

AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

May 9, 2022; 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, May 9, 2022, at the Austin Public Library.

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

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

AGENDA:

Stephanie Postma moved to approve the agenda as presented; Ted Hinchcliffe seconded. Motion carried.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Ted Hinchcliffe, seconded by Alex Mayfield, to approve the April 11, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. Carried.

EXPENSES AND FINANCE REPORTS:

Following board review of expenses, a motion was made by Stephanie Postma to approve expenditures and accept the finance reports for April of 2022. Sue Grove seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous roll-call vote.

SELCO REPORT:

No SELCO report. Sue Grove reported instead on activity involving the removal of the Richard Eberhart Memorial designation from Austin High School. She noted the memorial, which is actually owned by the United for Libraries organization, was given to the Mower County Historical Society. Stephanie Postma made a motion to follow this process in removing the framed informational plaque and photo from the library (as it relates to the AHS Memorial that was removed), giving the framed article to the MCHS. Ted Hinchcliffe seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

LIAISON REPORTS:

Jeff Baldus noted the County is working on distribution of Mower County Resilience Grants, utilizing the county's fund of \$500,000 in ARPA money.

OPERATIONAL REPORT:

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

Director Clinefelter advised interviews are underway for the youth services librarian position and 42 applications have been received for the library assistant position, for which interviews will be conducted following selection of the librarian candidate. She noted that adjusting the library open hours to 48 hours per week has helped the staff manage services and library tasks during the ongoing staff shortage since the departure of Jessica Lind in January, and she recommended keeping those hours in place until fall to give the two new staff members adequate time for training once they are hired and in place.

Julie provided an update on library programming, stating the Austin Page Turners events went well, but the author event on May 3 – a part of the Minnesota Book Tour – had only two people in attendance. She stated though the low turnout was disappointing, the two attendees, the library staff hosting the event, and the author had a very engaging and informative discussion. Julie also noted planning is ongoing for the grant-funded *One Austin, One America* program events, which will take place in August and September. Also in the planning stages Clinefelter advised of a planned update/remodel of the library's Early Literacy Room, which is being funded through designated memorials received over the past several months.

Clinefelter reported a number of patron accounts that have been placed with Unique Management Services debt collection reflect debts that are now more than seven years old. In light of the library's fine-free policy, the remote likelihood of collecting on the debts, as well as possible legal issues involved with old debt, she asked the board to consider eliminating the debt on those accounts. Julie pointed out this would make hundreds of individuals eligible for getting a new library card – not just in Austin, but also for those that may have moved to another town in the SELCO region, who are currently barred from getting a new card – and would greatly streamline the monitoring and follow-up work required of library staff for what is generally a very low return.

Sue Grove moved to waive collection accounts and debt amounts incurred prior to 2015, and Stephanie Postma seconded. The motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Board Chairperson Melissa Bonorden advised the board of an upcoming discussion with a facilitator from the League of Minnesota Cities, City Administrator Craig Clark and representatives from the Library Board and the Park and Rec Board to clarify the role of the boards, City Council and city administrative staff. She will share more information as it becomes available, noting the goal of the discussion is to increase communication and transparency throughout the City's governance structure.

Stephanie Postma prompted discussion of the library's Materials Selection and Reconsideration Policy in light of nationwide instances of attempts to censor or restrict materials in schools and public libraries. Julie Clinefelter distributed the library's written policy and reviewed the document with the board, and answered questions as to the current process for patron objections to library materials. Nitaya Jandragholica moved to reapprove the current policy as written, and Kristi Beckman seconded. The motion carried.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None.

BOARD COMMENTS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Kristi Beckman moved to adjourn at 5:40 p.m.; Alex Mayfield seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Steinhoff, Recording Secretary

NEXT BOARD MEETING – Monday, May 9, 2022, 4:30 p.m.