

AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

November 12, 2024; 4:30 p.m.

Prior to the call to order, board members heard a brief presentation on the state of Minnesota's new legislation known as the "Ban on Book Bans" (part of Minn. Stat. 134), by Library Director Julie Clinefelter. Board Treasurer (presiding in the absence of the chair and vice chair) called the regular meeting of the Austin Public Library Board to order at 4:45 p.m., on Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at the Austin Public Library.

PRESENT: Melissa Bonorden, Gema Alvarado-Guerrero, Jwokamer Debock, Ted Hinchcliffe, Nitaya Jandragholica, Valerie Sheedy

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Austin (City Council Liaison), Julie Clinefelter, Sara Steinhoff

ABSENT WITH NOTICE: Kristi Beckman, Sue Grove, Stephanie Postma

AGENDA:

Melissa Bonorden moved to approve the agenda; Gema Alvarado-Guerrero seconded. Motion carried.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Nitaya Jandragholica, seconded by Gema Alvarado-Guerrero, to approve the October 15, 2024, meeting minutes as presented. Carried.

EXPENSES AND FINANCE REPORTS:

A motion was made by Melissa Bonorden to approve expenditures and accept the finance reports for October 2024. Nitaya Jandragholica seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous roll-call vote.

SELCO REPORT:

Valerie Sheedy reported on recent activities by the SELCO Board, which included review of board liaison procedures by the Executive Committee and a review of SELCO's Strategic Priorities. She noted the Strategic Priorities review process may result in some organizational changes. Valerie also advised that SELCO is looking to Austin's library to contribute a large amount of funds into the Overdrive digital materials catalog, as they are seeing a higher rate of usage by Austin patrons than from some other libraries in the region.

Valerie also stated the SELCO Board recognized the efforts of Austin volunteer, Miriam Luehmann, by providing support for her work with the Mower County Jail to create, maintain and manage a book collection there to provide inmates with access to reading materials.

CITY/COUNTY LIAISON REPORTS:

City Council Liaison Jeff Austin noted the wrap-up of the elections and finalization of the budget for 2025 have been the main priorities for the City in recent weeks.

OPERATIONAL REPORT:

Julie Clinefelter provided a written report prior to the board meeting, and discussed the following items:

Library Staff:

Julie reported all ten regular library staff members and one of the board members attended the Minnesota Library Association annual conference in Rochester, on October 24 and 25. She provided a recap of several sessions, including topics of library advocacy, supporting social well-being, emerging trends in Minnesota library services, and discussions about how to leverage the high level of trust held people have in their libraries to achieve higher levels of human connection and civic engagement.

Nitaya Jandragholica commented on her attendance at the conference as a positive experience that provided her with new insight on how libraries function. She stated she found the session on "Talking About Libraries to Non-Library People" extremely informative in developing an "elevator speech," to help her tell people why she volunteers her time as a board member and why libraries are so vital to their communities.

Administration:

Julie provided a brief update on the status of continued implementation of the ARCI Matrix, stating the staff are now working on integrating the Matrix framework with the library's Strategic Plans to formulate the goals and action steps for 2025.

Julie also advised she met with success coaches from Austin Public Schools to explore new ways to work together to enhance support for students and their families.

Facilities:

Clinefelter provided a brief update on the ongoing HVAC controls project, which should be completed in the coming weeks.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The Personnel Committee will arrange a meeting time in the next few weeks to conduct the annual review of the Library Director and will report on same at the December board meeting.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS: None.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Nitaya Jandragholica reminded those present of the importance of maintaining and emphasizing the library's role as a safe space for all members of the community, as a place of access to nonbiased and factual information, and a place to connect with each other, especially in an environment of heightened anxiety and fears that emerged throughout the election and afterward. She also proposed 2025 library programs include an emphasis on unity and social justice.

ADJOURNMENT:

Gema Alvarado-Guerrero moved to adjourn at 5:35 p.m.; Jwokamer Debock seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Steinhoff, Secretary

NEXT BOARD MEETING – Monday, December 9, 2024, 4:30 p.m.