

**Scenic Regional Library
Board Minutes – November 15, 2022**

Scenic Regional Library Board of Trustees met at the Scenic Regional Library Union Branch on November 15, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. Board President Robert Niebruegge presided at the meeting. Board members attending the meeting were John Cheatham, Robert Niebruegge, Joy Dufrain, Carla Robertson, Susan Richardson, Linda Andrea, Sarah Rothermich, Kathleen Ham, Laura Hengstenberg, Karen Holtmeyer, John Barry, and Martha Lindsley. Board member Paula Sutton was absent.

Library Director Steven Campbell, Assistant Library Director Megan Maurer, Director of Business and Human Resources Kjersti Merseal, and Administrative Assistant Brenda Humphrey were also present.

A reporter from the *Missourian* attended.

There were no public comments.

Public Comments

No changes were made to the October 18, 2022 minutes. Minutes stand as presented.

Approval of Minutes

Director Campbell presented the Financial Report. He said that, we are one-third of the way through the budget. The library's revenue to date is minimal; the library brings in a small amount of revenue at this time. Total circulation is up 10-percent. Patron visits up 7.7-percent, although not up above what they were prior to 2020. John Barry asked about the cost of Evergreen. Director Campbell responded that he had looked at a similar ILS, Polaris, which was \$50,000 per year; fifty-percent of Evergreen is paid through the State Library.

Financial Report

The Financial Report was accepted as presented.

Scenic Regional Library is partnering with Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri to host *Lifehack* a program series at the Union Branch. The programs are designed for sixth to twelfth grade students and their parents. This is brought the boards attention because one of the programs is involves supporting LGBTQIA+ teens. With the Secretary of State's proposed rule for state aid certification, and the general political atmosphere at this time related to any LGBT books, displays, and programs, the library may receive some backlash for the program. Director Campbell said that he requested that the staff clearly state in the publicity for the program series that it is intended for the teens and their parents. The November 14 program on bullying in the series was cancelled due to lack of enrollment. The Supporting LGBTQIA+ program is on January 23.

Reports

There was a Zoom meeting between the Missouri Library Association's (MLA) membership and the Missouri chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on November 3 to discuss a lawsuit being filed by the Missouri Association of School Libraries (MASL) and the ACLU. The two organizations are suing the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office over House Bill 775 in an effort to have the law ruled unconstitutional. Missouri HB 775

calls for a limit on reading materials in public and private schools. Books containing anything that is considered sexually explicit are illegal. The exceptions are those books considered artistic or informational in nature. MLA's lobbyist, Randy Scherr, previously expressed concerns that MLA joining in the lawsuit could jeopardize state aid for public libraries. At the Zoom meeting, prior to the vote, Director Campbell expressed his opposition to MLA joining the lawsuit for this reason. However, the membership voted in a landslide to have MLA join in the lawsuit.

Director Campbell updated the Board on possible legislation to change the library's fiscal year. He spoke to Randy Scherr regarding Laura Hengstenberg's concerns possible negative repercussions from the library introducing legislation at a time when public libraries are already under scrutiny due to ongoing intellectual freedom issues. Mr. Scherr said that anti-intellectual freedom amendments could be attached to any local government bill, so it didn't really matter. It is in the process of being drafted by the library's lawyer. Director Campbell asked if the Board wanted to formally vote on proposing the bill. John Barry and Karen Holtmeyer agreed that we should proceed with having the legislation introduced.

John Cheatham made a motion to proceed with introducing the bill to change the library's fiscal year. Susan Richardson seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The Motion carried 12-0.

As Director Campbell mentioned last month, the library is partnering with the Missourian by providing book review written by staff each quarter. The first review feature will be published on November 23, 2022.

The opening reception for the "Rivers" exhibit was held at the Hermann branch art gallery on November 4 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. The turnout was very good with over 100 people in attendance. The exhibit features eighty pieces of artwork submitted by over two dozen regional artists. Two pieces of artwork were sold at the opening reception and one since. We sold nine pieces of artwork during the last exhibit.

The library's fall book sale concluded on Saturday, November 5. It was the second-largest grossing book sale in the library's history with \$15,470 in revenue. The Wright City and Pacific branches had their largest-ever grossing sale. The library had fewer sale books this year than in the past, which made the high revenue figures a pleasant surprise. All the Friends of the Library groups managed their branch's book sales and received the proceeds, except Union.

The library will be using the auction signs that haven't been re-sold in each branch to publicize library services.

Director Campbell and Assistant Director Megan Maurer completed their annual active shooter discussions at all branches.

The library had been checking out 300 Chromebooks through a Federal grant. Due to loss and damage, the number has been reduced to 206 devices. Director Campbell said that the Chromebooks did not cost the library, so the

administration is reluctant to attempt to prosecute. The patrons' cards have been blocked. The library is awaiting news on whether it will receive a renewal for the grant for the laptops and hotspots.

New Business

Library Foundation Board Member Sandy Feldkamp submitted her resignation October 18 due to work obligations. At the Friends of the Library appreciation event on November 8, Foundation President Alice Whalen and Director Campbell met the new president of the Wright City Friends of the Library group, Sarah Schroeder. She had a lot of great ideas for her group. They mentioned the recent vacancy on the Foundation Board and she expressed interest. Director Campbell recommends the Library Board appoint Sarah Schroeder to be appointed to Library Foundation Board.

Proposed Foundation Board Member

Laura Hengstenberg made a motion to appoint Sarah Schroeder to the Scenic Regional Library Foundation Board. Kathi Ham seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 12-0.

Sikich LLP has been the library's auditor for the past several years. The library's audit must be submitted to the State by December 31 according to statute. Unfortunately, the firm doesn't complete the audit until the last week or two of December. This creates two issues for the library. First, the library's bond attorney must submit compliance paperwork for the library's bonds by the end of the year. The paperwork requires a completed audit, which often results in a frenzy of emails between the attorney, the library, and the auditor, the last week of the year to finalize the information. Secondly, the Library Board has decided that they would like to have the auditor present the annual audit. However, the Board does not normally meet in December; even if they did meet in December, the audit has not been complete by mid-December the past couple years. While Sikich LLP is a large and reputable firm, the audit completion timeline has been an ongoing issue for years. The library must decide whether it wants to sever ties with Sikich LLP and go out for bid for auditing services. A new firm may have the audit completed earlier. The downside is that I have heard that libraries across the state often have a difficult time finding auditors. The other option would be for the library to keep Sikich LLP as its auditor and have the audit presented to the Library Board at its January meeting.

Annual Auditing Firm

Joy Dufraim states that St. Charles Community College has the same problem with the firm.

Carla Robertson made a motion to go out for bids for auditing services in 2023. Joy Dufraim seconds the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carries 12-0.

Director Campbell asked the Library Board to strike the paragraph prohibiting partisan political groups from meeting at the library from its Meeting Room Policy. Recently, a branch manager inquired whether a Republican group could meet in their meeting room. The library allows many non-profits to utilize its meeting rooms, including a church that holds its weekly service at the Union branch every Sunday. However, the current policy prohibits

Proposed Revision to Meeting Room Policy

partisan political groups from reserving the library's meeting rooms. This prohibition has not been followed uniformly throughout the system. Director Campbell pointed out that the American Library Association encourages libraries to allow all groups, including partisan political groups, to use library meeting rooms.

Karen Holtmeyer made a motion to strike the paragraph prohibiting political groups from meeting at the library from the library's Meeting Room Policy. Linda Andrea seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carries 12-0.

Billy Grace, president of the Hermann branch Friends of the Library, serves on a committee with Raylene Hollrah, a local business woman in Hermann, which is attempting to apply for a \$500,000 grant to pave sidewalks from the See Tal subdivision adjacent the library to the library, down to Highway H and Highway 19, and across that highway to Highway 100. It would connect the existing sidewalks leading from the Hermann public schools to the city park, and the new sidewalks leading to the library and See Tal subdivision. The grant requires matching funds. The committee has been approaching local businesses contributing toward the matching funds. Mr. Grace asked for approval for the Friends of the Library to contribute \$1,000 toward the grant's matching funds. He also asked that the library contribute \$1,000. Director Campbell said that in accordance with their bylaws, the Friends of the Library groups are only allowed to donate their funds directly to the library.

Hermann Sidewalk Project

Director Campbell spoke with Ms. Hollrah about the grant, which isn't due until July 2023. She said that her schedule is very busy the remainder of this year, but that she would like to meet and discuss the grant in January 2023.

Sarah Rothermich and Robert Niebruegge said she feel the Board needs more information.

Director Campbell said that he had either been told or saw something in writing in the past saying that public comments at Board meetings were limited to 5 minutes per speaker. Several months ago, due to visitors about Marthasville and book challenges, he added language to the agenda stating the rules for public comments. Recently, he found a public comments Policy from 2003. Director Campbell said that he would like to see the existing policy rescinded and language stating that the comment period is limited to 30 minutes with 3 minutes allocated to each speaker. John Cheatham stated we shouldn't adopt a formal policy unless there's a reason. Bob Niebruegge also said that the Board should keep the process simple until there is a need.

Propose Revisions to Public Comments Policy

John Cheatham made a motion to rescind the existing Public Comments Policy and place the proposed language about public comments on the agenda each month. Joy Dufraim seconds the motion. All vote Aye. The motion carries 12-0.

The library received a Request for Reconsideration of Materials form from two patrons in Hermann on October 27. Two patrons submitted a single form, which included both books. Director Campbell said that he spoke with both patrons on the phone.

Book Challenges

The first book is “Bye, Bye Binary”. Director Campbell said that the message is basically that boys can play with dolls and like pink, and girls can play with trucks and dinosaurs and like blue. The patrons believe that the book is stating that gender is fluid and that children can choose their gender. He didn’t see anything in the book that would indicate that message. The second book, “Hips on the Drag Queen Go Swish, Swish, Swish”, has previously been challenged and reviewed by the Board. The entire content of the book is three drag queens singing the title of the book to the tune of “Wheels on the Bus Go Round, Round, Round” over and over. It doesn’t talk about drag queens, or what they are, or anything else. Director Campbell recommends that Library Board vote to keep the two books in the collection, as well as in their current sections. However, suggested that the Board consider the next agenda item about the Collection Development Policy before ruling on the two books.

Director Campbell said that the Secretary of State’s proposed rule does not state that the Library Board must be the party that considers every challenge. Due to the political environment over the past few years, he has been bringing all the challenges to the Library Board. Director Campbell spoke to another Library Director, and she said that they have a committee comprised of library staff which make the decisions on challenges. The Library Board is informed of the decisions but are not involved in the process. He asked her if patrons who didn’t like the committee’s decision just went to the Library Board anyway and she said that had never happened.

To avoid having a book challenge on the agenda every month, Director Campbell proposed that the Library Board add language to the Collection Development Policy to create a committee of the library’s professional staff to consider challenges. The committee would be made up of the library’s five professional librarians; they would review each book, decide, and inform the patron and Board.

Director Campbell believes that some challenges would still go to the Library Board. However, he thinks the committee would create an additional step to the challenge process and reduce the number. Laura Hengstenberg said that she liked the idea of professional librarians reviewing the materials being challenged.

Carla Robertson made a motion to approve the additions to the Collection Development Policy to create a committee of the library’s professional staff to review material challenges. Martha Lindsley seconds the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carries 12-0.

Sarah Rothermich made a motion to refer the two books currently being challenged to the newly-formed Materials Review Committee for review; John Barry seconds the motion. All vote Aye. The motion carries 12-0

As reported last month, Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft’s office has submitted a proposed rule that would establish a certification requirement for libraries receiving state funds and “institute measures to protect minors from non-age-appropriate materials.” Director Campbell reminded the board that State Aid isn’t just the money received in cash; also covers \$18,000 annually for Evergreen and over \$10,000 MOREnet. The Missouri State Librarian held a

**Proposed Revision
to Collection
Development Policy**

**Secretary of State’s
Proposed Rule for
State Aid
Certification**

Zoom meeting after the proposal was announced and expressed the belief that policy templates could be created to allow public libraries to meet all the new requirements.

Originally, there was discussion about whether libraries should submit or encourage public comments on the rule. Some of the rule is vague and subjective, therefore parts would be difficult to enforce; public comments could result in the Secretary revising the rule and making it clearer and easier to enforce. It has also been reported that the Missouri Assembly will be introducing a similar bill in the coming session. Obviously, librarians are very upset about this, and it now appears that many libraries have decided to submit comments and encourage their staff and patrons to submit comments.

The Missouri Public Library Directors' group (MPLD) has issued a statement and resolution template on the rule; they have asked libraries around the state to adopt the resolution in opposition of the rule. Director Campbell said that this is the first time that the Secretary of State's office is getting involved in local policy. MPLD believes that local libraries should make their own policy decisions. Director Campbell said that the most concerning part of the rule is that it states "The library has or will adopt a written, publicly-accessible policy allowing any minor's parent or guardian to determine what materials and access will be available to a minor, and no person employed by or acting on behalf of the library shall knowingly grant access to any minor any material in any form not approved by the minor's parent or guardian." With self-check and 28% of library's usage being digital, there's no way that the library can police what children access.

Proposed Resolution

The proposed administrative rule will be published in the Missouri Register on November 15, 2022, and then have a 30-day comment period. Director Campbell asked if the Board wanted the library to publicize the proposed rule to its patrons and ask them to submit comments. The Board members indicated that they only wanted to approve the resolution.

Martha Lindsley stated that she doesn't want any kind of government censorship.

John Cheatham made a motion for the Library Board to adopt the resolution recommended by the Missouri Public Library Directors group to voice opposition to the Secretary of State's proposed rule. Linda Andrea seconds the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carries 12-0.

Kathi Ham said that she has been friends with the library's volunteer art gallery manager, Sheri Hausman, for 40 years. Ms. Hausman was Hermann Branch Manager for many years, as well as a professional artist. She has worked very hard, spending an average of 20 hours a week networking, promoting, and managing the gallery. Ms. Ham believes that the library should somehow compensate Ms. Hausman for her work with the gallery. Director Campbell stated that the gallery would have to shut down if Ms. Hausman no longer wanted to manage it, or couldn't manage it. He's also concerned that she may burn out due to the amount of time she has been spending on it. Ms. Ham said that because Ms. Hausman receives a pension through LAGERS, there would be limits on what she could be paid through

Volunteer Art Gallery Manager

payroll. She suggested paying Ms. Hausman as a contractor, using a 1099 form. Sarah Rothermich stated that she doesn't feel that the library could find someone to manage the gallery for free. Linda Andrea is in favor of paying the gallery manager something. Laura Hengstenberg asked the amount of money would be needed to "move the needle". Bob Niebruegge said that he understood that the library would not have any ongoing expenses for the gallery other than electric. He does not want to pay a gallery manager; he does not think that is a proper use of library tax funds.

Susan Richardson asked if Director Campbell could look into what other libraries pay to have their galleries managed. Kathi Ham said that if the library has the money to provide matching funds for sidewalks, why they didn't have the funds to compensate someone to manage the gallery? John Barry believes that the gallery is unique to Hermann and that he doesn't have to have a problem with compensating the art gallery manager. Robert Niebruegge stated that he believes the gallery should be funded by the artists, like a gallery in Owensville.

A visitor asked if the library's 35% fee from each sale in the gallery could be given to the manager as compensation. Director Campbell responded that the library only received four or five hundred dollars from fees from the last exhibit.

The Board asked Director Campbell to collect information from other libraries with galleries as to how they manage them.

There being no further business, Susan Richardson moved to adjourn the meeting. Sarah Rothermich seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned the meeting at 9:00 pm. **Adjourn**

Secretary

Approved: _____
President, Scenic Regional Library Board of Trustees

Date: _____