



**CITY OF NOVI LIBRARY BOARD
MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING
October 28, 2021**

Call to Order by President, Kathy Crawford

The meeting was held at the Novi Civic Center, Council Chambers, 45175 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.

Introduction of new Student Representatives by Director Farkas

The new student representatives were welcomed by the Board. The appointments for Abhay Kakarla and Rida Salim will be for the next two years.

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
Torry Yu, Board Member (absent/excused)

Student Representatives

Abhay Kakarla
Rida Salim

Library Staff

Julie Farkas, Director
Barbara Cook, Bookkeeper

Library Attorney

Tom Schultz
Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made to approve the Agenda as amended (to include the date change for the Events/Marketing/ Fundraising Committee as noted under discussion, below.)

1st – Trustee Dooley

2nd – Trustee Bartlett

Discussion: Trustee Dooley informed the Trustees that under Events/Marketing/Fundraising Committee the meeting scheduled for 10/18/21 was rescheduled and held on 10/25/21.

Roll Call Vote was taken. 6 yes votes. Motion passes. Trustee Yu is absent/excused.

Consent Agenda

1. Approve Minutes of:
 - A. September 23, 2021- Regular Meeting

2. Approve Claims and Warrants of:
 - A. Accounts 268 and 269 (#607)

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

1st- Trustee Cherukuri

2nd- Trustee Wood

No discussion took place.

Roll Call Vote was taken. 6 yes votes. Motion passes. Trustees Yu is absent/excused.

Presentations

1. No Presentations

Public Comment

President Crawford remarks: (prior to opening the floor to public comment)

President Crawford welcomed the Novi citizens. She informed guests that are attending this evening, due to a recent call to action from the Novi Northville Racial Awareness Accountability and Action Organization that the message posted on Facebook was misleading. The post stated that President Crawford, as president, is shutting down the board's DEI committee. President Crawford said that is simply not correct. President Crawford has no intention of shutting down the DEI committee. Additionally, Trustee Crawford said she could not eliminate the committee or shut down the committee without changing the bylaws of the board. She added that a board approval would also be needed. President Crawford has stated on numerous occasions that she is merely pausing the committee for a short time, until the board receives conflict resolution training. Also, the important DEI work continues through the library staff under the direction of Director Farkas.

Jason Michener, Harrier Place, Novi, MI.

- March 25th Deferred- Juneteenth paid holiday discussion. Director Farkas reopens a closed issue, bringing it to the new board for a vote. The vote to make Juneteenth a paid holiday was rejected by three; Trustee Crawford, Bartlett and Wood.
- April 22nd Delayed- Statement acknowledging hateful acts and for support for AAPI and Black communities, was voted to be tabled. Trustee's Crawford, Cherukuri, Bartlett and Wood voting to table.
- May 27th Denied - DEI Committee chair reappointment to Trustee Michener denied by President Crawford. A statement acknowledging hateful acts against and support for AAPI, Black community of Novi, denied, with four votes against- Trustees Crawford, Cherukuri, Bartlett and Wood.

- June 24th Deferred- Juneteenth paid holiday was sent to the Policy and Finance Committee by President Crawford. Denied - Juneteenth a paid holiday vote, with Trustees Crawford, Cherukuri, Bartlett and Wood voting no.
- July 22nd Delay- Board response to June listening session was incomplete and the response, as promised by President Crawford and the board, never happened. Denied board response to June listening session. The President decided not to answer and respond to all questions and comments unless they were asked multiple times.
- July 22nd Delayed - Juneteenth paid holiday was delayed. It was sent to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee made no recommendation as promised, led by Chair Bartlett. Also, June reflection session was canceled by President Crawford and DEI Chair Cherukuri.
- August 26th, deferred - Juneteenth paid holiday was supposed to be commented on by the policy committee, led by Chair Wood. No comment was made. Voted against by Cherukuri, Bartlett and Wood. Voted to be sent back to Policy and HR Committee by Trustees Crawford, Cherukuri, Bartlett, Wood and Yu.
- Sept. 23rd, Delayed - Juneteenth paid holiday. No meeting by the policy committee. Denied petition to remove DEI chair – Cherukuri. DEI committee prohibited from meeting by President Crawford and Chair Cherukuri
- Sept. 23rd – Delayed Juneteenth paid holiday. No decision from H.R. Committee by Chair Crawford.
- Jason Michener stated these examples represent a clear pattern, now established by the no longer new library board, that there is a systematic suppression and silencing of the minority communities in Novi as they have made multiple requests. He added that the board is very familiar with the issues.
- Jason is asking the board to act in the community's interest, and the delay, defer and deny tactics will no longer be approved or tolerated.

Betsey Beaudoin Novi Resident

- Betsey read the DEI statement that was passed by the board on May 27, 2021. (This can be found at the top of the library board's agenda).
- She stated that on behalf of Novi Northville Racial Awareness Accountability and Action Group, as well as the 280 individuals that signed the petition, they call on President Crawford to keep her word (as noted in board approved statement).
- Trustee Cherukuri's public social media posts, as well as the formal complaint made against him by Trustee Michener, are clear evidence of discrimination, bigotry and racism. She calls on immediate removal of Mr. Cherukuri as the chair of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.
- Betsey said the (board approved) statement she read professes the board's dedication to promote diversity, equity and inclusion. President Crawford unilaterally made the decision at the last meeting to stop the work of the DEI Committee, which was unanimously approved, as is a standing committee as of September 2020, and that is in direct opposition of the professed dedication.
- She calls on immediate appointment of Trustee Michener as the chair of the DEI committee and authorize her immediately to resume the committee's work. The Novi community is demanding accountability from the board and calling for action.
- She expressed deep appreciation for the excellent programming that has been put forth by the library staff. She thanked the Library staff for listening to the community. She truly hopes that the library board will look to the staff as an example of what it means to embrace diversity.

Sharon Trumpy, Novi, MI.

- Sharon is asking for action from the library president now that the president has been informed of the racist, misogynistic, homophobic and transphobic posts of a board member and failing to do so is abdicating responsibility as president.
- In May 2021, the board approved a statement that discrimination, bigotry and racism will not be tolerated. Last month, the president did tolerate bigotry and justified this by stating that offensive content could be found on anyone's social media. Mr. Cherukuri's public social media posts are not just offensive, they are bigoted. Sharon asks that Mr. Cherukuri be removed as he is not fit to serve on or lead the DEI committee.

- The library president commented that the DEI committee has been unproductive since its inception. Sharon said this is demonstrably false. Under Trustee Michener's leadership, the library board approved the APLA and BCALA memberships. Juneteenth was approved as a holiday and trustee Michener brought forward the motion for Juneteenth to be a paid holiday. Under Trustee Michener's direction, a community listening session and a response session focused on DEI work. She also led the committee when a second listening session was planned. While she chaired the committee, the members read uncomfortable conversations with the Black Man. Also, Trustee Michener consistently embedded DEI goals into other board matters, such as prohibiting hate speech.
- Since Mr. Cherukuri took on leadership of the DEI committee, he has not brought a single DEI initiative to the table. He canceled the planned listening session and failed to respond in writing to the cancellation of board's response session. He argued against making Juneteenth a paid holiday and refused to state his own commitment to DEI efforts in the library. To suggest that Trustee Michener and Trustee Cherukuri are equally ineffective as chair of the DEI because of their big personalities is simply inaccurate.
- The library staff work and commitment are abundantly clear. But the board is failing the Novi community.
- It is time to step up. Remove Trustee Cherukuri from the committee, reinstate Trustee Michener as the chair and get to work.

Jen Kalousek, Philip Drive, Novi MI

- Jen is concern with what she has heard from some board trustees at prior board meetings. She feels it is important that DEI is a fundamental goal and core value among many organizations. She is proud that the library's written board statement states that the library is committed to ensuring DEI. She is encouraged that the written document is not limited to just employees, but also specifically states it applies to all trustees and volunteers.
- However, she said words on paper mean nothing if the action taken by those in leadership are not aligned with those statements. Further, an entity with such a commitment to ensuring diversity and inclusion, dignity and respect surely ought to have a mechanism in place to enforce those goals. Janet asks what are those mechanisms.
- She has a number of questions that she thinks anyone who is interested in ensuring DEI among the board should be asking. People should feel empowered to know the answers to these questions. Is there a specific policy or otherwise that prohibits discrimination and harassment at the library? Whether those actions are directed towards an employee, volunteer or patron, is there a complaint procedure within that policy? To whom should reports be made? What does the policy say about prompt remedial action in response to that complaint? Does your policy require you to conduct an investigation into the allegations that are made? Is there anyone outside the library that needs to be notified: the City, or maybe an insurance carrier regarding potential liability coverage? Does the policy prohibit retaliation against individuals who raised complaints of discrimination, harassment or any other type of mistreatment?
- Janet understands that a formal complaint was made by one of the board trustees against another board trustee based on comments that he made to her during a DEI meeting. She understands the complaint was presented to the board chair. What has been done to ensure that that complaint is addressed and prompt remedial action has been taken? Have any third parties, such as liability insurance carriers been notified of this complaint? Has an investigation been started? As the board chair acknowledges that she too has had allegations of discriminatory conduct made against her, as referenced in an email from the board packet this evening. Has an independent third party been consulted on conducting an investigation?
- Jen as a resident of Novi, is disappointed to be left with the impression that the board's terrific written policy supporting DEI and not tolerating discrimination appeared to be nothing more than window dressing. Why was the response to pause the DEI Committee meeting? She can't imagine that the board, either unilaterally, through its chair or by a vote of the committee, is choosing an action that looks retaliatory in response to a complaint that was raised against the committee chair.
- Jen as a citizen and patron of the library, would like to know the purposes of the pause, and how long it's going to last. She would also like to know what actions are going to be taken to

repair the reputation and restore the committee and what is being done in response to the receipt of a formal complaint made by a board trustee

Tia Marie Sanders, Library Employee

- Tia Marie is a library employee and member of both the board DEI and staff DEI committees. She is concerned about the DEI board committee pause that was initiated without notice.
- She said that talking about and taking action to address inequity is always difficult, but choosing to stop the work because it is difficult is unacceptable.
- When members of the DEI committee, both staff and board members, shared with board leadership that Trustee Cherukuri was unfit to lead, this should have been addressed swiftly. Tia Marie noted that instead of removing Mr. Cherukuri as DEI chair, however, the work was stopped by the president of the Library board and placed blame on those who brought this bigotry to light. It was distressing to Tia Marie to see that President Crawford made the decision to stop the board DEI committee and attempt to frame this as a decision made by the H.R. committee. She thanked Trustee Dooley for her transparency and clarifying that the pause was not decided by the HR committee.
- Tia Marie calls on President Crawford to be transparent about the decision to pause the DEI committee and to take responsibility for these decisions. Tia Marie said this creates distrust among the staff, board and the public.
- Tia Marie said that President Crawford removed Trustee Michener as the chair of the DEI before the work even had a chance to get started. The DEI committee originally consisted of staff, including two black staff members, and two board members. She said of all of the committees this one was the only one that was created to support the diverse BIPOC community. She said that when complaints about the new DEI chair were made, they were targeted, things would be removed, and there would be retaliation, which is painful. This makes her have no trust for the board and it puts an undue burden on the director and staff. These decisions affect Tia Marie's life and her day to day livelihood, and the board does so from a lens of inconsideration, distrust and unsafety.

Kari Lopiccolo, resides near Novi library

- Kari welcomed the new student representatives and she thanks the board for their volunteering, dedication and serving the community.
- Kari echoes and supports previous comments this evening. She said that she met Trustee Michener through community work and that Trustee Michener breathes, lives and serves and does the work of DEI every day, even when she's not the chair of DEI committee. Kari said that Trustee Michener has values and anyone could look at her social media and see her values and not see anything that's negative towards any group or individual.
- Kari chose Novi to raise her family because of the diversity, equity and inclusion that Novi offers and so it's very concerning to her that the library is going in this direction and pausing this important work.
- Kari requests that the board be more transparent about when conflict resolution will be taking place. She certainly hopes that it's within the week because they are all adults and are going to role model for the student representatives that this kind of work is tough and they can get through this by sharing different perspectives instead of pausing. Mature conversations need to happen to get the work done because when these conversations stop, the work doesn't get done. Also, Kari said leaving all the work to the staff is underutilizing all the expertise that is available.

No name stated (speaking for her mother)

- She wanted to finish addressing her mother's concerns.
- She said that Trustee Cherukuri's behavior towards committee members is unprofessional and belittling, and despite multiple committee members voicing concerns, there was a failure to act.
- She said that Mr. Cherukuri's social media posts were brought to the library board's attention by the community members. Additionally, Trustee Michener lodged a formal complaint regarding Trustee Cherukuri's behavior at a DEI committee meeting. The board neglected their duties by protecting Trustee Cherukuri and shutting out important DEI work demanded by Novi community.

- She said this is retaliation for reporting Trustee Cherukuri's discriminatory acts. The very people the board has committed to representing and protecting are being targeted by Trustee Cherukuri. In her opinion staff does not feel safe under the board's leadership.
- She said to excuse Mr. Cherukuri's behavior, both on his in-person interactions and on social media sends a clear message that black people, as well as the LGBTQ plus community are no longer safe, protected and welcome in Novi.
- Specifically, at the Novi Public Library, as well as a black woman employed by the library, she does not feel that she adequately protected from racism and retaliation. Appointments by Mayor Gatt of the President and of Trustee Cherukuri to the library board and the decisions made by the President and the library board since that time sends a clear message of anti-Blackness from the city leadership. She calls on the board to be accountable and to immediately remove Trustee Cherukuri from the DEI committee.

Jackie, no address stated, resident of the city of Novi.

- Jackie spent a great deal of time over the years in the new library, the current library and the previous one. She thinks it is such an atrocity to the residents of the nearby community to endure the boards covering, backing and supporting someone who has clearly voiced their dislike of certain members of the community and just a society as a whole. Jackie said it is an embarrassment and she does not see the reason or justification for such a volatile move to the residents of Novi.
- She said that whoever is allowing this needs to be held accountable for what has been done to the whole community. It is an embarrassment for the community to have to endure according to Jackie.
- She asked how the board can justify continuing to support someone who verbally expresses their dislike of certain community persons and characters of people and representation of people. This behavior gives reason to possibly put someone else in that place. Action needs to take place instead of the pause. She calls for removal of this person.

Dr. Copeland, not a resident of Novi, but a stakeholder in Oakland County.

- Dr. Copeland wants the board to know that other counties and other cities are watching. Her question is what does the board want their legacy to be?
- She questions the appointment of someone who is incapable of doing the work that is required for diversity, equity, inclusion. If the board knows the appointed person is unqualified and incapable of doing the work, not just on the outside for people, but internally, there is a problem because the people he's supposed to represent he is actually harming. She said people are watching and taking note. Other cities are representing and understanding what is at stake here and what's at risk.
- She noted that young people are watching and asks the board again what they want their legacy to be.
- Dr. Copeland knows Trustee Michener because she's a mental health professional like herself. They deal with cultural competency on a daily basis, not just professionally, but also personally. She said they are training people and working with people on a daily basis to make sure they do no harm. Therefore, professionally Trustee Michener is called to an ethical standard to do no harm. Dr. Copeland knows that Trustee Michener would do no harm in her role as DEI chair.
- Dr. Copeland questions when people are appointed to positions that they don't have the ability, the qualifications or the training for.
- She is asking the board to represent what matters to the community that they were appointed to serve.
- Dr. Copeland said the concern becomes that the board's actions are going to set the standard for what happens around them. She asked the Board what they want their legacy to be.

Reports

1. Student Representatives Report
Presented by student representatives Abhay Kakarla and Rida Salim.

2. President's Report (Kathy Crawford)
 - A. 2019-2022 Strategic Planning Goals (page 23)
 - B. Scope of work proposal – information from trustees compiled by Trustee Dooley (pages 79-81)

The presidents report (President Crawford):

Trustee Dooley reviewed the compilation of ideas from each Trustee (regarding direction for Trustee training) and submitted them to Director Farkas. Director Farkas then submitted these requests to the two DEI trainers chosen by the board. The resulting scope of work was included on Pages 79 to 81 in the packet and is considered under matters for board action.

Trustee Dooley clarified that diversity, equity, inclusion is woven in the library's strategic plan and therefore she believes that it is going to be a part of Trustees training going forward. When the Trustees review and vote on the proposal this evening, that will give good guidance for the people that are weighing in in terms of the consultants because the Trustees do have a lot of work to do in order to repair the relationships and trust on the board, so they can dig deeper into DEI work because it does take a lot of vulnerability to do that. President Crawford appreciates everyone's participation.

President Crawford hopes Trustees had a chance to digest confidential information that she sent regarding concerns that were raised by Trustee Michener after last month's board meeting. The passing of the note by the sitting attorney at the last meeting was simply a request by the director regarding whether the attorney should intervene during the conversation. The attorney, present at the September board meeting, was new to the process and to the board. Director Farkas did whisper a reply which was misinterpreted, and there was absolutely no intent of making fun or ridiculing anyone.

President Crawford cautions members and staff to be more mindful of how a side conversation or a passed note could be misinterpreted. In addition, body language, including facial expression, could easily be misconstrued or misunderstood. Board members have been accused of eye-rolling and or frowning, plus gestures at board meetings when another member is speaking. Trustee Crawford has not personally observed this, but know that during meetings your face is readily on display and being interpreted. This was particularly true when meetings were held virtually. President Crawford suggest Trustees and staff become more conscious of their facial expressions and other body language.

Trustee Michener spoke to President Crawford's comments (above) in regards to Trustee Michener's concerns after last month's board meeting. Trustee Michener mentioned that she wasn't prepared, but she always tries to be as prepared as possible. Trustee Michener said that she comes to the meetings with hope and a professional duty to serve Novi as she has for seven years. That's always been her goal and to never cause any controversy that doesn't need to be caused. However, Trustee Michener said if she brings a complaint, it's accurate.

Trustee Michener provided the following time stamps:

0:10:42 attorney gives side glance to library director
0:51:03 attorney leans into start side conversation with director
0:52:22 attorney leans in to start side conversation with director
0:55:30 attorney leans in to start side conversation with director
0:55:38 attorney interjects without commenting through the chair
0:56:22 attorney talking, laughing with director
0:58:34 attorney interrupts Trustee Michener
1:00:30 attorney talking with director
1:01:00 attorney interjects while Trustee Wood is speaking
1:01:25 attorney talking with director
1:01:42 attorney interjects while Trustee Crawford is speaking

1:05:01 attorney talking with director
1:19:51 attorney leans in and starts side conversation with director
1:20:00 attorney talking with director
1:23:13 attorney leans in to start side conversation with director
1:27:25 attorney talking to Director, while Trustee Wood is speaking
1:28:12 attorney leans in and starts side conversation with director, while Trustee Michener is speaking
1:28:19 attorney's side conversation with director interrupts board meeting; Trustee Michener points out that they are out of order
1:28:20 attorney gives glance to director
1:28:24 attorney makes another side comment to director
1:29:17 attorney passes notepad to director after writing. Attorney then ignores a question from Trustee Michener and continues side conversation with director
1:35:23 attorney interjects without commenting through the chair
1:35:58 attorney talking with director
1:39:10 the attorney laughs openly at Trustee Michener's comment, which Trustee Michener said was not a joke.

Trustee Michener said she was not planning on bringing that, but she likes to be prepared because things have been said about her that aren't true. When she is laughed at, as can be seen on camera, and when she is interrupted while entering a motion, she commented that she takes offense to that.

Trustee Michener said she was told that everybody's not under OMA at this desk, but in her opinion, people should be expected to have professional behavior.

Trustee Michener said she is not trying to get anybody in trouble, but she is stating that this behavior is interrupting a professional meeting. She said she didn't make it up and it is not all in her head, and sometimes she feels targeted when she bring up things that happened to her as though she is just making things up.

3. Treasurer's Report (Geoffrey Wood)- pages 24-34

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 – September 2021

On page 28 of the October Board packet.

D. Library Fund 268 Expenditure and Revenue Report ending September 30, 2021

Revenue ending September 30, 2021 was \$3,212,122.

Expenditures ending September 30, 2021 was \$706,064.

E. Library Fund 269 Contributed Fund ending September 30, 2021

Revenue ending September 30, 2021 was \$5,270.

Expenditures ending September 30, 2021 was \$12,144.

F. Balance Sheets for Funds 268 and 269 as of September 30, 2021

Ending Fund Balance for Fund 268 as of September 30, 2021 was \$5,001,370

Ending Fund Balance for Fund 269 as of September 30, 2021 was \$1,688,780

Trustee Michener asked for clarification on attorney expenses on page 31; incurring \$3,780 in the first two months. She said that is over half of the legal fees budget for the entire fiscal year. During the month of August alone, \$2,128 was spent. Trustee Michener requested Director Farkas provide a copy of the retainer agreement and Trustee Michener said she did not receive a response from the director. Also, Trustee Michener would like to understand why the library uses two separate firms for representation, which she said she did not receive a response about.

Director Farkas said she did send an email back to Trustee Michener on the 26th of October responding to her questions. Director Farkas read from her email this evening. The email response from Director Farkas also included President Crawford. Director Farkas answered that the library does not have a retainer agreement with any specific attorney. Since Director Farkas has been employed with NPR, they have had a history of using an attorney on an as needed basis with Foster Swift for HR and policy and the City of Novi for bylaws and library contracts. Director Farkas has also used Butzel Long in the past. The city's attorney has offered their services as part of the city as well as they are available. If the board would like Director Farkas to pursue an agreement, then a scope of work and proposal would need to be set forth.

Trustee Michener asked again why there are two firms. As noted above Foster Swift is utilized for HR and policy. Foster Swift has library experience. The city attorney is used in terms of bylaws and appointments. Director Farkas had a relationship since she started at the library 14 years ago, with the building authority, as the City attorneys took on the project for the library and the city attorney is involved with contracts as well.

Trustee Michener said during the past year an attorney has been at every meeting, which is an expense. She said when she has asked for things, for different things, she is told they don't have the money. Trustee Michener said she wants to understand the expense and why, as it never went to vote (to have an attorney present). Director Farkas said she received direction from the last Board President asking for legal help to be represented at the board. Then when interim Trustee Dooley came aboard, she asked for the same and Director Farkas had the same request from President Crawford. Trustee Michener wants to know why and for what purpose?

Trustee Dooley offered clarification as to why she asked for an attorney presence when she was interim-president. Attorney representation was at the last meeting that prior President Agosta led. Trustee Dooley said that a representative from Foster Swift was at that meeting and that actual representative indicated that they are not really that adept when it comes to OMA and Robert's rules, as they are with other things. At that time Trustee Dooley was freshly going to lead the board and kind of thrown into it, and she knew that Rosati Schultz had that expertise. Trustee Dooley said she wanted to make sure the meeting was compliant, which was why she thought it would be best to secure a firm that did specialize in obeying Robert's rules. In past meetings there were a lot of questions with procedure, and Trustee Dooley is somebody that likes full transparency.

President Crawford also offered clarification as to why she requested an attorney. She stated she was on City council before and she is familiar with Mr. Schultz and his department. Also she experienced some of the same uncertainties that Trustee Dooley, just mentioned. President Crawford was going to be new to the board and new as president, and she wanted to make sure that she was getting proper advice.

Trustee Michener responded that no one is new anymore and asked what the continued reasoning is since there is still an attorney attending the meeting? President Crawford felt that Mr. Schulz's firm had more experience with things that are going on at meetings. Trustee Michener asked President Crawford to be specific with the kind of things? President Crawford said parliamentary procedure in particular; the OMA, the bylaws, and this attorney has worked on the bylaws. His firm has been actively involved in Novi library bylaws and policies.

4. Director's Report (Julie Farkas)

On pages 35-54 of the October Board packet.

Staff members celebrating anniversaries for November are:

- Betty Lang – Information Technology - 33 years

- Bill Bembeneck – Facilities- 21 years
- Julie Farkas– Director – 14 years
- Lisa Rinkel- Support Services – 5 years
- Kristin Malzahn- Information Services – 4 years
- Katie Edmiston- Information Services – 4 years

- A. Information Technology Report (pages 55-56)
- B. Facilities Report (pages 56-57)
- C. Information Services Report (pages 57-60)
- D. Support Services Report (page 61)
- E. Library Usage Statistics Report (pages 62-70)
- F. Friends of Novi Library – (pages 71-75)
- G. City of Novi Historical Commission – (page 76)

Public Comment

Jason Michener, Harrier Place, Novi.

- Jason commented on the Finance Committee's report in August re: whether the Library could afford to make Juneteenth a paid Holiday. He said the committee brought back a solution that was H.R. policy based, offering time off swaps and floating holidays. He was looking for a monetary solution from the finance committee.
- Jason restated his proposal he made at the June listening session and he said he never got a response because the July reflection session was canceled.
- Jason assumed 50 part time employees working the max eligible hours between 26 and 29 and half hours, they would receive six hours paid at an approximate hourly rate of 15, costing the library approximately \$4,500.
- Since then, he has seen the library postings for jobs, with part time employees working under 20 hours and they wouldn't be eligible for Holiday pay, and the pay rate was usually between \$10 and \$12.
- Jason's revised estimate based on ten part time employees that would be eligible the week of the holiday at a lower rate of 20-30 hours a week. They've received four hours of paid holiday, \$12 a piece that would be \$500.
- Jason said if no one worked over 20 hours part time the cost to the library is zero. If his numbers are wrong, he would love to have it refuted and correct numbers presented by the Finance Committee.
- Jason also wanted to address DEI comments by President Crawford, how the committee has always been a mess. Jason would submit to the board that under Chair Michener, there were two listening sessions and one recent reflection session successfully carried out. An initiation of the library book audit, and secured diversity based memberships. DEI helped secure Juneteenth as a day of recognition and tried to get it passed as a paid holiday. DEI proposed multiple statements of support for targeted minority groups.
- Jason said under Cherukuri, the July reflection session was cancelled. There was a resignation from a library staff on the DEI Board Committee. Also a letter was received a letter from the library HR employee questioning his role and his ability to lead as chair. Additionally, there is a signed petition by 275 people requesting his resignation.
- Jason reminds President Crawford that July 22nd, she commented it has not been a full year and look at all that has been accomplished, amazing progress has been made in a large part due to the passion, dedication and ingenuity of Trustee Michener.
- Jason would suggest that the DEI committee was very effective under prior leadership and has become completely paralyzed under the current leadership.
- Jason said the board should address the issue at hand, which is the constant refusal to listen to the minority populations and rectify the DEI issues that have been put forth, today, by multiple community members.

Louise, Novi Resident

- Louise came to see how the board interacts and because she heard the DEI Committee is on pause.
- Louise watched people bravely approach the podium to speak and because their truth is not understood it does not mean that pain and hurt is not there. She said the young lady speaking earlier maybe only had a few more words to finish and she was shut down.
- Louise said that twelve years ago, as a young mother, she went to the Novi library and was treated really badly and she has never been back. She couldn't pay the late fees and the late fees accumulated fast on the videos. Since then she has gone to the Northville Public Library where they had a more flexible fine policy on videos.
- Louise told Mr. Cherukuri that she really thinks at this point that he should step down. She does not understand how all these people have to be here and tell you that they're offended and they're hurt and they don't like what you're doing. It should be enough.
- When Louise first came to this area from another City, she noticed how white it is. She said there was no color, none. Now there is and she looks at Novi hopeful, as a place that is doing the work. She met Tia Marie at Black Lives Matter and was so proud of the community for showing up for that.

Kari Lopiccolo, off 10 mile in Simmons.

- Kari witnessed disrespectful reactions when watching Zoom board meetings. She was uncomfortable watching them. She saw Trustee Michener hold herself together and remain composed.
- Kari brought up the previous speaker, Louise who spoke about library fees. Kari said that because the DEI committee is paused there are action items on the agenda not being heard. She mentioned equity issues and the new library kiosk. Where she said books can be checked out and fees can accumulate if there is not another box to return it in. She said this perpetuates a negative cycle in that community, and she think that needs to be addressed right away.
- Kari suggests community members who can volunteer to help build a box and return those books to the library, and hopefully the committee will be able to be part of that.
- Kari said action stuff, like that, is needed. She does not think the committee should be paused and action steps are needed. They are all grown adults and can share ideas and work through it together.

Cameron Banks, Novi resident

- Cameron said she is 20 years old and has a wonderful mother. She wasn't prepared to speak today.
- Cameron said she has been following along with things that have been going on and actions or lack thereof.
- Cameron said she felt like she had a voice at such a young age and sometimes there are some battles that she could not fight for herself, and that's where her mother would take over, and would represent her in the way that she felt appreciated.
- Cameron is sad to see the board appointed Trustee Cherukuri in such a role. She said there are members on the board and community that are affected, their livelihoods are affected and their health are affected as well. She said it also shows a terrible example to younger people, especially people her age.
- Cameron is witnessing how parents are being treated and it ultimately affects her. She shared her mother is still having some health issues, extra stress and not feeling welcome in a place of her work and in the community. She said her mother sacrifices so much to represent and she puts so much effort into the community.
- Cameron also looks up to her grandfather who speaks about the ability to admit when you are wrong, and not always making the best decisions for the right decisions.
- Cameron said admitting a wrong is part of having honor, morals and value. Cameron said when problems arise there are processes in place to fix those and simply putting a pause on it is not a mature way to handle it. She said it is being cowardice coming down from the problem and not addressing it.
- Cameron said that when you step in and agree to this position, you know the steps that you need to take. And just knowing is not enough, you also have to take action.

Kristin Dokick, lives on Winthrop

- Kristin knows many of the people this evening, she might even guess that there are people here on both sides of this challenge in diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Kristin is involved in diversity, equity, inclusion for a living, having over 30 years invested in DEI and she hears a lot of people's pain today. She knows the hearts of both sides.
- Kristin is volunteering her time and experience to offer some ideas for the council, for the community and for everyone to basically hear each other's voice. She is not suggesting any actions, she is suggesting how to talk, and have conversations because there's a lot of heart on both sides.
- Kristin knows people individually. She met President Crawford, at the Capitol building with Kristin's little boy, Tyler. At that time Kristin suggested cultures connect and be part of the mission of Michigan. She said President Crawford was wonderful that day and wonderful today.
- Kristin said that everyone has spoken from the heart and she hears both sides. Also, she knows from experience that President Crawford would be open to this. She was open to it three years ago when Kristin met her and suggested that she take this to the state of Michigan to get it declared.
- Kristin has been in the public library with Julie Farkas. They have offered diversity programs.
- Kristin knows Tia Marie personally. She said Tia Marie has a great heart. Kristin knows a lot of people this evening and says there needs to be more conversations. She is not suggesting any specific actions and offered to volunteer her time to help.

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, and Kirsten Malzahn.
 - Meeting scheduled for 9/30/21 to discuss types of data gathering that is needed to proceed with further action related to Juneteenth and Holiday Pay Policy based on the Finance Committee's recommendation on August 26, 2021. A staff survey is currently being executed by the Library Director regarding paid holiday time. Included in Director Farkas's report is the In-Service staff survey results from August 20, 2021. Director Farkas would like to proceed with another In-service with Dr. Jay Marks to build from the work that first introduced in August. March 11, 2022 is being recommended.
3. **Finance Committee:** Financial plan based on building assessment review, Library endowment investigation.
(Chair- Bartlett, Cherukuri, Wood, Staff Liaisons – Julie Farkas & Barbara Cook)
 - Meeting scheduled for 10/18/2021
4. **Events/Marketing/Fundraising Committee:** Outreach opportunities
(Chair -Dooley, Bartlett, Yu, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas & Dana Brataniec)
 - Next meeting scheduled 10/18/2021
 - 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 report on events attended is on page 77 of the board packet.

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.

6. **Building/Landscape Committee:**

(Chair-Yu, Cherukuri, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)

- Meeting held: Thursday, October 14, 2021
- Meeting update from Chair Yu is on page 78
- 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 Update, meeting held 10/12/21: Welcomed two new members to the staff committee. Another tour of the Sri Venkateswara Temple will take place on 10/18/21. Shannon O'Leary is sharing with staff Japanese informational/cultural magazines with staff. Continue to review the ALA DEI Scorecard. Director Farkas is looking for volunteers from the staff committee to work on certain sections of the document pertaining to: Embeddedness of DEI into the Culture and Climate of the Organization, Training & Education, Recruitment, Hiring, Retention & Promotion, and Budget Priorities for DEI and Data Practices. HR Specialist, Nicole Williams is rolling out the new staff training opportunities in October for staff to take part in. More follow-up with Dr. Jay Marks is being done for future staff development. Library is currently engaging the Novi Photography Club to submit photos for an art display/contest with the theme: What does Diversity Mean to you? Two groups that have been engaged this past month: Pride & Joy (October 6th) and Mental Health Awareness (October 11th). We are looking to reconnect with PAASN.

Matters for Board Action

1. Remote Work Policy

A motion was made to approve the Remote Work Policy. (Pages 80-83)

1st- Trustee Cherukuri

2nd-Trustee Wood

Discussion:

Matters for Library Board Action

1. Approve Scope of Work proposal for engaging a consultant for the Library Board on pages 79-81.

A motion was made to approve scope of work proposal for engaging a consultant for the Library Board.

1st- Trustee Dooley

2nd-Trustee Michener

Discussion:

Trustee Bartlett: Both gentlemen being considered, Dr. Meadows and Dr. Marks have had requirements that their training sessions not be videotaped. In the last meeting, a comment was made that Dr. Meadow's session was videotaped, but it does not appear on the web site since the board did not tape the session. Regardless of contracts, if the proposal includes the board as a whole it is covered by OMA and the board cannot legally control recording devices from the General Public. Hence in the proposal it needs to be clear to vendors that they can have their sessions videotaped.

Director Farkas: Indicated that the proposals can be modified to inform both vendors of the possibility of being taped for all meetings involving the entire board.

Trustee Michener: Clarified that she was the one who mentioned the taping and it was indeed taped by a member of the public. As far as any legal issues regarding taping, Tom Schultz would have the most informed opinion but agreed with the clarification.

Roll Call Vote was taken to approve the scope of work with clarification regarding recording of sessions.

Roll Call Vote was taken and 6 yes votes. Trustee Yu is absent/excused.

2. Approve entering into a 3yr. contract with CBTS for phone equipment and service in the amount of \$15,478.20 annually

A motion was made to enter into a 3 yr. contract with CBTS for phone equipment and service in the amount of \$15,478.20 annually.

1st- Trustee Cherukuri

2nd-Trustee Wood

Discussion: Trustee Cherukuri said the number of responses to the phone RFP was tremendous. He complimented Barbara Rutkowski for the comprehensive response. Trustee Michener asked who the current service provider is and what they are paid. Also, she asked what triggered this bid. Director Farkas answered that CBTS is the current provider, and the library has had a relationship with them. It is a three year contract, annually, it will be \$15,000. It is more compared to the past but it is a different type of service. The trigger is that they were no longer going to provide service and the current phones are going to be discontinued in terms of service and warranty.

Roll Call Vote was taken and motion passes with 6 yes votes. Trustee Yu is absent/excused

3. Consideration and approval of closing the Library on Friday, March 11, 2022 for an additional In-Service day for staff training with Dr. Jay Marks to further develop and discuss DEI topics first introduced at the August 20, 2021 event; Director Farkas has two board meeting calendar conflicts which she is asking for the Board to meet a week earlier on Thursdays in February and July of 2022

A motion was made to approve closing the Library on Friday, March 11, 2022 for an additional In-Service day for staff training with Dr. Jay Marks to further develop and discuss DEI topics first introduced at the August 20, 2021 event; Director Farkas has two board meeting calendar conflicts which she is asking for the Board to meet a week earlier on Thursdays in February and July of 2022.

1st- Trustee Dooley
2nd-Trustee Cherukuri

Discussion: Trustee Michener asked if Director Farkas typically needs to adjust the board meeting for the month of February. Director Farkas said it is not an ongoing change.
Roll Call Vote was taken and motion passes with 6 yes votes. Trustee Yu is absent/excused

Communications

1. 9/27/21: Email from Kathy Crawford, Re: cube Project
2. 9/27/21: Email from Kathy Crawford, Re: Trustee Michener's letter
3. 9/28/21: Email from Sharon Trumpy, Re: Parent to Parent Book Discussion
4. 10/7/21: Email from Mary Storch, Re:Fines

Closed Session

1. **None**

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:32 p.m.

1st— Trustee Michener
2nd— Trustee Dooley

Roll Call vote to adjourn was unanimous. 6 yes votes. Trustees Yu is absent/excused



Brian Bartlett, Secretary

November 17, 2021

Date