

DRAFT
MAUD PRESTON PALENSKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY
Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, April 27, 2021

Call to order: President Ren Baldwin called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Other board members present: Vice President Liz Darato (Lakewood Ranch, Fla., representing St. Joseph); Treasurer Jim Kodis (City of St. Joseph); Melissa Clapper (St. Joseph Township); Rick Ast (City of St. Joseph); Bill Engeln (City of St. Joseph); Mimi Elwell (St. Joseph Township). Secretary Stepanie Mack (City of St. Joseph) and Patrice Rose (St. Joseph Township) were not present when the meeting was called to order, so Baldwin asked Ast to take the minutes. Mack and Rose appeared shortly afterwards.

Also present: Stephanie Maisin, library director; Sue Morgan, administrative assistant.

Visitors: Claire Gillespie, library employee; Ross Fisher, City Plumbing.

Announcements: None,

Public Comments: Claire Gillespie said she was attending “for observation.” Baldwin noted that this was the last meeting for Engeln, who had announced his resignation for the board. “We are sorry to see you go,” said Baldwin, adding that Engeln has been on the board for seven years. “I’m very proud of what the board has accomplished,” Engeln said.

Approval of the minutes: Kodis moved that the minutes of the March 31, 2021, meeting be approved, and Elwell seconded the motion. Voting in favor were Darato, Kodis, Engeln, Clapper, Ast, Elwell, and Baldwin. Mack and Rose had not yet arrived at the meeting.

New equipment maintenance: Ross Fisher of City Plumbing presented three three-year proposals for an Energy Service Agreement for the new equipment recently installed at the library. He said the “Best” program would cost \$13,700 a year, the “Better” program would cost \$8,600 a year, and the “Good” program would cost \$5,500 a year. The “Best” program includes computer-scheduled regular preventive maintenance and cleaning that means City Plumbing “is taking on the risk of ownership from you folks,” Fisher added.

“We should approve this (“Best”) program now, for what it will do for us,” Kodis said. “I think it is fiscally irresponsible if we don’t.” Baldwin said, “In my eyes, even at the cost of this program, we’re going to be saving money.”

Kodis moved to accept the “Best” program, and Ast seconded. Voting in favor were Kodis, Ast, Darato, Clapper, Elwell, Baldwin, Engeln, Mack, and Rose.

At the board’s request, Fisher agreed to ask whether the three-year contract could be extended to five years.

Approval of bills: Kodis moved to pay bills totaling \$56,822.16. Clapper seconded the motion. Voting in favor were Kodis, Engeln, Darato, Clapper, Elwell, Baldwin, Mack, Rose, and Ast.

Financial report: “Overall, we’re looking pretty good” on finances, Kodis said. Elwell noted that it’s difficult to make any meaningful comparisons between this year and last year, as “We were closed so much” this year due to Coronavirus restrictions.

Kodis, supported by Clapper, moved to approve the monthly financial report. Voting in favor were Kodis, Engeln, Darato, Clapper, Elwell, Baldwin, Mack, Rose, and Ast.

Old business: Masin said she is still working on the upcoming proposed budget. The library has been spending less than budgeted “because we have been very frugal and been closed part of the time, which is good, because we need that (money) for next year’s expenses,” she said.

Darato moved to accept Masin’s budget report, and Elwell seconded. Voting in favor were Darato, Kodis, Engeln, Clapper, Elwell, Baldwin, Mack, Rose, and Ast.

Donor Recognition Subcommittee update: Regarding the proposed donor recognition wall, Rose said she has been talking with Center of the World and Priebe Creative Woodworking. She said she so far prefers working with Priebe, but will continue to get more details on the project.

Garden maintenance project: Kodis, supported by Mack, moved to hire Crowder Landscaping and Lawn Care for outdoor maintenance at a cost of \$3,823. Voting in favor were Darato, Kodis, Engeln, Clapper, Elwell, Baldwin, Mack, Rose, and Ast.

Masin said she “like his (Crowder’s) approach” and appreciated his feelings that he “wanted the library to look as good as possible.” “There are some things he reported that we need to address,” Baldwin said. “It might help us down the line.”

Library hours: Masin reported that Saturday visitations are increasing as the weather improves, but some are just coming in to use the restrooms. There was one recent incident of a patron trying to claim a medical mask exemption, and claiming the Coronavirus pandemic is a hoax, she said. Meanwhile, staff is working from home as much as possible, and staff in the building is kept busy sanitizing surfaces. “We just need to get staffing in place” before open hours are increased, she added.

Darato moved to keep current hours in place, and Kodis supported the motion. Voting in favor were Darato, Kodis, Engeln, Clapper, Elwell, Baldwin, Mack, Rose, and Ast.

Library employee Gillespie said staff is grateful for the board’s efforts on their behalves. “It’s wonderful to have a board that supports us,” she said.

Director’s report: Masin said outdoor programs will be active this summer with Story Time events and Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra concerts. A list of upcoming programs will be included in next months’ board packet, she said.

President’s comments: None.

Board comments: None.

Adjournment: Kodis, supported by Ast, moved at 8:05 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Voting in favor were Darato, Kodis, Engeln, Clapper, Elwell, Baldwin, Mack, Rose, and Ast.

Next meeting: 6 p.m. Tuesday, May 25, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

William Ast

Acting secretary