



## BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### CALL TO ORDER – Board of Trustees

A Board of Trustees meeting, of the Peru Public Library, was held on Thursday, August 27th, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM and was presided over by President Alison Paul.

### ATTENDEES

MEMBERS PRESENT: *Austina Reed, Leslie Murphy, Melissa Duckwall, Bryan Maggart, Deb Swihart, Regine Brindle, and President Alison Paul.*

MEMBER APOLOGIES: *None*

DIRECTOR PRESENT: *Maryann Farnham and Assistant Director, Michelle Spangler, were present.*

GUESTS: *Brenda Weaver and Michelle Boswell. Staff member Lisa Rummel was also present, to take the minutes.*

Because Reed called into the meeting, roll call was used for the above list, which each board member stating their name and that they were present.

The meeting opened with a welcome to new board member Regine Brindle.

Next were a few comments on how the meeting will work. Roll call had to be taken so Reed can vote on anything via phone, and comments will be taken before starting the meeting. This includes the Humanities Grant presentation, led by Brindle, which happened next.

Swihart jumped in, stating that the board was blindsided by it last month. Brindle led off of that by sharing how this all came to happen. They had been going a different direction, thinking that the grant was too big for them, but then decided to go for it. Especially after learning more and more about Marie Stewart Edwards. She then presented a lot of information regarding not just what the women's suffragist movement was trying to and did accomplish, but Marie Stewart Edwards' accomplishments and life as well. The suffragist movement wasn't just about voting, but also about education and reform in various areas. Highlights included Edwards being the first girl in her town to ride a bike, the Peru Franchise League being created at the Peru Public Library and Edwards becoming the 2<sup>nd</sup> president of the league, Peru becoming the state league headquarters, Edwards being a leader in the Pan-American Conference of Women in Baltimore in 1922, Edwards being the first woman elected to the Peru School Board – which also served as the library board, Edwards being part of the group that created the Peru Civic Center, part of the art club, and more. Brindle next explained that they want to use 12-year old Edwards, with her bike, as the statue to try to inspire young people and to show them that they too can make a difference and have a voice. They are also hoping to create a children's book series featuring Edwards and others later on. Brindle passed out copies of the newspaper articles, talking about 7,276 women registering to vote in 1920. Brindle also discussed the surge in leagues that occurred while Edwards was the league president. Edwards wanted mothers to have voting rights and a voice, for their children's sake as well. She came in at the end, but helped to push it through. Brindle read a quote from a letter Edwards had written, talking about how people were already forgetting this, but that women were not given the vote, they fought for it. Brindle then gave an impassioned plea for the statue belonging here at the library, as everything happened here at the library.

Murphy had some questions regarding maintenance and repair. Reed answered, as a partner and not a board member (per her own words), stating that they've been awarded the grant. They now look for even more partners. The statue would be worth over \$100,000. The new partners would be the ones looked to for everything else. Maintenance is easier, as there will be a patina on it, waxed every few years then for less than \$500. She then stated that, discussing this as a board member, Farnham had brought up insurance as well. They aren't sure yet, but the new partners would help with that. Indiana Humanities Grant had asked for a maintenance plan, and the partners would spread out the responsibility for that, if the library doesn't want to do any of it. Landscaping would be included in this.

It was reiterated that this was a matching grant and it has already been awarded. Reed shared that the next step is designing the statue, with input from the library if they so desired. Indiana Humanities is also working with them in finding partners.

Reed thinks this project is a symbol of driving traffic to Miami County, and that it connects Miami County and the state. She thinks it will help tourism and hopes it will help Peru economically as well. This statue represents so many things and the good in all of us and she is hopeful that it will inspire and connect with others who then will also want to spend money here.

Brindle spoke again, stating that Edwards is someone who she loves more and more the more she learns about her. Edwards is someone for kids to look up to and women aren't dismissible anymore because of Edwards and women like her. She stated that we take things for granted because we don't know what it took to get here. Brindle also thinks a bust of Ellen Fetter is just as important, but that is on the slate to work on later. She reiterated that the Peru Public Library is where the women met, planned, etc. for the right to vote.

Paul pointed out that there were several guests and asked if they had any comments. Weaver spoke first, introducing herself and stating that the Garden Club president had already volunteered to do the landscaping for the statue. Michelle Boswell then introduced herself, stating that she's a firm believer in tourism and that she was the one who restored the toll house. She thinks this would be fantastic and inspire little girls; a great idea and a great project. She also represents the Paper of Miami County, and they will be doing a story on it.

Paul stated that the board will now proceed with the regular meeting. Guests may stay, with voting on the statue gift taking place during Old Business.

## **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

July minutes

A misspelled name was pointed out, as the correct spelling hadn't been known before until today. The secretary, Duckwall, had already approved them, otherwise. There being no other comments on the minutes, Swihart motions to accept the minutes as correct and Murphy seconded. Votes were taken by roll call: Reed - aye, Murphy - aye, Duckwall - aye, Maggart - aye, Swihart - aye, Brindle - aye, Paul - aye. The motion passed unanimously.

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

The treasurer, Swihart, had looked over the financials and stated that everything looked good. Farnham did have a note: they had received a special Property tax distribution (due to Covid-19) that is an advance on property taxes – probably December's. Murphy motioned to accept the financial statements, claims, bank and deposit statements and Duckwall seconded. The vote proceeded as follows: Reed - aye, Murphy - aye,

Duckwall - aye, Maggart - aye, Swihart - aye, Brindle - aye, Paul – aye, and the motion was passed unanimously.

## **AGENDA**

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

While not officially on the agenda, but Farnham did want to mention that we had received a funds statement from Northern Indiana Community Foundation. She next noted Brindle's appointment to the library board by the school board. The City Council Meeting is on Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, at 6 PM at City Hall, and is when the library has declared them our fiscal body, so if anyone wants to attend, that would be great. The budget hearing will be held at the next board meeting, with the adoption scheduled for October's meeting. Her report on Covid-19 was next, with her stating that the same restrictions as last month are still in place – nothing has changed yet. There were issues with at least one organization trying to conduct visitations on the floor. She had decided against that due to social distancing issues and contact tracing. Farnham stated that she does feel for them, but that it just isn't safe to have those visits here. Farnham wrapped up her report by sharing that the handicapped parking signs were now up in the parking lot.

### **OLD (UNFINISHED) BUSINESS**

First up was Humanities Grant discussion. Paul is hoping to limit it to 15 minutes. She motioned to hold the discussion to 15 minutes maximum. Brindle seconded. The vote was as follows: Reed - aye, Murphy - aye, Duckwall - aye, Maggart - aye, Swihart - aye, Brindle - aye, Paul – aye; so the motion passed with all ayes. Maggart volunteered to keep the time.

Swihart opened the discussion saying she likes the idea of the statue being Edwards as a little girl and that it sounds charming. She does have fiscal concerns regarding insurance and repair/maintenance. Paul next commented, telling her story of gaining US citizenship and registering to vote here. She thinks it is so interesting that the 6 women on the board are sitting here and have the right to vote because of Edwards. She hears the concerns and thinks the other organizations will be doing a lot with that. The doughboy on the courthouse lawn was mentioned in regards to this. Brindle stated that repairs and maintenance had been discussed with the foundry, and that they were thinking about details for safety and for not attracting vandals. They are still in the process of working with partners and all, but are not expecting the library to fund any of that. Murphy spoke up, saying that if those partnerships then fall through, the costs would fall to the library. Reed responded, stating that the estimates from artist all match the grant. Murphy reiterated that the rest falls to us then. Reed stated that no, everything else is on other partners, this is merely for if the board of trustees accepts the gift and wants to be a partner. If the board votes no, then it goes back and is just a partner no longer interested. Several board members expressed concern about the current times, with so many statues being torn down that our country was founded on. Brindle explained that that's one of the reasons they picked a little girl for the statue, and that with this statue, there is a story. Brindle also pointed out that Edwards little boy marched with her and her husband fully supported her efforts. In addition, Edwards seemed to better than most of the era in not being racist, and her private secretary is still alive and could corroborate everything. Maggart had also expressed concern over it not being a little boy statue and thought that might garner outrage eventually. It was pointed out that the grant is for preserving Women's History – and that the statues being taken down often had to do with slavery and people losing their voices, while this is the exact opposite in that it is about women gaining a voice through the vote. Paul asked Reed about funding for upkeep and insurance on the statue. Reed said that if the

library forfeits the partnership, other partners will do it. She stated that Miami County has already been awarded the grant. The first issue is if the library accepts the gift. The second and separate issue is that then, if we do, what are the terms of the partnership. The terms could then include the library not being responsible for maintenance at perpetuity. Farnham commented about how that had worked with her experience with the park, as maintenance for 20 years was entirely covered by others. She also thought the library could potentially get some funds for it from the Ellen Fetter funds.

Time was then up for the discussion, per the accepted motion to limit it to 15 minutes. Paul did mention that another motion could be made to extend the discussion but no one felt that was necessary. Paul put forth a motion to accept the statue as a gift on the library grounds, with Brindle seconding. Reed is recused due to the being the grant writer, but she also noted that she had received no payment for doing that. The others voted, stating their name and their vote: Murphy - nay, Duckwall - nay, Maggart - nay, Swihart - aye, Brindle - aye, Paul - aye. Due to the board rules concerning a majority being needed for a vote to pass, the motion is dead.

Next on the agenda is the county library district discussion. The board had had a State Library Representative give a talk before the board meeting, and based on that, Paul still thinks it would be a good idea to wait to do anything on this topic until after elections.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Swihart reported on the 2021 budget. She had talked to Farnham and Paul about it and Farnham had explained how things work with it. Based on that, money was shifted slightly, and they took a proposed cost-of-living increase for the staff down from 2% to 1%. Swihart also explained why the funds for insurance are remaining as they are. She had been hoping to shift more funds to Repair and Maintenance, but the money just wasn't there. Murphy was the only one who had a question, so that was answered briefly. Swihart motioned from the committee to accept the budget. The motion passed with these votes: Reed - aye, Murphy - aye, Duckwall - aye, Maggart - aye, Swihart - aye, Brindle - aye, Paul - aye.

Board of Trustee Code of Ethics was next. It probably needs to be done yearly, after election of officers. It just needs to be signed, so that was passed around.

Finally, the committee for the long range strategic plan is hoping to meet on September 9<sup>th</sup>, sometime after 5 PM, to discuss the plan and they will then present it to the board.

**There being no further business on the agenda, the meeting was adjourned by President Paul at 7:49 PM.**

**MINUTES PREPARED BY: Lisa Rummel, Peru Public Library staff member**

**SECRETARY APPROVAL:**

*(Signature & Date)*

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**Peru Public Library**