

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 20, 2024 GERING PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

Present:

Board Members: Jeff Kelley, Suzanne Myers, Mary Robinson, Kirstee Moore Schutte,

Library Director: Christie Clarke

City Council Liaison: Rebecca Shields

Absent:

Board Member: Kim Walker

Library Foundation Liaison: Jay Skiles

Kelley called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm and asked if there were any additions or changes to the agenda.

Director Clarke asked to add to the agenda under New Business an update to the Public Services Policy and a review of the Proposed Fiscal Budget for 2024-2025.

Attention was called to the posting of The Open Meetings Act - NEB.REV.STAT. CHAPTER 84, ARTICLE 14.

As required by State Law, public bodies shall make available at least one current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room. Agenda items may be moved up or down on the agenda at the discretion of the Board President. As required by State Law, additions may not be made to this agenda less than 24 hours before the beginning of the meeting unless they are considered under this section of the agenda and the Library Board determines that the matter requires emergency action.

Board members reviewed the July 16, 2024 board meeting minutes. Kelley asked for a motion to approve as corrected. Schutte moved to approve the minutes and Myers seconded it. The vote was called. "Ayes": Kelley, Myers, Robinson, Schutte. "Nays": none. Abstaining: none. Absent: Walker. The vote passed.

The statistical and financial reports for July were reviewed. Kelley called for a motion to approve. Myers moved and Schutte seconded the motion. "Ayes": Kelly, Myers, Robinson, Schutte. "Nays": none. Abstaining: None. Absent: Walker. The vote passed.

Board members reviewed the July bills. Discussion was held about increased janitorial expenses which resulted as new cleaning company was hired. Kelley called for a motion to approve them. Myers moved and Schutte seconded to approve the bills. The vote was called. "Ayes": Kelley, Myers, Robinson, Schutte. "Nays": none. Abstaining: none. Absent: Walker. The vote passed.

Board members reported on the United for Libraries virtual 2024. Sessions were attended by Suzanne Myers and Jeff Kelley

1. Effective Succession Strategies for Library had important information about being prepared for future openings on the library board and for mentoring new members. Vacancies can be good. Community mapping was a resource that would be valuable. The practice for Gering appointments was reviewed by Director Clarke who asks the board and staff for recommendations, sends them to the mayor who vets the candidates. The mayor then takes it to city council who vote to appoint the new member/s.
2. Rising to the Challenge - Culture Wars addressed the importance of Trustees being aware of misinformation, have open communication, de-escalate exaggerated rhetoric, be proactive and choose expansion over restriction.
3. Valuing Your Library Beyond Cost Benefit Analysis identified four values of the library and suggested that trustees and staff identify measurable and qualitative benefits of each. Suzanne suggested that we schedule a time when some or all of us watch and/or discuss this together.
4. Tips for Trustees highlighted the importance of board training, nurturing Board/Director relationships, and being advocates for the library.
5. Advocacy: The importance of Leveraging Your Community discussed challenges and gave reasons patrons might want to ban books with specific suggestions for trustees and messages. Annual training for approaching challenges with "to do" plans were detailed.
6. Mini-sessions highlighted books and authors
7. The Key Note Speaker, Eric Klinenberg, discussed his new book dealing with the 2020 Covid pandemic and how society can address challenges in the future. He said that "Librarians are the essential workers for 2024". He previously wrote "Palaces for the People" which highlighted the importance of social infrastructure including libraries.

Director Clarke's Report

1. Library Page, Jada Whipple's last day was August 12. Fernando Gonzalez-Juarez is our new Page and he started on August 7. He was able to train a few days with Jada before she left. He is doing well in his new position.
2. Library Assistant, Logan Allen's last day was August 3. Janelle Belford is our new Library Assistant and her first day was yesterday, August 19.
3. For next fiscal year a new part-time Library Assistant-Public Services position is on the books. If the budget is passed at the end of September, we will move forward with hiring for this position to begin September 30th.
4. Also, in the Capital Improvement Fund for next fiscal year is \$100,000 to go towards building improvements. This will be either for a ramp project or an expansion/remodel of the current space project.
5. Library Assistant to Youth Services, Hayley Grams, will begin a new schedule in September. She will work Tuesday-Saturday with plans to implement a Saturday preschool Storytime.
6. Programming plans for September include regular Storytime which started back in August. New programs and changes to existing programs are as follows:
 - a. Lego Club will now be one Wednesday per month to open up spots for other programs.
 - b. Art Club will now be held one Wednesday per month for grades 3-8.

- c. Teen Anime to be held once in September with future plans based on attendance and reception of the program.
 - d. Teen Dungeons & Dragons will be held every other month beginning in September.
 - e. LEAP will return on September 23 as an 8-week evening program.
 - f. Saturday Preschool Storytime will start with one session in September with plans to move to two sessions per month thereafter.
7. Youth Services Librarian Kira Perez plans to move forward with seasonal programs for elementary, teen, and tween age groups on Wednesdays of each month.
 8. Public Services Librarian Sherry Preston has been very busy organizing the Amberley Snyder program for September. Ms. Snyder will be speaking on September 23rd at 1 pm at the Civic Center and at 7 pm at the Mitchell Fair Grounds. Both events are free and open to the public.
 9. The Friends will have a back-to-school fall book sale September 5-7.

The Gering Library Foundation Board:

The Foundation is supporting the Amberley Snyder program. The Foundation did vote to move forward for financially supporting improvement of current library site if council approves.

City Council Liaison: no report

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

The Public Service Policy was reviewed and changes included adding games which can now be checked out. The other change is that if a damaged item has not been paid for in full after three months it would be discarded but the charge will remain on account.

Myers moved and Schutte seconded the motion. "Ayes": Kelly, Myers, Robinson, Schutte.

"Nays": none. Abstaining: None. Absent: Walker. The vote passed.

Other policies will be addressed at future board meetings. In particular, Clarke will research and consult on making necessary changes to the current finance policy to make sure it is compliant and in harmony with city ordinance.

Budget

Board members reviewed the budget proposal for fiscal year 2024-2025 that Director Clarke submitted to the City Administrator, City Finance Director and to City Council.

Kelley asked for a motion to adjourn. Kelley moved and Robinson seconded the motion.

"Ayes": Kelly, Myers, Robinson, Schutte. "Nays": none. Abstaining: None. Absent: Walker. The vote passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:11

Suzanne Myers-Secretary