



Minutes of the Regular Meeting of  
The Board of Trustees  
Webster Groves Public Library  
January 20, 2021

The meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Webster Groves Public Library was held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, January 21. Vice-president Bethany Curtis presided and Library Director Tom Cooper kept the minutes. Also present: Trustees Joan Esserman, Jenine Harris, Leanne Waugh, Ed Scholl, Tess Thompson, Janey Worthington, and Sherry Taylor, and City Council Liaison Karen Alexander. Absent: Trustee Justin Hauke.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Public Agenda

There was no public agenda.

Minutes of the November 18, 2020 Meeting

Mr. Cooper had distributed a set of minutes with corrections suggested by Mr. Hauke. Ms. Esserman also suggested a correction to her financial report. Ms. Taylor moved to accept the minutes as amended, Ms. Worthington seconded and the minutes were approved.

Correspondence

Mr. Cooper noted a card from patron John Harper, thanking our Reference staff for the VHS conversion service, and including a \$100 donation.

President's Report

There was no president's report.

Librarian's Report

Mr. Cooper recapped the plans that MLC libraries are pursuing to determine the best time to reopen for public service, including an upcoming meeting with St. Louis County Health Department.

Advanced Planning

Dr. Harris asked if anyone had questions about the survey results she had presented. Trustees were pleased with the level of patron satisfaction and the overall positive responses. There was a discussion of whether we could focus on populations that were underrepresented in the responses received, specifically people of color and men. Dr. Harris suggested that in a professional community

survey, which the Committee hopes to pursue in the near future, there could be plans for soliciting input from specific demographics.

While the responses were mostly positive, there were some critical comments, and we should continue discussion about how to remedy those things. Mr. Cooper said that to him, the most important matter is to focus on communicating the services we offer to people.

Dr. Thompson noted that the Board owed a debt to Dr. Harris for her excellent work on such a well-implemented survey.

#### Building and Grounds

Ms. Curtis spoke of the recent roof repairs. She noted that we are still waiting to hear from Steve Calhoun at ASI Signage about the status of our front yard sign, and we are also waiting for some replacement windows for broken panes in the Reading Room.

Ms. Esserman asked whether the repaving of the porous pavement on the parking lot seemed to be quality work, noting that the original porous pavement had deteriorated too quickly. Mr. Cooper said the paving companies he spoke with claimed that there had been improvements to this kind of pavement. The work looks good; time will tell if it is more durable.

#### Finance

Ms. Esserman recapped the 2020 Audit, noting that for the second year in a row, our financial position has improved, though not as much this year as last year. We have a good fund balance, which is important for emergencies.

Mr. Cooper discussed the three recommendations from the auditors, which were:

- Either begin doing an annual Fixed Assets Report, which our policy states we should do, or revise the Fixed Assets Policy;

- More carefully monitor specific operating budget fund lines when we make adjustments;

- Provide better security of on-hand cash.

The Policy Committee will meet soon to discuss revising the Fixed Assets policy. Mr. Cooper and Maureen McKenzie, our bookkeeper, will work on monitoring budget line items. As to securing on-hand cash, trustees are satisfied with the procedures we have in place. Cash on hand is reconciled against the computer system which records daily receipts, and counted and deposited by a bookkeeper who does not handle that cash on a daily basis, providing a dual control of cash receipts.

Ms. Esserman presented the November and December 2020 financial reports. Mr. Scholl moved to approve the reports, Ms. Taylor seconded, and the reports were approved.

### Human Resources

Dr. Thompson asked Mr. Cooper to speak about Bob Langenberg, the library's groundskeeper since June 2008, who died in November of COVID-related causes. She was pleased to note that the staff had taken up a collection to purchase a memorial paver in his name, and suggested trustees could make donations to purchase a book in his name.

### Policy

Ms. Taylor said that the Policy Committee had met to discuss a cell phone policy for the library. This was in response to a recommendation by our insurance company, who noted that we do not have such a policy for employees who drive as part of their jobs. A draft of that policy had been distributed. There were no questions or suggestions for changes. Ms. Esserman moved to accept the policy, Ms. Waugh seconded, and the policy was accepted. Mr. Cooper will add it to our Employee Manual.

### Old Business

There was no old business.

### New Business

Ms. Worthington moved that the Board should vote each month whether they would be meeting in-person or via Zoom, and that the February meeting should be via Zoom. Mr. Scholl seconded, and the motion passed.

In discussion about continuing to meet via Zoom, it was suggested by Dr. Thompson that, to make our virtual online meetings more accessible to the public, we might add the Zoom meeting entrance information for the Library Board's monthly meetings into the upcoming meetings/events list on the City's website; Councilwoman Alexander advised that this may result in significant increase in public attendance, based on City Council's experience. Mr. Cooper will look into the process for adding meeting information and report back.

There was a discussion of Mr. Hauke's email and his concerns about continuing to meet via Zoom, which he feels does not provide a sufficiently open forum, and about the library not being open for public service, which is an ongoing matter of equal access. As he had suggested in his email that 'the board can consider whether to seek a new member/president at this evening's meeting,' there was a discussion of the matter. Trustees are not certain that Mr. Hauke intends to resign. They also do not think that they have the authority to remove a trustee without cause, as trustees are appointed by the City Council and not the Library Board. At this point, Mr. Hauke has only missed one meeting, which hardly approaches the threshold at which our own by-laws suggest a trustee can be removed. Ms. Alexander offered to take the question to the Mayor and Council for consultation, as it is unclear what action we can, or should take. The discussion was tabled until we have further information.

## Adjournment

Ms. Waugh moved to adjourn, Mr. Scholl seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

The next meeting of the Library's Board of Trustees will be held on Wednesday, February 17 at 7 p.m.