



**CITY OF NOVI LIBRARY BOARD
MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING
November 17, 2021**

Call to Order by President, Kathy Crawford

The meeting was held at the Novi Public Library, 45255 Ten Mile Road Novi Michigan 48375, and was called to order by Kathy Crawford, President, at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call by Secretary, Brian Bartlett

1. Library Board

Kathy Crawford, President
Kat Dooley, Vice- President
Brian Bartlett, Secretary
Sreeny Cherukuri, Board Member
Tara Michener, Board Member
Geoffrey Wood, Treasurer (absent/excused)
Torry Yu, Board Member

Student Representatives

Abhay Kakarla
Rida Salim

Library Staff

Julie Farkas, Director
Barbara Cook, Bookkeeper

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made to approve the Agenda as amended. Trustee Michener commented that under Committee Reports item 8, DEI - includes the staff DEI meeting, which was held and the Board DEI meeting was not held. Trustee Michener said the staff DEI meeting should not be included under board business. President Crawford mentioned that other staff committees are listed in the committees section, not just under DEI, in committee reports, items 1-8. Trustee Michener asked for staff committees to be listed under Directors Report and not under the board committees section. President Crawford is open to discussing this. President Crawford asked for other comments on this matter and no other Trustees commented.

Trustee Dooley asked for correction to a name error on the board minutes on page 15. The name Trustee Julie Dooley will be changed to Trustee Dooley. The agenda was approved as amended.

1st – Trustee Michener

2nd – Trustee Dooley

Discussion: No Further Discussion

Roll Call Vote was taken. 6 yes votes and 0 no votes. Trustee Wood is absent/excused.

Consent Agenda

1. Approve Minutes of:
 - A. October 28, 2021- Regular Meeting

2. Approve Claims and Warrants of:
 - A. Accounts 268 and 269 (#608)

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda (items 1 and 2, above.)

1st- Trustee Bartlett

2nd- Trustee Dooley

No discussion took place.

Roll Call Vote was taken. 6 yes votes and 0 no votes. Trustee Wood is absent/excused.

Presentations

1. No Presentations scheduled

Public Comment

President Crawford welcomed public comment and asked speakers to state name, address and follow the 3 minute time limit.

Jason Michener, Harrier Place, Novi, MI.

- Jason stated the library motto: Inform. Inspire. Include. He said the board operates under delay, defer and deny when it comes to DEI issues; most prevalent Juneteenth as a paid holiday, with President Crawford voting against it twice and all 3 members of the finance committee (Trustee's Bartlett, Cherukuri, Wood) voting against 3 times.
- Jason is hopeful tonight as the board packet seems to address all the concerns these trustees had about making it a paid holiday. The cost of the holiday is \$2,016.06. Even with expenses associated with recent storm damage fund 268 has a \$2.5 million reserve, which could fund this one-time cost. Additionally, 268 has operated under a surplus during the last 5 years, which could easily fund Juneteenth Holiday.
- Novi Library has 10 paid holidays and State Government and the Library of MI have 11 paid holidays. West Bloomfield Library and the City of Novi has 13 paid holidays. Additionally, the staff overwhelming voted for Juneteenth as a paid holiday from staff survey results.
- He is asking another board member, (other than Trustee Michener, who has worked so hard for Juneteenth as a paid holiday) to add Juneteenth as a paid Holiday this evening under matters for board action, to end the cycle of Delay. Defer. Deny.
- Jason said now that concerns have been addressed, and the board is informed he hopes the board is inspired to include Juneteenth as a paid holiday tonight.

Sharon Trumpy, Harvest Drive, Novi, MI.

- Sharon said approximately 174 days ago the board unanimously approved the statement by President Crawford. *The Novi Public Library is committed to ensuring that every Novi community member, library guest, Board of Trustee member, library staff and volunteer, is treated with dignity and respect. Discrimination, bigotry and racism will not be tolerated.*
- 146 days ago the board received a formal staff complaint against Trustee Cherukuri. With the staff member stating he is mismatched for the DEI committee and does it a disservice.
- 118 days ago a community member stated their concern about Trustee Cherukuri's social public media posts.
- 83 days ago Trustee Michener made a formal complaint against Trustee Cherukuri alleging mistreatment during a DEI committee meeting.

- 69 days ago a community petition was delivered to President Crawford requesting the removal of Trustee Cherukuri from the DEI committee.
- 59 days ago President Crawford said she is pausing the DEI Committee indefinitely. This evening Sharon read some of President Crawford's public social media posts.
- Trustee Cherukuri approached a young black female after the last meeting and said his social media posts remain intact because nothing he said is offensive. Sharon read Trustee Cherukuri's public social media posts.
- Trustee Michener serves on three board committee's DEI, bylaws and policy. Since Trustee Michener has made her formal complaint not one of these committees has held a meeting. Other committees held meetings and it seems as though Trustee Michener has been excluded since lodging her complaint, which looks like retaliation.
- She is asking the board to keep its word that every board member is treated with dignity and respect and that bigotry not be tolerated.

Reports

1. Student Representatives Report

Presented by student representatives Abhay Kakarla and Rida Salim. Staff Liaison Lindsay Gojcaj.

- Special thanks to Dana Brataniec, Novi Library Communication Specialist for her help with Teentober Bingo challenge.

2. President's Report (Kathy Crawford)

A. Scope of work proposal update: Both Dr. Jay Marks and Dr. Lee Meadows have declined the invitation to submit a proposal. Dr. Marks stated not having the time based on his current schedule. Dr. Meadows has personal family obligations that is taking precedence and he would not be able to engage until after January if the board would want to wait until that timeframe.

- President Crawford added that since neither trainer is available and the holiday season is quickly approaching that it is reasonable that the board would be better prepared for training after the holidays. Dr. Meadows agreed to work with the board for an agreed price and has suggested a process. The board will be moving forward with Dr. Meadows.

3. Treasurer's Report (Trustee Wood – absent/excused)pages 28-39

A. 2021-2022 Library Budget Fund 268

The 2021-2022 Library Fund 268 budget calls for revenue of \$3,244,172 with expenditures of \$3,409,700 consuming \$165,528 of the fund balance.

B. 2021-2022 Contributed Fund Budget 269

The 2021-2022 Library Contributed Fund 269 budget calls for revenue of \$47,500 and expenditures of \$58,400 consuming \$10,900 of the fund balance.

C. Financial Report – October 2021

On page 32 of the November Board packet.

D. Library Fund 268 Expenditure and Revenue Report ending October 31, 2021

Revenue ending October 31, 2021 was \$3,218,689.

Expenditures ending October 31, 2021 was \$1,031,038.

E. Library Fund 269 Contributed Fund ending October 31, 2021

Revenue ending October 31, 2021 was \$5,746.

Expenditures ending October 31, 2021 was \$12,699.

- F. Balance Sheets for Funds 268 and 269 as of October 31, 2021
Ending Fund Balance for Fund 268 as of October 31, 2021 was \$4,682,963.88
Ending Fund Balance for Fund 269 as of October 31, 2021 was \$1,688,701.86

4. Director's Report (Julie Farkas)

On pages 40-49 of the November Board packet.

Staff members celebrating anniversaries for November are:

- Emily Brush– Information Services - 6 years
- Shannon O'Leary – Information Services- 6 years

The Novi Library Café is open M-F 9am-5pm. The opening time may be adjusted to accommodate the new high school start time.

A software change from Constant Contact to Patron Point was implemented. The eNewsletter is now emailed via Patron Point. This software includes an opt-out option.

- A. Information Technology Report (pages 49-50)
- B. Facilities Report (pages 50-51)
- C. Information Services Report (pages 51-55)
- D. Support Services Report (pages 56-57)
- E. Library Usage Statistics Report (pages 58-66)
- F. Friends of Novi Library – (page 67)
- G. City of Novi Historical Commission- Nov. 10, 2021 Meeting Agenda – (pages 68-69)

Trustee Michener asked if there is a system to make contact with those who do not have library cards. Director Farkas said anyone can be added as long as they initiate the request. Trustee Cherukuri asked how the City reaches its customers. Director Farkas believes the City still utilizes Constant Contact and there list is opt-in only. Trustee Cherukuri asked if a link can be added to the City's subscribers with a link to get the library newsletter. Director Farkas will look into this. Trustee Michener said Sheryl Walsh-Molloy has the 6 and wondered if that is a source that the library can also tie into.

Trustee Cherukuri asked if the teen members had any comment regarding the start time of the café. Both teen representatives utilize the café after school has ended.

Trustee Dooley commented that with Constant Contact the library reached over 2,500 people vs with Patron Point with the library reaching over 22,000 people.

Trustee Yu asked if Patron Point only reaches active card holders. Director Farkas confirmed that to be accurate. Trustee Yu asked if a patron's card has expired will that patron receive the newsletter or will they be cut off. Director Farkas will check on this.

Public Comment

President Crawford welcomed public comment and asked speakers to state name, address and follow the 3 minute time limit.

Sharon Trumpy, Harvest Drive Novi, MI.

- Sharon said that making Juneteenth a paid holiday was first discussed by the library board in June, 2020. This current board voted against it in March, 2021. Four Trustees voting against said they recognize the importance of Juneteenth but had additional questions/concerns.
- A concern was fiscal responsibility. In the packet tonight the cost is \$2,016.06. Comparing this amount to attorney fees of \$6773.50 year to date.
- In a past meeting, Trustee Bartlett inquired about the City's paid holidays. The City has 13 paid holidays as included in the packet this evening. Additionally, Sharon cited 7 governments and libraries that are paid more holidays than the Novi Library.
- Sharon addressed the staff survey in this evening's packet. Citing the highest number of votes from staff is to add Juneteenth as a paid holiday. This option was even more popular than adopting the City of Novi's 13 paid holidays, but not Juneteenth.
- With all of the board's concerns addressed she is expecting that everyone on this board will be clamoring to vote for Juneteenth to be a paid holiday this evening - to show the board values the holiday.
- Juneteenth as a paid holiday is not a knee jerk decision. This discussion started in 2020 with a previous board and in March of 2021 with this board.
- Sharon asks the board for no more delays, no more questions and it is time to show the staff and the community whether the board really values this holiday. Vote tonight on making Juneteenth a paid holiday.

Willy Mena, Yorkshire Novi, MI.

- Proud to be part of a team of 4 in 2007 that was instrumental in jump starting the bond campaign that raised \$16 million to build the beautiful library building.
- Feels privileged to serve on the library board from 2008-2014.
- Their team had many challenges and accomplishments: successfully built new library under-budget during a recession, doubled the size of the library and kept the staff size the same, kept the library running at peak efficiency despite shrinking revenue, found ways to increase programs and quality continued to improve during that time and grew the usage base significantly. Then in 2011 received the Michigan Library of the Year Award.
- The above are some of the reasons Willy has a strong personal connection to the Novi Library.
- He has become dismayed after watching many meetings after the last year or so: he has watched - the board allow agenda items be added at the beginning of meetings cheating community members from an opportunity to weigh in on those topics, the board has allowed votes to take place multiple times on the same issue, personal agendas have taken priority over library business, allowing agenda items to come forth that are beyond the scope and domain of the Novi Library and board members have personally attacked other board members.
- Willy said it gets worse as two former board members have walked away deciding not to apply for reinstatement due to harassment and intimidation by some community members. He watched as similar harassment forced a former board president to resign. He continued to watch as a former member of the DEI Committee decided they no longer wanted to serve as a member clearly because of the unfair treatment that was endured.
- Willy said now he sees social media video posts being created with the sole intent of intimidating and harassing board members.
- He recommends updating the governance rule to disallow personal attacks from employees and community members.
- Willy said Novi is a great library and you would not know it from watching the board meetings. He truly appreciates those who keep the best interest of all Novi Community Members in mind when rendering decisions.

Jason Michener, Harrier Place, Novi.

- Jason says what he has seen over the year is a motion by the former president of this board, after George Floyd was murdered in the streets.
- Jason has watched board members commit and then walk away from decisions.
- One board member has been true to what she has stood for ever since her first appointment. She has been crucified by her fellow board members and other members of the public.

- When she has stood up against discrimination and unfair treatment, Jason said she has been tormented by other board members and removed from being able to operate on committees. The DEI committee is prohibited from meeting and other committees she is on have stopped meetings since August.
- Jason said the problem is treating the citizens of Novi with equity and inclusion. He said the work is to make the diverse members of Novi feel included and provide them equity when they bring something to the table and consider it seriously.
- He does not see a reason to not have Juneteenth be a paid holiday. All objections and concerns have been addressed at this point and no board member has added it to the agenda.
- He has seen great discussion happen during a public meeting and decisions can be made during that time, therefore he does not see a problem with bringing motions to the board and having discussions in front of the public. Preparing in advance is equally okay and he does not see one as being underhanded.
- He suggests the board address the actual issue of diversity, equity and inclusion and the board will have a functioning board and library again. If not, the board will not be able to get passed this and this great library will continue to suffer for this one cause. Jason said the board has the power to change this and can start tonight.

Betsey Beaudoin, Cranbrooke Novi, MI.

- She asked the board to consider why there is such an obstacle in creating diversity, equity and inclusion in a building that says that is one of the primary goals.
- Betsey said DEI matters to her a great deal as a parent of white children growing up in this City that everyone here feels included. She feels her children are better prepared for the world because of the diverse population in Novi.
- The library has said their preference is to work for free two more days essentially in order to have Juneteenth as a paid holiday. This is an example of how much the staff cares about Juneteenth holiday. She asks the board to really consider and care about what the staff has said in the survey.
- Essentially this is gaining two paid holidays or approximately \$4,000 which is now financially in the board's interest to allow Juneteenth to be celebrated by staff and community.
- Betsey commented that more people are in attendance because they care about this issue and she is again asking the board to do the right thing. Create equity in this building. Serve diversity. Give everyone a seat at the table and she asks the board to please do the right thing.

Committee Reports

1. **Policy Committee:** Review current public policies for the Library
(Chair-Wood, Bartlett, and Michener, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
 - Staff Committee: Julie Farkas, Barb Rutkowski, Kim Swejkoski, Betty Lang, Keith Perfect, Dana Brataniec and Hillary Hentschel staff meeting scheduled for 10/25/21.
 - No meeting; no report
2. **HR Committee:** Review HR Policies for the Library, Director Review & Goals
(Chair -Crawford, Dooley, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas & Nicole Williams)
 - Staff Committee: Julie Farkas, Nicole Williams, Lindsay Gojcaj, Kristin Abate and Kirsten Malzahn.
 - Data requested by Library Board HR Committee on September 20, 2021; presented to HR Committee on 10/29/21. HR Policy Committee meeting on 11/2/21 to further review data; see notes on page 70-76.
 - Director's Mid-Year Review (conduct in December 2021 or January 2022?)

3. **Finance Committee:** Financial plan based on building assessment review, Library endowment investigation.
(Chair- Bartlett, Cherukuri, Wood, Staff Liaisons – Julie Farkas & Barbara Cook)
 - Meeting held 10/18/2021; see notes on pages 77-83.

4. **Events/Marketing/Fundraising Committee:** Outreach opportunities
(Chair -Dooley, Bartlett, Yu, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas & Dana Brataniec)
 - Meeting held 10/25/21; next meeting scheduled for 11/15/21
 - GOALS:
 1. Read box fundraiser during National Library Week (April 2022)
 2. Bigger ongoing support to Friends of Novi Library
 3. Marketing plan update
 - Chair Dooley's update and events attended is on page 84

5. **Strategic Planning Committee:**
(Chair - Bartlett, Dooley, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
 - No meeting; No report
 - Based on the Board Retreat on Saturday, June 26, 2021, committees are being asked to identify 2-3 goals to be identified and addressed for 21/22.
 - Update: Trustee Bartlett said the purpose of the survey is to collect more data as the library is in the budgeting phase. Discussions will surround fine free, upcoming labor issues resulting from Covid, and high employee costs due to inflation, etc. will increase significantly. Additionally the team is collecting information on what current library patron's value.

6. **Building/Landscape Committee:**
(Chair-Yu, Cherukuri, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
 - No meeting; no report
 - GOALS:
 1. Apply for the Build America's Great Libraries Grant, if approved, to fund library improvement projects, such as the main entryway. Explore other grant opportunities we can apply for.
 2. Explore ways to make our infrastructure (i.e. phone, security system) to be more resilient to weather, external factors (i.e. market shifts); Opportunities to complete the LED lighting project with the meeting spaces.
 3. Review NPL's current Technology Plan.

7. **Bylaw Committee: Review of Library Board Bylaws**
(Chair – Wood, Bartlett, Michener, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
 - No meeting; no report
 - GOAL: Review current Library Board Bylaws (last updated March 28, 2019)

8. **DEI: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee**
(Chair – Cherukuri, Dooley, Michener, Staff Liaisons – Julie Farkas & Nicole Williams)
 - No meeting held; no report.
 - Staff DEI Committee Continues Work.

Update from Director Farkas about staff DEI Committee:

- Two staff members were added to staff DEI committee

- o Tuesday, October 12, 2021 was last staff DEI Meeting
- o Continue review of ALA scorecard and DEI Initiatives based on 5 categories:
 1. Embeddedness of DEI into NPL Culture
 2. Climate of Organization
 3. Training and education
 4. Recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion
 5. Budget priorities and Data practices
- o Shout out to Nicole Williams, Library HR Specialist, for providing many DEI training opportunities to staff.

Update: Trustee Crawford said it is important for board members to look at all of the data collected. Good policy decisions are made when the data is collected, reviewed and discussed.

Trustee Michener: Trustee Michener said she just heard a great staff DEI report, but it belongs in the report. She expressed concern about the board DEI committee, which she founded. Trustee Michener discussed the stop/pause to the board DEI committee that has not met since she voiced a complaint at the August meeting. Trustee Michener expressed her consistency in her belief and actions of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the community. She said it seems since her complaint that she has been benched and it is obviously retaliation. Trustee Michener said some of her DEI initiatives have been put under staff and she has not received accolades, which is fine but she is an expert DEI educator who has been paused. Trustee Michener does not understand why she is not included as a part of continued DEI initiatives. She wants the board to step up with their DEI initiatives.

President Crawford responded that she in no way has benched Trustee Michener. In fact, Trustee Michener was offered to chair another committee and Trustee Michener declined. President Crawford said the board DEI committee has only been paused as the board DEI committee has not been able to function as a committee, due to continued problems. President Crawford said she has applauded Trustee Michener in the past. Unfortunately, right now because of the board DEI's committees conflict, they are unable to function as a committee. President Crawford is working to have proper training and conflict resolution with an expert. President Crawford said the DEI work is not paused and continues at the staff level.

Trustees discussed conflicts of scheduling committee meetings and the importance of committing to dates far in advance in order to make it work.

The next Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday December 15, 2021 in the City Council Chamber. President Crawford thanked the attendees, staff and board members and their diligence to make the Library a focal point in the community and she wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Matters for Library Board Action

1. None

Communications

1. None

Closed Session

1. None

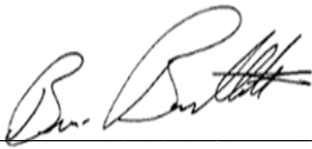
Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:07 p.m.

1st— Trustee Michener

2nd— Trustee Yu

Roll Call vote to adjourn was unanimous. 6 yes votes. 0 no votes. Trustees Wood is absent/excused



Brian Bartlett, Secretary

December 15, 2021

Date