



Minutes of the Regular Meeting of  
The Board of Trustees  
Webster Groves Public Library  
April 21, 2021

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

Call to Order

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

Public Agenda

There was no public agenda.

Minutes of the March 17, 2021 Meeting

Dr. Thompson moved to approve the minutes, Mr. Scholl seconded, and the minutes were approved.

Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

President's Report

Ms. Curtis noted that Tess Thompson, Justin Hauke, and Joan Esserman have expiring terms in May. Dr. Thompson and Mr. Hauke may speak to City Hall if they wish to extend their terms, but Ms. Esserman is termed out.

Librarian's Report

Mr. Cooper reported that business is steady after reopening. The trend of more people coming into the building and fewer pulling up for curbside service continues. Statistics gathered for the first month indicate that there is still a sharp drop-off in attendance after 4:30 to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, indicating it is not likely we will expand evening hours yet. He said the next steps in the reopening process would likely be to add Sunday hours (perhaps in May), and to open the Meeting Room for public groups, likely by June. Use of the Meeting Room would still be subject to limitations on size of groups (no more than 30 people), and masking and distancing requirements would be in effect. There would be no refreshments allowed.

### Advanced Planning

There was no report from this committee.

### Building and Grounds

Ms. Curtis expressed her pleasure at seeing the newly installed sign. It has been inspected by the city. There is still some work to be done filling in the gap underneath the sign and maybe planting some flowers around it.

Mr. Cooper took a moment to thank Ms. Curtis for her work on this project, which has been talked about for years; but her persistence, helped by Dr. Thompson as a member of the committee, finally got it done.

### Finance

Ms. Esserman presented the financial report for March. Expenditures are within budget. She noted that property reassessments were due to be finalized by July 1, but that increases in property values do not yield a like increase in tax revenues. How much our income can increase is controlled by the Hancock Amendment and pegged to inflation as indicated by the CPI. That figure has been running at about 1.6%.

Mr. Scholl of the Finance Committee also gave a synopsis of the state of the economy in general and in the near future. There is projected to be significant growth in the second half of 2021 and into 2022, fueled largely by built-up demand, a hot housing market, and continuing low interest rates. Further, inflation is still under control.

Ms. Worthington moved to approve the finance report, Ms. Esserman seconded, and the report was approved.

### Human Resources

Mr. Cooper described his efforts to bring a better balance in the use of salaried full-time staff and hourly part-time staff. By making better use of full-time hours, he hopes to free up more of the funds now being spent on part-time staff. He hopes this would help to realize better compensation for all staff. Doing this would not eliminate any positions, but come about through attrition of part-time staff.

### Policy

There was no report from this committee.

Ms. Worthington reported that the Friends of the Library are enthusiastically working on a number of projects, including their upcoming trivia event, an ice cream social keyed to Missouri's bicentennial, and the paver program. Their membership is also up.

Dr. Thompson took a moment to express the board's gratitude for the service of Joan Esserman. Her experience and expertise have been invaluable in her years of service. Ms. Esserman added that this was her second full term on the library board,

noting that trustees who have termed out can reapply for the board after a two-year hiatus.

#### Old Business

There was a discussion of how to proceed with Zoom versus in-person meetings. Several trustees expressed a willingness to get back to in-person meetings, though there was still ambivalence on the point. In the end, it was decided that since the library would likely make the Meeting Room available to the public in June, it would be best to plan for that month as the first in-person meeting.

Mr. Scholl moved that the May meeting should be via Zoom, with regular meetings commencing with the June meeting. Dr. Thompson seconded, and the motion was approved.

#### New Business

Mr. Cooper presented an outline of suggested budget adjustments to the 2020-2021 operating budget (attached), which the Finance Committee had reviewed in a prior meeting. Ms. Esserman moved to approve the adjustments, Mr. Scholl seconded, and the adjustments are approved.

#### Adjournment

Dr. Thompson moved to adjourn, Ms. Esserman seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

The next meeting of the Library's Board of Trustees will be held on Wednesday, May 19 at 7 p.m.