

## WICHITA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Minutes of a Meeting of the Library Board of Directors  
April 18, 2023.

The hybrid meeting of the Library Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at the Advanced Learning Library with the following present in person: Ms. Abi Boatman, Ms. Donna Douglas, Ms. Rachel Enix, Ms. Lauren Hirsh, Mr. Kevin McWhorter, Ms. Shelby Petersen, Mr. Chuck Schmidt, and Mr. Jonathan Winkler. The following attended virtually: Mr. Randall Johnston and Ms. TaDonne Neal.

### Call to Order

Kevin McWhorter called the meeting to order at 12:05p.m., a quorum being present.

### Approval of the Agenda

Chuck Schmidt moved (Petersen) to approve the agenda as published. **Motion carried unanimously.**

### Public Comment

None

### Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the regular meeting held on March 20, 2023 were presented. Shelby Petersen moved (Douglas) to approve them as included in board packets. **Motion carried unanimously.**

### Unfinished Business

None

### New Business

Director Nix and Mark Manning from the City of Wichita Finance Department presented information on preliminary projections for the 2025 budget. The City of Wichita has historically relied on restrained growth in expenditures to remain within the footprint of a slow-growing revenue base, some elements of which are technologically obsolescent (e.g., the tax on landline phones). However, a number of warning signs—such as ongoing inflation and generous wage settlements with bargaining units—point toward an emerging structural deficit that will lead to shortfalls beginning in 2025. Therefore, City departments are being asked to identify ways in which they can continue to provide services while cutting their general fund expenditures by 5%. For the Library this translates to a \$450,000 reduction in budget.

Potential program options for 2025 include closing or cutting operating hours at branches, increasing meeting room rental fees, discontinuing use of the software that allows staff to

provide curbside service and collect account debt, reducing the quantity of public computers, and increasing passport services.

After discussing these ideas and brainstorming other possibilities, the Board formed a strong consensus that branch closures must be avoided and priority should be given to alternatives that minimize impact to library customers. Board members were encouraged to reach out to their appointing City Council members to express concern about the budget deficit and convey the Board's sense that is not acceptable to close library locations.

### **Finance Committee Report**

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Chuck Schmidt moved to approve the January finance report and supplemental bills in the following amounts: General Fund bills of \$1,127,589.37; Grant Fund Bills of \$15,379.10; and Gift and Memorial Fund bills of \$12,654.64, for a total of \$1,155,623.11. **Motion carried unanimously.**

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Chuck Schmidt moved to approve the subscription to Newspapers.com in the amount of \$21,060.00. **Motion carried unanimously.**

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Chuck Schmidt moved to approve payment of the Gale Analytics invoice in the amount of \$14,965.01. **Motion carried unanimously.**

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Chuck Schmidt moved to approve the South Central Kansas Library System Grant FY23 proposed budget and authorize staff to submit the contract to the City Council for review and approval. **Motion carried unanimously.**

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Chuck Schmidt moved to approve the 2023 State Aid Grant budget as proposed by staff. **Motion carried unanimously.**

### **Operations Committee Report**

No report.

### **Planning & Facilities Committee Report**

Lauren Hirsh reported that the Westlink Branch will close for renovation at the end of its regular opening hours on May 6. The temporary location will open May 22. A conceptual design meeting was held earlier in the month that provided preliminary insight into interior layout, finishes, and other details for the renovated building. Through several meetings and surveys, the community has provided helpful insight into what they would like to see done. Since the bulk of its collections will be in storage, Westlink will be the last branch to undergo RFID conversion.

*TaDonne Neal left.*

### **Public Affairs Committee Report**

No report.

*Abi Boatman left.*

**Special Committee Reports**

*Friends of the Library* – Amanda Shankle reported that planning continues for the Volunteer Luncheon being held April 28 at the Advanced Learning Library. The next used book sale will be on May 13. The Friends of the Library Board President position remains vacant.

*Library Foundation* – Kristi Oberg reported that the event featuring Roz Chast, author of the 2023 NEA Big Read book “*Can’t We Talk About Something More Pleasant?*”, was well attended. It was also the first joint event with the Friends of the Library.

Just under \$300,000 has been raised for the capital campaign. The Foundation will be focusing on fundraising for the branch projects funded by this campaign.

*Wichita Genealogical Society (WGS)* – No report.

**Director of Libraries Report**

Director Nix reported that the NEA: Big Read program was hugely successful this year.

Internet bundle hotspot funding will run out at the end of June. Chromebooks will then continue to circulate without the hotspots while the Library and Foundation seek additional funding for this Internet connectivity.

This year’s Summer Reading program is in the final planning stages. Preregistration has begun with open registration beginning May 1.

Circulation numbers continue to grow as staff begin preparing for a very active programming schedule over the summer.

**Announcements**

None

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be May 16, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaime Nix