

MINUTES
NEUSCHAFER COMMUNITY LIBRARY BOARD MEETING
April 5, 2021

Present: Amanda D’Arcy, Judy McGowan, Carolyn Schmidt, Bobbi Marks, Natalie Snyder
(Library Director)

Absent: John Ohlson

Also present: Louise Thauer, Friends of the Library; Bradley Shipps, OWLS Director

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM by Judy McGowan.

Director’s Report:

Dated April 5, 2021, presented by Snyder.

Treasurer’s Report:

Donation Checking Acct (premier Bank) as of 3/31/2021: \$23,750.05

Donation Money Market Acct (Farmer’s State Bank) as of 3/31/2021: \$21,440.85*

(*Marks indicated this is an estimate based on an interest estimate for the month, not yet available.)

Schmidt made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s report, D’Arcy second. Motion carried.

ACTION ITEMS:

Minutes: Minutes from the March 8th meeting presented. D’Arcy made a motion to accept the minutes, Schmidt second. Motion carried.

Minutes from March 18th Special meeting presented. Motion to accept the minutes made by McGowan, second by D’ Arcy. Motion carried.

Payment of Bills: McGowan clarified that the procedure used currently is acceptable, and due to timely nature of library board meetings going forward, should not present an issue with board approval and Village board payment. Motion to approve current bills for payment by Schmidt, second by Marks. Motion carried.

Discussion around end of month timing and the unavailability of some necessary items to be collected before library board meetings. Marks will contact Village clerk about running a paid bill report for library board record keeping purposes going forward.

Director hiring process: Schmidt reported there have been 12 applicants thus far. 7 have not been as qualified, 5 are interviewing on Wednesday April 7th. Interviews will be conducted throughout the day at Hotel Fremont. Representatives from the Library Board as well as

Friends of the Library will be evaluating the candidates. An offer letter will be established for the selected applicant, indicating director's duties, compensation, and also referencing the policies and procedures of the Neuschafer Community Library. This letter will be reviewed and discussed at an upcoming meeting.

Discuss and Approve plan for May: Snyder reported that it should be possible to remain open during the remodel, operating out of the gymnasium. Phone and computer/laptop access have been checked and will be usable in the gym. If all materials are not accessible, OWLS can place a "temporary closed" notification on all items we need to remove from circulation for the time being. Materials will still come from other libraries and at the very least curbside can remain available. Children's collection should remain accessible as a priority. Due dates can be changed to accommodate the remodel, making them after the library materials have been moved back into the facility.

McGowan clarified that we will not know the status of using the gymnasium (closing it to public use) until the Village board meeting Tuesday April 13th. A number of decisions are resting on village approval/denial.

Remodel Staffing: Snyder would like to be able to inform staff of their May schedules by the end of April.

Electrical Bids: Snyder reported D'Arcy contacting three electricians to survey the necessary work for the remodel and provided two bids from Bauer Electric and Alan's Electric. Still waiting on the bid from Oehlke. McGowan suggested waiting until the third bid arrives before making a decision, reviewing/selecting an electrician at an upcoming board meeting. Timeliness is crucial to booking the electrician to ensure they are available on specific dates.

Exit Interviews: D'Arcy reported having had exit interviews with several former library employees. Overall D'Arcy reported it was clear in her conversations that former employees were emotionally invested in their positions, the library, and the community as a whole. COVID provided many challenges in 2020. Several key positive themes emerged:

1. The library is much more than just a place to check out books, it serves an important place to meet up with people and talk.
2. Natalie Snyder has been a saving grace, providing key leadership and vision, particularly during the pandemic.
3. The Friends of the Library group have been an important resource, and the employees could not imagine being without that group's support.

Several negative concepts also emerged:

1. The former employees did not know their library board members. They did not feel a connection and felt the library board members did not play a role with staff.
2. The former employees did not feel the library had a cohesive vision or strategic plan in place.
3. They felt as though there could be a better sharing of resources between the library, village, and community as a whole.

Moving forward, D'Arcy recommended exit interviews be added into the Neuschafer Community Library Policies and Procedures manual. She also suggested asking the incoming Director to set aside an hour a month following the board meetings, for relay to the staff, library board meeting information, so they feel included and remain knowledgeable about board decisions and other reviewed, pertinent library items. This would provide a base of continuity throughout the staff. D'Arcy believes increased support from the board of the staff would also help retention.

Check for \$7500 to Friends of Library for half of flooring install: Instead of writing out a check in the amount of \$7500 today, Marks suggested waiting on the check until the final bill is received, or until next board meeting May 3rd. Thauer (FOL) reported that the bid is coming in lower than originally anticipated. Marks also indicated needing an invoice for library board book records.

Library Credit Card: Marks and McGowan both shared that discussion and investigation continues with regard to a library credit or debit card. Due to director changes coming in May, it may be prudent to wait to finalize this piece. Tabled until May board meeting.

Review of Trustee Essentials #5 and #7: For the record, McGowan wants all parties involved with the library to be mindful, that the Library Director is the sole person in charge of hiring, disciplining, and firing staff, in addition to the accepting of staff resignations. Regardless of timeframe it is up to the library director to work through and with, all staff changes. Staff matters and changes are not at the discretion of the municipality. All changes are to go through the library director first, and library board second. No exceptions.

D'Arcy added that Trustee Essential #5, items 6, 9, and 10 need to be reviewed with a plan to uphold, at a future meeting. Details should be included in the offer letter, yet to be drafted.

Review "Policies of the Neuschafer Community Library" and discuss necessary changes: Snyder presented the board at a prior meeting with a highlighted copy of necessary changes. McGowan made a motion to table this discussion until May, D'Arcy second. Motion carried.

Review request to village about gymnasium use starting Wednesday April 21st: McGowan to confirm the timeline needed for gym use during remodel. Village to vote on April 13th. Snyder

requested April 21st – June 7th, allowing enough time for moving and set up of materials from one location to the other.

Friends of the Library update: Thauer reported FOL will be providing (and looking for additional) volunteers to assist with moving items prior to and after the remodel.

FOL is planning a rededication of the library, current plan Wednesday, June 23rd, to coincide with the Webfooters performance, bringing a potentially higher number of visitors. Thauer is gathering historical items including photos to teach the history of the library during the rededication. Gratitude toward the Wohlt family for the receipt of the remodel grant money is also planned. More details to come as the event draws closer.

Public input: None.

Adjournment: Schmidt made a motion to adjourn, Marks second. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:52pm.

Next meeting: Monday, May 3, 2021, 4:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Schmidt (Acting Secretary)