

MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MARY RILEY STYLES PUBLIC LIBRARY
Held in the Mary Riley Styles Public Library
120 N. Virginia Avenue Falls Church, VA 22046
November 20, 2019

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Chairperson Stephanie Oppenheimer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following Board members attended the meeting:

Stephanie Oppenheimer
Jeff Peterson
Chet DeLong
Chrystie Swiney
Kathleen Tysse
Molly Novotny

Mr. Don Camp was present via cell phone; he stated that he could not attend the Board meeting since he was on temporary work assignment in New York City.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Library Board unanimously moved to allow Mr. Don Camp to participate at today's Board meeting by conference call under the resolution adopting the policy for electronic participation in meetings.

Council Liaison, Ross Litkenhous, and Planning Commission Liaison, Rob Puentes, were not in attendance.

Others present for the meeting included: Director Jenny Carroll and her assistant Claudia Gutierrez. City resident and library employee Cathy Breen and City resident Ms. Alexzandra Fogle were present as well.

2. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

a) Letter from Ms. E. O'Donnell

City resident Ms. O'Donnell wrote a letter to the Board expressing her disapproval about a children's book that she perceived was not appropriate to have in the library's collection; she expressed that she did not like where the library collection was heading and will not come to the library until things change. There was a discussion about who selects the library books and what items are provided to patrons. The Director stated that she is proud of the library's collection and the diversity of the materials selected by the library staff. The library provides the materials to the community based on diversity, inclusivity, and demand and the decision is then up to patrons and parents on what to read and what programs to attend.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Library Board unanimously moved to support the independence of staff in its choice of books, which are inclusive, diverse and representative of the totality of the community.

The Director pointed out a paragraph from the library materials selection policy (approved by the Board in 2004) that states: “The library provides quality services, resources, and lifelong learning opportunities through books and a wide variety of other formats to meet the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs and interests of its diverse and changing population. The Library provides information for the exchange of ideas and affirms the right of each patron to determine for him/herself which library materials and services he/she chooses. In keeping with this policy, resources are provided equally to all library users, both adults and children”

b) Environmental Chapter

The Director informed the Board that the Environmental chapter presented to the Board at the September 18 meeting by the Environmental Program Coordinator Kate Walker, will be presented to Council next January/February 2020. The Board did not have any particular input for this chapter; however, they still can send their comments.

c) Student Liaisons – discussion

Ms. Oppenheimer informed the Board that she talked to Ms. Sally Ekfelt who informed her that the next group of students would be submitting applications to become student liaisons. The applications will be posted in January 2020 and the selection will take place in May. If the Board wants a student liaison, the Board needs to reach out Ms. Ekfelt. The Board agreed they want to stay in the liaison program since it is mutually beneficial for both the students and the Board. Ms. Oppenheimer will respond to Ms. Ekfelt and include the suggestion of sharing experiences with other boards/commissions. The Board would like to improve the benefit by having clear expectations and orientation guidelines, with the caveat of not creating a barrier for the student to have to do something special to be on the Library Board, since the benefit is meant to be for the students. The Director suggested inviting Ms. Ekfelt to a library meeting to talk more about the program.

d) Thank you from Columbia Baptist Church

Ms. Carroll informed the Board that the Baptist Church, as part of a Community Partnership with the library, provided a thank you gift with good wishes to the library from their staff.

3. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 18, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Library Board unanimously approved the September 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes with minor corrections.

4. LIBRARY REPORT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Director informed the Board that in addition to Ms. O’Donnell’s letter, she had another formal request from a patron to review a children’s book titled: “*It’s Halloween, You ‘Fraidy Mouse!’*” (part of the Geronimo Stilton series), for a scene the patron felt was akin to sexual harassment. The Director informed the Board of the process for the request to review materials. Both the library Director and the three professional staff reviewed the patron’s request. This particular book is for beginner readers and it is part of a popular series. Other libraries in the area have it in their collection as well. The Director responded to the patron that the book will not be removed from the library’s collection. The library

provides the materials and staff encourages parents to make their own choices for their children's reading material. The patron has the right to appeal the response and bring the request to the library Board.

- There was a praise for the library from a friend of Mr. Camp for having the digital microfilm and fiche reader available for patrons.
- The Director will be receiving the new Advisory Board Manual from the library of Virginia by the end of the year and will provide it to the Board. The last update was in 2009.
- A shining Star Award was given to Lucilda Hernandez Posada, who is the library custodian, for her diligent work with the recycling process from Library Assistant II Ester Pavia.
- The Director completed the Bibliostat report, which is the Annual State and Federal Statistical report. It includes FY19 budget, program, and operational information. This information helps to complete the Library Annual Report and determines State Aid.
- On December 11, the Library staff will be having their holiday party at the library.
- The Director will be off from December 8 -10th.
- The City Employee Halloween Festivities are finished and the Library won the contest for the best office Décor and Best Group Costume for their *Stranger Things* themed Halloween.

5. LIBRARY FOUNDATION REPORT

Mr. Camp informed the Board that the Foundation will be starting their annual solicitation and will be sending letters by Monday, December 2. He thanked the library for providing around 2000 new library cardholder addresses, which they will include in the fall solicitation mailing. The Foundation Board is meeting on Saturday, November 30 to discuss on how to support the library project. They will also discuss the funding for library staff events suggested earlier by Ms. Tysse. The Foundation Development Committee is working on a Christmas tree for the Falls Church Tree Fest.

6. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

No report

7. ARTS AND HUMANITIES COUNCIL REPORT (CATCH)

No report.

8. LIBRARY PROJECT UPDATE

The Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) documents have been sent to Centennial, the Construction Manager at Risk, and will be due on Friday, December 13 to city staff. The library project team will review and negotiate the GMP during the next two to three weeks. Tentatively it will be presented at a Special Board Meeting on January 7 in a closed session.

Ms. Oppenheimer wrote a draft email with talking points and a form letter to encourage people to support the library project. It is an informational letter about the library project and people can personalize it and send it to Council to show their support. There were some comments and suggestions to include in the letter. Council is concerned that it appears as if the renovation and expansion project is mostly to accommodate for a larger story time space. The Director pointed out that the project also increases adult space and services. Updated information about the library project, including the video, is posted on the library website and on social media. Ms. Oppenheimer will make changes to the letter and include Board's comments. Mr. Peterson stated that the letter from VPIS is finalized and is being sent to Council.

Some library staff who are Falls Church citizens have expressed their interest in supporting the library. There was a discussion about the best time for the Board to pursue an Opinion Editorial in the Falls Church News Press. The Director will contact the City's Director of Communications, Susan Finarelli, to ask for guidance. Ms. Oppenheimer also encouraged the Board to meet individually with Council members to discuss the project; some already have, and got feedback about questions that Council wants answered by the library project team, the Board, or the City's Financial Department. Stephanie and Jeff have spoken with Marybeth Connelly and Chet has spoken with Mayor Tartar. Wyatt Shields, City Manager, has been tasked with gathering the questions from Council and providing answers. Ms. Oppenheimer stated that to date that has not happened. Ms. Connelly gave Stephanie a list of eleven questions from basic to financial. The most clear feedback was that Council wants to gather all their questions with answers in one place to review them including the additional costs for streetscape, LEED silver certification, and stormwater.

There will be a budget amendment in January and Council will decide how to dispose of the surplus. The submission of the GMP will be turned in to the City by December 13, this is part of the contract with Centennial. Negotiation dates are on the schedule as well as the Special Library Board meeting on January 7. The GMP package will then go to Council for review. After Council reviews it, and in order to proceed with the library project, City Manager Wyatt Shields needs to inform Council where the funds are coming to cover the increase in the library's project. The Board will be able to speak on behalf of the library project as citizens at the December 9 Council Meeting. Board members will be attending and will coordinate covering all the talking points. The Board discussed ways to get the word out via social media and different City organizations they could ask for support.

9. DRAFT LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Library Director reviewed the Board legislative agenda that once approved will become incorporated into the City wide legislative agenda. The Library Director informed the Board that the Library of Virginia is requesting full funding for State Aid in the next 2 years by adding \$5.5M in 2021 and \$11M in 2022. In 2018, the LVA appropriated \$250,000 for FY19 and \$500,000 for FY20. The amount for the library in 2020 was \$153,156. If the library were fully funded this current fiscal year, the amount would have been \$254,301. All the State Aid given to the library goes to library materials. Banning guns in libraries had been included as well as the second item. Mr. William Barratt wrote another letter to the Board in regards to the second item on the Legislative Agenda. The Board made a minor change in the section about guns in libraries and Community Centers. The change was from "The Board of Trustees of the Mary Riley Styles Public Library continues to support the ban of weapons/guns in public libraries and community centers because there is simply no reason to have weapons in these educational institutions." to "The Board of Trustees of the Mary Riley Styles Public Library continues to support the ban of weapons/guns in public libraries and community centers - educational institutions."

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Library Board unanimously approved a minor change in the 2019 Legislative Agenda.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Library Board unanimously approved the 2019 Legislative Agenda with some suggestions that the Board will like to incorporate.

The Director mentioned that she will submit the approved Legislative Agenda to the Assistant City Manager Cindy Mester who assembles all of the Legislative Agenda issues and presents it to Council for approval. After that, it is sent to Richmond.

10. BUSINESS NOT ON AGENDA

None

1. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:42p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Carroll
Library Director

Approved:

Stephanie Oppenheimer, Chairperson

Copies: Board of Trustees, City Manager, Library Reference Desk, Staff Bulletin Board, City Clerk, Library Web Page

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