

# LINCOLN LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING



**January 26, 2022**

**Board Present:** Arden Lang, President; Helen Cox, Vice-President; Annie Brooks; Cristina Cray; Andre Jordan; Mary Mucciante; Geoff Pettys; Tiffany Roe; Marty Ryan;

**Board Absent:**

**Staff Present:** Emily Stone, Technical Services Manager; Anna Lilian Moser, Youth Service Manager;

**City Employees Present:** Mayor James Langfelder; Ron Cook, HR Director; James Zerkle, Corporation Counsel;

President Lang called the meeting to order at 4:48pm.

Roll was called.

**Mayoral Address:** Mayor Langfelder confirmed the dismissal of Director Hartman. Mayor Langfelder introduced James Zerkle, Corporation Council, and Ron Cook, HR Director. Mayor Langfelder stated that he and Mr. Cook were meeting with willing staff individually to hear challenges, wants/needs, and input. He stated that they were hoping to find the next potential director with the present library staff. Mayor Langfelder invited question with the caveat being that certain personnel issues could not be commented upon.

- Marty Ryan stated that he was concerned about the abrupt nature of former Director Hartman's dismissal pair with the vague language of "going in a different direction". He asked if something so serious had transpired that she be terminated in the last wave of a pandemic.

Mayor Langfelder answered that there is no truly good time for a termination and though he could not get into specifics, the loss of valuable staff was a tipping point in the decision. He stated that confidential personnel matters could only be addressed in closed executive session.

Mayor Langfelder stated that he would like to have a new permanent replacement in place fairly quickly. It is his preference to fill the position from within, if possible.

- Ms. Lang asked who was in charge until the decision is made. Mayor Langfelder explained that each manager is handling his or her own department. Ms. Fisher is handling most administrative duties relying on Mr. Cook or himself for any added support.

Ms. Fisher added that the managers were working collectively to handle any difficulties that arise and that HR Director Cook, a members of the Board, the Foundation and the Friends of Lincoln Library have all offered tremendous support.

Ms. Lang questioned whether the phrase “going in a different direction” meant that the mayor was unhappy with the current Strategic Plan. Mayor Langfelder answered that the current Strategic Plan was fluid and changes due to in-house and worldwide issues (*i.e.; the pandemic*).

Ms. Lang stated that although the Board of Trustees by-laws state that the Board, albeit advisory, be involved in the selection and, possibly the dismissal, of the Director, they had not had any input on these processes. Ms. Lang said that she had tried to contact Mr. Zerkle about this discrepancy, before former Director Hartman’s dismissal.

Mr. Zerkle stated that the by-laws do reflect what is in the city code. However, the library board is strictly advisory not governing. The board does not have the authority to hire or fire staff, it not a managing board but more of a policy board. Hiring and firing lies at the discretion of the city.

Mr. Pettys wondered why the by-laws, as well as the city ordinance, states that the board is involved in the hiring/firing process, if that is not the case. He asked if this is something that should be changed in both places. Mr. Zerkle stated that it is worded that the Board can make “nonbinding” recommendations on these matters but no governing decisions.

Mr. Pettys said that it was his belief that the board had not been involved in even interviewing previous applicants for the director position and wondered if the board could be involved in the interviewing process and offer a recommendation, even if it was a nonbinding one. Mayor Langfelder answered that he would be open to allowing the board to interview prospective directors. It was agreed that that the board would meet in Executive Session to meet any selected individuals.

Ms. Lang stated that she believed that the by-laws should be more clearly worded to alleviate any ambiguity as to the board’s role in the selection process.

- Ms. Mucciante asked Mayor Langfelder what he saw as the mission for the library director and the library as a whole. Mayor Langfelder said he saw the library as an opportunity center with the library director focusing on outreach and collaboration. He also would like add an Assistant Director and an Outreach Coordinator.

- Mr. Pettys wanted to know who was handling the Annual Budget presentation. Ms. Fisher explained that Dominique LaSalvia, Samantha Dunn, and Anna Moser were taking the lead on the presentation.

**Minutes:** Minutes from December Board Meeting were presented for approval. Ms. Cox motioned to approve minutes. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried.

**Financial Reports:** In Fiscal Officer Dominique LaSalvia's absence, Ms. Fisher submitted the November financial reports. Ms. Fisher stated that the only irregularity is that item line #1232 went over 100% but that line feeds from the other 1200 lines, so it evens it out.

**Director's Report:** *(In the absence of a Director, Ms. Fisher presented)*

**COVID-19 Update** – Programming is currently being done virtually. Room reservations are still being accommodated but all library programming is virtual. Three staff members have been out in January due to COVID but luckily no hospitalizations.

**Vacancies** – Currently the library has 4 positions open Library assistant II, Library Assistant IV, Adult Services Manager, and Director. Library management is working with HR to get interviews started and positions filled. Youth Services has 2 new staff members, Kit Garton – Teen Librarian and Christa Rother – Library Assistant IV, putting them in a great position going into the Summer Reading Program!

**Digital Display** – The library has purchased new digital display board technology through MVIX USA which should be installed soon.

**Item Check Out Longevity** – A patron requested that our check out time limits be increased. Ms. Fisher explained that the length after meeting with management that it was decided that increasing the length of check out periods would greatly increase waiting lists for items. However, a renewal option has been added for interlibrary loan items.

- Ms. Cray asked that we consider researching the possibility of obtaining a new elevator in the next fiscal year. Ms. Fisher pointed out that Mayor Langfelder was included in this meeting and could hear our requests. And assured that she would also convey that request to Dominique LaSalvia.
- Ms. Lang asked if the librarians had the opportunity to do evaluations on progress toward meeting the goals and expectations the Strategic Plan and if not could that be done. Ms. Stone stated that monthly statistics are reported to IPLAR and can easily be shared with the Board. Those monthly statistics along with annual statistics can and will be shared as well.

## President's Report - None

**Friends Report** – Ms. Cray reported that the Friends have the following book sales scheduled:

March 5<sup>th</sup> – Children's books & Adult Hardback Fiction

May 8<sup>th</sup> – Science Fiction and Horror, CD's & DVDs

June 11<sup>th</sup> – Annual Summer Book Sale (all items)

*These dates are dependent upon COVID numbers.*

**Programming Update** – Anna Moser presented programming update

Most programming is being done virtually. However, Adult Services has done some passive programming, such as:

- ✓ Winter Art Show – January 17<sup>th</sup> through the end of February
- ✓ Winter Reading Challenge which runs through the end of February
- ✓ Knittin' for Kittens – where individuals knit and donate blankets for shelter animals

Youth Services has been doing virtual story times and take and make craft projects. Kit Garton, our new Teen Librarian, is doing very well and has hosted her first Teen Advisory Group and has already scheduled a virtual game night and virtual book club!

Summer Griffith and Anna Moser are working together on a collaboration with the Presidential Library on the Lincoln for Lincolns Read-a-Thon, on February 12<sup>th</sup>. They are looking for donations of gift cards and new books that will go towards Compass for Kids. There will be a collection box in the library atrium for new books donated to this program.

The library is also participating in Black Children's Book Week in the month of February.

Interviews are moving forward with interviews for the grant funded Outreach Coordinator Position.

Britainy Montague is doing a music based Black History Month series on Instagram.

Adult Services is doing a Book Match program where books are matched with patrons based on survey questions.

Youth Services and Adult Services are in the beginning stages of planning for the Summer Reading Program.

Library outreach continues to expand.

**Unfinished Business:** The review of by-laws will be tabled until next board meeting.

**New Business:**

**Elections** – Mr. Ryan stated that elections will be addressed during February’s board meeting. He asked for anyone who is interested in holding an office to email him.

**2022 Meeting Dates** – 2022 meeting dates were submitted for approval. Ms. Cray made a motion to approve the meeting dates. Mr. Ryan seconded the motion. Meeting dates were approved unanimously.

**Public Forum:** None

**No Executive Session:** None

- Mr. Pettys asked under what circumstances Executive Session were held. Ms. Lang stated that Executive Session only occurs when dealing with confidential personnel matters.

**Adjournment:** Ms. Cray made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Pettys seconded that motion. Meeting was adjourned at 5:51pm.

