

*Board of Trustees of the Upper Sandusky Community Library*

*Minutes*

*November 12, 2020*

The Upper Sandusky Community Library Board of Trustees convened on Thursday, November 12, at 12:00 p.m. via Zoom virtual electronic meeting according to the provisions of Amended Substitute House Bill 197, which include temporary changes to Ohio's Open Meetings Act, effective until the end of the declared [COVID-19] emergency or Dec. 1, 2020. The changes allow library boards to have the option of meeting via electronic means. The following members were present in the Zoom meeting: Ms. Dianne Grafmiller, Ms. Amy Aldridge-Ritchey, Ms. Laurie Scheck, Mr. Todd Leightey, and Ms. Ann Kemerley. Ms. Jenny Romich and Ms. Jill Logsdon were absent. Director Kathleen Whitt and Brian Hemminger of the *Daily Chief-Union* were also present.

Vice President Dianne Grafmiller asked for public comments. Hearing none, she asked if there were corrections or additions to the distributed minutes of the October meeting. Hearing none, Ms. Grafmiller declared that the minutes stand as distributed.

Next on the agenda was ratification of payment of the bills. Ms. Grafmiller asked if there were any questions about the bills. Hearing none, the motion was made and seconded to ratify the payment of bills; in a roll call vote, all present approved the bills.

There was no old business.

Under new business, Ms. Whitt informed the Board that a recent evaluation of the library's website suggested that Board members' photos be added to the page. Board members agreed that this would be a nice addition and said that they would send a photo to be used. Ms. Whitt said she would ask the library's website editor for the best size picture.

The next item on the agenda was consideration of candidates to replace outgoing Board member Jill Logsdon. The Board has not yet identified candidates they would like to nominate to the US EVS School Board, and tabled the matter until the December meeting.

Ms. Whitt then said that since the spring library closings due to the pandemic, SEO, and USCL, have been allowing patrons to self-register for a temporary library account online. SEO is now allowing member libraries to tailor this service to their individual needs. There are options to allow patrons to self-register either for a digital only account, or for a temporary regular account. Either can be modified to a regular library card when the patron visits the library and presents identification and proof of address. Ms. Whitt asked the Board to allow revision of the Circulation Policy to permit self-registration for both digital and temporary cards. The motion was made and seconded to revise the Circulation Policy to permit patron self-registration. All present approved the motion.

The Board next considered permanent elimination of overdue fines. The library has not been charging overdue fines since mid-March, and at the May meeting the Board voted to suspend overdue fines through December 2020, with Ms. Whitt to report at this meeting on the effects on circulation and overdue or lost materials. Ms. Whitt reported that data suggest there is no significant adverse effect on whether materials are returned on time as a result of charging or not

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charging overdue fines. In addition, evidence from libraries that have stopped charging overdue fines show that more overdue materials were returned and patrons who have been afraid to come to the library due to overdue fines may come back. This is especially important for patrons who may be unable to pay relatively small fines but who may have a greater need the library's services more than those for whom fine payment is not a problem. Since USCL adopted automatic renewals in July 2017, the amount collected in overdue fines has been significantly reduced, so that annual income from fines is now about only a quarter of a percent of total revenue. Materials that are more than 30 days overdue will be marked "Assumed Lost" by the catalog system and a lost fee assessed; if materials are then returned, this fee will be cancelled. It was moved and seconded to eliminate fines for overdue materials while retaining fees for lost or damaged materials, and existing fines for items previously returned late are to be forgiven; patrons with overdue items must either return or renew them before checking out additional items. In a roll call vote, all present approved the motion.

The next item on the agenda was consideration of the library's goals for 2021. The goals include development of a strategic plan, completion of a facilities plan and maintenance log, and updating the lighting system and elevator controls and mitigation of humidity in the elevator shaft. The Board approved the goals as submitted.

Ms. Whitt then reported that the minimum wage for the State of Ohio will increase to \$8.80 per hour in January 2021. This is an increase of only 1.5% over the current amount of \$8.70. It was noted that this is less than cost of living and the motion was made and seconded to adjust the schedule of salary and hourly wage ranges upwards by 3.00% across the board, effective January 2021, and retaining the current schedule for merit increases at each staff member's service anniversary. In a roll call vote, all present approved the motion.

The next item on the agenda was consideration of the library budget for 2021. The appropriations request presented by the director request shows a .56% decrease from the 2020 appropriations for the operating budget. The appropriations request is higher than projected receipts, but estimation of receipts is conservative, and actual expenditures are always less than the amount appropriated. In 2019, expenditures were approximately 18% under the amount appropriated, and revenues more than 5.5% over the projection; revenue was 19% over expenditures for the year. It was moved and seconded to approve the 2021 budget request at the category level, as presented by the Director; in a roll call vote, all present approved the motion.

The Board then considered a year-end bonus for library staff. In recognition of the extra effort and creativity shown by the staff in extremely difficult conditions, it was moved and seconded to award \$200 to each full-time staff member and \$100 to each part-time or as needed staff member. In a roll call vote, all present approved the motion.

The last item on the agenda was a discussion on the acquisition of a touchless self-checkout station. In consideration of health and safety concerns, Ms. Whitt proposed this as an additional measure to prevent spread of disease. The funds are available in the CRF grant monies received. The Board reviewed quotes from Bibliotheca and BayScan. The Bibliotheca quote was

significantly higher than that offered by BayScan. It was noted that the Bibliotheca system was likely more complex than our needs require, and also includes an annual subscription fee not required for the BayScan system. In addition, BayScan is located in Ohio, which supports the library's preference for more local vendors. It was moved and seconded to accept the BayScan quote to provide a touchless self-checkout station, to be paid out of CRF grant funds. In a roll call vote, all present approved the motion.

In the Director's Report, Ms. Whitt reported that:

1. The Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT) posted the October 2020 Public Library Fund (PLF) distribution of \$33,575,97, which is \$6,450 (-0.02%) below ODT's original estimate that was issued in July 2019. The distribution came in at \$3.43 million (+11.4%) above ODT's latest estimates which were issued at the end of June. This is the third month in a row where the actual PLF distribution has exceeded ODT's revised estimates by a significant margin. However, the PLF Calendar Year (CY) 2020 year-to-date total is \$377,891,745 which is still \$6.8 million (-1.97%) below what we were anticipating pre-pandemic.
2. The Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT) posted the November 2020 Public Library Fund (PLF) distribution of \$35,335,878 – which is \$1.47 million (+ 4.34%) above ODT's original estimate that was issued in July 2019. The distribution came in \$5 million (+ 16.59%) above ODT's latest estimates which were issued at the end of June. The PLF Calendar Year (CY) 2020 year-to-date total is \$373,227,623 which is still \$5.3 million (- 1.41%) below what we were anticipating pre-pandemic. However, the PLF and state revenues are continuing to perform better than expected considering the pandemic.
3. OLC is currently working with the administration and the legislature of the State of Ohio to extend the flexibility for library boards to be able to meet virtually beyond Dec. 1. At this point if nothing happens prior to Dec. 1 then boards will not be able to continue meeting electronically.
4. In response to the question from the October Board meeting about 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter taxes: We are caught up on taxes. Patti printed the form for 2nd quarter and forgot to go into the website and enter the information. There were no penalties. We didn't actually have to pay that amount, they sent us a credit refund.
5. Miss Jill has posted a new story for our downtown story walk. The book is *'Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving* by Dav Pilkey. We hope families will enjoy this seasonal offering.
6. Participation in our September plant swap and October pumpkin decoration contest was enthusiastic. We received over 25 entries in the contest, which highlighted the creativity of members of our community of all ages.
7. In addition to our ongoing virtual programming, we are planning a repeat of last year's adult Winter Reading Program. This will be accessible to patrons from home as well as by stopping in at the library.
8. The average number of visitors to the library in October was about 62 per day, continuing the downward trend (the average in September was about 69 per day). After school, we are usually seeing about 4-5 students a day.

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9. As I announced last month, we have been awarded a grant from the Wyandot County Community Foundation in the amount of \$1,380 for 5 additional WiFi hotspots. These hotspots are on order and will be put into service as soon as we receive and process them.
10. We have found a potential contractor to replace the HVAC control system and are awaiting a quote.
11. HDERLink is awaiting receipt of the Wi-Fi access points to extend access in the library and throughout the USEVS district. We hope this will be in place by the middle of November.
12. I have discussed with Wendy Searfoss the possibility of E-resource cards to allow students to access the library's digital content. She says that the school system's OverDrive account will allow access to the public library's content so the students will not need a USCL card to access our e-books. We discussed the databases available through the State Library of Ohio, and the information the students would need are already available to them through InfOhio.
13. The Friends of the Library have cancelled the Santa's Secret Shop for this year. They are currently having their annual membership renewal.
14. We have ordered touchless water bottle filling stations to promote health and safety in the library. This is being done using money from the Coronavirus Relief Fund grant.
15. We received no new Memorial/Honor/Donations in October.

Under Items Not on the Agenda, Ms. Whitt requested guidance on whether the library should remain open as the pandemic conditions worsen. A possibility might be to offer curbside service only. After discussion of different options and the effect they might have on staff hours, it was decided to maintain current open hours and operating conditions for the time being.

Ms. Grafmiller asked if there were any other items for discussion. There were none. The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

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President

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Secretary