

AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

September 13, 2021; 4:30 p.m.

Chairperson Melissa Bonorden called the regular meeting of the Austin Public Library Board to order at 4:30 p.m., on Monday, September 13, 2021, at the Austin Public Library. The meeting was conducted by videoconference via Zoom Meeting, as permitted by Minn. Stat. 13D.021 during the condition of a current health pandemic (COVID-19).

PRESENT: Melissa Bonorden, Jwokamer Debock, Sue Grove, Ted Hinchcliffe, Nitaya Jandragholica, Shannon Lysne, Stephanie Postma

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Baldus (County Commissioner), Julie Clinefelter, Sara Steinhoff

ABSENT (WITH PRIOR NOTICE): Jodi Krueger, Alex Mayfield

AGENDA: Ted Hinchcliffe moved to approve the agenda as presented; Jwokamer Debock seconded. Motion carried.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Stephanie Postma, seconded by Sue Grove, to approve the July 12, 2021, meeting minutes as presented. Carried.

EXPENSES AND FINANCE REPORTS:

A motion made by Ted Hinchcliffe was seconded by Nitaya Jandragholica to approve expenditures and accept the finance reports for the months of July 2021 and August 2021. Motion carried by unanimous roll-call vote.

LIAISON REPORTS:

Jeff Baldus updated the board on the 2022 county budget and other current business items.

SELCO REPORT:

Sue Grove reported she attended her first meeting as a member of SELCO's executive committee, where she received a status report that funding for the regional library service is stable and operations are running smoothly at present.

OPERATIONAL REPORT:

Julie Clinefelter provided a written operational report to the board and presented additional information regarding several of the subjects covered.

The first topic addressed was current staffing, with Clinefelter noting the hiring of four additional part-time pages (all local students) to help keep shifts covered as the school year kicks off and the library's open hours increase from 38 to 48 hours per week. She also advised there are a number of vacations scheduled for regular staff, who need to use up their vacation time by year-end, in the next few months. She is working on ideas for the fall inservice day for staff development, as well as for ongoing "morale boosters" to help support the staff.

Director Clinefelter also provided an update on the first week of new hours for the library and the shift of curbside services from set hours to a call-in basis. She reported there were 8 call-in curbside pickups in the first week of September, and noted the library had provided curbside service over 500 times during the months of June through August 2021.

Julie noted she continues to maintain the library participation in the community's Digital Equity Steering Committee, advising the group is moving in the right direction, but progress will be slow due to the complexity of the issues involved. She stated the group is receiving assistance through the Blandin Broadband Community Connection in both funding and coordination of efforts, which will provide a boost the group's work.

In programming, Julie reported the numbers from the Summer Reading Program were still down this year (as compared to pre-COVID years), but showed encouraging growth over last year's mostly-virtual participation. She also advised the library would be posting daily virtual storytimes each day during Welcoming Week, using books that focus on celebrating diversity and inclusion.

Julie noted the first Reading for Life podcast is ready to be posted online and preparations continue for the book group and discussion series that will take place during the 2021-22 program year.

Clinefelter reported on public reaction to the City mandate for masks in all City facilities and buildings, noting that there had been a few patrons who did not wish to comply. She advised any issues with refusal to comply with the requirement will be handled in the same manner as any other violation of library Rules of Conduct. The board commended her for addressing the topic with patrons in a common-sense manner that focuses on how the library can best provide services to everyone, including those who do not wish to comply with the City mandate, as they can utilize virtual and curbside services to maintain access.

Julie provided information and a photograph of a donated piece of art for approval by the board. The painting was presented as the sponsored artwork given to the community as part of the Austin Artworks Festival. The donors, Jim and Jeanne Sheehan, selected the library as the location for the artwork. Julie advised the gift will be also submitted to the City Council for their approval.

Shannon Lysne moved to accept the artwork donation; Sue Grove seconded. Motion carried.

Julie noted she is awaiting final signature of the agreement for the State of Minnesota Construction Grant, which will provide funding towards the project room expansion and other elements of Project 25. She will meet with City Engineer Steven Lang this month to discuss how the project will proceed.

Clinefelter gave an update on feedback from a recent Fire Department inspection, where it was recommended the library install additional power outlets for the public computer area, as well as relocate some items being stored in the mechanical room. She noted these tasks had been completed and those areas are now in full compliance with the fire code requirements.

Julie recognized the efforts of the Friends of the Library for their work on the summer Flamingo fundraiser, which was well-received by the public and is in the running for an award from the Minnesota Association of Library Friends. She also advised the next used book sale by the Friends will take place in January at the Ruby Rupner building at the Nature Center.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Clinefelter noted the regularly scheduled date for the next board meeting, Oct. 11, falls on Columbus Day, and the board sometimes holds its October meeting on Tuesday of that week if members are unavailable due to the holiday. The board voiced a preference for meeting on Monday, Oct. 11, and decided the meeting will be held on that date via Zoom videoconference.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None.

BOARD COMMENTS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Stephanie Postma moved to adjourn at 5:15 p.m.; Ted Hinchcliffe seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Steinhoff, Recording Secretary

NEXT BOARD MEETING – Monday, Oct. 11, 2021, 4:30 p.m.