

WICHITA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Directors
June 16, 2020.

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Directors was held virtually on Tuesday, June 16, 2020 with the following present: Mr. Lamont Anderson, Ms. Abi Boatman, Ms. Donna Douglas, Ms. Jennifer Goheen, Dr. Justin Henry, Ms. Lauren Hirsh, Mr. Randall Johnston, Ms. Shannon Littlejohn, Mr. Kevin McWhorter, Ms. TaDonne Neal, Ms. Shelby Petersen, Mr. Chuck Schmidt, and Mr. Jonathan Winkler.

Vice Mayor Cindy Claycomb gave a presentation on the revitalization of the Evergreen Center, which includes the consolidation of library and neighborhood resource center activities into a single facility. This project had been initiated by Janet Miller, her predecessor as Council member for District VI. Primary focus areas for the remodeled center will include workforce development, career readiness, and small business promotion. In addition to City services, the facility will house offices for the Kansas Hispanic Education & Development Foundation and for Empower Evergreen (a new non-profit to be created to support communication, collaboration and coordination of activities out of the center). Permanent office space for the Kansas Department of Children and Families will be available, while co-working space will be provided for other organizations that will offer programming or services from the new center. This project aligns with the Project Wichita goal of creating neighborhood anchor institutions that support increased educational attainment and improve the economic self-sufficiency of community members. Planning has been in hand since 2016. A request to initiate the library's portion of Capital Improvement Program funding will be made to the City Council on June 23. If it is approved, renovation will likely begin in September, with completion and grand opening projected for July 2021.

Call to Order

President Kevin McWhorter called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m., a quorum being present.

Recognition and Introductions

Director Berner recognized retiring board member Axel Chacon by presenting a book that will be placed into the library collection in his honor.

Board members welcomed Abi Boatman, recently appointed to the Board by Mayor Whipple.

Approval of the Agenda

TaDonne Neal moved (Littlejohn) to approve the agenda as published. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the regular meeting held on May 19, 2020 were presented. Chuck Schmidt moved (Anderson) to approve the minutes as included in board packets. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Unfinished Business

The board discussed a proposal from Real Men, Real Heroes for installation of a painted mural on the north façade of the Maya Angelou Northeast branch. Director Cynthia Berner summarized information received since the last board meeting regarding the relation of the proposed mural to the property's Community Unit Plan. She also noted that when she consulted with Design Council staff, she was told that the relation of the mural to surrounding properties is considered, so images showing properties adjacent and across the street from the property were added to the agenda report for this item.

President McWhorter asked board members to share their opinions on the proposed project. Lamont Anderson stated that he fully supports the mural and would like to see the board move forward with it, since it pays homage to Maya

Angelou and will provide a more welcoming and engaging library presence for the community.

TaDonne Neal said she also favors the mural and the plan to involve children in its creation. She indicated that this will improve the appearance of the branch building and will encourage people to visit the library.

President McWhorter noted that this decision may set a precedent and asked members their thoughts on how to ensure that it does not place future boards at a disadvantage.

Lamont Anderson responded that he believes a precedent already exists with the mural at the Evergreen branch, but agreed that it would be useful to have a policy guiding the evaluation of future proposals.

Jonathan Winkler agreed with the development of a policy and suggested it should be based in part on what other libraries do when presented with similar situations. He recommended that the proposal be forwarded to the Design Council for their opinion.

Chuck Schmidt stated that he has mixed feelings about the mural. While he likes the cultural representation and the namesake, he is cautious about painting on brick and the maintenance that will entail in the future.

Shannon Littlejohn said that she too loves the idea of the mural but is also concerned about painting on the brick. She indicated support for creation of a policy and for referring the proposal to the Design Council for their guidance.

Shelby Petersen left the meeting.

Jennifer Goheen stated she loves the mural idea but agreed there needs to be a policy in place for maintenance of the mural.

Jennifer Goheen left the meeting.

Lamont Anderson stated that the information about the mural should be presented to the Design Council for their opinion. Additionally Real Men, Real

Heroes should be contacted for their opinion on maintenance of the mural and a policy should be created.

By consensus, no action was taken on the proposal. The item will be forwarded to the Design Council for feedback and to Real Men, Real Heroes and the City's Arts and Cultural Division for additional information regarding long-term maintenance plans for murals on City-owned facilities. Staff will further investigate the City's public art policy as well as similar policies from peer libraries. This item will be scheduled again as unfinished business for the July meeting.

New Business

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Kevin McWhorter moved (Hirsh) to approve the May 2020 finance report and supplemental bills in the following amounts: General Fund bills of \$829,373.78; COVID-19 bills of \$109,435.97; South Central Kansas Library System grant fund bills of \$15,389.18; and Gift and Memorial Fund bills of \$404,950.10 for a total of \$1,348,102.63. Mr. McWhorter noted that the larger than normal totals were based on three pay periods in the general fund and the purchase of some certificates of deposit in the Gift and Memorial Fund. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Finance Committee Report

None

Operations Committee Report

None

Planning & Facilities Committee Report

None

Public Affairs Committee Report

None

Special Committee Reports

Friends of the Library – None

Library Foundation – None

Wichita Genealogical Society (WGS) – None

Director of Libraries Report

Director Berner stated that the lease agreement for the new Linwood branch building has been approved by the City Council, which is also tentatively scheduled to consider the Evergreen branch redesign on June 23.

The City of Wichita has released an online budget simulator to canvass public opinion on ways to address a multi-million-dollar shortfall in the City budget.

A small number of complaints have been received from customers regarding the reinstatement of hold and transfer fees after the limited public reopening beginning May 26. Library staff has responded by explaining the City's current budget difficulties and offering options to obtain materials without the need to place holds. Customers have been disappointed but more understanding of the fees' return.

A letter was included in board packets from Chelsea Long, a community member who described the security at the Advanced Learning Library as being so lacking as to prompt her and her children to be cautious about visiting. Ms. Long does not appear to be a current account holder and did not provide any contact information with her letter, which had been delivered by hand. It was dated in late May but referred to conditions prevailing in early March, before the Library's two-month pandemic closure. As a result, staff have not been able to obtain more specific information either by contacting Ms. Long directly or investigating independently. No reports exist on file for incidents of the type described in the letter. Polling of employees and security officers did not turn up anyone who was aware of situations like those reported in the letter.

Jonathan Winkler asked if staff members had reported being afraid or uncomfortable within the Advanced Learning Library, as Ms. Long had suggested in her letter. Director Berner responded that she has not received feedback from staff or any comments from customers along these lines.

President McWhorter stated that the letter appears to reflect an isolated incident. Accordingly, there is no cause for concern at present, unless other complaints are received.

Announcements

None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be July 21, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Berner
Director of Libraries