

# AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

February 10, 2025; 4:30 pm

Chair Stephanie Postma called the regular meeting of the Austin Public Library Board to order at 4:30 p.m., on Monday, February 10, 2025, at the Austin Public Library.

**PRESENT:** Gema Alvarado-Guerrero, Kristi Beckman, Jwokamer Debock, Sue Grove, Stephanie Postma, Tim Rietz, Valerie Sheedy

**ALSO PRESENT:** Julie Clinefelter, Sara Steinhoff, Tom Dankert

**ABSENT WITH NOTICE:** Ted Hinchcliffe, Nitaya Jandragholica

## **AGENDA:**

Sue Grove moved to approve the agenda; Gema Alvarado-Guerrero seconded. Motion carried.

## **FINANCE REPORTS OVERVIEW:**

Tom Dankert, Director of Administrative Services, provided an explanation and overview of the monthly financial reports to assist the board their financial review duties throughout the year.

## **ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS:**

Sue Grove moved to re-elect the current Chair Stephanie Postma, Vice Chair Kristi Beckman, and Treasurer Ted Hinchcliffe to their positions for the remainder of 2025. Tim Rietz seconded the motion. Motion carried. Jwokamer Debock nominated Sue Grove to serve as Board Secretary; Val Sheedy seconded. Sue Grove accepted the nomination. Motion carried.

Board Chair Stephanie Postma reviewed the committee appointments, appointing Val Sheedy and Tim Rietz to the Personnel Committee. Sara Steinhoff noted the requirement in the Bylaws that the chair serve as an ex officio member of all three standing committees, so Stephanie will be added as such to the Building and Grounds Committee. All other committee appointments and memberships will continue from 2024.

## **MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Tim Rietz, seconded by Gema Alvarado-Guerrero, to approve the January 13, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Carried.

## **EXPENSES AND FINANCE REPORTS:**

A motion was made by Kristi Beckman to approve expenditures and accept the finance reports for January 2025. Valerie Sheedy seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous roll-call vote.

## **GIFTS REPORT:**

A motion was made by Gema Alvarado-Guerrero, seconded by Kristi Beckman, to approve the January 2025 Gifts Report. Carried.

## **SELCO Report:**

Valerie Sheedy reported the last SELCO Board meeting was held on January 28, where board liaisons were selected for all unrepresented libraries, and the board began consideration of minor changes to the SELCO membership agreement to assure compliance with state statute. She noted that the regional ILS data migration to the new shared software is underway.

## **OPERATIONAL REPORT:**

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

### **Staffing:**

Julie noted that staff had been spread thin over the past few weeks due to multiple staff being ill, and one of the librarians having to extend her absence for an additional two weeks. She advised these factors resulted in library closure for one Saturday and one Wednesday, as well as opening late on one Thursday because of insufficient staff to safely open the building to the public.

Clinefelter reported training has started for all staff on the new Integrated Library System (ILS), which will replace Horizon as the software tool and database for circulation, collection information and patron data. She noted the data migration take place over the next few months, and computer systems are expected to be down for a day or two when the new system goes live. During that changeover, patrons will be able to check out books, but staff will not be able to access the system to look up cards or carry out any other circulation related tasks (checking in items, renewing, cataloging, etc.). The library will remain open during this time.

#### **Community Connections:**

Julie advised that Minitex invited her to assist with a webinar on building community connections, similar to the presentation she participated in with SELCO at the MLA conference last fall. She also stated she and board member Nitaya Jandragholica will attend Library Legislative Day on Feb. 20, to visit with State representatives. In addition, Julie noted she responded to a representative from the University of Minnesota, who is working on a project regarding library construction grants and wanted to use the Austin library's recent remodel as an example, and provided her with photos, study room statistics and other information.

Clinefelter reported the hotspot program continues to be heavily utilized by patrons following a change to the checkout period from three months to three weeks, which is consistent with the checkout period for all other library materials. She noted the feedback so far has been largely a positive reaction to how much shorter the wait time is for an available device. Julie also noted she had a conference with T-Mobile representatives on replacement of devices as they wear out or stop working, and she will attend a February 12 meeting of the Hormel Foundation's committee on digital equity to present information from the library perspective.

#### **Programming:**

Julie noted that library programming in January typically has relatively low participation numbers, and 2025 has followed that trend. Technology Coordinator Eric Christians has been providing tech coaching hours and hands-on classes at the Senior Center, with a good response at that location. Julie has also noticed that this outreach has been bringing some new people into the library. She noted the Workforce Center is also talking with Eric on doing some outreach classes with that organization.

Julie reported on the status of the Reading for Life program, which will continue for a few more lectures, to be followed by use of the recordings of lectures and discussions developed over the last few years, packaged as a collection of resources for use going forward.

Julie advised of progress on the "Milly the Mill Pond Monster" project, noting the Austin High School welding teacher has expressed interested in building the sculpture as a student-driven project, and SELCO has approved a \$2,000 Community Reads Grant to begin the project. She noted the library will also apply for a SELCO Community Collaboration grant to help pay for installation and programs.

Lastly, Julie informed the board of a COPAL program being held at the library that evening, where community members can make Valentines at a "Love Your Immigrant Neighbor" event, to express support for community members. She also reported the library has secured funding for two series of the Spanish-language Driver's License classes, which have been very popular.

#### **Facilities and Services:**

Julie reported that patron demand for printing has continued to increase, and the library will purchase an additional wireless printer to meet that demand. She also advised the program room will be repainted shortly and Brian Mason is obtaining bids for the 2025 CIP project to replace water heaters original to the building.

**CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:** None.

**BOARD COMMENTS:** Kristi Beckman noted many, many community members are looking for ways to support neighbors who are experiencing difficulties and stress due to immigration and economic concerns.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Kristi Beckman moved to adjourn at 5:30 pm; Jwokamer Debock seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Steinhoff, Secretary

**NEXT BOARD MEETING – Monday, March 10, 2025, 4:30 p.m.**