

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
RITTER PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR SESSION**

Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 10, 2023

The Board of Trustees of Ritter Public Library convened in regular session at 7:00 PM in the Ritter Public Library Community Room. Warden called the meeting to order with the following members and visitors present:

Lois Arnold	Present
Eileen Bulan	Present
Chad Coolidge	Present
Zack Dolyk	Present
Pam Reese	Present
Sarah Ross	Absent
Marie Warden	Present

Employees: S. Licks, C. Springer, Angie Folley

Visitors: Kenn Baughman, Joseph Jones, Jean Anderson, Joan Cohoe, Sue Owens

Certification of Notification:

Springer certified that a notice of the meeting had been published in the October 5, 2023 edition of the *Vermilion Photojournal*. In addition, to the Ritter Public Library social media outlets and Library Website.

Approval of Minutes:

Arnold moved that the September 2023 Regular Board Meeting minutes be approved as presented, and Bulan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence:

Licks presented a letter from a neighbor requesting the library clean up the area to the far side of the West lot and fix or replace the fence in the same area (attached).

Licks presented a letter from OLC expressing their appreciation for the work of Aimee Adams as chair to the 2023 OLC expo (attached). Licks thanked Adams for representing our library so well as an ambassador of the OLC conference.

Public Comment:

Jean Anderson: Thank you to all of you for giving us the most wonderful library. Uses many of our services often. Would like to speak about some of the books in the children's section. Due to the "adult nature" she expressed she would like the library Board to consider putting them in a section that is "supervised" by parents. Anderson presented a sampling of books that she felt needed parental guidance and asked that we move them. "They are trying to allow people to be comfortable with being different rather than being normal, like how we've all grown up."

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Kenn Baughman: Kenn introduced himself, the President of the Friends of Harbortown. At the end of the year, they will be disbanding the Friends of Harbortown. The Friends of Harbortown Board has decided to divest leftover monies to community groups. The Friends of Harbortown would like to donate money to the library to build up local and other history sections of the library. The Library Board thanked Kenn and the Friends of Harbortown for their donation.

Sue Owens: As a teacher, she feels concerned about the content that children are seeing these days. Feels that a lot of parents don't know that these books are in the children's section and should be made aware of these books so that they can stop their children from seeing them. Feels the Teen books are too dark and sad and violent. Instead of showing books that are joyful and happy, we show them things that are more troublesome. Perhaps as we consider new funds that come in are there more stories that are uplifting with heroes, rather than death and murder.

Warden thanked everyone for coming tonight and for their participation.

Director's Report:

Licks reviewed the Director's report and Department reports (attached).

Highlighted the Lights on for Literacy event.

Discussed her experiences at the OLC Conference and Expo.

Licks will be on vacation next week.

Facility Report:

Licks reviewed the Facility Manager's report (attached).

Discussed the elevator issues. Dolyk requested that Springer get some information together regarding when our inspection was missed. Springer will do so.

Discussed replacing the fence on the west side of the parking lot.

Arnold stated that the Bioswale looks really nice. It was just redone by Corso's.

Dolyk requested we look into scheduling a regular maintenance for caulking the roofs.

Financial Report:

Springer reviewed the Fiscal Officer's report (attached).

Reese moved to accept the financials as presented, and Bulan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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Committee Reports:

Finance

Springer stated that the Finance Committee met before the meeting to go over some changes in the revenue after receiving the Certificate of Estimated Resources from the Erie County Auditor and PLF estimate from the Lorain County Auditor. There was a negative variance based on estimated numbers when doing the tax budget. Therefore, Licks and Springer previously sat down and made some changes to the budget to account for the decrease in revenue.

Springer presented the full Board with the proposed changes to the budget. Springer requested that the Board reserve a vote for Temporary Appropriations for the December meeting.

Also discussed was the minimum wage increase beginning on January 1, 2024. The minimum wage will go up to \$10.45. Currently, our shelvers will start at \$10.40 on Step Zero. Springer recommends increasing only that line in the grid by \$0.05. Springer requested a full Board vote.

Arnold moved to accept the Finance Committee's recommendation, and increase the shelver grid line by \$0.05, and Reese seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Personnel

Licks met with the Personnel Committee. She presented the Board with three potential changes (attached). Arnold felt that some of the wording in the Anti-Bullying policy was awkward. Suggested a wording change. The potential policy was brought to the Director by a staff member. Are we laying out specific repercussions? "If bullying is found, discipline will follow..."

Dolyk stated he feels that "bullying" is too vague and could cause a lot of potential issues. Folley stated that in order to include the "bullying" policy in the handbook, we may have to have a state-level course to train people in what is and is not bullying. Arnold stated that we need to flesh it out a little more, as it feels vague. Arnold asked if this was also in the public policy. Licks stated that at this time we have a Patron Code of Conduct policy. This potential policy is specifically for staff-on-staff interaction. Warden likes the idea of having a workshop during a staff in-service.

Licks also presented Tuition Reimbursement. We have had trouble recruiting degreed librarians. Warden asked if this would have to be in the contract? We would likely have to have an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). Arnold

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stated that this has come up in the past and the Board added the Continuing Education Stipend. Arnold does not feel that we can offer tuition reimbursement to the entire staff.

Discussed worries that someone can just quit and not give us our money back. Arnold feels it would be more of an incentive if we gave people a salary bump. Arnold does not feel that it would encourage people to stay or come work here. Concerns were expressed that people will just leave without paying the library back.

Springer asked if we made it mandatory that the employee is not reimbursed until the retention period has passed. Arnold does not feel this will solve our retention problems. Dolyk suggested a proportion monthly after the year. The Union has a tuition reimbursement program for an Associate degree. Warden feels that the suggested changes of proportioning the reimbursements are worth considering. Warden also likes the salary increase alternatively. Discussed different concerns regarding raises and retention.

Arnold would like us to consider, instead, an incentive of a salary increase. Warden stated that the Personnel Committee should meet again and discuss Tuition Reimbursement at a later date.

The final item considering for changing the Dress Code. It is currently too gendered. The Personnel Committee suggests removing the gender specifics. Arnold asked about a conflict between one paragraph using “collared shirts” and another stating they can wear a t-shirt. No other concerns were expressed regarding the dress code.

The Personnel Committee will meet again on October 26, 2023.

Foundation

Dolyk stated the Foundation had a great meeting with the Director and the superintendent of Vermilion Schools. Dr. Hile has done work with another community previously to address the issue of declining Early Literacy. Achieved close to 90% of their goal in six years. The Foundation is very interested in assisting the library and the schools working together to increase early literacy. The biggest concern is how to reach the families who do not read to their children. Reaching that population. Focusing on Preschool, 1st grade, and 2nd grade.

The fundraiser went very well. The Foundation sold all 75 tickets at \$200 per ticket. They sold out and received donations on top of that. The net was approximately \$16,000.00

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Arnold stated that she recently read a study that while children may be on the right pace, they aren't able to connect the words they are reading to the greater concept. Discussed baby boxes, but Warden stated we had them previously, and they became a privacy issue.

Reese stated that there were wonderful articles in the Morning Journal and the Vermilion Photojournal about the fundraiser.

Friends

Reese presented information regarding the Friends meeting (attached).

Sandra has asked the Mayor to present the Friends with a proclamation during Nation Library Friends Week the week on October 16. Warden stated the Friends have always been so generous. This proclamation is well deserved.

Topics for Discussion:

Expiration of trustee appointment, December 31, 2023

Warden stated that Sarah Ross's Trustee term was expiring on December 31, 2023.

Warden contacted Ross and confirmed that she wishes to continue on the Ritter Public Library Board of Trustees. A letter will be sent to the Vermilion School District Board of Education requesting they approve her re-appointment.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Warden moved the adoption of the following resolution:

Be it resolved by the Board of Library Trustees of the Ritter Public Library to increase appropriation #1000-230-750-0000 Furniture & Equipment by \$5,000 from the General Fund to cover the cost to furnish the Director's office.

*Reese seconded the resolution and the roll called upon its adoption. The vote resulted as follows: Arnold – Aye; Bulan – Aye; Coolidge – Aye; Dolyk – Aye; Reese – Aye; Warden - Aye
Ross – Absent.*

Warden stated that Ross would like to meet regarding Strategic Planning either this Thursday morning or Friday afternoon. The Strategic Planning committee will meet on Friday, October 13 at 2:30pm.

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Move to Adjourn: Arnold moved to adjourn, and Reese seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:21PM.

The meeting was adjourned until Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 7:00 PM at the Ritter Public Library.

Caroline Springer
Fiscal Officer

Marie Warden
President – Board of Trustees