

Minutes LaGrange County Library Board of Trustees Public Meeting July 20, 2023

Board members present: Jerry White, Maranda Randol, Rita Lehner, Sam Plew, Martin Franke

Board members absent: Jody Blake, Michelle Chrisman

Others Present: Richard Kuster, Library Director; Anna Mendoza, Asst. Library Director

Board President Sam Plew convened the meeting at 5:34 pm.

Sam invited comment regarding the minutes of the previous meeting. There were none offered. **Rita moved acceptance of the minutes as presented; Maranda seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted without further comment by unanimous voice vote of the Board.**

Financials:

Richard presented the treasurer's report with the following comments:

- Trust Indiana investment, at around \$800,000, is earning around 5% interest. This varies from day to day but is consistent at that general rate of return.
- The bond payment on the building, which was due in July, was paid ahead of time in June. The next bond payment is due January 15, 2024.
- Reports and Claims: Anna Mendoza reported in June the Library issued checks # 29491-29537 plus electronic transfers in the total amount of \$400,090.36, including the bond payment already mentioned. There was brief discussion about individual charges by the Board. Martin requested that the Visa bill be broken down into line items so that board members would know where credit card charges were being allocated. Anna mentioned that this was already being done to enter claims, and that she would do so on future board reports. With no other discussion, **Maranda moved to accept the claims as presented, seconded by Rita, motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Board.**

Director's Report

- Richard explained the budget process for newer board members; the budget takes about ½ of the year to develop for the subsequent one. The tax rate is not expected to change much for this coming year. Richard requested permission to advertise the budget at the maximum authorized rate (before a review by County Council would be initiated). **Jerry moved to authorize this action; Rita seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote of the Board with no further discussion.**
- Richard presented a plan from developer KRM for the expansion of the Shishewana Branch to the west of the current building. Jerry asked about a budget for the project. Richard responded by reporting that no specific budget for the project has been developed, but the library system currently has a balance of around \$224,000 in the Rainy Day Fund available for such a purpose. In reviewing the KRM plan, Jerry objected to the late participation in the process by the Board. Richard responded by saying that the options before the Board were to 1) Accept the plan as presented 2) entertain other proposals from other architectural firms. Jerry pointed out that the 600 square foot addition proposed contract does not include the cost of the final drawing. He would like to include this cost in the quote. **Martin moved to table the discussion until next month (August meeting) when hopefully some of these questions can be answered. Rita seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote of the Board.**
- Richard presented a draft employee handbook, back from evaluation from Eberhardt and Weimer. Richard and Anna have evaluated the final draft and made no substantial changes. Jerry asked why traditional vacation was left in place rather than replacing this with PTO (paid time off). Richard responded by pointing out that the vacation time policy had been left mostly as it was before, with the elimination of sick leave, which was replaced with personal time off. Accumulated sick leave to this point for long time employees was left intact. Sam asked that copies of this document be sent to Jody and Michelle, the two absent board members, before the next meeting. **No action was taken in this regard at this time.**
- Property Insurance: Richard mentioned that it is time to reconsider our property insurance coverage. The options open to the Board currently are to solicit new bids or stay with the current coverage, which is being provided by Farmer's Mutual. Farmer's Mutual has a plan very friendly to the needs of library organizations such as ours and has saved the LaGrange County Library a lot of money over the last several years. **Rita moved to continue coverage with Farmer's Mutual at this time, seconded by Martin, and agreed to by unanimous voice vote of the Board.** Richard indicated that he will be prepared to review the coverage that we have currently in detail at the August Board meeting.
- The installation of the electronic sign for the promotion of library programming at the northeast corner near the intersection of Spring and High Streets was discussed. The sign will be installed in close proximity to a sugar maple

tree purchased by the Friends of the Library in 2011. It is hoped that the installation of the sign and the accompanying electrical connection will not harm the tree's root structure. **No Board action was taken at this time on this issue.**

- Collection report: 143,033 items currently in the collection. Circulation is down compared to the last several months, which is normal for mid-summer when no local schools are in session and the Bookmobile is not distributing tubs. **No Board action taken on this issue at this time.**
- Richard mentioned several needed renovations required at the Topeka Branch Library. Since this board meeting was taking place at that location, the Board agreed to look at the situation after the meeting is adjourned. A brief discussion took place regarding these needs, chief of which was replacement of the cork flooring, which has shrunk and compressed since installation, and some arrangement made in the Community Room for storage of tables, chairs and equipment and accommodation for a staff break room for eating meals and taking breaks. Sam asked if this was to be prioritized before or after the addition is constructed at Shiphewana; Richard responded that the Topeka renovations are an immediate need.

There were no Committee Reports brought forward to the Board at this meeting.

Correspondence to the Board: Anna reported on PLAC sales: no sales in the immediate last quarter.

Old Business: A "cut and paste" mistake was identified in the minutes to the June meeting, previously adopted at this Board meeting. It contained some inaccurate information for the Board meeting in June (pertaining as it did to the Board meeting in May) and it was agreed to strike that portion of the minutes from the June meeting.

New Business: Sam presented an idea to link the planting of sunflowers on the vacant lot of the former Farmer's State Bank/W.R. Thomas 5¢ & 10¢ Store to the replacement of lost/stolen library cards. The idea was accepted by general acclimation by all other Board members. This will not only help with library public relations, take care of a library and personal issue for patrons, but will help beautify the main street area of LaGrange.

Sam entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jerry, in the absence of Jody, so moved, seconded by Maranda and adopted unanimously by voice vote of the Board. The Board adjourned from the Community Room and went next door to the library branch itself to look at the needed renovations.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martin A. Franke

Martin A. Franke, LaGrange County Library Board Secretary
