

MAUD PRESTON PALENSKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY BOARD
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 24, 2023
DRAFT

Call to Order: Board President Ren Baldwin (City of St. Joseph) called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Other board members present: Treasurer Emily Zito-Desimone (City of St. Joseph); Secretary Rick Ast (City of St. Joseph); Betty Mundy (St. Joseph Charter Township); Kathy Buursma (City of St. Joseph); Mimi Elwell (St. Joseph Township); and Patrice Rose (St. Joseph Township).

Absent: Vice President Melissa Clapper (St. Joseph Township), and Barbara Thompson (City of St. Joseph).

Also present: Library Director Paula Stakley; Leigh Ann Vallone, library administrative assistant; Curtis Osmun, library systems supervisor; Virginia Antonson, Friends of the Library; and Kevan Truman, Friends of the Library.

There were no members of the public present, either in person or by remote.

Friends of the Library: Antonson said an “all-genre book sale” is coming up on Nov. 9-11 and “we’re looking forward to a great sale.”

The Friends has “changed our by-laws a little” to add a social committee, Antonson said. That committee is “making sure we’re showing our library staff how much they are appreciated,” she said, adding that Friends President Rebecca Marsden brought muffins for the staff members.

Antonson said Marsden, a “long-time president,” is stepping down from her post.

Minutes: Elwell moved to approve the minutes of the Sept. 26 board meeting, and Buursma seconded her motion. Ast said the minutes should show that he was absent from that meeting.

The board voted unanimously to approve the minutes. Ast abstained from voting, as he was absent from the Sept. 26 meeting.

Bills: Zito-Desimone moved to pay the September library bills totaling \$69,332.94. Rose seconded her motion, and the board voted unanimously to pay the bills.

Financial report: Baldwin said the Library Endowment Fund was the same now as last month, and wondered whether that indicated “no growth in certificates of deposits – unless growth appears somewhere else in the report.” Zito-Desimone said she would “follow up on that.”

Zito-Desimone moved to accept the financial report, and Ast supported her motion. The board voted unanimously to accept the financial report.

Strategic planning: Baldwin said the “cornerstone of strategic planning” is to “get a better grip on finances.” He said Zito-Desimone should be included to help make city financial reports “more understandable for us.”

Baldwin said he has met with Robert Jank, previously of Chicago and now living in Sawyer, about the strategic planning process. Stakley said Jank “has experience with non-profits” and is a “very inspiring gentleman.”

Baldwin said he is “not sure we need to rush a decision” until he meets with Jank again.

Clapper suggested that “those of us in this room create a bullet list of what we would like to see strategic planning accomplish.”

Local History Room policy: Baldwin said some of the library’s rules for using the room, including “no coats in the room, appear to me to be a little bit punitive.” However, Elwell said the library must “be protective of what’s in there,” and Zito-Desimone said the policy “covers us for insurance purposes.”

Zito-Desimone also suggested that the rules should state that “some items may require white gloves” be used by patrons in order to be handled.

Union contract: Elwell moved to approve a “resolution approving the continuation of the union contract post decertification.” Zito-Desimone seconded the motion, and the board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

After the meeting, Baldwin and Ast signed a required document stating that the motion had been approved.

Board comments: “We’re fine with our funds in the Berrien Community Foundation,” Zito-Desimone told the board.

At previous meetings, there had been some questions about whether it was legal for the board to invest funds with the Berrien Community Foundation.

Zito-Desimone said “the only risk” would be if the library put its money into stocks. “We are only in bonds, and not in stocks,” she said.

Adjournment: Ast, supported by Elwell, moved to adjourn the meeting. Baldwin declared the meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Secretary Rick Ast

Next meeting: 6 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 28.