

MEETING MINUTES  
Hillsdale Community Library Board of Trustees  
November 9, 2023

- I. Call to Order: 5:00pm
- II. Roll Call
  - A. All trustees and director present: George Allen (President), Rebekah Dobski (Library Director), Karen Hill (Trustee), Laura Negus (Secretary), Joshua Paladino (Vice President), Stephanie Stockford (Trustee).
  - B. Visitors to the meeting included: Samantha Fether, Annette Littley, Penny Swan, Rev. Steven Allen, Linda Fogarty, Mary Boocks, and Lindy Jordan.
- III. Approval of Agenda
  - A. Hill moved to add IX.A Friends of the Library communication. Paladino seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.
  - B. Stockford moved to add XI.D Discussion of adopting a code of ethics. Negus seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.
  - C. Hill moved to table the vote to accept or reject the amended bylaws. Stockford seconded the motion. The motion failed for lack of vote 2-0 with Hill and Stockford voting in favor.
  - D. Paladino moved to approve minutes as amended. Stockford seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.
- IV. Approval of Minutes of 10.12.23
  - A. Hill moved to amend the 10.12.23 minutes to include language she presented to the board, namely more specific language regarding the nature of the discussion between the trustees of item X.D Revision to the Bylaws on points III.5 Conflict of Interest and IV.2 President. Stockford seconded the motion. The board generally discussed the difficulty of deciding what to include or exclude from the minutes in order to consistently keep a good record of events without overwhelming the secretary. The motion carried 5-0.
  - B. Hill moved to accept the minutes of 10.12.23 as amended. Stockford seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.
- V. Visitor Comments – Penny Swan, Fr. Steven Allen.
- VI. Revenue and Expenditure Report
  - A. Hill noted donations are up, indicating public support of the library.
  - B. Dobski added information on some trusts benefitting the library. A representative of County National Bank, Joann Bowman, informed Dobski of the Edward Kunesh trust which will bring 10% of his estate to the library at the year end and which the representative conservatively estimates to be around \$415,000. There

are also two other trusts which may come as yearly payments; Dobski is inquiring into the details of these other ones.

VII. Circulation Report

- A. Hill noted that numbers in the past have been inflated due to procedural check-in redundancies and that this might be something to watch in future.

VIII. Director's Report

- A. Program Statistics: The Halloween event was especially successfully drawing 323 visitors to the library.

IX. Communication

A. Friends of the Library Update:

- The Friends received paperwork that they have lost their tax-exempt status from not filing taxes for the past 3 years. Brianna Crall (President) reached out to the previous President and they were unaware this was something that needed to happen. Crall has contacted a local accountant to help with this. It appears to be a quick fix, but one that the Friends want to make sure is done correctly.
- The Friends had someone interested in being an intern with them for social media, but with some deadlines, she decided to intern somewhere else. She will be designing for them informally. She sent mock-up "My First Library Card" designs. The Friends made and voted on changes to it, the artist will be revising, and the Friends should be voting on the final draft at November's meeting.
- The Friends report was filed with LARA (Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs) and accepted.
- The Friends voted on two designs for their canvas bag fundraiser and put them out on a Facebook poll. They will now be ordering a mock-up (free of charge) and if they like it, will vote to purchase 100 in bulk to sell at the library for a profit.

X. Old Business

A. New Director Hire: The board welcomed new director Rebekah Dobski. Allen introduced Dobski. Dobski also briefly introduced herself mentioning her studies in history and anthropology before she pursued library as a career. She has been working on obtaining her Master of Library Science from Wayne State University and will complete it by the end of the month.

B. Dollar General Youth Literacy Grant - Allen briefly explained the grant, as well as the subcommittee of himself and Hill who had been working on the project in the absence of a director. Hill and Allen reported that the backpacks have arrived and are a wonderful addition to the library. Director and staff are still deciding how to best present them to patrons.

Allen then moved to dissolve this subcommittee now that Dobski is in place. Hill seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

C. Building Issues - Laura Sergent relayed from DPS that the outside doors of the library need to be replaced at approximately \$2000 per door and suggested the library put such into the budget for 2024. Allen responded asking how many doors, how urgent this matter is, who will replace the doors, and how long will it take for them to be replaced. He awaits a reply from the city. Hill mentioned that perhaps updating the doors could update the lock system which the board has previously discussed.

D. Revision to the Bylaws

1. Current bylaws - no discussion
2. Proposed bylaws- Allen moved to accept the proposed bylaws as presented. Paladino seconded the motion. Hill expressed the opinion that the duties of president as presented are too “heavy handed”, specifically about the president preparing the meeting agenda, which she thinks should fall to the library director. Hill also pointed out that, regarding the duties of secretary, the Michigan Public Library Board of Trustees Manual suggests delegating the taking of minutes to a non-board member in order for the secretary to participate more fully in board meetings. Paladino expressed his opinion that the president needs to prepare the agenda due to the inherent authority structure of the board with regard to the director. Allen expressed his opinion that the preparation of the agenda is the responsibility of the board and officers, but can be delegated to the director. The motion carried 4-1 with Allen, Negus, Paladino, and Stockford in favor and Hill opposed.

E. Materials Ordering and Cataloging -

1. Allen relinquished to Dobski materials ordering and cataloging duties he had taken on in the absence of a director.
2. The board discussed the temporary stipend extended to an HCL staff member to work on cataloging until such time as the new director can take over. Dobski said she is working on transferring this role to herself and will inform the city when the takeover occurs.

XI. New Business

A. Discussion of Staff Salaries

1. Allen would like to discuss regular staff pay raises for the next fiscal year.
2. Stockford would like answers as to why staff were not given raises that Jessica Spangler (as HCL director) requested be given out of her own raise from the city; it was understood that other city departments partook of similar schemes. It was agreed that Stockford would compose a message about these past financial irregularities for the board to present to the city in order to ask for explanation.

B. Dobski shared the latest from Tina Bumpus regarding General Fund and Investments noting changes from what was presented in the Board Meeting packet:

Checking Account Common changed from \$258,677.36 to \$101,644.14 and investments changed from \$181,790.58 to \$339,100.12. The board wonders who is deciding when to

change investments and why? Allen suggests the board be informed before changes are made, especially with the new Kunesh trust taken into account. Allen and Dobski plan to discuss same with the city.

C. Library Board Meeting Dates for 2024 - The board agrees that Heidi can continue to mark on the HCL calendar the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 5pm for board meetings for 2024.

D. Ethics Code Discussion - Stockford shares that many boards have codes of ethics. She brought a sample code of ethics from United for Libraries for the board to peruse. Hill added that the Michigan Public Library Trustee Manual includes this same sample code of ethics in Appendix E. Stockford volunteered to draft a more specific ethics policy for board consideration.

XII. BOARD COMMENTS

A. Allen welcomed Dobski again. Hill thanked Penny Swan for her comment about the city municipal code regarding voting or abstaining to vote, namely municipal Code 6.7. Negus explained her minute-taking procedure.

XIII. NEXT MEETING DATE was set for Thursday, December 14 at 5:00pm.

XIV. At 6:40pm Stockford moved to adjourn the meeting. Hill seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.