



SHOREWOOD LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
May 10, 2023 Approved Minutes

Trustees Present: Donna Whittle, Alex Dimitroff, Ling Meng, Jon Smucker, and Leslie Cooley

Attending virtually via Zoom: Library Director Jen Gerber and Trustee Elvira Craig de Silva

Others Present: Virtual Engagement Librarian Lizzie Hjelle and Library Office Manager/ Confidential Secretary Angela Andre

Not Present: Interim Superintendent JoAnn Sternke

1. **Call to order:** at 5:20 pm, the meeting of the Shorewood Public Library Board of Trustees was called to order by Board President Whittle.

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

3. **No Citizens to be heard on items not on the agenda**

4. **Consent Agenda:**

MOTION: Trustee Meng motioned for approval of the entire consent agenda. Trustee Cooley seconded. All voted in favor; motion carried.

Trustee Whittle said she was glad the numbers are climbing as seen in the statistics report.

5. **No items pulled from the consent agenda**

6. **No additional topics not on the agenda**

7. **Informational: E-Resources Presentation**

Virtual Engagement Librarian Lizzie Hjelle presented her quarterly digital resource report. She highlighted some of the information:

- Shorewood library has added two new e-resources. **Morningstar Investment Research Center** is a powerful investment tool that is free to all library card holders which can be accessed in the library or from home. It offers information about stocks, investments, retirement cost calculators, and portfolio analysis tools as well as classes and training. The second new resource is the **Wall Street Journal** online which is not available on Libby or PressReader.
- There has been an uptick in use of the language learning resources.
- Use of Ancestry library edition has seen a huge increase. This coincided with the launch of Shorewood Library's genealogy interest group where Ms. Hjelle gave a

presentation of how to use the resource and what you can find there. Ms. Hjelle shared that use of Ancestry usage was even higher in April and is still climbing.

- Another hugely popular resource among our patrons is the Kanopy streaming service. There were over 2,800 visits to Kanopy in Q1 and over 700 video plays which is up from Q4 of 2022. The report shows how patrons are accessing Kanopy. Many access via the app using their smart TV, but some also access it on their desktop computers. To date, 225 individual patron Kanopy accounts have been created and those numbers continue to climb.

Trustee Whittle inquired about the A-Z Database. Ms. Hjelle explained that it can be used to search for addresses and phone numbers, businesses and doctors in the area, income levels per zip code, as well as homeowner and renter lists. There is also resume help available with this resource.

Trustee Whittle noted that some of these databases are difficult to find. Lizzie confirmed that this will be a consideration when redesigning the library's website.

Trustee Cooley asked about the difference is between the Mango and Transparent language learning resources. Ms. Hjelle explained that Mango may have a more user friendly interface but Transparent offers access to more languages, including indigenous languages. Transparent is a state provided resource but Shorewood Library has opted in to our subscription to Mango since it is preferred by patrons.

Ms. Hjelle also noted that *The Economist*, which is an extremely popular publication, is no longer found on Libby or PressReader but she is looking into other ways to access it digitally. She noticed its drop from Libby even before the state became aware. Lizzie worked hard to retain a print copy of *The Economist* at our current rate as it is a very popular resource. She will be keeping a close eye on the state's effort to get the Economist digitally accessible through PressReader.

Director Gerber also mentioned the price increase for the print copies of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. The library has subscriptions for print copies and they are in high demand on a daily basis. The cost increased significantly and although she was able to negotiate for a lower price this year, Jen is unsure they can continue to offer two copies in the coming years. Trustee Cooley suggested this may be a sponsorship opportunity.

8. Informational: Library Director's Report

- **New Village-Wide Phone System:** On May 17th, the Village offices and the Library will be updating the phone system and installing replacement digital phones. Bayside I.T. is doing the work and has scheduled training for all staff on May 15th and May 16th. We have been assured there will be no interruption to public services during this upgrade.
- **Q1 financial report:** We are at about 25% spending for the year which is exactly where we should be
- **Summer help:** So as not to rush into hiring for the full-time library position, Director Gerber is looking into options such as paid summer interns.

- **Record Players:** The wait for checking out the library's record player is over a year, so we have purchased two additional units for circulation.
- **Staff changes:** This past month saw two staff resignations. One 19 hour per week clerk resigned to accept a full-time position at the East Branch of Milwaukee Library. Teen Services Librarian, Lisa Quintero has resigned to pursue a new career in speech therapy.
- **Conversation with Staff:** In order to assess staffing needs going forward, Director Gerber met with staff to evaluate service trends and patron needs. Information requests are different than they used to be and are resulting in emotional fatigue among staff. They are servicing people who are unhoused, in need of jobs, food, shelter, and even medical resources. The length of transactions has gone from 1 - 4 minutes to 15 – 20 minutes long per person.
- **Staffing Hours:** Based on input from librarians and circulation staff, it is Director Gerber's recommendation to reallocate the hours of the two vacant positions where they might be needed more. This does not indicate a need for less circulation staff but rather acknowledges that clerk staffing levels have not been evaluated over the time that we have implemented the self-check outs and the pick-up lockers. Jen proposes that the 19-hour clerk position be changed to a 10-hour position and that the librarian position increase from 32 hours to 40 hours. The approved budget does accommodate these changes with is a slight overage of \$1,600 annually.
- **Introducing the idea of a new "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Librarian" to replace the Teen Librarian position:** Library staff was asked to consider Shorewood and national library trends as well as the as the various kind of reference questions are they are getting. She asked them to consider the creation of a position that would more proactively address those questions and needs. Noting statistics that show the declining participation in teen program and the reduction in teen collection circulation, Jen met with reference staff to talk about the idea of replacing the current Young Adult Services position with what she would label the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Librarian.

This position would focus on proactively meeting the needs of our more vulnerable patrons. Examples include the unemployed, under-employed, patrons with disabilities, the digital divide, the unhoused, mental health awareness, teen advocacy, neurodiversity, gender advocacy, and minorities, by forming partnerships within the community with groups such as Workforce Development, Street Angels, teen advocacy at the high school. So, Director Gerber see teens served under this position as well.

- No similar job description currently exists in the state, so this would be a new and innovative initiative, but there are examples of similar positions elsewhere. Jen has linked one example in her report. <https://www.oppl.org/news-events/jackson-hired-as-librarys-first-director-of-equity-and-anti-racism/>
- Director Gerber has reached out to Dr. Abby Phillips at the UWM SOIS to set up a meeting to discuss the idea of this position and to help craft a job description. Dr.

Phillips currently teaches the course on Public Libraries within the MLIS program and exhibits an emphasis on public libraries serving mental health, the homeless, and social justice.

Personnel Committee Discussion:

Trustee Dimitroff reported that the Personnel Committee has reviewed and discussed the possible changes to staffing. They liked the idea of using this opportunity to refocus the librarian position. Ms. Dimitroff stated that for whatever reason, a teen librarian doesn't seem to be needed, but she is sure that we need someone who could direct teens to mental health resources.

The committee also noted that this is the second clerk position that has been vacated due to the lack of a fixed schedule. Director Gerber expanded that the clerk who recently resigned has accepted a full-time position with Milwaukee Public Library. That person was prepared to work part time for Milwaukee and remain at Shorewood Library, but his Shorewood supervisor denied his request to have his hours adjusted to also accommodate his hours at MPL. Director Gerber used this example to illustrate that the way it stands, Shorewood's staffing methods make it difficult to hold a second job that would afford them enough to live on.

Trustee Whittle feels strongly that as equitable employers, we should treat our employees with respect by accommodating a fixed schedule if it's at all possible. When Trustee Cooley inquired as to why the scheduling was set up to be flexible, Director Gerber speculated that this was done to accommodate the changing schedules of employees who are students at UWM.

Returning to the proposed EDI services position, Trustee Whittle wanted to make sure that the person in that position is not overwhelmed by the scope of their advocacy duties. She also emphasized that the library should not undercut the possibility of redeveloping the Young Adult services Librarian in the future. Director Gerber stated that she is very open to that possibility. Further, she has no intention of eliminating young adult library services but rather. The new position would encompass the needs of teens and the librarian would still be very connected with the High School and Middle Schools. She asked for input from the Trustees regarding the proposed new position.

Trustee Cooley expressed disappointment that she won't be here to see this initiative carried through because it is a needed exploration and response to the types of inquiries and patrons coming into the library. She asked that the title of the position be reconsidered. She also emphasized that teens are our future. Even if their participation numbers are small, if we are here for them, they will eventually become adult patrons. Lastly, she wondered if the renovation plan would be impacted by these changes in focus. Director Gerber responded that she still sees it important to create a dedicated area for teens to let them know they are welcome here. She also noted that they would indeed consider EDI when going forward with the renovation.

The trustees expressed some concern about burnout in the proposed position. Director Gerber's hope is that the position would not be responsible for handling all the EDI related issues but would rather act proactively to provide resources for all staff to use in their programs and patron interactions. She emphasized that this would be key to highlight in the job description.

9. Informational: Bylaws Committee Report

Trustee Cooley reported that the group met and reviewed the first, second, and third drafts prepared by Director Gerber and they offered comments and suggestions. The full board has now been given the fourth draft.

At this point there is one suggested amendment to *Section 9: Public Comment*. Trustee Whittle was concerned that the publishing of a speaker's name and address would result in self-censorship of vulnerable populations. The trustees and Jen discussed a hybrid solution. For the purpose of accountability and confirmation of residency, the speaker would be asked to submit their full name and address to the Board but that would be kept confidential and only their first name would be recorded in the minutes.

Trustees Cooley and Whittle suggested this language: *Any person wishing to speak must fill out an identifying card including full name and address. They shall be given no more than 5 minutes to address the board.*

Trustee Whittle also suggested an amendment to Article 5 section 3 a. and 4 a. regarding assignment to committees based on related experience. She argued that this is self-evident and may be a constraint to the President when assigning members. Director Gerber suggested that the language could be changed to state that *"members shall be chosen ideally..."* Trustee Whittle accepted the amendment as it would offer more flexibility.

10. Action: Library Board Bylaws

MOTION: Trustee Cooley motioned for approval of the Revised Library Board Bylaws with the amendments described above. Trustee Meng seconded. All voted in favor; motion carried.

Trustee Whittle extended thanks to Jen, Jon, and Leslie for their work on this initiative.

11. Informational: Personnel Committee Report

Nothing to discuss

12. Informational: Nominating Committee Report

Trustee Smucker reported that next month's meeting will include the nomination and election of officers.

13. Informational: Friends of the Library Liaison and Library Director Friends Report

Trustee Dimitroff reported that the Friends approved a gift of \$500 in support of the Adult Summer Reading Program as well as up to \$5000 for a permanent of a story walk installment.

14. Informational: DPI Trustee Essentials: TE 11: Planning for the Library's Future

15. Communications

Nothing to report

16. Informational: Trustee Acknowledgement

On this, her last day of service as a Trustee on the Shorewood Library Board, Leslie Cooley was presented a Certificate of Appreciation for her six dedicated, highly productive, and extremely generous years of service.

17. Items for Future Consideration

None

18. Adjournment

Trustee Dimitroff motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:54 PM. Motion seconded by Trustee Smucker. All voted in favor and the motion passed.