

North Central Washington Libraries
Board Minutes

June 17, 2021

I. Call to Order:

Nancy Spurgeon called to order the June meeting of the NCW Libraries Board of Trustees at 1:02 PM June 17, 2021. The meeting was held as a Zoom teleconference.

II. Attendees:

The following persons attended via Zoom: Board Members Katherine Meade, Denise Sorom, Nancy Spurgeon, Jim Mitchell, and Jill Sheley. Barbara Walters, Executive Director; Kim Neher, Deputy Director; Mike Githens, Director of Finance; Bill Carroll, Director of Branch Operations; Aaron Floyd, Director of IT; Tim Dillman, Executive Assistant.

III. Public Comment:

Executive Assistant Tim Dillman read a public comment that had been submitted by a Chelan, WA resident prior to the meeting. The entire public comment is available as an addendum to these minutes.

IV. Consent Agenda:

Nancy asked if there were questions or corrections for any items in the Consent Agenda which included the:

- a. June Meeting Agenda
- b. Minutes of the May 20 regular board meeting
- c. Payroll & Vouchers
 - i. May Payroll for \$505,277.96 and Benefits for \$202,566.96
 - ii. May Accounts Payable for \$247,697.68
 - iii. Staff Reports

Denise Sorom moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Katherine Meade seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

V. Review Statement on Representation Petitions

Denise reported that at the direction of the rest of the board, she had met with Gil and Barbara to discuss the drafting of a potential response to the representation petition. Barbara provided Denise with three drafts of possible responses. Denise provided an alternate response based on one of those responses. Denise said she felt it was important to communicate support for staff but also important to provide a statement about the communication difficulties that could arise in a union environment. Denise asked Jill to explain the edits she had suggested. Jill changed the order of one of the sentences to provide a better flow to the statement.

Katherine moved to adopt the statement as written by Denise and Jill. Lisa seconded and the motion passed.

VI. Executive Directors Report

Barbara started her report with an update on the HR Manager position. An offer has been made to one of the candidates after two rounds of interviews. An announcement will likely be able to be made next week. Barbara also congratulated Bill on being offered the position of Library Director at the Marion County Library in Marion, Iowa. Bill's final day with NCW Libraries will be July 9th.

Barbara reminded the board that the Summer Library Program kicked off this week.

Barbara notified the board that the library received the official word that Commerce Department Grants were approved in the 2022 State Budget and Ephrata, Coulee City, Cashmere, and the Wenatchee Library all received funding. Barbara explained some of the next steps that will happen for these projects.

The district has also been invited to apply for \$73,000 of IMLS/State Library American Recovery Plan Act funds. Barbara also mentioned she had the opportunity to talk with Rep. Goehner and Rep. Steele at a recent NW Tech Alliance event.

Denise asked about who is taking over Bill's responsibilities upon his departure. Barbara said she is working on naming an interim. A conversation is scheduled tomorrow with Nash Consulting to talk through the plan.

Nancy asked what the strategy is to get the word out about the Summer Library Program. Kim described the in-house advertising that has been done and the potential radio and print marketing that could be done. Nancy followed up by asking if materials are available in Spanish. Kim confirmed that they are. Nancy offered to provide access to a childcare provider email list that she has, and Jill mentioned that FoWL would be happy to help promote the program.

VII. Gifts Policy-First Read

A first read of the proposed Gifts Policy was presented to the board. The purpose of the policy would be to provide guidance and procedures for the acceptance and administration of donations and gifts to NCW Libraries. The board validated the need for the policy. Several board members gave input on corrections and additions they would like to see. Katherine asked who would be responsible for the implementation of the policy and if there would be corresponding procedures. Barbara said that she would be the owner of the policy and said procedures would be developed. Jill advocated for as much specific guidelines as possible and communicated the need for more clarity on the provisions for naming rights. She expressed that a statute of limitations on naming rights might dissuade some donors from donations. Barbara indicated that the staff would incorporate the input into the next draft and bring it back to the board in August.

VIII. Nash Consulting Presentation

The board was joined by Ethan Nash and Mike Nash from Nash Consulting. The firm was the winning bid in a Leadership Development RFP that closed on June 4th. Mike gave a brief history of the firm and some of their core philosophies. Ethan then gave a run through on how their firm is approaching leadership development with NCW Libraries. Several board members gave positive comments, while adding that it would be beneficial to build in some data collection with frontline staff on the front end to inform some of the leadership gaps or

opportunities for training. Ethan and Mike both left the call. The board had some additional discussion about the proposal.

Denise moved to approve the proposal from Nash Consulting for Leadership Development.

Lisa seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Financial Report

Mike told the board that property taxes for the end of May are right where they would be expected to be. The district did receive some revenue in the In-Lieu of Taxes category. The district is at 49.62% of projected revenue at the close of May.

Mike reminded the board that if all expenses could be evenly split across 12 months, the end of May expenses would represent 42% of the annual budget. The year-to-date expenses for Personnel and Benefits are at 37.31%. Staff expenses are trending toward underspent and likely will be underspent at year's end. The personnel benefits are trending slightly lower. The WA Legislature has adopted a new PERS rate that will be lower for employers. The Professional Services budget for the Admin department will likely be slightly over budget at year's end.

Library Materials and Books is at 23% of budget. Mike and Barbara are meeting with the Collection Department and working on determining the best opportunities to spend down that budget in the remaining months.

The total overall expenses are at 32.4% of budget.

Mike reviewed the end of May account balances with the board and explained where he thinks the General Fund balance will be at year's end. He then talked about the planned transfers across the General Fund related to the Reserve Fund Balance Policy. There is just over \$1.6 million in excess once the board sets aside Contingency Reserve and Operating Reserve. The board is being asked to transfer \$1,656,310.54 from the General Fund to the 645 Fund- Capital Reserve Fund. Denise asked if that amount will fully fund the capital reserve. Mike said yes this catches the capital fund up to where it should be at the end of 2021.

X. 2020 Fund Balances and Request for Transfer

Denise moved to transfer \$1,656,310.54 from Fund 644 to Fund 645.

Katherine seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Presentation of 2020 Financial Annual Report

Mike showed the board the 2020 Financial Annual Report submitted May 27 to the WA State Auditor's Office. Mike explained some of the nuances that make balancing to the Chelan County Treasurer a challenge. Mike showed the Excel spreadsheet that he created to keep track of the reconciling process to the Chelan County Treasurer. Mike believes this process will allow for a cleaner, easier audit in future years. Denise asked if the district would ever consider moving to an accrual system to make syncing with the Chelan Treasurer easier.

Mike said the auditors want to see the library district remain a cash-based system. Mike is looking into possible setting the district up with its own finance system instead of using the Chelan County Treasurer for bill paying.

XII. Branch Report

Bill reviewed the written report provided to the board, letting trustees know this would be his last meeting before moving back to Iowa to become the Director of Marion County Library. Nancy and other board members thanked Bill for his service.

XII. IT Report

Aaron gave a brief report based on the written report provided to the board. He highlighted the priority projects IT focused on in May.

XII. Announcements

Tim gave a brief reminder of the logistics for the Board Retreat which will be held at Pybus Market on Thursday, July 21 from 8-4.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Allstot, Chairwoman

Katherine Meade, Secretar

ADDENDUM:

The following letter is submitted for inclusion in the next meeting of library trustees.

Dear Library Trustees,

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of Chelan County who has noticed a pronounced bias in NCW Library's selection of new books, specifically in books written for children and young adults. I became aware of this bias after reading through the April 2021 mail order catalog. An inordinate number (approximately 40%) of the books dealt with matters of race, gender, or immigration. From the descriptions of the books provided it is clear that these books promote the values popularly referred to as "woke" and taken as a whole amount to a form of propaganda directed at impressionable children. I urge you to examine the mail order catalog and read the descriptions for yourself.

Many of the books deal with controversial topics like illegal immigration, gay marriage, transgenderism, and the importance of race. The tactic employed is always the same. Realizing that children have little patience for straightforward polemic, the authors of these books have employed a strategy whereby the main character of the book is a young person who is either an illegal immigrant or gay or transgender or of a racial/ethnic minority and is presented as a very sympathetic character that the young reader is likely to admire or identify with. It is an effective technique whose objective is the persuasion of young minds. All of us can probably remember identifying with characters from books or movies that we read or watched in our youth. But it is not a straightforward or honest technique if it is employed for the purpose of persuasion because there exists no equivalency in the real world between one's immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identification or race and the content of one's character. Nice guys and bad guys are pretty evenly distributed.

Admittedly, librarians would have a tough time balancing out their selections by finding books that portray transgenders, homosexuals, illegal aliens and racial minorities as liars, thieves, and bullies. Such books would have a tough time making it past today's thought police. For that reason I'm not suggesting that "balance" is the solution. Nor am I suggesting that there is no place in a public library for a sympathetic account of the travails of an illegal immigrant or a gay person. Rather I am protesting what is the overwhelming bias present in the selection of books promoted by NCW Library for young people. The librarians that select these books have, in effect, usurped what is properly the responsibility and the right of parents to instill certain values in their children. In all likelihood, a majority of parents in North Central Washington are of the opinion that immigration should be lawful, that a person's defining characteristic should not be their race, and that gender jumping should not be encouraged. In light of their book selections, NCW librarians don't agree, have decided that they know better and have endeavored to impose their standards on their young patrons.

I'm not suggesting an orgy of book burning. After all, there exist parents who share the librarians' ideology and they have every right to indoctrinate their children as they see fit. One possible solution to this problem is that books that deal with the controversial topics mentioned previously be categorized as such and that parental permission be required for access to these books. I realize that this would impose additional work for library staff but our country is experiencing a profound clash of values now and it is highly improper that public funds are being used by one faction in this clash to advance their cause.

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