



Shorewood Library Board of Trustees September 15, 2015 – Approved Minutes

Trustees Present: Mariann Maris, Maggie Marks, Jean Gurney, Patrick Linnane, Alex Handelsman, Alexandra Dimitroff, Bryan Davis

Others Present: Library Clerk Nathan Brain (during Fine Forgiveness Week discussion), Librarian Heide Piehler (During Intern and Boys & Girls Club discussions), Assistant Director Emily Passey; Administrative Assistant Angela Andre

Call to Order: At 4:34 p.m. the meeting of the Shorewood Library Board of Trustees was called to order by Board President Maris.

Statement of Public Notice: Ms. Andre stated that the meeting had been posted and noticed according to law.

The Board welcomed newly appointed Trustee Alexandra (Alex) Dimitroff and Shorewood School District Superintendent Dr. Bryan Davis.

CONSENT AGENDA: Ms. Marks motioned for approval of the entire consent agenda with the edit to the minutes, seconded by Ms. Gurney and approved unanimously after a vote.

Friends of the Shorewood Library Report
Nothing to report at this time – the Friends have not met during the summer.

Fine Forgiveness Program report

First, Ms. Passey summarized the week in numbers:

- \$3,528.17 in fines were waived - This is more than is normally waived in one full year.
- During the same week last year, Shorewood waived \$52 in fines
- Shorewood collected \$701 in fines for the week. This is not an increase from \$698 in 2014.

Clerk Nathan Brain joined the meeting to give an account of what the clerks witnessed during the week.

- One patron was forgiven \$90 worth of fines. Because of that, they gave \$10 to the “Pay it Forward” fund which was used to help cover fines from other libraries which we were not able to waive.
- One of our frequently library users, a middle schooler, had been unable to use her card for two or three years because of fines accumulated. They were waived and she may once again use her card.
- After having \$42 worth of overdue fines waived, one patron exclaimed, “I never win anything!”

- A Brown Deer patron was fined for overdue Shorewood items and upset that she was not able to use her library card. She was extremely relieved and grateful after hearing that her fines would be forgiven.
- Many patrons asked if other libraries would be holding a similar event.

Ms. Passey noted that it was a ‘week off from patron complaints’ and seemed to generate excitement about the library. She said there was a great response to the information / outreach tables. One day saw 40 people stopped at the table, another day 20. On the Friend’s appointed day at the table, they received a donation of \$100 as well as many new memberships. Ms. Passey also recounted the reaction of one very grateful patron when the Mango language learning database was demonstrated.

Assistant Director Passey offered some recommendations based on what she and staff observed during the week:

1. Make it a one day event rather than the entire week. Every day of the fine forgiveness week turned out to be very busy and a lot of extra work for the staff.
2. The Board might consider changing the current policy regulations regarding the waiving of fines and fees. Fines can be laborious for staff and anger-inducing for patrons who often take out their frustrations library employees. The Board may want to review how much could be reasonably waived on a regular basis. Ms. Passy will draft a procedure to present to the Board. She also suggested implementing a form that patrons could use to request fine forgiveness.
3. The library should work towards taking credit cards for payment at the front desk. There are many people who wish to pay with a card and we would likely get a lot more payments if this were possible. Emily suggested using the Hales Corner model as a starting point.

On behalf of the Board, President Maris commended Emily and the library staff and said that the Fine Forgiveness week was well organized and created a fun and welcoming atmosphere. It built good will for the library.

Consideration of Hiring a Youth Services Intern

Youth Services Librarian Heide Piehler joined the meeting to elaborate on the need for extra staffing to help with the children’s area. She collected information that illustrates that Shorewood’s children’s area is not well-staffed compared to other libraries. At the same time, Shorewood is doing much more in terms of programming, website posting, and the Early Learning Center, and much more outreach than ever before. Ms. Piehler explained that a lot of tasks are necessary but lower level (cutting things out, preparing for programs, etc.) Right now she does those tasks herself or clerks and shelvers help out when they have time. However, because it is by no means their priority to do such tasks, this is not a reliable plan to get things done.

Ms. Piehler believes the most cost efficient solution would be to add an intern or staff aide dedicated to youth services for clerical and lower level tasks.

Ms. Gurney asked about the difference between an aide and an intern. According to Ms. Piehler and Ms. Passey, an intern would likely be a current student in the field of Library Science who is seeking practical experience in a library setting. According to other libraries who hire interns, however, it has been difficult to get these positions filled. In contrast, a library aide might be someone retired from a compatible field or someone who wants limited hours - 10 to 15 a week.

Ms. Piehler suggested that their pay would be somewhere between that of the current pay for shelvers and clerks. Ms. Dimitroff noted that it may be helpful to advertise an internship at UWM-SOIS as a paid position for work experience.

Ms. Maris suggested approving at least one of the proposed positions for ten hours a week through December 31 and then revisiting the topic at the beginning of 2016. Mr. Handelsman thought it may be difficult to hire someone for a three month period, but Ms. Passey argued that students are usually flexible.

Mr. Linnane wondered if there had to be a relationship with an educational institution to have an intern but Ms. Passey explained that the internship would be paid but not result in any direct education credit. Ms. Maris wondered if it would be a more flexible option to post the position as an aide. Ms. Piehler noted the immediate need for an aide but added that ideally they would like someone in a longer term position who could cover the information desk occasionally.

Motion to allow staff to post an aide position for 10 hours a week with hourly pay to be determined made by Ms. Gurney, seconded by Ms. Marks and passed unanimously after a vote.

This item will be revisited again – perhaps with the idea of adding a summer internship.

Consideration of support for Boys & Girls Club in Shorewood

Ms. Piehler was informed that the Boys & Girls Club is trying to become more established in the suburbs. The organization is applying for a grant to that end. They would like to create a presence in Shorewood and Librarians Piehler and Quintero were asked by Boys & Girls Club representative to submit a letter as a supporting document for their grant application. This letter is now being presented to the Trustees today for their input or approval. It is due to be submitted on September 18 (two days from today).

Superintendent Davis said that the Club has approached the school district with a similar request. They are asking for more details from Mr. Eric Ashley and are holding off on issuing a statement until they hear back from him. Mr. Linnane and Ms. Gurney added that caution is well advised. Mr. Davis reiterated that since they don't have any information about what plans

the Boys & Girls Club would have for Shorewood, perhaps they should ask Mr. Ashley to come in and do a presentation.

Ms. Passey noted that the library staff may see more acutely the need for organized activities in the community and that's what prompted staff to support the idea. Mr. Davis suggests sending a letter and asking the representative to come in and outline their plans. Ms. Gurney emphasized the importance of finding out the details about this representative, Mr. Ashley, and his role in the organization. Ms. Passey noted that the library is not obligated to send the letter if the Board is against it.

Mr. Linnane argued that to be a serious letter of support, it should clearly demonstrate an infrastructure of support and outline of a plan. The letter staff has drafted is a letter of interest but not support. He suggested that they not send a letter at this time particularly with the submission deadline near, and perhaps examine the option during the next funding cycle.

The letter will not be sent but Mr. Ashley will be invited to make a presentation and perhaps brainstorm ideas with the library and school staff. Ms. Piehler will ask for contact information and advise him to organize a meeting with various village departments.

The trustees thanked Ms. Piehler and Ms. Quintero for taking their efforts in drafting the letter.

Revision to Meeting Room Use Policy

The Village Center meeting rooms are the shared responsibility of the Library and Senior Resource Center. The Senior Center works to keep the rooms in good condition and have devised a room set-up plan for optimal use which has been in use for many years. At the time of reservation, groups using the room are asked to accept the conditions which include returning the room to its original state. Recently, some groups have been leaving the rooms in unacceptable condition. When contacted, some have said that they found the room in the condition they left it.

Ms. Passey explained that the hope in revising the policy is to clarify the way the room needs to be set up and actions to take if a group finds the room they are about to use in a state of disarray.

Mr. Linnane asked if a deposit is required to reserve a room and Ms. Passey told him there is not and that any organization must leave the room open to the public. Mr. Handelsman asked if there was language in the agreement about consequences from failure to follow the guidelines. Ms. Passey said that the policy does state that and decisions about further use of the room is at the discretion of the Director. Answering a question posed by Mr. Linnane, Ms. Passey confirmed that there is no action in the online reservation system that confirms that a person has agreed to the terms described in the policy except that they move forward to request the space. Therefore Mr. Linnane concluded that the policy is not helpful in preventing groups from disobeying the policy but is helpful to staff when addressing violations of the guidelines.

Ms. Dimitroff recommended changing the policy language to remove the phrase "...be most conducive..." because there is a particular room set up desired and that should be referenced. Ms. Maris suggests more powerful language in the policy up front to state that the group reserving the room is responsible for set up and for restoring the room as they found it.

The revisions will be discussed at the October meeting.

Discussion of communication between staff and Library Board

As a discussion item only, Ms. Maris wanted to address how to keep the lines of communication open with all library staff while recognizing that it is the Library Director who works directly with the Board.

Although a suggestion was made that a staff member attend Board meetings on a regular basis, Mr. Handelsman was uncomfortable with the idea of forced participation. If staff feels that they are not apprised of what is going on in Board meetings then that needs to be addressed by the Board.

President Maris noted that Ms. Passey has been briefing the staff after each Board meeting.

When Ms. Dimitroff inquired about the origins of this discussion, Ms. Passey explained that some library employees have expressed feeling disconnected from the library board. Ms. Passey stated that in her opinion as one of the staff members, the problem does not lie in the lack of communication between Trustees and staff but with the previous lack of communication back and forth from Director to Board and from Director to staff. The established chain of communication is staff to Director and, if the suggestion was deemed suitable, Director to Board.

Ms. Gurney noted that the concern about limited communication was highlighted recently when staff faced a situation in which they did not feel they could communicate important information to the Board.

Library Director Search

Ms. Marks has agreed to chair the Search and Screen Committee. Ms. Dimitroff and Superintendent Davis will also be invited to serve on the committee. Ms. Passey is working with senior staff to create the framework for a new job description. Based on her time and experiences as Interim Director for Shorewood Library, she recommends that the committee only consider those applicants with at least five years of experience as a library director.

Action items for future consideration

- Meeting room policy changes
- Director Job description

Adjournment: Mr. Linnane motioned with a second by Ms. Gurney, and by unanimous vote, moved to Adjourn at 6:15 p.m.

Recorded by Angela Andre, Administrative Assistant and submitted by Emily Passey, Acting Library Director.