



BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

October 22nd, 2020

CALL TO ORDER – Board of Trustees

A Board of Trustees meeting, of the Peru Public Library, was held on Thursday, October 22nd, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM and was presided over by President Alison Paul.

ATTENDEES

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

MEMBER APOLOGIES: *Bryan Maggart*

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

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

The order of public comments and the Ellen Cole Fetter painting agenda item was discussed.

Melissa Duckwall has resigned. Her official, written resignation letter has been submitted, so it is all in order. A new secretary needs to be elected, however. Reed was the only one who volunteered to be nominated for the position of secretary. The nomination passed with all ayes. Austina Reed is the new secretary.

2021 BUDGET ADOPTION

There being no remonstratives, the budget was passed around to be voted on by signature. With everyone voting aye, Reed signed the budget as the secretary. The 2021 budget of \$497,167 has been adopted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Brenda Weaver spoke about Ellen Cole Fetter, the first president of the Women's Franchise League here in Peru. Weaver came to tell the library board that a painting has been commissioned of Ellen Cole Fetter that they would like to donate to the library. The painting is the same size as the Andrew Carnegie one currently hanging up, and the library still receives funds every year from the Ellen Cole Fetter Book Fund. Weaver mentioned that the painting is being done by a local artist, Kelly Meadows, who is also Weaver's sister-in-law. The painting will be finished as soon as the custom frame is done. They are hoping to do the presentation of the painting on December 15th. Paul asked if there would be an event or anything for the presentation. Brindle said they were planning on having a commemoration of the centennial anniversary of the creation of the Peru League of Women Voters which took place on December 15th, so they are hoping to have a reception where they would have an unveiling of the painting – dependent on COVID-19, of course. The painting has been done in color, not the photograph's original black and white tones, and Ellen Fetter's sternness has been softened somewhat. Some stories about Ellen Cole Fetter were shared then, including how she liked to ride astride.

Reed shared that LT. Governor Suzanne Crouch would be coming on Tuesday, October 27th, to present the grant check to ReDiscover Downtown Peru. She invited the board and explained who all was going to be present, which included the mayor and several state legislators. There will also be refreshments.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

September Minutes

The following corrections were made: on page 7, a word should have been “tune”, not “tone”, Steve Anderson’s last name had an extra “s” in one place, and several wordings were discussed but left as they were true to what had been said even. Swihart motioned to accept the minutes as corrected and Brindle seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Swihart reported that everything looked fine and Farnham pointed out some of the claims for this month. Brindle asked about the Evergreen Indiana fees and fines, so Farnham explained how it worked when fines were paid to the material’s owning library. She said we have gotten \$200 in fines paid to us from other libraries some years. The bank and deposit statements all appeared to be in order, Swihart said as well. Paul motioned to accept the financial statements, claims, bank and deposit statements and Reed seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Paul has been doing a lot of research and came across information regarding phones and the open door policy. Basically, the board members shouldn’t even handle their phone during the meetings. No voting is necessary on this, as it is code. From now on, no one will touch their phone so that there is no hint of impropriety.

Farnham also had a couple of things to say. There was a thank you card from Brenda Weaver that Farnham read aloud and passed around for the board to see. There was also a letter from a Rex Almond, M.D. which was addressed to Paul. It was about a statue in his area, and gave some info as well as a congratulations to Paul. The letter was also passed around.

Paul pointed out the inclusion of her letter to the city, regarding the Marie Stuart Edwards statue, in the board packet.

Reed asked about an upcoming event, which Farnham said would be discussed later on in the agenda.

AGENDA

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Farnham opened with some corrections for the misinformation from the previous month’s meeting, as she wants the correct information to be on the public record.

She addressed literacy and literature first, as that had come up frequently, and as she wanted to make sure everyone understood what our job as a library is. It is not our job to teach. That is the mission of the schools. We had a literacy program years ago that came here and taught, that that hasn’t happened in years. That is how most libraries do literacy programs – by hosting other groups who are teaching. Our job is to embrace someone’s love of literacy. We’re here to encourage them to read, to let them foster that love of reading. We’re here to let them know that there is a Netflix series coming out based on their favorite book. Paul asked where else in the community people could go to learn to read. Farnham pointed out that a lot of money is spent at the schools to teach children how to read, that there is also an adult school here in Peru. If someone comes into the library looking for reading assistance, we like to give them information about where they can go to get that literacy training so they can be successful. So we would send them to the adult school in North Peru or down to Ivy Tech. There are

multiple resources in this town and there are also two literacy coalitions close by, one in Kokomo and one in Rochester. We don't have the funding here to duplicate those efforts.

Farnham continued, saying that everyone is welcome in this building – we do not limit or restrict who can come into the library at all. She used numbers from 2019, as 2020 looks vastly different than our normal, and told the board there were 230 children's programs at the library, with 5,627 children in attendance. Spangler and Farnham estimate that the library gave away over 2,000 free books to children in the community in 2019 as well. So in the 24 years Farnham has worked here, that would be around 70,000 plus free books provided to the community. That is an average of about 2 free books to everyone in the county.

Farnham next addressed the monuments being vandalized. There has been only 1 time in the 24 years she's been here, and that one time, it was mostly on the building and the stone, not so much on the bell. This led to a discussion over who owns those monuments along the side of the library and where they came from.

Continuing with the items on the agenda, Farnham reported that the library is compliant with Indiana State Library Standards. We have received the Indiana State Library CARES Act Mini-Grant, for \$1,400, which will pick up where the other grant left off and help to pay for PPE. There is an Indiana Public Access meeting on Monday, November 9th, at 5:30 PM at the Riverview Event center. Paul will be attending as more information is better. The library is also participating in the Dreams to Reality Halloween event with a book distribution. We are hoping for 900 people, which is their normal numbers there. Spangler discussed the all the events the library gives materials away at, that we couldn't do this year.

On COVID restrictions, Farnham plans to stay on the current track and gave another rundown of what that is. The average number of visitors each day is starting to go up, so it's possible we could go back to our regular hours after December. Farnham has the feeling the stage may be rolled back after the election, however, so isn't changing anything till then to be safe. Reed asked if other libraries have contact tracing stuff in place. Farnham responded that she and Spangler had discovered just the month before that we were (or are) one of the first libraries open as much as we are.

Farnham said there is a pothole in the driveway that will hopefully be fixed over the weekend. There was no other current or future renovation news.

OLD (UNFINISHED) BUSINESS

Reed reported from the Strategic Plan/Long Range Plan committee. She opened by saying they appreciated Farnham's research on what has been accomplished and what can be done. The time frame for the long range plan was discussed, and three years was settled on, so this plan will go to 2014. Reed is not going to read the plan, just highlight the few new or updated parts. Poverty was focused on in the committee. The committee had discussed the S.W.A.T. analysis on the second page of the plan a lot as well. On page ten, the reference to the role of the library trustees is new. They decided to build the board of trustees into the plan. Reed also highlighted the parts about explaining their district, marketing, and a few other small parts. Paul also stated that they didn't change a lot. There were minor changes, the mission and value statements were updated, and the trustee portion was the only big one. Reed added that they had batted around various definitions of literacy, and that Farnham was the one who told them about community literacy so that is now referenced throughout the

plan and in the trustee section. Paul commented that our library is an anomaly when it comes to the amount of physical materials still being checked out, as we have more stuff checked out here than most libraries do. Farnham said the committee had spent a lot of time discussing the different sorts of literacy. The term and concept of information literacy is from the 1990's and she pointed out just how much the library staff's job has changed in regards to information needs. The information we are asked about now is different, hence the term community literacy. This opened up a brief discussion on barometers. Brindle said that what most impressed her is the breadth of Evergreen Services offered, including testing options available through INSPIRE. Farnham shared that she was happy to see the addition of the trustee section, and that advocacy is huge. Paul said the board could either vote now or read over it for the month and vote at the next meeting. Swihart spoke up, asking about the one highlighted section. It was a part that had had some organization still up in the air but the highlighting simply needed to be removed. Farnham did take the opportunity to read through the list of the community partners. Reed motioned to accept the Strategic Plan with the stated correction. As she was from the Strategic Plan committee, it is a committee motion and no second is needed. The motion passed with all ayes.

NEW BUSINESS

The Salary Schedule was first. It is the same as the 2020 schedule except for the professional librarian section which was updated to reflect in the cost of living increase. Swihart clarified where all of the staff were located on the schedule, so which classes were used and which weren't. Reed motioned to accept the salary schedule as shown and Brindle seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.

The agenda order was rearranged slightly here, with the November and December meetings being rescheduled next. Both meetings were moved to the third Thursday of the month rather than the usual fourth Thursday.

Next, the director's evaluation was discussed. The board will meet and discuss their group census on that in an executive session, an hour before the November meeting. They will present the evaluation to the director in another executive meeting an hour before the December meeting.

The last item on the agenda was the Ellen Cole Fetter Painting. Paul asked if the board wanted to have a quick discussion on it to which no one responded. Paul motioned that we accept this painting, this gift, to celebrate this women who not only gave to the community and this library, but we have a continuing fund that does provide books to the library. Brindle seconded the motion and Paul once again asked if there was any discussion. There being no comments or questions, it moved onto the vote. The motion passed with all ayes.

The director evaluations were passed around for the board members to read through and score the director on for discussion at the executive meeting in November. Paul explained how it would work for the newer board members.

There being no further business on the agenda, the meeting was adjourned by President Paul at 7:34 PM.

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

SECRETARY APPROVAL:

(Signature & Date)

Peru Public Library
