

Rockbridge Regional Library System
Board of Trustees Meeting – February 23, 2023
4:15 PM

The Board of Trustees met at St. John's United Methodist Church on February 23, at 4:15 AM.

Members present included Alexandra Brown, Bob Kramer, McKinley Williams, Bret Kampf, Melanie Forde, Margaret Kirkby, Jessica Whipple, Tom Goodale, Thomas Bell, Tim Eldredge, and Gail Heslep. Bruce McWilliams, President of the Rockbridge Regional Library Foundation Board attended as a representative from the Foundation Board. Staff members present were Julie Goyette, Library Director, and Beverly Slaydon, Recording Secretary.

Ms. Brown, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:20 PM.

The minutes of the January 23, 2023 meeting were approved as presented.

Ms. Brown announced that this would be Beverly Slaydon's last Board meeting with the library as she is retiring on February 28th. Ms. Brown read a Resolution for Beverly and thanked her for her 32 years of service. Refreshments were served.

Mission Moment

Mrs. Goyette introduced Elaina Skovira, Buena Vista Branch Manager. This the tenth year Mrs. Skovira has managed the Buena Vista Branch. She reported that the temporary location in the Education Building at St. John's United Methodist Church is welcoming, bright and dry. Patrons found the new temporary location quickly and are using library resources. The St. John's United Methodist Church has been very gracious. Staff have received all positive comments. Mrs. Skovira thanked her staff for all of their hard work setting up the temporary space.

Foundation Update

Bruce McWilliams, Foundation Board President, reported the 2022 Annual Appeal took in a total of \$22,070.00. We received \$10,060.00 by mail and \$12,010.00 through online donations. The Foundation Board is very pleased with this amount donated. The Fundraising Committee will meet to start discussing our 2023 Appeal sometime in April.

Questions regarding board packet

Mrs. Goyette asked if there were any questions from the board packet for this meeting. Mr. Kampf had a question about where to find a figure in the report and Mrs. Goyette explained where to find it.

Discussion

Lexington Library update

Lexington opened back up on February 17th. Part of the Piovano Room is complete and part of the Children's area is open but we are waiting for new shelving to be able to move books and complete the flooring in that area.

Mr. Bell asked if the new meeting space is complete. The space is complete and was not affected by the flood.

Due to the additions to our agenda, Mrs. Heslep made a motion to table the Policy Committee's report and the review of revised policies. Mr. Eldredge seconded the motion. The board of trustees voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Structural Engineer's report on Buena Vista

Ms. Brown welcomed Buena Vista Mayor Bill Fitzgerald, City Manager, Jason Tyree, and City Attorney, Brian Kearney, to the meeting. Ms. Brown asked if they would like to start off with the Structural Engineer's report. Mr. Kearney reported that the Engineer found nothing that would prove the building is not structurally sound. Mr. Kearney stated the building is the Buena Vista Library and the library needs to get back into that building now. Mr. Bell asked about the flooding that was addressed in the report. A staff member was injured and had to have two operations after slipping in the water that comes in the back door of the library. The water continues to come into the building under the back door whenever we have heavy rain. The library closes now when it floods.

Mayor Fitzgerald said it was reported to him that the building was falling down. That is why they had a structural engineer come in and inspect the building. The structural engineer determined the building is structurally sound and the library needs to move back into the building. Mayor Fitzgerald said he would have the back door sealed off to stop the water coming in immediately. Mr. Kampf asked if the back door was an emergency door and Mayor Fitzgerald replied yes. Mayor Fitzgerald responded that there were four doors total; front door, main entrance, back door and side door on the jail side. Mr. Fitzgerald said they could go down and seal the door off and the library could move right back in.

Mr. Kearney said the lines of communication need to stay open. Mr. Fitzgerald said there was a big lack of communication between Buena Vista and Mrs. Goyette. Mr. Kearney stated that we all want the library. He said the building is structurally sound and repeated that the library needs to move back into that building now.

Reverend Williams, board treasurer and representative for Lexington, wanted the mayor, city manager, and attorney to address the accident with the staff that happened in 2019 with the water at the backdoor. He stated it was disrespectful to the staff not to address the water issue. He asked why the mayor, attorney and city manager were not more concerned about the people using the library: small children and the elderly, for example. At that time, Mr. Fitzgerald turned to the person next to him and called Mr. Williams a smart ass. Mr. Williams told Mr. Fitzgerald he didn't appreciate him saying that and found the remark very disrespectful.

The question was asked about who Ms. Skovira, Buena Vista Branch Manager, should communicate with when there is a problem with the building. Mayor Fitzgerald responded that Mrs. Goyette should be contacted and she should contact Mr. Tyree. Mr. Kearney stated those details could be worked out later. Ms. Kirkby, board trustee, asked, who is liable for an injury that would occur in the Buena Vista Library. Mr. Kearney responded the City of Buena Vista and Mrs. Goyette added the Rockbridge Regional Library as well as the Library Board could also be held liable.

Mr. Bell, trustee representing Buena Vista, addressed Mayor Fitzgerald by saying he knew Fitzgerald had grown up in Buena Vista and loved the people of Buena Vista, and he certainly doesn't work all the hours he does for the city for the small amount of pay Fitzgerald receives. Mr. Cooper, Council Member, once had figured out it was two cents an hour the Mayor was making if he was paid by the hour. Mr. Bell continued stating people were not happy that we moved out of the library initially but now that we are in the education building, they are very happy with the set up. They love the location. St. John's

loves the library being here. Mr. Bell asked if it would it be possible to set a time, maybe two weeks from now, to invite members of the city to come together and find out what they want in a library. Mr. Bell asked if possibly Mayor Fitzgerald was frustrated with Mrs. Goyette because he thinks she is trying to force the City of Buena Vista into giving the library a new building. Mayor Fitzgerald said he was frustrated because everything the City of Buena Vista tries to do is questioned by Mrs. Goyette such as the recent Structural Engineer's report. Fitzgerald added that this has to stop and the City of Buena Vista is going to get things fixed, and Mrs. Goyette has to communicate better with the City of Buena Vista.

Ms. Skovira stated that she had always contacted the city's public works department about any problems with the building. She added that it was public works staff who warned her about dust years ago. In January, it was public works staff who said they would recommend a structural engineer assess the building.

Mr. Kearney said the City Council had never been told that the library was moving into the church when it did. Mrs. Goyette said she had called and left a message with Mr. Tyree to call her but did not hear back from him. She later followed up with an email. Mr. Kearney suggested regular meetings with board members, Mrs. Goyette, and the city manager.

Mrs. Goyette apologized to Mayor Fitzgerald for her part in any misunderstanding and said she would look forward to meeting with him and anyone else on a regular basis to discuss problems relating to the Buena Vista Library.

Mr. Tyree spoke up and confirmed that Mrs. Goyette did try to reach him.

Steve Baldrige, the husband of a staff member at the Buena Vista Library, and also a former member of Buena Vista City Council, asked to speak. He suggested that the Board of Trustees decide what is adequate space for the library. The program space in the Buena Vista Library has never been adequate and that is why the library moved into the church several months ago so they could use the space for programs. Baldrige asked what is more important - the library serving the public? Or the building? Mr. Baldrige stated he would not recommend moving back in the library building until adequate space for services are available and meet the needs for the area served by the Library. Buena Vista Library serves more than just Buena Vista City. Moving forward, he asked, what does adequate mean?

Mary Jo Brinkley spoke on behalf of the church and said the church will be heartbroken if the library has to move out. Mrs. Brinkley served years ago on the board of trustees as vice chair and a representative for Buena Vista. Mrs. Goyette apologized to Mrs. Brinkley for the tone of this meeting.

At the time Ms. Brown moved that the Rockbridge Regional Library Board of Trustees convene in closed session to discuss the following:

As permitted by Virginia Code §2.2-3711(A) (4), discussion or consideration of a matter involving the protection of the privacy of individuals in personal matters not related to public business.

Second to Motion: Ms. Forde All in favor? Unanimous Opposed? None

Time into Closed Session: 5:35 PM

Ms. Brown moved that the Board certify that, in the closed meeting just concluded, to the best of each member's knowledge, nothing was heard, discussed or considered except the matter or matters (1)

Specifically identified in the motion to convene in closed session and (2) lawfully permitted to be so discussed as exempt from the open meeting requirements under the provision of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act cited in that motion.

Note: Any member of the public body who believes that there was a departure from the requirements of (1) and (2) above shall so state prior to the vote, indicating the substance of the departure that, in his or her judgement, has taken place. The statement shall be recorded in the minutes of the public body.

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3712.

Roll Call Vote: All Affirmative

Time of certification of roll call vote: 5:56 PM

Time out of Closed Session: 5:56 PM

The Board continued its discussion on returning to the Buena Vista Library Building. Mrs. Brinkley wanted the Board to know the church would do whatever they could to help the library. The church has opened its heart to the library and want them in the church even if it means going back to just having programs in the church.

A motion was made by Ms. Brown to respond quickly to Buena Vista City Council with a move in date pending Mrs. Skovira's return back to work after surgery, the church calendar, and scheduling movers, IT equipment, and communicating once a month with the city of Buena Vista. Mr. Goodale seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Bookmobile RFP

The RFP went out on January 21st for two new vehicles for Extension Services. The deadline for receipt of applicant RFPs is 5:00 PM, February 28, 2023.

Board Retreat

Ms. Brown would like to have the Board Retreat sometime in April. She asked the Board members to look at their calendars and see what date in April may work for them.

Next meeting will be March 27, 2023.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Slaydon
Recording Secretary