

NORTHVILLE DISTRICT LIBRARY (NDL) BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 28, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

Carlo Meeting Room, Northville District Library

- 1. Call to Order:** Trustee Alan Somershoe called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
 - 1.1 Roll Call** - Present: Trustees Carol Doyle, Alan Somershoe, Deborah Stanifer, and Thomas Thompson. Also present: Laura Mancini, Library Director; Maria Williams, Assistant Library Director, Carla Eggert, Business Operations Specialist; Martha Nork, President, Friends of the Northville District Library; and Samantha Downes, Adult Services Librarian. Absent: Trustees Joe Corriveau, Robert Sochacki, and Nick Vlisides.
 - 1.2 Approval of the Agenda:** **MOTION:** Thomas Thompson made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Deborah Stanifer seconded the motion. Motion passed.
 - 1.3 Approval of Meeting Minutes, 09/23/21:** **MOTION:** Thomas Thompson made a motion to approve the Sept. 23, 2021 minutes as presented. Carol Doyle seconded the motion. Motion passed.
 - 1.4 Citizen Comments:** None.
- 2. Correspondence:** None
- 3. Reports to the Board:**
 - 3.1 Northville District Library Director's Report-**

Personnel Updates: Laura Mancini reported that the library has a new Public Relations and Marketing Librarian, Katie Rothley, who began her position on Oct. 25th.

First Amendment Audit: Laura reported that the library was a subject of a First Amendment audit this past week. This is an instance of someone coming into a public building solely to photograph or record the activities of public employees and members of the public using the facility. The intent of these audits is to create content that can be posted to social media. This activity has been happening at several local libraries in recent weeks. The gentlemen involved were in the building for about 15 minutes and were cooperative when asked not to photograph minor children without parental permission.

Covid-19: Northville has been averaging 50 new cases of Covid-19 a week during the month of October. Despite these numbers, the Library is still working to restore services in a safe manner. On October 4, the NDL returned to its regular hours. The building is now open seven days a week for a total of 62 hours. Study rooms were reopened to the public on October 24th. The Carlo Meeting Room will reopen for public use and reservations on November 1st. The Friends Community Room will remain closed as it is temporarily housing library staff in socially distanced work stations. The Friends volunteers have been given clearance to return to the Friends Store and Used Book Operations. Other library volunteers will be called back at a later date.

Programming: The Adult Services team continue to offer a stellar selection of programming for our patrons. Earlier this month, the Library had a presentation on the Maybury Sanatorium given by local historian Joe Oldenburg. The NDL tried something new and offered the program twice on back to back nights, one evening at NDL and the following evening at Northville Township Hall. Both events had good attendance and several attendees commented that they liked being at Township Hall as it allows for more social distancing. Adult Services also hosted its 3rd annual Spelling Bee and was able to return to Genitti's Hole in the Wall for the event. Special thanks to the Genitti family for letting the NDL use their facility. The NDL was invited to the Parks and

Recreations Senior Fest at the Community Center. The Library had a booth at the event and received many positive comments from attendees about our service. Youth Services presented story times at Maybury State Park as well as at Mill Race Village as part of this year's Halloween Hysteria event. The Michigan Library Association held its annual conference virtually earlier in the month. Natalie Molnar, Michael McEvoy and Tyler Vitale gave a presentation on how they converted our annual Battle of the Books competition into a virtual event for 2021. It was nice to see these staff members get recognition from the library profession for their extraordinary efforts. Laura shared a video from a patron who was enjoying a library craft kit for children while in quarantine for Covid exposure.

3.2 Friends of the Northville District Library Report: Friends President Martha Nork reported that many of the Friends volunteers have returned to the library. The Friends have begun accepting used book donations, Monday and Thursday, from 10am to 12pm. The Friends Store has reopened but will be open Monday through Friday only as four of the volunteers who worked in the store have decided not to return. The Friends will hold their Volunteer Fair in the Carlo Room on November 6 from 11am to 1pm. The fair will feature representatives from ten Northville organizations that are in need of volunteers.

4. Reconsideration Appeal: A patron made a formal appeal to Laura Mancini regarding two books in the library collection, "Sam is my Sister" by Ashley Rhodes-Courter and "Be Amazing" by Desmond is Amazing. The patron requested that the books be removed from the library collection or separated from the regular collection and put into a special area of the library. Laura Mancini denied the request. The patron has appealed that decision to the Board of Trustees. Board Chairperson, Nicholas Vlisides was not able to attend today's meeting but wrote a response to the patron that Alan Somershoe read.

October 28, 2021

Board of Trustees
Northville District Library
212 W. Cady Street
Northville, Michigan 48167

Re: Controversial Materials, Reconsideration of Materials Request

Dear Board of Trustees:

This letter or note is prepared in response to an Appeal by one of our library Patrons in connection to a request to reconsider that two books be placed in a separate area of our Library. The two books under reconsideration are, "Sam is my Sister," by Ashely Rhodes-Courter, and "Be Amazing," by Desmond is Amazing." Unfortunately, I have prior commitment and cannot attend the meeting on October 28, 2021. This letter is written to express my views on this matter.

First, I wish to thank our Patron, Ms. Caitlin Goulding, for her serious and sincere request. We appreciate all our patrons and work to fully and comprehensively respond to all requests, inquires and reviews in a deliberative and contemplative manner. Thank you.

With respect to the request, it is important to note that the Library, its Staff and the Board of Trustees do not advocate nor encourage any particular view or ideology. Our mission is to provide free and open access of materials to the public. A core concept of our Library is that it is built on the principal of freedom and lawful freedom of expression. At times, such expressions can lead to controversy. Nevertheless, the strength of a society is its capability to allow and admit such controversies. Those societies that cannot or do not tolerate such freedoms are anathema to these core principles and may inhibit the open dialogue and progress of its citizens.

In this context, and after reading the books, it is my view that these publications be allowed to remain in our library and furthermore not be separated into a “special” area. Our Library has over 44,000 children’s books. Designating these two books to a “special status” may imply that they fall outside of some perceived standard guidelines. Such a designation may, therefore, unintentionally indicate a negative or less acceptable connotation. That can never be an appropriate objective for our library.

Our position at the Northville District Library is one of a welcoming establishment open to all our patrons. The acquisition of knowledge often exposes and/or includes experiences that make us feel uncomfortable and perhaps to question our own beliefs. This is not an easy road, but it is the right road.

Again, thank you very much for your input and for voicing your sincere concerns for our Library.

Respectfully,
Nicholas A. Vlides
Chairman, Board of Trustees
Northville District Library

MOTION: Thomas Thompson made a motion to affirm the decision made by Laura Mancini to keep the books “Sam is my Sister” and “Be Amazing” in the youth collection and to adopt the letter written by Nick Vlides as the Board’s official position on the matter. Deborah Stanifer seconded the motion. Motion passed. Laura Mancini was instructed to contact the patron and inform them of the Board’s decision.

4. Finance Report:

4.1 Bills over \$1,000 for approval: Deborah Stanifer presented the List of Bills over \$1,000 for October 2021. **MOTION:** Deborah Stanifer made a motion to approve these bills in the amount of \$175,076.36 for payment. Carol Doyle seconded the motion. Motion passed.

4.2 Financial Report: Deborah reported that we are 83% through our fiscal year and the library has received 102% of its projected revenue. The Library has converted its checking account with Comerica from a commercial account to a small business account to save on bank fees. The original six month certificate of deposit established in the Reserve Account has ended and was renewed for another six months. The library earned \$254.16 in interest in the first six months.

5. Committee Reports

5.1 Facilities Committee- Alan Somershoe gave an update on the various facilities projects currently occurring. The plan for the renovation of the staff area in the Youth Department will be presented to the Facility Committee in November. Royal Roofing has completed the work on the gutters. They have been cleaned and the joints resealed.

5.2 Policy Committee: Carol reported that the Policy Committee has met to consider those library policies that are up for review this year. They are also proposing the addition of a policy on photography in the library. Carol presented the policy on the Disposal of Furniture, Equipment and Supplies. **MOTION:** Carol Doyle made a motion to accept the Policy on the Disposal of Furniture, Equipment and Supplies without changes. Alan Somershoe seconded the motion. Motion passed. Carol also presented the Meeting Room Policy with changes and the proposed Photography Policy for the first reading.

5.3 Strategic Planning: Laura reported that the Strategic Planning Committee has narrowed down the bids received for strategic planning from five to two and will meet on November 15 to determine which bid to proceed with for strategic planning.

5.4 Millage Study Group: The Millage Study Group is working on establishing the Millage Committee. Marjorie Banner will serve as Chair from Northville Township. It has not yet been determined if the millage will be on the June or August ballot in 2022.

Announcements and Comments:

8.1 The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

8.2 The next Facility Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

8.3 The next Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

11/02/21

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