

LINCOLN LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING



June 14, 2023

Board Present: Andre Jordan, President; Helen Cox, Vice-President; Geoff Pettys; Mary Mucciante; Jessica Rubinkowski; Marty Ryan (arrived 4:49pm)

Board Absent: Cristina Cray, Secretary

Staff Present: Kathryn Harris, Interim Director; Emily Stone, Assistant Director

President Jordan called the meeting to order at 4:48pm

Roll was called.

Minutes: Minutes from the May Board meeting were presented for approval. A motion to approve the minutes with corrections unanimously carried. The corrections were: the deletion of an extraneous word, correction to the spelling of Jessica Rubinkowski's name, and the following was added to unfinished business: Geoff Pettys would like to create a subcommittee to look into a reorganization of the library's governance structure, and would like to serve on the committee.

Board Members introduced themselves to Interim Director Harris.

Director's Report:

General Updates

- Interim Director Harris gave the board a brief summary of her professional background and informed them that her focus during her 90-day tenure at Lincoln Library is on finding a new permanent director. She is also getting to

know staff and understand their jobs. She stated that she is in agreement with Mayor Buscher that the library director should hold a library degree. She has been in touch with her library contacts throughout the state, including at ILA, to start laying the groundwork for a director search.

- In response to a question asked at the last meeting, it was noted that 179 paid Non-Resident library cards were issued in the last 12 months.
- We continue to be in a waiting phase for the Bookmobile. The chassis and body are currently being constructed, and the tentative completion date is December 2023.

Staff and Hiring

- Curtis Mann's last day will be July 7th and the Board will be invited to his retirement party on July 6th once details are finalized.
- The interviews for the Sangamon Valley Collection Manager are scheduled. There were two qualified candidates, one of whom withdrew. Therefore, it is predicted that the hiring process will proceed quickly.
- The Division Manager for the CoLab has been reposted.
- Interviews for the Librarian IV position in Extension Services occurred yesterday, and a hiring recommendation was made.
- The Community Engagement Manager position description is currently being reviewed to make sure it best meets the library's needs.

Programs

- The Juneteenth kick-off event and talent showcase is being hosted at the Library tonight starting at 5:30pm. The County Health Department will also be in attendance, offering free blood pressure readings and more for community members.
- Summer Reading is officially underway and is going very well so far.
- The CoLab soft launch was successful, and staff have already begun hosting programs and classes in the space.

President's Report:

President Jordan stated that he was glad everything at the Library is calming down and being restored to order.

Lincoln Library Alliance Report:

President Jordan presented the Alliance Report on Secretary Cray's behalf. The Alliance met June 5th and their meeting largely focused on the recent Book Sale. They also scheduled a Meet and Greet event for June 24th, explored dates for future mini

book sales, and worked on a trivia event to be hosted in the fall. It was also noted that 2 new members joined the Lincoln Library Alliance Board.

New Business: Geoff Pettys presented the research he has done on the role of the Library Board. He noted that much of his research was done using board meeting minutes, which he would like to see continue to be more detailed so that future researchers and board members can use them as historical documents. The public library as we know it today has been in existence in Springfield since approximately 1900. In that time, there have been 11 total library directors, with most directors serving for 20 years or more under multiple mayoral administrations. Mr. Pettys noted that the library has gone through 4 directors since 2017, and that no director in library history had ever been fired prior to the dismissal of Rochelle Hartman, and no mayor had ever fired a director appointed by a previous administration prior to the dismissal of Summer Griffith. Mr. Pettys also informed the Board that prior to the hiring of Will O'Hearn in 2017, the Board had been involved in every director search and hiring process. He stated that it was unclear why this power was removed from the Board and expressed that it was a disservice to the library and the citizens of Springfield to have a politicized library director position. He also questioned why the board was not informed prior to the dismissal of the last two directors. He stated that he would like to address these issues publicly at City Council. Interim Director Harris stated that she will begin researching how comparable libraries throughout the state are governed and what their relationships are to their cities and boards.

A motion was made to create a Library Governance Subcommittee of at least 3 members for the purpose of researching and recommending a change to the library's governance structure. The motion passed unanimously. Denise will email the Board to ask for volunteers to serve on the subcommittee, which will hold open meetings in the library.

Mr. Pettys will draft a statement from the Board to be read at an upcoming City Council meeting, and President Jordan and Ms. Rubinkowski both volunteered to assist. The Board unanimously voted to convene a special meeting to approve the letter, to be held July 6th at 12pm.

Executive Session: None

Public Forum: A member of the public asked if the Board should inform the Mayor and City Council in advance about the statement to be read at Council. It was stated that this was not necessary, since Mr. Pettys will sign up with the Council Coordinator in advance to speak at the meeting.

Adjournment: Mr. Jordan made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Ryan seconded that motion. Meeting was adjourned at 6:17pm.

