

## **Hillsdale Community Library Board of Trustees**

### **Minutes of the Meeting for May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

- I. **Call to Order:** President Cress called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call:** Scott Cress (President), Joshua Paladino (Secretary), Bryonna Barton (Library Director), George Allen, Karen Hill (Vice President), and Jim Bowen in attendance.
- III. **Approval of Agenda**
  - a. Cress moved that the board amend the agenda to put visitor comments and board comments after the approval of the minutes. No discussion. Unanimous agreement.
- IV. **Approval of Minutes**
  - a. Allen moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Hill seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.
- V. **Visitor Comments:**

The board received comments from: Joanne Miller, Mark Nichols, Renee Young, Sarah Yachs, Jaminda Springer, Carmen Wyatt-Hayes, Jeremiah Reagan, Katherine Watkins, Greg Stuchell, JP Thureau, Ashlee Moore, Blake McCallister, Lauren Jenkins Sally Bike, Brooke Diener, Samuel Lair, Christian Winter, Calvin Stockdale, Madison, Tracy Fowler, Brianna Crawl, Holly Carpenter, Isaac Kirshner, Penny Swan, Alethia Diener, Alex, Debbie Brown, Cassandra Farmer, Robert Socha, John Moriarty, Paul Klewel, Leanne Rumler, Rev. Rob McPherson, Rev. Dennis Wainscott, John Brooks, Leisha Taylor, David Turner, Terra Scott, Carol Addison, Lance Lashaway, Lahryn Spencer, Kathleen Murphy.

#### **VI. Board Comments:**

- Jim Bowen and Karen Hill said the library board must follow the Michigan Public Library Trustee Manual. They said that book selections must reflect the entire community with no exceptions.
- George Allen said that the library board should respect the library director and staff.
- Scott Cress said that materials selection is not an issue of pro-censorship v. anti-censorship. He said that the idea of intellectual freedom is being used to disseminate one set of ideas and not another. Every library puts limits on materials selections. We make choices and decisions. The challenge is not to act like one group believes in curation and another does not. We need to work together to understand how curation decisions are made. There is a curation process. He said that patrons can request books and request that books be removed from the library.

- Bryonna Barton said she follows curation standards. She cited her master's degree in library science as teaching her how to curate books. She said she buys LGBTQ and Christian books but not pornographic books. She said LGBTQ books will continue to be represented in this library. She even has books on sexual assault because people need to be able to read about everybody's experience. The discussion about changing the library board's curation policy is opposed to her education and everyone in the room.

## **VII. Approval of Financial Report**

Bowen moved to approve income and expense report. Hill seconded the motion. Passed with unanimous agreement.

## **VIII. Circulation Report**

Circulation improved in April.

## **IX. Director's Report**

Program report: Attendance has remained steady. Lauren and Heidi have started new programs and continue to do great work. The director is working to rearrange staff positions. Heidi has taken the adult services librarian position. They appreciate having one thing to focus on rather than multiple services. Barton is excited to announce new programs in the near future.

Woodlands Library Cooperative Report: Meeting was cancelled due to a conflict, but it has been rescheduled.

Grant report: LSTA grant for STEAM (Science, Technology, Education, Arts, and Math) will bring 3-D printers, button makers, robotics, and similar programs. The librarians currently do not know how to work these, but the staff will learn.

Hillsdale County Community Foundation will give money for breakout rooms and escape rooms.

Hillsdale County Community Foundation will give money for changing stations in two main bathrooms and to buy carpet cleaners for stains on carpets. The purchase will eliminate costs from bringing in professional cleaning groups every year. The library will also purchase a giant rotating flyer rack to clean up counters and tables.

A Hillsdale County Community Foundation grant will pay to repair the children's bathroom and buy a child-sized toilet.

The Woodlands Library Cooperative approved an innovative grant. The library director purchased a projector. The library did not have projector screens, but they were a common request. The library will also purchase a mobile whiteboard, new display shelving for both teens and adults, and a speaker system for outdoor and indoor events.

## **X. Communication**

Letters from Debbie Mikula, Andrew Fink, Erica Morris, Dave Morris, Maurine McCurry, and Maria Servold (with names added in support).

## **XI. Old Business**

None.

## **XII. New Business**

**Director Evaluation:** Staff survey, library evaluation, city employee evaluation, self-appraisal questionnaire, library director evaluation policy. The board debated which policy form to adopt: a general Hillsdale city evaluation form or a specific Hillsdale Community Library form. Evaluations should be submitted by June 2<sup>nd</sup>. The evaluations will be shared on May 21<sup>st</sup> with the city manager and library staff. The board adopted the specific library evaluation form with unanimous consent.

**Book displays:** Cress & Allen voiced the opinion that the library should avoid controversial topics in book displays. Cress disagrees with the banned-book narrative. Bowen understands their point but does not think that the library can draw a clear line. Allen distinguished between selection and promotion. The library must be much more careful when it promotes certain books but not as careful in purchasing books. Hill wondered where Allen would draw the line on “promotion.”

Barton mentioned the autism awareness display to argue that anything can be controversial. The displays help raise awareness and show that resources for certain topics are available. She said definitions of promotion are subjective. She said patrons should not come to board members about objectionable books; they should file a book-challenge form. Cress again appealed to the subjective sense of the community, arguing that it is a real thing and that it must be considered in book displays. Allen argued that the board should respond to complaints from the community rather than dictate certain practices.

Cress asked Barton how she would respond to objections about book displays. She said she does not think she has made any mistakes with book displays and has received only positive comments about them. She discusses book displays with the staff. Allen asked how the director would respond to universal outrage against a display. He asserted that the board should place immense trust in the director as a general attitude, but he would like to know how her judgment would operate in practice.

City Attorney, John Lovinger: The library board needs new rules to clearly state whether it will act on proposed amendments. He said the board and the director failed to post about the amendment, and nobody motioned to add the amendment to the agenda.

Cress moved that the board create a subcommittee to address materials acquisition policy. Allen seconded the motion. Passed with unanimous consent. Hill and Allen volunteered to

compose a standing subcommittee to create a procedure to reform the library's policy manual. The board approved the subcommittee's membership with unanimous consent.

**XIII. Next Meeting Date:**

The next regular meeting is at 6 p.m. on June 9<sup>th</sup>.

**XIV. Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.