

**MAUD PRESTON PALENSKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2021**

**DRAFT**

**Call to order**

Board President Ren Baldwin (City of St. Joseph) called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

**Other board members present:** Vice President Liz Darato (St. Joseph Township); Secretary Rick Ast (City of St. Joseph); Melissa Clapper (St. Joseph Township); Patrice Rose (St. Joseph Township); and Mimi Elwell (St. Joseph Township), attending remotely by Zoom due to health reasons.

**Absent:** Treasurer Jim Kodis (City of St. Joseph); Kathy Buursma (City of St. Joseph).

**Also present:** Director Stephanie Masin; Assistant Director Paula Stakely; Administrative Assistant Sue Morgan; and Virginia Antonson, representing the Friends of the Library.

**Visitors:** None.

**Announcements:** None.

**Friends of the Library:** Antonson reported the Friends have taken in \$3,182 in book sales, as compared to \$3,260 in 2019. The Friends at their Oct. 19 meeting will decide when the next sale will be held, she said. The group is accepting used books again, and people are “brings them in,” she added. Kathy Ward is the sale chairman, according to Antonson.

The Friends “wish list” has been purchased, consisting of such supplies as book trucks, a button maker, a rack for tax forms, and a “tube dancer” to attract visitors to outside events, Antonson said. The “wish list” budget was \$3,254, she added.

**Minutes:** Clapper, supported by Darato, moved to approve the minutes, as corrected, for the July 27 board meeting. The minutes had misspelled Director Masin’s last name.

Voting in favor were Baldwin, Darato, Ast, Clapper, Rose, and Elwell. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Resignation:** Ast, supported by Rose, moved to accept Stephanie Mack’s resignation from the board. Mack has moved out of the City of St. Joseph and is no longer eligible for membership.

Voting in favor were Baldwin, Darato, Ast, Clapper, Rose, and Elwell. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Staffing:** Baldwin reported that a number of library employees have resigned recently, some due to issues arising out of the library’s policy on mask requirements during COVID-19 pandemic. He suggested the board pass a resolution of support for Masin’s decisions on masking. Darato said the support should be posted on the library’s web site.

Clapper, supported by Darato, moved to pass such a resolution. Rose said she “can’t put my name on that,” but declined to further explain her position.

Voting in favor of the resolution were Baldwin, Darato, Ast, Clapper, and Elwell. Rose voted no. The motion passed by a 5-1 vote.

**Bills:** Clapper, supported by Elwell, voted to pay bills totaling \$15,257.30 for the month of July, and bills totaling \$53,318.24 for the month of August.

Voting in favor of paying the bills were Baldwin, Darato, Ast, Clapper, Rose, and Elwell. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Treasurer's report:** Baldwin read a financial report that had been submitted by Kodis.

On investment earnings, Kodis reported that: the Endowment Fund as of July 31 totaled \$298.18, \$461,008.26 in bank deposits (\$460,710.08 at the year's start), for an annualized return of 0.777 percent; the Endowment Fund as of Aug. 31 had \$563.75, \$461,273.83 in bank deposits (\$460,710.08 at the year's start), for a 1.468 annualized return.

On the Berrien Community Foundation Fund growth since June 30, 2020, the BCF Endowment Fund #00577 had \$673.04 in growth with a beginning balance of \$1,912.62; 35.2 percent growth (gain is unrealized until funds are withdrawn), and \$446.52 of the balance being currently spendable; BCF Endowment Fund #00573 had \$48,811.17 in growth with a beginning balance of \$238,985.40, showing growth of 20.48 percent (gain is unrealized until the funds are withdrawn), and \$58,577.55 of the balance being currently spendable; BCF Library Growth & Use Fund #00609 had \$72,961.51 in growth with a beginning balance of \$800,000 including a \$1,000 addition gift, with 18.2 percent growth annualized (gain is unrealized until funds are withdrawn), and \$872,961.51 of the balance being spendable.

In the July 2021 and August 2021 Financial report, the Endowment Fund had revenues of \$563.75 as of Aug. 31, with a net gain of \$563.75 (numbers do not include BCF gains or losses); the Library Fund had revenues of \$205,929.47 as of Aug. 31 and expenditures of \$85,517.40, for a net gain of \$120,412.07 (the net gain includes \$1,363.60 in contributions).

Utilities year to date were at \$3,885.43 as compared to \$7,952.42 in 2020' and repair expenditures year to date were \$4,262.17 compared to \$1,642 in 2020.

Darato, supported by Elwell, moved to accept the Financial Report. Voting yes were Baldwin, Darato, Ast, Clapper, Rose, and Elwell. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Old business:** The gutter downspouts have yet to be buried, Masin said. The flags marking the locations were put in, only to be removed when the lawn was mowed, so that work has yet to be done, she said.

The board held a lengthy discussion on a review of the library's by-laws and the version forwarded to the board by the library's lawyer. "I don't think the attorney added much" to the existing by-laws, Baldwin said.

Masin suggested that the board hold a workshop meeting on the bylaws.

**Circulation:** Masin explained how the pandemic "forced us to adjust" the circulation policy. However, the changes, including extending the borrowing period from two to three weeks, were popular with library patrons, she added. Additionally, statistics showed that the length of time someone had to wait on hold for an item dropped over the past year while an extended, three week checkout period, had been in place.

Clapper, supported by Darato, moved to accept the new circulation policy. Voting in favor were Baldwin, Ast, Darato, Clapper, Rose, and Elwell. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Annual appeal:** Masin said the annual appeal dropped off last year, but added she would like to try it again this October. She asked whether board wanted to keep, change, or drop the appeal.

“Let’s do it another year,” Darato said. “It may bounce back.” “Any amount we get in is better than nothing,” Clapper said.

Baldwin suggested a graphic appeal rather than a written appeal.

According to Masin’s report, the annual appeal brought in \$11,065 in 2018, \$15,970 in 2019, and \$10,350 in 2020.

**Scholarship:** Masin said she would like to establish a scholarship for library employees, especially for pages. It would be “a nice little bonus” and might “make the job a little more attractive,” she said.

Masin added the scholarship “should be self-sustaining.” Baldwin said the consensus of the board was that the scholarship idea should be further looked into.

**Director’s report:** Masin described the changes necessary for the landscaping project with Crowder Landscaping. She said the company apologized for misunderstandings thus far, and added, “I’m thrilled with the way the gardens look. He still wants to work with us.”

Darato, supported by Elwell, moved to approve \$3,202 for Crowder Landscaping. Voting to approve the motion were Baldwin, Elwell, Rose, Darato, Clapper, and Ast. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Adjournment:** Ast, supported by Darato, moved to adjourn the meeting. Voting in favor were Ast, Darato, Baldwin, Clapper, Rose, and Elwell. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Baldwin adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Ast  
Secretary