

Kent County Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the January 25, 2021 Virtual Meeting

Present: Elisabeth Tully, President; Valerie Overton, Vice President; Jay Silcox, Treasurer; Bronwyn Jones, Secretary; Erin Counihan, Trustee; Judi O'brien, Trustee; Arnessa Dowell, Executive Director; Chris Walmsley, Staff Member

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 pm.

The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. Ms. Jones moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Silcox seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Treasurer & Finance Committee Report

Mr. Silcox reviewed the finance committee meeting and the bank balances, noting that there was a balance of \$218,539.71 in the Peoples Bank savings account, \$98,415.60 in the PNC Bank checking account, and \$31,231.69 in the PNC Bank money market account.

Ms. Tully reported that she and Mr. Silcox would visit PNC Bank to set Mr. Silcox up as an authorized representative of the library.

Mr. Silcox noted that Ms. Amy Sine had joined the finance committee as a citizen representative.

There were no action items from the committee.

Director's Report

Ms. Dowell reviewed the proposed organizational chart, noting the need for support in several areas of the library. Ms. Dowell pointed to situations such as the branches where an employee running the branch by herself posed a significant liability for the organization. Ms. Dowell also reviewed how expanding the number of positions allowed for more streamlined service for the patrons, and freed up employee time to focus on outreach or programming as necessary.

Ms. Tully noted that positions created an ongoing financial obligation, and that the trustees needed to ensure that funding would be available. Ms. Tully commented that as the budget became more clear for the upcoming fiscal year, the trustees would be better able to determine what staffing level they were comfortable supporting.

Ms. Dowell reminded the trustees that there was a large amount of unrestricted reserves, and these combined with underspending from the current fiscal year could facilitate planning for the

future of the library. Ms. Dowell reviewed various funding sources to reinforce that funds were available to finance the vision for the library.

Mr. Silcox reviewed the finance committee responsibility related to these changes, such as ensuring there would be enough funding for benefits to support the positions. Mr. Silcox further asked if there was a priority list for the proposed positions, along with a timeline for implementing the changes.

Ms. Dowell noted that the proposed changes were aimed at building capacity so that future organizational planning would not need to wait on placing people into positions.

Ms. Dowell and Mr. Silcox agreed to have a meeting to go through the proposed staffing plan and associated budget documentation.

Ms. Dowell reviewed a proposed schedule of hours for the library, noting that late Wednesday hours did not see significant activity, and that revised service and branch hours enabled time for cross training and further staff development opportunities.

Ms. Tully questioned if these hours were only during the pandemic, or if this would become the full operational schedule. Ms. Dowell responded that these would be just for the current pandemic period.

Ms. Counihan asked if the hours worked with the current staffing and that staff would not be expected to work more hours than at present. Ms. Dowell replied that staff was involved in the creation of the schedule and that current staffing was able to accommodate the change in hours.

Ms. Tully questioned if the reopening plan was being reviewed and revised, noting that the schools were reopening in February. Ms. Dowell noted that there were several areas of the old reopening plan which were being revisited.

Ms. Dowell noted that quarantine times had been reduced to increase the turnover for patrons while still being mindful of guidance for materials handling.

The trustees discussed overdue notices and overdue fines. Ms. Tully asked Ms. Dowell about her opinion on going fine free. Ms. Dowell replied that she recommended it for several reasons such as the high poverty rate in Kent County coupled with the fact that fines were never a significant source of revenue, and that fines only reinforce existing wealth, access and technology gaps within the county.

Ms. Moves moved for Kent County Public Library to go fine free. Ms. Overton seconded the motion. Ms. Tully called for discussion. Mr. Silcox asked when the policy would go into effect. Ms. Tully noted that since fines were not being charged during the pandemic, it would be a

continuation of this practice. Ms. Tully called for a vote, and the motion was approved unanimously.

The trustees reviewed the fines and fees policy, noting that it would need to be revised to reflect the previous motion. Ms. Tully moved to approve the fines and fees policy as amended. Mr. Silcox seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Ms. Dowell noted that the strategic plan was being reviewed and worked on at this time, and would be revisited at the February meeting.

Trustee Education

Ms. Tully presented to the trustees related to the roles and responsibilities of the trustees and the director.

No further business was brought before the trustees.

Ms. Tully moved to adjourn. Ms. Jones seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.