Henika District Library

Meeting Minutes

Henika District Library

Board of Directors Meeting

April 19, 2020 at 6:00 pm

**Members Present:** Meghan Augustin, Suzy Byville Amy Huyck, Jacqui Kuhn, Sara LeFevre, Gary Marsh, Maria Musgrave, Danielle Simmons

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Nicole Gray – Director

**Guests:** Rachel Koehne, Mark Musgrave, Mark Minegar, Sue Minegar, Aaron Rocheleau, Sarah Rocheleau, John Simmons

1. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:05 pm by Huyck.
2. Approval of Agenda motioned by Musgrave and seconded by Marsh. All yes, motion passed.
3. Community Opportunity to Address the Board
   1. Friends of the Library Update: No update provided.
   2. Sarah Rocheleau shared concerns about the number of books on display in the library that seem to be pushing a political agenda, as well as the idea of smaller children in the youth area seeing materials that she feels should not be in a youth section. Rocheleau feels that there is not a lot of variety in the new books being added to the collection, with many of the new books promoting LGTBQ. Rocheleau stated that she has not been in the library within the past month, so she cannot speak to whether the changes that have been made recently have addressed her concerns.
   3. John Simmons shared concerns about the predominance of the displays, the consistency of the displays, and the lack of alternative viewpoints on display in the library’s collection as a whole. Simmons feels there is a definitive bias on display and would like to see more fair approach to all sides of the issue. Simmons stated that culturally important works should be available for patrons to access within the safety and security of the library. Koehne responded that there is limited space on the shelves in the library and that anyone can put an item on hold to peruse in the library at their leisure. Koehne also noted that ADA requirements do not allow materials on the top or bottom shelves, and that studies show that circulation is increased when shelves are 2/3 full, with several face-outs. Simmons has spoken to the Board on multiple occasions and would like to know the status of past requests, such as the repair of masonry issues on front of the building that was brought up three years ago.
   4. Mark Musgrave in attendance to take notes for Civics class at the high school.
   5. Sue Minegar suggested a review of the collection development policy and asked if the policy could be made accessible to the community. Gray provided a copy of the collection development policy to those interested in viewing it during the meeting. Minegar feels that if a book is not available in library or within the cooperative, it should be.
   6. Sarah Rocheleau inquired about the process for requesting books to be purchased for the collection. Koehne explained that there is a form available at the bottom of the website to request a book; in order for the library to purchase a work, it must be readily available from a vendor and there cannot already be too many copies available in the system. Koehne stated that more often than not, book requests are able to be purchased.
   7. Maria Musgrave wondered if we are missing a connection with the community because we are not in person as much anymore. Discussion followed about what can be done differently and how to ensure people feel they can openly communicate. Gray noted there is a contact form available on the website. Augustin suggested making the form more prominent on the site and highlighting it more frequently. Huyck suggested creating a QR code linking to the form to have available in person on a flyer and noted that we need to keep options open for different preferences. Community members were asked if they would have used a form if they had known it was available, and both Rocheleau and Simmons stated they prefer speaking in person to ensure their concerns are being heard.
4. Approval of March 2020 Meeting Minutes motioned by Simmons and seconded by LeFevre. All yes, motion passed.
5. Financial Reports for March 2020
   1. Simmons inquired about the $480 expense line item “Building & Grounds Maintenance.” Gray explained that this is a regular recurring monthly charge for building cleaning services by Coverall of Western Michigan.
   2. Credit Card Detail Report was reviewed.
   3. YTD Budget vs. Actuals was reviewed.
   4. United Bank accounts were reviewed.
   5. Approval of paid bills motioned by Musgrave and seconded by Augustin. All yes, motion passed.
6. Director’s Report
   1. The library has reduced quarantine time. Returned materials sit in open air for approximately one hour before being checked in. Blue return bins remain by the doors and the regular return bin has been returned to its usual place in front of the circulation desk. The reduction in quarantine time reduces the space requirements for staff-only areas, which has allowed for two additional tables and the Ellison machine to be available for patron use. The reading room has also reopened for patron use.
   2. The youth area has been rearranged to allow for a more separate space for teens. The new setup of the metal shelves creates a teen space with only one entrance in the tween/teen transition area, which is located in a straight line from the elevator aid in wheelchair navigation. The table that was previously located in the teen area has been moved to the tween area. The new “wall” of shelves facing the play area houses the juvenile nonfiction materials within the shelving unit and the literacy kits are on top of the shelving unit. Gray stated that the current setup is the best solution that can be offered at this time.
   3. The library is now open to the public on Saturdays with adjusted hours of 10am to 2pm. Staffing changes will necessitate adjusting hours, as the current level of staffing will not support maintaining the same operating hours.
   4. Preparations have begun for summer reading. The current plan to is offer two in-person socially distanced outdoor events per month, assuming adequate staff will be available to run those events. Tracking sheets and prizes will also be part of the planning. Simmons asked if members of the Board can volunteer to help if there is not enough staff. Gray is hopeful staffing will not be an issue and is planning to conduct interviews this week and next week. Rachel has already planned out the entire summer’s worth of activities. Several members of the Board expressed willingness to help with events if needed.
   5. The Youth Services and Adult Programming reports were reviewed. The most recent virtual escape room did not get many participants. However, the first virtual escape room continues to have participants. Overall, there has not been much tween/teen interest in programming. Youth take and make participation has decreased since the summer, but is starting to trend back up. Adult programming participation is starting to increase as well. DVD bundles have been a small but consistent program offering.
   6. Current circulation report statistics are higher than 2020 numbers, but this data may be misleading due the library being closed or partially open in 2020. The same trends seem to be applying, with a slow rate of recovery.
7. Old Business
   1. Gray requested to move the discussion of the building fund deposit to next month. Gray will be attending a webinar this week that is specific to compliance of accounts on QuickBooks and would like to complete this training prior to discussion in order to present the full picture.
   2. The front entrance painting was project of the FOTL. Marsh suggested looking into stripping the primer that has been applied in the entryway because there is not anything we can put on top of the material that will perform better than the finish that was applied in the original manufacturing. Huyck noted that her husband is the maintenance supervisor at the school and offered to speak with him to obtain suggestions for different stripping materials. Musgrave suggested that the Building and Grounds Committee meet soon to discuss and tie up any loose ends on building needs.
   3. Gray provided data to the Board at the March 2021 meeting for the discussion surrounding collection development. Members of the Board toured the youth area, which was recently rearranged in response to concerns about materials in the youth section that might not be appropriate for younger children.
8. New Business
   1. Gray has received the draft from the audit and expects the completed findings to come in next month. The library’s total net position increased by roughly $4,000 last year after factoring in depreciation, for a total net position of approximately $970,000.
   2. Rachel has submitted her resignation; her last day with Henika is Thursday. Rachel had prepared a written letter for Gray to share with the Board, but instead chose to attend the meeting and speak to the Board herself. Koehne expressed pride in the collection development policy that was created and stated that staff try to put out materials to reflect the diversity of the community. Koehne noted that a diversity audit would be helpful but warned that such a project would take more than a full year even with a full staff. Koehne shared that she felt a lack of support from the Board in the 2.5 years she has worked at Henika. There was a discussion among the Board members concerning a disconnect with communication because the Board feels they have been supportive. Musgrave questioned why concerns from 2.5 years are not being addressed at the library level and explained that she was always told that Board members should separate themselves from the staff because the Board oversees Nicole and Nicole oversees staff. Musgrave asked whether exit interviews were still being conducted, and Huyck offered to do one with Koehne. Huyck hopes Gray knows the Board is here to support the staff and asked Gray to be adamant and clear about needs. LeFevre thanked Rachel for speaking up and noted that if there was a miscommunication in November that she wished the Board had known so we could have supported any necessary changes. Marsh stated that it would be helpful to know specifics of the issues mentioned so the Board can assess how to improve. Huyck apologized for the miscommunication and hopes Gray understands the Board is here to help and support. Gray opened discussion on how the staffing change will affect the library’s hours, as the remaining staff will be: Gray (salaried), Bethany (28 hours per week), and Ashley (12 hours per week). The library cannot continue to be open as many hours with this level of staffing, so Gray asked at a minimum to close on Thursdays, which were previously staffed by Gray and Koehne. The library recently reopened on Saturdays, which Gray worked alone. If the priority is to be open at Saturdays, then another weekday must close. The Board discussed the safety concerns of staff working alone and unanimously agreed that staff should be working in pairs for safety. There was lengthy discussion about how to adjust the library hours as a short-term fix while short-staffed until the full-time position is filled, with appropriate communication to patrons via website and social media platforms. Options discussed included: reverting Saturdays to curbside service only, scheduling a second staff member to work with Gray on Saturdays and closing on Wednesday and Thursday, and closing entirely on Saturday. Gray stated that there is a strong desire from the community for the library to be open on Saturdays, despite low numbers of patrons actually utilizing the library on Saturdays. The Board agreed to support Gray in making the best decision once she speaks to the staff about adjusting the schedule for the next few weeks until the position being vacated by Koehne is filled.
9. Around the Table
   1. Musgrave shared that she always plays the devil’s advocate to ensure all sides of the situation are thought through and encourages everyone to ask questions or challenge anything that is said. Musgrave is sorry to hear that the staff felt unsafe or that there was poor communication. Musgrave stated that she appreciates and trusts Nicole.
   2. LeFevre inquired about sending the meeting minutes out to everyone after the meeting instead of waiting until the board packet is emailed out the week of the next month’s meeting. Kuhn shared that minutes are submitted within a week and Gray puts them on the website as soon as she receives them.
   3. Marsh stated that he does not think there should be any reason why Gray should have to put up with difficult members of the public. Marsh recognizes the problem but is sad to not have a solution.
   4. Byville shared that she would like to see paper and pencil feedback in addition to the Google form. Byville inquired about creating a library Board email for the Board to collectively check and respond to, as well as the possibility of having a joint meeting with the Board and the staff. Nicole and the staff are the subject matter experts and Byville supports Nicole to make the best decisions.
   5. Kuhn expressed sadness over Koehne’s resignation and a desire to support Nicole and the staff. Kuhn felt there was consensus from everyone in the room when decisions were being made and encouraged everyone to bring up concerns during discussions.
   6. Augustin echoed the sentiments of other Board members. There has been talk of miscommunication, and the challenges of Zoom meetings likely contributed to that. Augustin expressed hope that in-person meetings can continue to reduce the likelihood of miscommunications. It is clear that implementation of ideas sometimes did not work and need to be discussed further with more direct feedback. Suggestions from the Board are coming from a good place in attempting to solve a problem.
   7. Huyck expressed sadness to see Rachel go and reiterated that she is 100% here for Nicole and to support the staff. Huyck stated that Gray might just need to be very blunt. Board members are not in the building day-to-day, so the Board does not know there are issues unless told. Huyck stated that she has full confidence in Nicole making the right decisions.
10. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm by Huyck.