

MAUD PRESTON PALENSKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, Nov. 22, 2022
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 Melissa Clapper (St. Joseph Township); Secretary William Ast (City of St. Joseph); Patrice Rose (St. Joseph Township); Mimi Elwell (St. Joseph Township); Barbara Thompson (City of St. Joseph); Betty Mundy (St. Joseph Township); and Kathy Buursma (City of St. Joseph).

Also present: Acting Director Paula Stakley; Curtis Osmun, library assistant for computer services; Jesse Crosby, library assistant for technical services; and Virginia Antonson of the Friends of the Library. No members of the public attended, either in person or remotely.

Friends of the Library: Antonson reported that the Friends of the Library's November Used Book Sale was "very successful," despite the "horrible weather."

The sale, which included biographies and books on history, Christmas, and cooking, took in \$1,450.55, Antonson said. That included \$81 in donations and the sale of three library book bags, she said, adding that the stock of books was pretty well emptied out" by the end of the sale.

The Friends next meet on Dec. 10, Antonson said. That meeting will include the election of officers and planning for the next book sale, she said.

Public comment: Library employee Crosby submitted a written copy of ideas and suggestions for library operations. He said he wished to "open discussion between the board and staff" about those operations.

"The timing is a little awkward," Baldwin told Crosby, as the board is in the process of hiring a new director and isn't in a position to discuss new ideas at this time. However, he added he was grateful for the ideas, and Clapper also thanked him and said Crosby's paper "is worth considering."

For example, Crosby said he could not find any instances of the library applying for federal grants, and that the new director "should have knowledge of grant writing."

"Everything here is worth digging into," Baldwin said.

Approval of minutes: Clapper, supported by Thompson, moved to approve, with corrections, the minutes of the Oct. 25 board meeting. Clapper noted she had said at that meeting that the Lincoln Township Public Library was in the process of hiring a new director, but the new director had already been hired by that time.

The board voted unanimously to approve the corrected minutes.

Approval of special meeting minutes: Elwell moved to approve the minutes of the Nov. 9 special board meeting, and Buursma supported the motion. The board voted unanimously to approve the minutes. Ast was absent from that meeting and did not vote.

Bills: Clapper, supported by Mundy, moved to pay the library's bills in the amount of \$12,556.61. Clapper and Buursma had some questions about specific bills, and Stakley said she would find the answers to those questions.

The board voted unanimously to pay the library's bills.

Financial report: Clapper, supported by Mundy, moved to accept the library's monthly financial report.

"In most cases, we are tracking appropriately," Baldwin said.

Baldwin said the report did not include a comparative balance sheet. Stakley said she had the impression that was one sheet the board "didn't want anymore."

The board in a unanimous vote approved the financial report.

LED sign: Stakley told the board that Osmun "worked very diligently to get (the LED sign) reconfigured." The sign is "ready to go" as soon as electricians install the new part, which will be after Thanksgiving, she continued.

Search Committee: Clapper said Mortimore Consulting LLC has accepted the position of consultant for the board's search for a new director. The job position has been posted, she told the board, adding that Mortimore of Mortimore Consulting will submit a list of his top candidates to the committee.

The board may be able to interview the top candidate at its January meeting, Clapper said. Mortimore will conduct the interview itself, leaving the board better able to make a decision, she said.

Baldwin said he assumes the library will be able to pay Mortimore's fees "out of our savings." He said Stakley will "investigate with the city how we do that," and the board informally agreed with that.

"This is not an easy task," Baldwin concluded.

Rules of conduct: Stakley said political groups wishing to use the library have been "moved over to the grandfather clock" area. That way the group is not in front of the entrance, but can still be easily seen, she added.

Baldwin said such groups cannot leave that area to approach library patrons, and may only interact with patrons "when the patron approaches them."

Clapper said it would be useful to have a policy stating how many minor violations it would take before the group is told to leave the building.

Stakley said the library used such levels for violations of the computer use policy.

Stakley said the most recent time that a patron was banned, staff had decided to ban the patron for a week. The patron's response was "to destroy things," and so the patron was "banned immediately." It would be useful, however, to "have middle ground," she added.

"There probably won't be problems (with rules of conduct) until the next election," Baldwin said. He added that the board can "deal with it next month."

Director job description: Clapper moved to accept the board's job description for the library director, and Thompson supported the motion.

Elwell asked whether there had been "any feedback from staff." Clapper said the job description "all we and the staff said." If anything needs to be changed, "We can always fix it," she added.

The board voted unanimously to approve the job description."

Purchasing policy: Buursma wanted to know whether employees responsible for collections go through any training.

"Right now it's a little hairy," Stakley said. "I don't feel there has been extended training at all. We really need that now."

"It wouldn't be a bad idea if everyone knows how it's done," Clapper said.

Baldwin said the board “will look at this again” at its next meeting.

Clapper said she was concerned about patrons who may want certain books removed, and referred to the recent incident when some parents wanted some books removed from the St. Joseph High School library. One means might be the formation of a committee, which would include staff, she said.

“I don’t want to put more work on anyone,” Clapper said. “I do know St. Joseph High School is too close.”

“It just seems to me that we need a more formal policy,” Buursma said.

Baldwin decided to “hold this over until the next meeting.” Stakley said she will check with other libraries on how they handle such situations.

Director’s report: Stakley said there have been a number of changes at the library, but added “most of the big changes are behind the scenes.” The solar display terminal is “up and working,” she added.

Stakley said there is “another leak,” this time in the Local History Room. Baldwin said he thinks the leak “is coming from above,” but noted that the leak is not near the solar display terminal.

Elwell asked whether any meetings have been scheduled for December (when the board does not normally meet). Clapper said “that’s to be determined.”

Adjournment: Ast, supported by Elwell, moved to adjourn the meeting. The board voted unanimously to approve the motion, and Baldwin declared the meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

William F. Ast III
Board Secretary

Next regular meeting: 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24.