

Scenic Regional Library  
Board Minutes – June 15, 2021

Scenic Regional Library Board of Trustees met at the Scenic Regional Library Union Branch on June 15, 2021 at 7:00 pm. Board President Susan Richardson presided at the meeting. Board members attending the meeting were Martha Lindsley, Linda Andrae, John Cheatham, Paula Sutton, Kathleen Ham, Michele Fehlings, Robert Niebruegge, John Barry, and Karen Holtmeyer. Board members Joy Dufrain and Carla Robertson were absent. Library Director Steven Campbell, Assistant Library Director Megan Maurer, Business and Human Resources Manager Kjersti Merseal, Administrative Assistant Erica Mosley, and St. Clair Branch Manager Alesia Cullen were also present.

There were no public comments.

**Public Comments**

***Karen Holtmeyer made the motion to accept the May 18, 2021 minutes as written. Robert Niebruegge seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 9/0.***

**Approval of Minutes**

Director Campbell said the Library expends approximately \$300,000 to \$325,000 per month, on average. If that holds true for June (the last month in the fiscal year) the Library will have a \$500,000 budget surplus this year. He anticipates about \$250,000 of the surplus will go toward the RFID project, with the remainder going to construction of the new Hermann branch. The Library has collected 101.22% of projected tax income, with \$30,000 to \$40,000 additional revenue expected in June. Director Campbell said this will be the first time in its history the Library has collected \$6 million in revenue, and pointed out that when he started, nine years ago, the budget was only \$2 million.

**Financial Report**

Regarding the patron count report, Director Campbell said all branches have experienced a significant increase in foot traffic and usage in June. He is not sure if it is due to lifting the patron mask requirement, or opening the children's areas June 1, or the usual summertime increase in traffic.

Board member Joy Dufrain was absent, but Director Campbell spoke with her by phone prior to the meeting and voiced her concern about the amount of staff turnover recently. Director Campbell believes that staff was reluctant to leave during the pandemic, partly due to the Library's generous pandemic pay and sick leave policies. The high turnover rate right now could actually be a backlog from the past year. He said almost everyone leaving right now are part-time staff who have found full-time jobs elsewhere, or for extenuating personal circumstances, and so there is no reason to be concerned about the high turnover. Human Resources Manager Kjersti Merseal said she does exit interviews with all departing employees, and generally hears only positive things about the Library. She uses the interviews as a tool to help managers and supervisors improve, although she rarely has anything constructive (that's critical) to pass along.

John Barry asked about the Cash Over/Short line in the financial report, noting that this had been cited on the last audit. Kjersti Merseal said that it's on the audit every year because the Library does not have a point of sale system at the branches for photocopy sales and similar transactions. However, she said the

income from these sales is such a small part of the budget, and that the discrepancy is usually in the Library's favor.

***John Cheatham made the motion to accept the Financial Report. Michele Fehlings seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 9/0.***

Alesia Cullen, new St. Clair Branch Manager, introduced herself to the Board. **Reports**

**Linda Andrae entered the meeting at 7:11.**

Director Campbell said he responded to two complaints about LGBT Pride Month displays at some of the branches. One complaint was via email and the other by phone. He did not hear back to his response to the emailed complaint, although the patron who complained by phone seemed satisfied with the conversation. He explained that Administration does not dictate branch displays; each branch chooses their own displays, and these displays may reflect current events like Women's History Month or Black History Month.

Director Campbell said that one Friends' groups have declined to contribute funds for a prize drawing at the Employee Appreciation Banquet, so, as explained in the Board packet, the Library will not be able to have a prize drawing. The Board expressed disappointment. Susan Richardson suggested the Board make a statement to strongly encourage the Friends' groups to fund the prize drawing at the banquet. If all the Friends groups did not want to contribute, other arrangements should be made to cover their share in order to allow the prize drawing to happen. Director Campbell said he would reach out to the one Friends' group and let them know the Library Board would like them to reconsider the request. If they decline, again, he will explore some other way to make the prize drawing happen.

The mobile kitchen cart, reported to cost \$10,000 in the Board packet, turned out to cost closer to \$12,000 after shipping costs. However, Megan Maurer secured a grant from Foundations of Franklin County for the entire cost. The Library will be required to make the purchase within the next two weeks, and will then be reimbursed. Assistant Director Maurer said she is forming partnerships with the Missouri Extension and other organizations for healthy cooking programs, and with Mercy about cooking programs related to food access. She said all three counties in the Library's operating district are considered food deserts by the Missouri Department of Agriculture. Some of the Library branches have seed libraries, and St. Clair has a community garden, so she said the mobile kitchen is the last piece to pull those projects together.

Director Campbell said the only potential issue that came up during his meeting with the Hermann Hospital's architect was their planned exterior entrance, which is more elaborate than expected. The Library had previously said they would cover the expense for the exterior. However, it was decided at the meeting that the Library would provide a basic, plain gray metal exterior with a two-door entrance, and anything beyond that would be the Hospital's responsibility. There is also a 1,500 square foot gap between the Hospital's entrance and the Library's that is essentially wasted space. The Hospital will try to adjust their plan that so that the vacant space could be moved toward the front of the building and utilized for a second tenant.

RFID tagging should be complete by the end of June. The “go live” date will be the day after Labor Day.

The musical instruments have been installed on the Union branch children’s patio, and some of the Board members went out to see them prior to the meeting.

The Library has received two quotes for upholstering the children’s and teen’s seating for all branches (except Union and Hermann); the low quote was for \$7,500 from a company in Washington. Director Campbell said the cost is worth it because it will make the seating easier to clean. The project will take approximately five to six months to complete by sending out the furniture one branch at a time.

Director Campbell has received Board reappointment letters back from Gasconade County for Kathleen Ham and Robert Niebruegge. He expects to get the other letters, from Warren County, within the next several weeks.

Internet speeds at the New Haven branch have been upgraded. MOREnet is in the process of a similar upgrade for the Hermann branch.

#### **Unfinished Business**

The Board reviewed the proposed COVID-19 Action Plan. Although the Library’s attorney was adamant about including cleaning protocols, Director Campbell said he is skeptical about them. He cited a statistic that chances of contracting COVID from surfaces (as opposed to airborne) is 1 in 10,000, literally the same as being struck by lightning. He sees the benefit in wiping down surfaces, but asked the Board to allow Administration the discretion to define “regular” cleaning based on practicality for staff. Susan Richardson said regular cleaning will help during cold and flu season, as well. Linda Andrae recommended her church’s method of supplying antibacterial wipes and asking attendees to wipe surfaces after themselves.

#### **Proposed Library COVID Policy**

*Paula Sutton made the motion to approve the COVID-19 Action Plan. John Barry seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 10/0.*

Director Campbell recommended the Board lift the mask requirement for staff.

#### **Staff Face Mask Requirement**

*John Cheatham made the motion to eliminate the mask requirement for Library staff. Linda Andrae seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 10/0.*

As RFID tagging should be complete by the end of the month, Director Campbell recommended the Library resume normal service hours on July 6.

#### **Reduced Service Hours**

*Robert Niebruegge made the motion to approve resuming regular service hours beginning Tuesday, July 6. Kathleen Ham seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 10/0.*

## New Business

Director Campbell said Administration is still waiting on a second quote for the Union branch sprinkler system repair. He wants to wait and see if the previous adjustments to the system works before proceeding with the nearly \$10,000 in repairs. He asked the Board if there is another alarm before the next Board meeting in August, can he consider it an emergency situation and proceed with the lowest of the two quotes without a Board vote. Robert Niebruegge asked why wait to do the repair, and said he is concerned about another false alarm triggering the sprinklers. Megan Maurer said the issue is in the dry system, not the wet system, and the technicians she spoke to never indicated the sprinklers going off was a risk. She also said they told her the system was set up correctly, and is “up to” code. The problem is simply the Library’s location at the end of the water line. Director Campbell said the city of Union was also experiencing unusual water pressure issues recently, which may have contributed to the problem and would be another good reason to wait and see if the adjustment works. John Cheatham approved of Director Campbell ordering the repair if needed before the next Board meeting. Director Campbell will keep the Board updated via email.

## Union Branch Sprinkler System

The Board reviewed the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget. Director Campbell said the preliminary budget presumes zero new revenue (even though an increase is likely when assessed valuation figures are received in August). The budget will be revised in September with the new revenue figures.

## Preliminary FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget

***John Cheatham made the motion to approve the Preliminary FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget. Michele Fehlings seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 10/0.***

Director Campbell mentioned possible proposals for the Library’s new revenue. He said Kjersti Merseal is gathering salary information in the area for comparison to the Library’s. Although Administration increased Library Assistant and Branch Manager salaries recently, salaries at retail and other businesses are still increasing rapidly, due to COVID and other factors. Director Campbell may propose another significant increase in salaries for certain Library staff, such as part-time and full-time library assistants. Director Campbell also may propose the creation of a full-time marketing and publicity position. Director Campbell said the Board already approved such a position in 2015, but he removed it from the budget because he didn’t think it was necessary at the time. Now, with events like the NEA Big Read and increased outreach and programming, he said Assistant Director Maurer has been advocating for the position. These proposals will be presented to the Board with the revised budget in August.

Director Campbell recommended proceeding with the Hermann construction project, which would move the date for going out to bid to mid-July, one month earlier than previously planned. Even with zero new revenue, the Library’s FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget comfortably includes funds for financing the project. He said that according to Chris Collier, final financing amounts can be fine-tuned if bids come in higher or lower than expected. The Board discussed rising construction costs in the area. Director Campbell said

## Hermann Branch Project - Resolution

the estimate the Library's architect received from the contractor in the spring took those increases into account, so there is some "wiggle room." Also, since the project is utilizing an existing structure, the more expensive structural steel is already in place. Karen Holtmeyer said the Library should act now, as construction will only continue to get more expensive.

***John Cheatham made the motion to approve the resolution to proceed with financing through Piper Sandler & Co. for the construction of the new Hermann branch. Paula Sutton seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 10/0.***

Following normal procedure, the current Board officers would move up one position, leaving the office of Treasurer open for a Board member from either Warren County or Crawford County.

**Nomination and Election of 2021-2022 Officers**

***Paula Sutton made the motion to elect Karen Holtmeyer as President, Robert Niebruegge as Vice President, and John Cheatham as Secretary. John Barry seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 10/0.***

***Karen Holtmeyer made the motion to nominate Joy Dufraim as Treasurer. Robert Niebruegge seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 10/0.***

Director Campbell recommended a nominee for a vacancy on the Foundation Board of Directors, Pat Aichholz of Gasconade County.

**Scenic Regional Library Foundation Nominee**

***Michele Fehlings made the motion to appoint Pat Aichholz to the Scenic Regional Library Foundation Board of Directors. Robert Niebruegge seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 10/0.***

***Karen Holtmeyer made the motion to move to closed session. Paula Sutton seconded the motion.***

**Closed Session-RSMo 610.021 (1) legal**

***There was a roll call vote to move into Executive Session: Susan Richardson—Aye, Martha Lindsley—Aye, Linda Andrae—Aye, John Cheatham—Aye, Paula Sutton—Aye, Kathleen Ham—Aye, Michele Fehlings—Aye, Robert Niebruegge—Aye, John Barry—Aye, Karen Holtmeyer—Aye.***

The Board moved into Executive Session at 8:20 pm.

***There was a roll call vote to move out of Executive Session: Susan Richardson—Aye, Martha Lindsley—Aye, Linda Andrae—Aye, John Cheatham—Aye, Paula Sutton—Aye, Kathleen Ham—Aye, Michele Fehlings—Aye, Robert Niebruegge—Aye, John Barry—Aye, Karen Holtmeyer—Aye.***

The Library Board returned from Executive Session at 8:31 pm.

*There being no further business, Board President Susan Richardson **Adjourn** adjourned the meeting at 8:32 pm.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
President, Scenic Regional Library Board of Trustees

Date: \_\_\_\_\_