

Scenic Regional Library
Board Minutes – Special Meeting – November 2, 2020

Scenic Regional Library Board of Trustees met virtually via Zoom on November 2, 2020 at 7:00 pm for a Special Library Board Meeting. Board President Susan Richardson presided at the meeting. Board members attending the meeting were Linda Andrae, Paula Sutton, Kathleen Ham, Michele Fehlings, John Barry, Joy Dufrain, Karen Holtmeyer, and Carla Robertson. Board members Martha Lindsley, John Cheatham, Robert Niebruegge, and Diann Wacker were absent. Also attending the meeting were Scenic Regional Library staff members Connie Vest and Barb Schweissguth. Library Director Steven Campbell, Assistant Library Director Megan Maurer, Business and Human Resource Manager Kjersti Merseal, and Administrative Assistant Erica Mosley were also present.

There were no public comments.

Public Comments

Board President Susan Richardson proposed a new temporary pandemic-related sick leave policy to allow staff to stay home if sick and receive full pay. The Library would then return to the current sick leave policy after the pandemic ends. She said that it would be temporary action to ensure the well-being of Library staff and their families. The Library will have to trust its staff to make sure abuse does not occur. She said other taxing entities, including schools and government groups, are also paying staff to stay home if they are sick.

**Temporary Sick
Leave Policy**

Connie Vest joined the meeting at 7:07.

Director Steve Campbell said the Board was very generous in its previous decision to offer two-thirds pay to staff who had exhausted their CARES act coverage. However, that measure does not address the problem the Library is dealing with now. Staff are coming to work with mild flu-like symptoms, and it is impossible to know if they have COVID or not. He believes the Library is incentivizing coming to work sick. He said if staff come to work sick and get others sick, and Administration ends up having to close a branch, the Library will have to pay everyone at that branch anyway. It is more cost effective to pay just one person to stay home.

Paula Sutton joined the meeting at 7:11.

Carla Robertson agreed, and said she considers Library staff to be front-line workers. However, she asked why staff members who display mild flu-like symptoms are not getting tested for COVID. Director Campbell said part-time staff does not receive health insurance through the Library, and the Library cannot force anyone to get a test, especially if they have only a low-grade fever or mild cough. Susan Richardson said the tests are expensive, approximately \$110, and staff could potentially spend their entire paycheck, especially if they have to get tested multiple times.

Director Campbell said Library staff was very grateful to be paid during the shutdown, and for the safety precautions implemented when the Library reopened. He would like to continue an overly-cautious approach rather than backtrack. He said staff wouldn't want to work with someone who is coughing and still at work because they want to be paid, and the public wouldn't want to be exposed to that either. He also wants to explore paid sick leave for part-time staff in the future, after the pandemic.

Joy Dufrain asked for clarification on the CARES Act. Director Campbell said the government does not supply any money to pay employees; it only mandates that businesses pay employees. The proposed temporary policy goes beyond the CARES Act. He was not sure how long the Library will be able to afford to offer the policy, but was optimistic the Library could afford make it through the winter cold and flu season.

Susan Richardson suggested adding wording to the temporary policy about continuing the policy as long as it is affordable, so the Board can decide to revert to the original policy if it becomes unaffordable. Paula Sutton recommended giving staff a symptom checklist similar to Mid-continent Public Library's. Director Campbell said he, Megan Maurer, and Kjersti Merseal would be reviewing the financial situation regularly. If shifts can be covered by Administration staff, it will be less expensive than using part-time staff.

Paula Sutton made the motion to allow staff to stay home if sick and receive 100% of their pay, until the end of the pandemic; the cost of the temporary measure will be reviewed on a monthly basis and reported to the Library Board.

Carla Robertson said under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, COVID tests are available for free at community testing centers. She said the Library should be encouraging staff to get a test. Susan Richardson said the Library will have to trust its staff to do everything they can to stay healthy.

John Barry seconded the motion. Board President Susan Richardson took votes by Roll Call: Carla Robertson—Yes, John Barry—Yes, Linda Andrae—Yes, Kathleen Ham—Yes, Michele Fehlings—Yes, Paula Sutton—Yes, Karen Holtmeyer—Yes, Joy Dufrain—Yes, Susan Richardson—Yes. The motion carried 9 /0.

Director Campbell said he appreciated the Board approving the new policy, which goes above and beyond legal requirements, but which he thinks will help keep staff healthy through the winter months. He said he would send staff a detailed email about the policy after the meeting. The new policy will become effective November 3, 2020.

There being no further business, Board President Susan Richardson adjourned the meeting at 7:37 pm.

Adjourn

Secretary

Approved: _____
President, Scenic Regional Library Board of Trustees

Date: _____