

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice President Jenefer Machovina called to order a meeting of the Avon Lake Public Library Board of Trustees on August 12, 2021 at 7:01p.m. Trustees in attendance were: Jenefer Machovina, Michele Jakubs, Holly Moore Kowalski, Rebecca Schaltenbrand, and Betsey Bell. Steve Parsons and Deborah Yue were absent. Also present were Director William Rutger, Fiscal Officer Lorie Scheer, Assistant Director Gerry Vogel and Administrative Assistant Carrie Muzychak. Marilyn Valentino was also in attendance.

II. Adjustments to the agenda -There were no adjustments to the agenda.

III. Public comments - There were no public comments. William welcomed in-coming trustee Marilyn Valentino to the meeting.

IV. Minutes

A. Minutes of the regular meeting of June 10, 2021

Holly moved, and Betsey seconded **Resolution No. 2804-21**, approving the minutes of the regular meeting of June 10, 2021.

Call For Vote: All Ayes Motion Carried

V. Fiscal Officer's Report

A. Fiscal Officer's 2021 report, and monthly financial statements - Lorie touched on the Revenue report and commented that the Public Library Fund (PLF) has been amended to reflect a significant expected increase to \$806,669.79. William explained that the PLF represents funding from the State and that this projection has increased because the State has fared better than had been expected. This is positive news for our financial position.

As for the Bank report, Lorie noted cash reserve funds from STARPlus have recently been transferred to STAR Ohio Building Investment Fund. William and Lorie clarified that funds had been moved to STARPlus in the past due to better rates and the implication that it was supported and backed by the State. However, STARPlus is no longer being endorsed by the Treasurer's office as there are multiple products in the marketplace offering similar services to those available through STARPlus so it does not make sense to endorse one product over others. William clarified the Library is legally limited to where deposits can be placed and STAR Ohio is a standard product across the industry and is approved by the State.

Lorie reviewed the Expense report and commented the Fixed Building & Site Maintenance line item shows we incurred an expense relating to the recently completed parking lot maintenance. This was a project which was delayed due to the pandemic.

As for the check report, Lorie reminded the Trustees that the report reflects checks processed for both June and July. Lorie gave further clarification on checks including those submitted to Avon Lake Printing (summer reading logs), 21st Century Media (employment ad for Facilities Manager), CNA Surety (annual expense for a surety bond), Illinois Library Association (summer reading t-shirts and other items), infoUSA Marketing Inc. (research databases available for patrons), Northeast Ohio Regional Libraries (institutional dues), Treasurer, State of Ohio (transfer of library materials via courier), and US Protective Services (alarm system).

Overall, Lorie stated the Library is in good shape financially, and with no other questions concluded the report.

Holly moved, and Michele seconded **Resolution No. 2805-21**, approving the Fiscal Officer's June 2021 report and monthly financial statements.

Call For Vote: All Ayes Motion Carried

VI. Directors Reports

A. Gifts - William stated there was one gift to the Endowment fund from June-July 2021, as follows: \$100.00 from Marion Zelinski in support of the Library.

Betsey moved, and Rebecca seconded **Resolution No. 2806-21**, accepting \$100.00 to the Endowment Fund.

Call For Vote: All Ayes Motion Carried

B . Director's Monthly Report - William gave an overview of the final phase of the Library's reopening planned for September. Public meeting rooms will open again and reservations are being secured. DiscoveryWorks will reopen to the public and staff has been rearranging, repairing, and painting the space. In-person programming will resume and some programming will have virtual components as well. Take-home crafts and kits will continue due to popularity among patrons. The Holds room will be relocated out of its current location to the Circulation area so DiscoveryWorks can resume classroom visits. Seating areas have been designated around the library with single seats to accommodate quiet areas and have been well received. Group study spaces have been defined and select tutor rooms will now be reservable. The Gallery has been rearranged as cafe seating when not reserved.

As for continuing COVID-19 restrictions, plexiglass barriers will remain indefinitely and currently many staff and patrons are opting to wear masks and other protective gear. Sanitizing and mask stations are still available for staff and patron usage. Self-checkout stations and the app continue to be popular with patrons. Staff has been working closely with the schools, which will resume field trips at the Library. The Library will assess the demand for in-person programming and will adjust accordingly.

William gave updates on the large format scanner which has been up and running for in-house usage such as digitizing archives and digitizing City of Avon Lake meeting minutes. Gerry and William explained the scanner is on a wheeled table and has the capability of raising and lowering. The scanner has recently been moved out of DiscoveryWorks and is now located near the Information desk. It will be made available for public usage in September with appropriate signage and instruction provided by staff.

William spoke to the DiscoveryWorks redesign process which is underway. RGI Creative will be meeting with staff. Multiple RGI Creative staff members are Avon Lake residents as well as DiscoveryWorks users and are already familiar with the space and its current usage. An online community survey is live and will be promoted in the fall program guide and on signage when DiscoveryWorks opens.

As mentioned by Lorie in the financial report, William commented State revenues continue to exceed expectations thus increasing the Public Library Fund.

William highlighted a new partnership with Avon-on-the-Lake Garden Club. The Library will offer the Garden Club a dedicated meeting space and the Garden Club will open the speaker portion of their meeting as available to the public. William mentioned this is a “win-win” opportunity to showcase and offer additional programming at no cost to us.

C. Monthly statistics -William noted that Circulation statistics continue to increase from month to month as the Library experiences a steady and manageable stream of activity. Self-checkout figures consistently increase and currently account for 28% of Circulation. This figure also includes self-check activity via the app. William also highlighted an emerging trend as it relates to digital materials. Patrons are reverting back to checking out physical items as opposed to digital materials. Many patrons took advantage of digital resources while the Library was closed or had limited services. However, current data shows patrons of all ages are now preferring to obtain physical books and other resources as the reopening phases continue. With no further questions, William concluded the Director’s report.

VII. Unfinished Business - There was no unfinished business.

VIII. New Business

A. Nepotism Policy - William has been working with the Board and garnering Rebecca’s public law expertise to consider revising Library policies such as the nepotism policy. Currently, the nepotism policy states “*No immediate family of current employees or Board members may be hired by the Library*”. William and Rebecca commented our current policy is more restrictive than required and may cause practical problems such as preventing the best candidate from being hired . Rebecca advised that the Library is required to comply with the nepotism prohibitions set forth in the Ohio Ethics Law. The Ohio Ethics Law, generally, prohibits a public employee, such as a Library employee, from 1) authorizing the employment of a family member; and 2) using the authority or influence of a public position to secure authorization of the employment of a

family member. The Ohio Ethics Law does **not** prohibit family members from working for the same public entity as long as the employees are not in the same chain-of-command. William stated other libraries and institutions such as the City of Avon Lake do not have nepotism policies that are more stringent than the Ohio Ethics Law. Collectively, it was determined to be in the best interests of the Library to revise the policy to reflect the current nepotism prohibitions in the Ohio Ethics law. In its simplest form, family members cannot be in positions of command and cannot promote or influence decision-making relating to family members.

The recommended verbiage for the updated Nepotism policy was presented as follows: *Library employees are required to comply with the nepotism prohibitions and restrictions set forth in the Ohio Ethics Law (Ohio Revised Code Chapter 102 and Section 2921.42 and 2921.43). These prohibitions include authorizing a family member’s employment, influencing the hiring process for a family member, supervising a family member (direct, or in the chain-of-command), participating in an evaluation of a family member, and participating in discussions relating to a promotion or pay increase of a family member. Employees are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the nepotism provisions of the Ohio Ethics Law, as well as nepotism informational resources provided by the Ohio Ethics Commission.*

Rebecca clarified that Ohio law defines a family member as including the following relatives, regardless of where they reside: (1) spouse; (2) children (whether dependent or not); (3) siblings; (4) parents; (5) grandparents; and (6) grandchildren. It also includes any other person related by blood or by marriage and living in the same household.

Betsey moved and Holly seconded **Resolution No. 2807-21** to approve the revised Nepotism policy as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Motion Carried

Betsey Bell	AYE
Michele Jakubs	AYE
Holly Moore Kowalski	AYE
Jenefer Machovina	AYE
Steve Parsons	Absent
Rebecca Schaltenbrand	AYE
Deborah Yue	Absent

B. Fine Policy- William spoke to the Library’s current fine policy which had been revised during the pandemic to limit fines to ease operations and limit handling cash. Generally, fines are not accrued however, are incurred for items not returned after a period of time. In addition, fines are currently still in place for some non-traditional items such as Hot Picks, Nooks and Kindles, musical instruments, and bicycles because of the limited supply and nature of the equipment. The Board had discussed fine-free policies prior to the pandemic as it has been a trend across libraries intended to reduce barriers to access. William remarked over the last year, the Library has had few problems with patron hoarding or issues recovering items. Lorie also clarified fines are not

designed to generate revenue but are in place to protect our materials and there is no harm or loss with waiving fines for most items. William proposed the Library revise the policy to fine-free, however, continue charging fees for lost and damaged materials. The Library will notify patrons of overdue items after 2 weeks as opposed to 6 weeks overdue. Fines will remain for some items because they are new, in-demand, or non-typical and need to be returned in a reasonable time. These specific items (listed below) will be charged at a rate of \$5.00 per day. Betsey and Rebecca additionally inquired whether fines incurred in the past that are still remaining on patron cards will be removed. Discussion ensued involving retroactively removing fines for accounts not currently in collections. The Board agreed to provide a one-time amnesty to remove patron fines not relating to lost items. Marilyn Valerino asked if the public will be advised on this new policy and William replied that rather than a public announcement, Library staff will provide one-on-one communication to relay the information to our patrons.

The recommended verbiage for the updated Fine policy was presented as follows: *Borrowed items returned will not be charged overdue fines except for equipment, musical instruments, bikes, and DiscoveryWorks kits. These items carry a \$5.00 per day fine. The Library will charge fees for lost or damaged items.*

Rebecca moved and Michele seconded **Resolution No. 2808-21** to approve the revised Overdue Fine policy as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Motion Carried

Betsey Bell	AYE
Michele Jakubs	AYE
Holly Moore Kowalski	AYE
Jenefer Machovina	AYE
Steve Parsons	Absent
Rebecca Schaltenbrand	AYE
Deborah Yue	Absent

Betsey moved and Rebecca seconded **Resolution No. 2809-21** to retroactively waive outstanding overdue fines that are not in collections.

Roll Call Vote: Motion Carried

Betsey Bell	AYE
Michele Jakubs	AYE
Holly Moore Kowalski	AYE
Jenefer Machovina	AYE
Steve Parsons	Absent
Rebecca Schaltenbrand	AYE
Deborah Yue	Absent

C. *Additional closing dates* - William made mention that Christmas Day 2021 and New Year’s Day 2022 fall on a Saturday. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are approved paid holidays. Patron usage has typically been light during this time of year and for ease of scheduling, William proposes closing the Thursdays before these holidays (December 23, 2021, and December 30, 2021). All part-time employees scheduled to work December 23rd and 30th will be paid for hours they would normally work. All full-time employees will be paid for these days as their level off days for Christmas and New Year’s, respectively. Lorie added the Library will be open to patrons both Sundays following these holidays.

In addition, William announced the “Boo by the Woods” event will be held in conjunction with the City of Avon Lake on Saturday, October 16, 2021. William plans to close the Library to the public on Saturday from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm to accommodate an enhanced event that will be partially held in the parking lot and lower level of the Library. William clarified that the Library will be closed to the public but will be in operation with staff providing set up and execution of the event that will be held from 5:00 pm until 9:00 pm. William noted that the Library will be open for public usage both Friday and Sunday of that week.

Betsey moved and Rebecca seconded **Resolution No. 2810-21** to approve December 23, 2021, and December 30, 2021, as additional holiday closings.

Roll Call Vote: Motion Carried

Betsey Bell	AYE
Michele Jakubs	AYE
Holly Moore Kowalski	AYE
Jenefer Machovina	AYE
Steve Parsons	Absent
Rebecca Schaltenbrand	AYE
Deborah Yue	Absent

William made mention of a proposed grant requiring Board approval. The Friends approached Shea about doing a program with The Knitted Knockers in collaboration with “Stitch Niche”. Using specific yarn and patterns, The Knitted Knockers is a non-profit group that creates and distributes replacements for breast cancer survivors who have gone through reconstructive surgery. The Board agreed this is an opportunity to enhance programming by partnering with an organization serving our community.

IX. Adjourn

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m. The next regular scheduled meeting of the Avon Lake Public Library Board of Trustees is September 9, 2021.

Steve Parsons, President

Deborah Yue, Secretary