



The Board of Trustees Minutes

Regular Meeting

Date: May 19, 2021

Attendees:	<i>Trustees</i> Jeffrey Armstrong Jennifer Darling Kate Maver Jason Nolde Will Perry Robert Plantz	<i>Staff</i> Andrew Mangels Jana Nassif CJ Lynce Pam Linger Karen Hunt	<i>Guests</i>
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The Board met in the Porter Room of Westlake Porter Public Library and by Zoom. Jennifer Darling called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Minutes

Kate Maver moved to approve the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting of April 21, 2021. Bob Plantz seconded the motion. All present were in favor.

Communications

There were no Communications.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Administrative Reports

Young Adult Report

Jana Nassif introduced Aaron Spears, our Young Adult Librarian. Mr. Spears has been with the library almost two years. He thanked the Board for their leadership and focus on science and safety throughout the pandemic. He always felt very cared for and very safe during the different stages we went through. So thank you for that. It relieved a huge burden and level of anxiety. It really helped out in Youth Services and allowed them to be very creative without having to worry. It allowed them to think outside the box and try new things.

He shared some success stories in trying times. When brainstorming last April in the middle of lockdown, he pitched to Rebecca Shook the number one thing we saw the kids playing on the computers pre-covid was Roblox. He felt they are still out there playing and just needed to find them. Roblox is a gaming system all online and is a host of user-generated games. The Roblox Club was created in April 2020 and launched in May 2020. It has been a weekly program for a year now.

Craft pickups started in September with weekly teen craft kits. They were prepping twelve kits and quickly learned it wasn't enough so went to twenty-four kits. In 2021 we have been doing them twice a month and have had 240 kits so far this year. The teens can work on them when it's convenient for them.

YA is also creating curated Discovery Boxes. The teen fills out a reader's advisory form. Based on that they receive a book, a bookmark, a papercraft and an international snack. He lets them know why he chose the book for them. They also receive a writing prompt. We do twelve a month

and they have been full since January. There is an actual interaction because he asks them what genre they like or what to avoid.

The teen volunteers have rolled with shutdowns, openings, not quite openings really, really well. We have more volunteers than last year. We were able to be open and have them safely volunteer in order to get their service hours. They were also able to volunteer virtually this year where they provided teen reviews for other teens through our blog. This allowed them to get their service hours, contribute and also get their voices out there.

Kate Maver commented she was so impressed by all Youth Services was doing. The insight about older kids is invaluable.

Jason Nolde asked if there is a way to search books by age and reading level? Aaron explained through the catalog you can search AR (Accelerated Reader) and also Lexile.

The Director commented how fortunate the library is to have Aaron. He is an absolute rock star in a department full of rock stars.

Jennifer Darling commented the whole time Aaron was talking she was thinking he probably does not hear from parents because they are so overwhelmed with everything. But she cannot overstate the value of everything Youth Services did for so many children—it was so creative and so well executed. She thanked Aaron so much for all his work.

Aaron Spears left the meeting at 6:50 pm.

Human Resources Report

The Human Resources Report for April was delivered with the agenda.

Pam Linger, Human Resource Manager, explained the Fiscal Officer is taking over Human Resources and the EAC and it is going very well.

Staff Week has been moved to October 4. The EAC is ready for any contingency.

Bob Plantz commented he will miss Pam and believes she has elevated the consciousness of HR in this organization and the level of awareness has been raised thanks to Pam.

Ms. Linger commented this Board is unique and their accessibility to employees is incredible. The Board shows up and it is evident how much they care. Ms. Linger added it has been a pleasure working with the Board.

Mr. Plantz commented about the number of organizations looking for help. He asked if we are fully staffed and if it is hard to find qualified candidates? Ms. Linger commented it is not a struggle at all. There are a lot of library candidates out there looking for work. Unfortunately, other libraries have let people go so those folks are searching. Mr. Lynce commented he believes the candidates recently have been superior.

Jennifer Darling asked if we are seeing diversity in candidates. Ms. Linger responded we are keeping our eyes out.

Assistant Director's Report

The Assistant Director's Report for April was delivered with the agenda.

Mr. Lynce reported we have lost a big service for anyone who is a fan of British TV. Acorn TV was discontinued to libraries. Adult Services and Tech Services have been identifying other sources for similar programs. Losing Acorn TV was out of our control.

We have been increasing capacity for tables and chairs in Adult Services and trying to identify where we can space out but add more seating.

There were two big retirements in Youth Services: Nancy Sabo and Cathy McCann. Andrea Tarolli has moved to Adult Services to take over the meeting rooms.

We will have a float in the Memorial Day Parade and also on the 4th of July. The Memorial Day parade will showcase the Safety Town model made by Building Services.

Jason Nolde asked with the Reading Garden now open if they have looked at the new plans for the garden. Mr. Lynce has explained nothing has been done yet, this will most likely be tied in with space planning.

Jennifer Darling asked about Natalie Jemiola holding office hours to assist non-profits and how we get the word out about that. Mr. Lynce replied Candid, which was formerly The Foundation Center, lists us as one of their sites and that we have office hours available. If a non-profit is looking for grants, they would go through Candid and we are one of the only sites that offer office hours. Fortunately, Ms. Jemiola actually worked for the The Foundation Center so she has a lot of experience with that and it is how we became one of the first sites to offer educational programs and office hours.

Ms. Darling asked what the current age is for children allowed in the library unaccompanied? Mr. Lynce explained we are back to nine and above.

Financial Reports

The Financial Reports for April were delivered with the agenda.

2022 Tax Budget - We are required to submit our tax budget for the following year to the Cuyahoga County Budget Commission to prove that we need our funding for next year. This has to be approved by the School Board and must be submitted to the Budget Commission by July 20, 2021. Once approved, it will go to the School Board for their vote.

Bank Depository Agreements - ORC Section 135 requires depository agreements be in place with all financial institutions. The depository agreements can be in place for up to five years and the agreements currently in place with First Federal of Lakewood and US Bank expire on June 30, 2021.

Meeder Investment Management is our investment advisory firm. Libraries as public entities are only allowed to invest in a limited number of financial instruments due to risks. Meeder has been our investment manager and they have responsibility for investing all of the funds we give them depending on what our cash needs are. They have done a really great job in terms of getting a higher investment return than Ms. Nassif could do on her own. They have recently updated their reports and made them very clear. She will be including these reports going forward in the Board packet. Meeder is also responsible for managing Star Ohio.

Bob Plantz asked if we have any input in how they invest our funds. Ms. Nassif explained it is turned over to them. A few years ago we started investing in commercial paper and asked them to limit the amount they invested. Since then, we have taken that restriction away. So we can dictate, if we want to, what we want them to invest in but their models are a lot more sophisticated in terms of maximizing our income and return so we typically let them do what is in our best interests.

Director's Report

The Director acknowledged Ms. Linger's service to the Board, the library and staff and thanked her for eight years serving the library.

Elizabeth Sheehe will be attending the School Board meeting to present our tax budget on June 30, 2021 in the Director's place.

Government Imagination Library Initiative

So far forty percent of eligible children in Westlake have signed up for the program. We would like to help increase that number. One of the ways we are doing that is through the Myrna Chelko Early Literacy Initiative.

General Staff Meeting

Typically, General Staff Meetings are held quarterly and cover a variety of topics. This time, the Director concentrated on two items he felt were particularly important. One was updating staff on the strategic plan and he didn't want it to be watered down.

Secondly, he has been very concerned about the \$15 Minimum Wage. If legislation were to pass, it might be implemented quickly. The rate would be stepped up, it would not go directly to \$15 but would raise it pretty significantly and then we, as an organization would have some tough decisions to make about how we would handle our minimum wage people and the pressure it puts on the salary table all the way up. He doesn't have those answers but the Admin team have been discussing the issue so he wanted to be as up front and transparent with the staff as possible so if minimum wage would all of a sudden leapfrog and we would need to implement something in ninety days they would not be surprised. The group most affected would be the shelvers. One of the most obvious solutions would be to have them take on more duties and move them into a higher pay level. However, we have people who are shelvers who don't seem to want to do anything else. He wanted to let them know if the wage scale changed, they might not be able to just shelve books anymore—we didn't have the full answer but there would likely need to be a change and here are some of the scenarios. He has not really heard any comments after the GSM so they are now aware of the possibilities.

When the decision is made, it will be brought to the Board. There are two solutions right now. The first would be raise the minimum wage and then move everybody else up or you combine the lower positions with the higher ones and maybe eliminate a pay level.

Staff Week (Week of October 4)

One plan for Staff Week would include a Board breakfast and meeting. It wouldn't necessarily be about Board business but maybe use that time to share information so the Board can see some of the great things the staff are doing. The Director would like a commitment from the Board to hold a Board breakfast and meeting during that week, probably from 8 to 9 am.

Friends Bus Shelter

We have been thrown a curve ball. The City has said we cannot put a bus shelter on the poured concrete (even though when that concrete was poured, the City said we could add a bus shelter) because it is too close to the street. They said we can only put the shelter behind the sidewalk. RTA has said we need more concrete and would need to tear out the portion the City previously installed. The shelter itself would be around \$12,000. There is an additional cost depending on the roof. There is also a onetime RTA maintenance and cleaning fee of \$5,000. In addition, we would most likely need to add approximately \$2,000 in additional concrete fees. This would make the cost of the shelter approximately \$17,000 - \$20,000.

The Friends were asked if they would be willing to fund the shelter. There are some members who feel it is not in their mission to fund a bus shelter. The Director feels the idea of a bus shelter should be tabled for now.

Bob Plantz asked if a small shelter could be installed over the existing bench. The Director commented he could look at that. There is also a fire connector in the way.

Jeff Armstrong asked if this will still be a valid stop if RTA changes routes.

Jason Nolde suggested if a shelter cannot be placed over the bench, we table the idea and tie it in with space planning.

Jana Nassif asked if the planned corridor expansion would have any impact. The Director responded that that plan actually calls for more bus stops.

The Director met with the Hajeks and Karen Alfred and talked about merging the Friends and the Foundation. While this might still be a good idea, the priority lessened when Portables was able to stay open. Karen Alfred made the point that Friends will turn fifty in 2022 and it would be a shame not to let them reach that milestone. The Director explained they will continue to work and develop a plan to see what it would look like if the Friends were not able to remain viable.

The Foundation has cracked the \$100,000 mark—which is just fantastic. When the Director started fifteen years ago the Foundation had \$50,000 and was just moribund. There were times when it felt like the Foundation should be closed but they felt if that happened, it could not be brought back, but it couldn't gain traction. However, recently, there has been a lot of positive movement. They are getting ready to launch a new website and they will be a part of the Art Festival.

WPPL PAC

Sarah Rintamaki reported donations of \$750 to the levy PAC.

Strategic Planning

The Director is working with Allison Motz on the site Monday.com which is task oriented. This is where our strategic plan currently resides. This software allows you to see who is responsible for the given tasks, the status, dates when things are due. You can enter all kinds of information and then download it to a spreadsheet, switch it to a PDF and use it as a tool to hand out or put on the website. Once all the steps are in order, it will be brought to the managers to get them involved.

Jason Nolde asked if the Strategic Plan is now on the library website. The Director explained PR and Marketing are working on it. His column for *NOTES* was about the process of our strategic plan and used as an introduction to the public.

Space Planning

We received eight responses from architects. Ms. Nassif developed a great rubric to compare relevant information. After review by the committee, they decided to interview three firms: HBM, Bostwick and Bialosky.

Bob Plantz moved to accept the Human Resource, Assistant Director, Financial, and Director's Reports. Will Perry seconded the motion. All present were in favor.

Board Reports

Board Vice President's Report

Jennifer Darling thanked Jason Nolde and Bob Plantz for serving on the Space Planning Committee. She thanked Pam and appreciates her dedicated service to the library in the ever changing terrain. Ms. Darling wishes her all the best in her retirement.

Diversity Report

Ms. Darling asked if there were any updates from last month? Mr. Lynce reported he met with Carla and Rebecca to discuss what films they could show. They are going to use *Ryan and the Last Dragon*, which is an animated film with a diverse set of characters. We will also start a diversity movie series starting in September where we will show movies that will attract families along with those targeted to adults.

Diversity Fest

Mr. Lynce will be meeting next week with the Diversity and Inclusion Team as well as the Programs Committee to discuss how to move forward with the Fest.

Jennifer Darling pointed out that so far we have talked about cultural diversity and asked if the Diversity Movie Series will include other types of diversity. Mr. Lynce responded absolutely. That is why they would like to show more than one film.

Jennifer Darling was included in the Diversity and Inclusion Team meeting so she will be able to discern what the Board can do to support the team.

The elementary school has started a diversity team Ms. Darling is involved with. She believes this will provide a good contact list that might help with reaching out to the community and let them know about these things that are happening. They have fantastic ideas.

New Business

Resolution 7-21 – Approve the 2022 Tax Budget

Kater Maver moved to approve Resolution 7-21 2022 Tax Budget. Jason Nolde seconded the motion.

Jason Nolde noted the supplies and services are projected to be less. Is this still in line with the original forecasting or have we made adjustments to that building assessment. The Fiscal Officer explained there were minimal changes to be more in line with 2020 actual budget. These funds do not have anything to do with permanent improvement or any projects budgeted there so will not have any impact on it. This will not look anything close to what our 2022 budget actually looks like.

Jason Nolde asked if there is anything that was postponed due to the last year. The Fiscal Officer replied no. If there was, it was included in the 2021 budget. Roll call vote followed: Jeffrey Armstrong – yes, Kate Maver - yes, Jason Nolde – yes, Will Perry – yes, Bob Plantz – yes, Jennifer Darling – yes.

Bank Depository Agreements for the period of July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2026

Bob Plantz moved to approve the Bank Depository Agreements for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2026. Roll call vote followed: Jeffrey Armstrong – yes, Kate Maver - yes, Jason Nolde – yes, Will Perry – yes, Bob Plantz – yes, Jennifer Darling – yes.

Youth Services – Increase two 16-hour 300 Youth Services Associate positions to two 20-hour Youth Services Associate positions.

Kate Maver moved to approve increasing two 16-hour 300 Youth Services Associate positions to two 20-hour Youth Services Associate positions. Jeff Armstrong seconded the motion.

Jennifer Darling asked if 20 hours is enough? The Director believes it is and likes the flexibility it allows along with better desk coverage. The staff also likes the good balance between work and family. If this motion is approved, their part time people will all be twenty hours and they will have a nice mix of twenty and forty hour people.

Ms. Darling pointed out how much Youth Services has raised the level of what everybody else has done during the pandemic. She wants to make sure they are happy and supported and not feeling overworked and have that time to be creative. Mr. Lynce reported he has this discussion often with Rebecca Shook, Youth Services Manager. She is fantastic at identifying when the team is overworked and reaching capacity. This is what she is asking for and has been planning around as we come out of the pandemic. It feels like the right amount.

All present were in favor.

Organizational Chart

Will Perry moved to approve the new Organizational Chart with the effectiveness to be reviewed in September. Kate Maver seconded the motion.

The Director explained this organizational chart resembles a more traditional reporting structure. With Ms. Linger's retirement, we looked at the organizational chart. They are proposing, at least for now, taking the majority of HR duties that are process in nature and give that to Finance. Mr. Lynce, Ms. Nassif and the Director would work together on personnel issues.

At a later date, they could pursue other options if this doesn't work.

This meant it would be a burden for The Fiscal Officer to also handle Tech Services and IT so these departments should be moved under the Assistant Director. It is a really good fit to have CJ and Connor working together. If these moves are made, Building Services and Safety and Security will be moved back to the Director. This realignment gives us a little more flexibility. If we should reach a point where we might need a dedicated HR person, we could bring one on—either part time or full time.

Bob Plantz understands why we would make these changes and thinks it makes a lot of sense. However, he would like to review the situation in a year and decide if this works, rather than wait for a bad set of circumstances to arise. The Director suggested a quarterly check in to make sure it feels right. Moving to this model means paying close attention and waiving the white flag quickly if it is not working.

Jason Nolde asked the Fiscal Officer for her thoughts since it impacts her roll so greatly. Ms. Nassif reported it is common for this size library to have these positions combined. There is really a lot of overlap and she is very familiar with what HR has been doing. This makes a lot more sense with her skillset and knowledge. She pointed out she has supervised the Tech and IT Departments but doesn't have an MLIS degree nor an IT background—It is more about her management skills in those departments. She feels she has a lot more knowledge of human resources. She will also focus on more learning and building her skills. She thinks it is a good fit and there is a lot of overlap there already.

All present were in favor.

Pandemic Policy

The Director explained that after the Governor began lifting the COVID restrictions in accordance with CDC guidelines, he called the management team together after asking them to gather thoughts from their departments. There were comments from employees hoping we continue the mask mandate to employees feeling it has been awful this entire year and that our civil liberties have been eroded and thank you for considering removing these horrendous restrictions. With everything in between. He also checked with other libraries. By and large the sentiment was they appreciate everything the library has done for them this past year; we recognize the impact this has had on the library with some of the ill will in general and we don't want to fight with people. We think the fights are going to get nasty and we don't want to do combat every day, four and five times a day. We think it is best to strongly encourage people to wear masks but not make it mandatory. There are strong feelings on both ends. The managers felt their staff will be okay if we lift the restrictions.

What we are asking is if the Board is comfortable removing those things; the mask issue is the big one. We would keep the mask mandate until June 2 with the rationale it gives more people the time to get vaccinated.

Kate Maver thinks the recommendations are great. If this is what the staff have worked through and decided, the Board is here to keep things safe and running but if this is something they are

owning and it is in line with the CDC and Ohio and will keep people from breaking into fisticuffs—yes. This is fine.

Jeff Armstrong’s biggest concern is not recommending a mask or not saying if you are not vaccinated you do need a mask. CJ said the statement would be “a mask would be recommended if you are not vaccinated,” which is the current CDC guideline. Also, they recommend if you are vaccinated, you do not have to wear a mask indoors or outdoors.

Mr. Mangels explained we are essentially saying if you are unvaccinated you need to wear a mask, and we will still tell them they need to wear a mask, but we will not enforce it because the only way to enforce it would be to request a vaccine passport. If someone walks in not wearing a mask, we will not ask them if they are vaccinated. We will assume they are vaccinated because they are not wearing a mask. Mr. Armstrong understands you cannot ask someone if they are vaccinated—we can’t and we won’t and if someone comes in without a mask, you also won’t ask them if they’ve been vaccinated. He doesn’t agree you should say that’s okay if you are not vaccinated, to not have a mask. Mr. Mangels agreed we don’t want to say it’s okay. He does want the sign to state that if you are unvaccinated, you should wear a mask. Our language will state if you are unvaccinated, you should wear a mask.

Jason Nolde noted, in the end, it doesn’t make a difference whether we say recommended or required but don’t enforce it, it doesn’t make a difference. Mr. Armstrong believes it does in the eyes of the public. Mr. Mangels agrees with both and stated the language should be unequivocal.

Kate Maver moved to support the recommendations provided by the administration and managers regarding COVID protocols. Jason Nolde seconded the motion.

Jason Nolde would be comfortable giving the administration the authority to enact these protocols earlier than June 2 if appropriate, as long as we are complying with CDC and state guidelines. Mr. Mangels appreciates the support to make that judgement call.

All present were in favor.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

Recorded by: Karen Hunt, WPPL Sr. Administrative Associate	
Attested by:	
_____	_____
Jennifer Darling, WPPL Board Vice President	Jason Nolde, WPPL Board Secretary