

DRAFT

Board of Trustees Minutes June 9, 2022

A regular meeting of the Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees was held at the Baugher Center, 100 West Indiana Avenue, Chesterton, Indiana on Thursday, June 9, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

Board members present were: Kathryn Cochran, Michele Corazzo, Will Scharp, Nick Tilden, Abbe Trent, and Rondi Wightman.

Board member absent: Heather Augustyn

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Lisa Stamm, Library Assistant Director Heather Chaddock, Attorney Lisa Baron, and Minutes Recorder Christine Hoover.

This meeting was called to order by Board President Kathryn Cochran at 7:07 pm.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Nick Tilden to approve the minutes from the May 12, 2022 regular Board meeting as presented. Rondi Wightman seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with Michele Corazzo abstaining from voting, and the motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the Financial and Statistical Reports as presented. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Claims and Warrants

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of May 13, 2022 through June 9, 2022 as presented. Nick Tilden seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Librarian's Report

Service highlights were related from the past month featuring positive feedback and gratitude expressed by patrons regarding their Library experiences.

The Library is celebrating its 50th birthday in 2022 and will offer special, related programs and giveaways for all ages during the month of August. The Library will also host a table with Library birthday giveaways at the upcoming Chesterton Art Fair.

In the month of May, 17,757 people visited the Library. Staff created nine (9) in-person programs with 80 attendees. Staff answered 28 reference questions, 83 tech help questions, and 106 new library cards were registered. Graphs showing materials circulation statistics were provided.

The Polaris integrated library system (ILS) experienced a maintenance upgrade on May 9. This upgrade went smoothly, and there were no costs incurred for this upgrade which improved functionality and security.

On May 19, Director Stamm and Board Trustees Kathryn Cochran and Abbe Trent attended the exhibit opening of Calumet Voices, National Stories. This collaborative effort between the Westchester Township History Museum, the Porter County Museum, and the Chicago Field Museum is part of a larger, traveling exhibit that will culminate with all participants' components displayed together at the Field Museum at the end of 2022. This local focus of the exhibit is "A Calumet Tapestry: Artistic Views of the Region", and the Library contributed locally made, antique ceramics and glassware; opposing protest and activism signs; and other Duneland artifacts. Director Stamm commended Museum Curator Serena Ard for the outstanding job she did, especially in reflecting the indigenous peoples of the Region and speaking of their often-overlooked contributions.

There are birds in one of the unfinished closet spaces in the upstairs area of the Museum. This is not in a public area. It is believed that a nest has been created inside a vent on the west side of the house towards the south end, above three small windows. It is believed that the point of entry used by birds both this year and last year is a structural failure within or behind the vent. Duneland School Corporation (DSC) has been contacted to resolve this problem.

On May 18, all toilet plumbing failed in the Baugher Center. The Town of Chesterton was contacted to determine if there was a sewer backup or other issue in the area that would cause this problem. Since there were no such issues reported by the Town, Trapmasters was called to resolve the problem. They located a large blockage of sanitizing hand wipes and hair, and the blockage was cleared by the end of the day for a cost of \$400. It was noted that the Library stopped using sanitizing hand wipes in bulk toward the end of 2020 and since then has been using biodegradable paper towels and human-friendly sanitizer solution. Staff were also instructed long ago not to flush any sort of wipes.

In May, the Library was decorated in preparation for the summer reading program entitled *Oceans of Possibilities*. Schools have shared the summer reading information and shown the promotional video to students and parents, and so far there are 261 children, 92 teens/tweens, and 131 adults registered. After only a few days into the program, registrants are already at more than 50% of the total registrants from last year. Patrons can participate in the summer reading program with either a paper log or online through Beanstack.

In May, Tri-Kappa donated \$250 to the Library. This donation was deposited into the Unrestricted Gift Fund. Director Stamm expressed her thanks to Tri-Kappa for consistently including the Library in their community support.

Director Stamm has been attending webinars from the Indiana State Library (ISL), Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF), and State Board of Accounts (SBOA) regarding the budget process. Once the Max Levy Growth Quotient is officially proclaimed by DLGF (around June 30), Director Stamm will prepare a draft budget and bring it to the Board during the July meeting.

One of the small trees in the strip of grass along the Indiana Avenue side of the Baugher Center parking lot had a bug infestation. Its trunk was dead, so the Maintenance Department cut it down. There was another tree in the same strip of grass that appeared to have similar issues, but an attempt was made to treat it and remove a few small dead limbs.

A limb of another large, mature tree to the right when facing the main entrance was hanging low enough over the sidewalk to become a hazard to those walking by/under it, so Justin's Tree Service was hired to remove this limb. They were consulted about the other small tree that was infested, and they advised it was dying and unable to be saved. Justin's was asked to remove it and to grind down all remaining stumps so grass can be planted where these trees stood. It appears that when the landscaping was done by the Baugher Center adjacent/above the Calumet sidewalk (decades ago), the plastic bags containing the new mulch and dirt were buried within the mulch and dirt as it was tilled. This plastic has been choking out rain and generally disrupting the ecosystem. Justin's advised the only option to permanently take care of this problem of buried plastic would be to entirely redo the landscaping by removing the plastic and replacing all dirt and mulch. This was not an acceptable option, and it was decided to remove plastic when it is visible and tend the area as has been done in the past. The currently in-process cost of the removal and grinding of trees, stumps, and limbs by Justin's is \$750. It has since been determined that carpenter ants have been infesting the small trees, and the Maintenance crew is working with Justin's and Chesterton Feed and Garden to find treatments to deter the ants from infesting and eating other nearby trees now that the small trees have been removed.

Staff changes for the month include the hiring of Keegan Palonis as a part-time Clerk, and the separation of substitute Clerk Siara Christenson.

Old Business

Thomas HVAC

A permit for the Thomas HVAC project was obtained from the Town of Chesterton at a cost of \$1,822, and the architect for the project and Circle R Construction were advised that the permits are now in-hand.

Amerco Engineering provided results from the asbestos inspection at the Thomas Branch. This report is included in the Board documents. The sample collected confirmed that the asbestos-containing drywall joint compound is also located on the 2nd floor of Thomas. Therefore, during the renovation project, Amerco will have an Indiana-licensed Asbestos Abatement Contractor remove the requested drywall as needed for the project. Amerco is wrapping up the report for the Thomas roof core samples, and this report is expected soon.

Museum Assessment

DSC Superintendent Chip Pettit was made aware that the Library Board prefers to purchase the Brown Mansion and is not interested in entering into another lease. He advised he would share this information with DSC legal counsel as they explore purchasing options. Director Stamm will advise the Board of any new information that is received.

Dune Acres

As the Board discussed during its May meeting, the Trustees lean toward selling the parcel of land in Dune Acres, per the donor's intent that "...this property, or the funds that can be procured by its sale, will be of benefit to the Library." The Trustees opted to table this item until June meeting in order that the Trustees that missed the May meeting may add to the discussion. Board members at this time

agreed that selling this property was the best option and agreed with Director Stamm's request that she be given flexibility until after the Budget is done in July to begin the listing and selling process.

Memorials

Director Stamm and the Maintenance Manager have been researching and discussing the procurement and installation of two benches to honor the memory of Trustee Drew Rhed and Attorney Terry Hiestand. These two benches will be placed on the grounds of Hageman Library. In conversations with Chesterton Feed and Garden and Ace Hardware, Director Stamm determined that steel slats in a wrought iron bench would be best in terms of longevity and maintenance with an added benefit being that they would match what the Town installs. Chesterton Feed and Garden is creating price quotes for the benches, and Ace Hardware is advising on plaques since they have supplied the plaques on other benches around town.

New Business

Unacceptable Behavior Policy

The legal counsel for the Indiana State Library sent a memo to library directors informing them that Indiana just passed legislation discarding the requirement that a person have a permit or license to carry a handgun. Directors were advised that blanket statements prohibiting "weapons" should be changed in their unacceptable behavior policies since guns are weapons and are permitted by the State of Indiana to be openly carried. Director Stamm updated the Unacceptable Behavior Policy to streamline the language as a whole and to specifically include language relating to the new legislation.

After discussion of the updated changes to this policy, it was decided that Attorney Lisa Baron will review the proposed language dealing with the carrying of firearms by the public and suggest phrasing to minimize any potentially unclear areas. This issue will be tabled until next month's meeting.

Counsel Changes

In May, Attorney Lisa Baron informed Director Stamm that she has been promoted to lead her firm's new office in Indianapolis and that she will be relocating to Indianapolis in January 2023. She would like to remain in her role as the Library's attorney and gave the Board a variety of options to consider for her to achieve that purpose. She advised that her workload will still require her to be in northwest Indiana on occasion, and she can schedule that workload so she would be present at Board meetings. If she could not be present, remote attendance would be a possibility.

After discussion, the Board agreed to retain Lisa Baron as the Library Attorney with the allowance of her attending monthly meetings both in-person and remotely, if necessary.

Minutes Recorder

Minutes Recorder Christine Hoover will be retiring after this meeting. She has acted as the Library Minutes Recorder for the past 11 years, and Director Stamm thanked her for the job she has done. Assistant Director Heather Chaddock will assume the duties of Minutes Recorder beginning at the July meeting.

A motion was made by Abbe Treat to approve the Librarian's Report as presented. Nick Tilden seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments at this time.

Other Business

There was no Other Business at this time.

The date of the next regular Board of Trustees meeting will be on Thursday, July 14, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Baugher Center.

Kathryn Cochran made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 7:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Hoover, Minutes Recorder for
Heather Augustyn, Secretary