

MAUD PRESTON PALENSKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY BOARD
Tuesday, May 28, 2024
DRAFT

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

Other board members present: Vice President Melissa Clapper (St. Joseph Charter Township); Secretary Rick Ast (City of St. Joseph); Kathy Buursma (City of St. Joseph); Patrice Rose (St. Joseph Charter Township); Mary Streufert (City of St. Joseph); Claudia Staude (City of St. Joseph); and Trustee Mimi Elwell (St. Joseph Charter Township).

Absent: Betty Mundy (St. Joseph Township).

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

Present by remote: Nicole Gibby, president of the Friends of the Library; and Becky Marsden, Friends of the Library.

Friends of the Library: Truman reported the Friends have “plenty of money,” over \$10,000, for the Library’s “wish list.” The most recent book sale brought in less money because the Friends had fewer books to sell, and because of street construction going on at the time of the sale, he added.

Truman said the library staff was very helpful before, during, and after the sale.

Minutes of the March 26, 2024 meeting: Streufert said the heading of the fiscal year budget should read “Fiscal 2024-25.”

Ast moved to approve the minutes, as corrected, and Staude supported the motion. The board in a unanimous vote approved the minutes, as corrected.

Bills: Clapper, supported by Buursma, moved to pay monthly bills totaling \$19,862.15. The board voted unanimously to pay the monthly bills.

Financial report: Stakley said library's fund balance stands at \$1,627,820.30. That balance remains as is "month after month" and "changes once a year, in December," she added.

Clapper asked if there is any way to check out "what we get monthly." Baldwin told her, "What you're asking is in the City's report, not ours ... Revenues don't come in monthly. Some are quarterly."

"Why is it Greek to me?" Streufert asked. "...We need a generic explanation ... like a cheat sheet. I'd be happy to try to get that before the September meeting."

"We need a better explanation of what we have," Clapper put in.

Staide noted that "An English translation is somehow easier than an accountant's translation."

Staide moved to accept the financial report, and Clapper seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to accept the report.

FY 24-25 Budget, Headlee rollback: The board discussed the effect that the Headlee Amendment might have on library revenues. The Amendment to the Michigan Constitution, approved by voters in 1978, limits property tax revenue if the assessed value increases faster than the rate of inflation.

"I don't think it will greatly affect us," Stakley said.

Strategic planning discussion: The board has accepted the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS) proposal to help the board in strategic planning for the library at a cost of \$12,500. The board at the May 28 meeting talked about the next steps it must take.

The discussion included how a strategic planning committee might be organized, how many members it should have, and whether library staff should be included. Baldwin pointed out that no more than four board members could be involved, as five members would constitute a quorum.

Baldwin suggested waiting for a recommendation from MCLS.

Donor committee: Rose said the committee has "changed the parameters for (donation) levels a little ... I think we've got something doable."

Fence repair: The metal fence surrounding the library needs repair. Stakley said Johnny AMP Welding Services of Benton Harbor has submitted a repair estimate of \$4,200 for the work.

Baldwin said the cost is below the limit that requires board approval. “Go ahead and move forward,” he told Stakley.

Township millage: St. Joseph Township’s millage support for the library is “up for renewal” next year, Stakley said.

Buursma wondered whether holding a Library Board meeting at St. Joseph Township Hall might help the odds of renewal. “I don’t know how that would be received,” said Rose, who is St. Joseph Township clerk.

Staude wondered whether “there is anything we could do to help the millage.”

“Legally, no,” Stakley said. “We cannot encourage a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ vote. It’s against state law.” But the Friends of the Library are under no such constraint, she added.

“It’s definitely on our radar,” said Gibby, speaking remotely.

Director’s report: Stakley said former board treasurer Emily-Zito Desimone gave birth to a baby boy, Lorenzo Corleone Desimone, on May 10.

Stakley said she has signed the agreement for strategic planning with MCLS. The board needs to decide on the offered options before the planning process can proceed, she added.

Barbara Simpson, a former substitute, has been hired for the Library Assistant position, Stakley said. Stakley said she has hired Amy Nolan to fill the substitute position.

Referring to a remodeling project being done at the Lincoln Township Public Library, Truman asked why that library can undertake a major project “while we struggle over a fence.” Elwell told him that Lincoln Township has “a dedicated millage just for the library,” while St. Joseph does not. “That explains some differences,” Clapper said.

Adjournment: Ast moved to adjourn the meeting, and Elwell supported the motion. The board voted unanimously to adjourn, and Baldwin declared the meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary William Ast

Next board meeting: 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 25