan Church. The Historical Society would like to donate informational plaques to accompany the historical signs on loan to the library.

April 14-May 18 statistics: 608 patron visits; eight programs held; 550 physical items circulated; 230 circulations of e-content.

Allan noted that library clerk Claire Spivak has passed the civil service exam, and recommended she be hired on a permanent basis.

She requested improvements be made to the back lawn area, and noted the need to put out bids for grounds maintenance.

Strategic Planning Committee update

Rosemarie Gardner reported that a survey has been created and is being circulated widely in the community, is available online and is being promoted through signs in the library and messages on the library's Facebook and web pages. Hartley is organizing two in-person focus groups in June to get input from the community.

Old Business

Credit card usage: Jacquard noted that in the past credit card receipts were not submitted and questionable purchases were made. He noted that the library's lawyer told the board the library could not use a credit card. Gardner said she had spoken to the state librarian and several library directors, and all use credit cards for purchases, and said diligence is needed to make sure they are used correctly, and

receipts kept and shared. Jacquard suggested there could be other ways, such as pre-paid credit cards or increasing the money on the petty cash debit card to cover a purchase.

The board agreed to put money approved in March for shelving into the petty cash account so the purchase can be made with the debit card, and that Mirczak would bring the credit card issue up with the lawyer for further clarification.

Financial policy: Jacquard said he would rewrite the proposed policy using input shared by the lawyer.

New Business

Technology purchases: The board discussed the purchase of a new laptop for the library manager, preloaded with programs the library needs and uses and with full technical support from JA, for about \$990; and an Owl system to stream library meetings for about \$1,000. Jacquard motioned to approve; Hartley seconded. Carried.

Financial audit: Mirczak noted that a financial audit was approved in August 2023, suspended when the library closed in September, and resumed by board vote in January. However, auditors have requested financial records that cannot be found, and without that information cannot proceed with an opinion. Mirczak suggested the fiscal 2023 audit be switched to an operational audit, which will generate a report offering recommendation for changes and improvements. Because RFPL has paid for two years of auditing, he further suggested a pause to implement the audit's recommendations, followed by a full financial audit for fiscal 2025. Jacquard said the inability to conduct a full financial audit for 2023 will be a major disappointment to the community. Mirczak said the goal is to move forward, get recommendations and implement improvements.

Mirczak moved to change the 2023 audit to an operational audit, and do a financial audit for fiscal 2025. Gardner seconded. Carried.

Bank accounts: Mirczak said he and Gardner had spoken to the GF National Bank manager about an earlier proposal to move some funds into a money market account, and found that was not possible. Another option is to move funds into an ICS (insured cash sweep) account, which offers FDIC insurance on balances over \$250,000 as well as a higher interest rate (currently 5%). RFPL would have to hold a balance of about \$45,000 in its checking account to avoid all fees, but could move the rest into an ICS account. Funds could be transferred instantly back into the regular account when needed. Mirczak noted he had run the idea by the lawyer who had approved. Jacquard suggested RFPL keep \$60,000 in the checking account, and move the remainder into ICS. Mirczak so moved; Gardner seconded. Carried.

Library hours: Marion Allan noted that library attendance has been tracked since reopening in March, and proposed eliminating some evening hours because of poor attendance. She suggested keeping the library open 38 hours, allowing 2 hours a week for the manager and clerk to complete work without patrons in the library, including book maintenance and mandatory meeting attendance. She suggested the library be open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

Jacquard asked for one more month of tracking, to make sure attendance patterns don't change with the arrival of summer residents.

Personnel and maintenance: The board and library manager plan to hire a third employee, probably for \$25 hours a week at \$16 an hour. Allan said she would work with SALS on a job description and advertise the position. Allan shared proposed bids for grounds maintenance, landscaping and exterior cleaning.

Public comment

Outgoing board member Rosemarie Gardner was thanked for her service. A community member stood to read several documents regarding public meeting policies. Another thanked Gardner and Allan for completing his FOIL requests, noting that some were 10 months old. He also thanked Gardner for her work on the board. A community member commended the board for its dedication. Another recommended the board consider charging to process FOIL requests in the future, and utilize the Warren County Career Center for hiring assistance.

Executive Session

At 9 p.m. Gardner moved to adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel. During executive session the board agreed to extend employment to Claire Spivak, with details to be worked out after discussion with the library's lawyer.

At 9:20 p.m. the board came out of executive session. Hartley moved to adjourn; Jacquard seconded. Carried.

Minutes prepared by Margaret Hartley, Board Secretary