

Carlock Public Library Board

Special Meeting Minutes

Friday, December 4, 2020

President Beth Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm. Other Board members present were Nick Birky, Lacey Fritsch, David Garrison, Char Proctor, and Jane Randall. Mike Miller was absent.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Correspondence and Public Comment: Twelve members of the public were in attendance in person and on Zoom. Beth read the rules for public comment according to the Carlock Public By-Laws. Leanne Welch and Pat Luber voiced their support of Denise. Additional comments were held over until the end of the meeting. Beth acknowledged the receipt of 18 letters from community members all in support of Director Denise Litwiller and the desire to keep her as director (available for public inspection at the Library). Correspondence from Michael and Sharon Miller expressing their objections to the recent closure of the Library was received (attached).

New Business:

- 1) **Using Zoom for meetings:** Dave reported that he has looked into purchasing a technology system for use in the meeting room, which would include large TV set on the wall with iPad, ceiling microphones, and video cameras. In addition to Board meetings, it could be used for children's and adult programs, and other presentations. The Friends of the Library are considering a large contribution to help with the cost of the system. The Open Meetings Act requirements for audio or video conferencing were discussed. If the Board wished to continue having electronic meetings after the pandemic, an ordinance would have to be enacted.

Lacey made a motion to allow electronic meetings via Zoom during the pandemic as allowed by the IL Governor's Executive Order suspending the requirement of in-person attendance by members of a public body; seconded by Nick. Motion carried 6-0.

Char made a motion to approve the purchase of a technology system as described by Dave with the money coming from contingency funds and possibly being reimbursed by Friends; seconded by Lacey. Motion carried 6-0.

- 2) **Hours of Operation:** The Library has been closed this week due to inadequate staff. Receipt of Staffing Recommendations from Trustee Miller was noted (attached). The Library is normally open 50 hours per week. Nola has expressed that she will not be working next week and will review the possibility of returning December 16. Eric is currently ill and no return date has been determined for him. Leanne is the only permanent employee able to work currently, and her hours total 30 hours per week. After discussion, Jane made a motion to temporarily reduce the Library hours to 30 hours, Leanne's regular hours, which are: Mon, Tues, Thurs: 12 noon – 7 pm; Fri: 12 noon – 5 pm; and Sat: 9 am – 1 pm, and as staff is able to return, we will resume our regular 50 hour week; seconded by Lacey. Motion carried 6-0. Hours will be posted and publicized indicating staffing issues.

COVID response: Dave will contact our cleaning person Barbie Cors to see if she is able to give us additional time to do extensive cleaning. If not, we will look into hiring additional outside cleaners. Staff is to leave her a note if there is an area that needs special attention. Current protocol includes quarantining all returned items before putting them back on the shelf, wiping down the front desk work area between shifts, and wiping down touch surfaces between patrons, such as desk and door knobs. Nick has a checklist for employees as they come to work that he will share. Char will purchase a non-contact thermometer to be used for employee screening.

Nick made a motion to adopt the following as our COVID Response: 1) We will follow recommended CDC guidelines; 2) Employees will self-monitor using checklist; 3) If an employee is unable to work due to COVID symptoms or exposure, they will be paid their regular salary; 4) Hours of cleaning will be increased as needed; 5) The current disinfecting protocols will be continued. The motion was seconded by Jane and carried 6-0.

Jane made a motion to amend the previous motion adding 6) In the event an employee uses sick time due to COVID-19 symptoms or exposure, the Library will close for a period of 48 hours for enhanced

cleaning; seconded by Lacey. Motion carried 6-0. Dave will talk with Barbie about her availability on short notice to clean. Again, if not, an outside company will be contacted.

- 3) **Resignation of Library Director:** Denise Litwiller submitted a letter of resignation effective Monday, November 30, 2020. She has since said that she is willing to give us 2 week's notice if we want it. Char stated that we can a) accept her resignation, or b) try and persuade her to stay. A discussion followed regarding the reasons for her departure, which focused on the actions of an individual board member. Jane noted a paragraph from the *Illinois Public Library Trustee Manual, 2016*, under "Library Trustees and Personnel Practices":

"The director is responsible to the board as a whole, but not responsible to each board member individually. Individual board members, including the board president, have no power to make demands or give orders to the director. This does not rule out individual board members asking the director for clarification about issues facing the board or discussing with the director concerns that individual board members may have. The board must speak with one voice when delegating to the director, when giving direction to the director, when requesting information. The director must serve the board as a whole in order to manage the library efficiently." After further discussion, the following motions were made.

Beth made a motion to request legal guidance as to holding trustees to the "Public Library Trustee Ethics Statement" from the United for Libraries, a division American Library Association (ALA) and to the Illinois State Libraries' (ISL) *Illinois Public Library Trustee Manual*, Library Trustees and Personnel Practices. Motion was seconded by Nick and carried 6-0.

Lacey made a motion that the Board does not accept the resignation from Denise Litwiller and will work to create an environment more sustainable and positive for the Director; seconded by Char. Motion carried 6-0.

Lacey made a motion that the Library Director be removed as FOIA officer, leaving the secondary officer, who is currently Mike Miller, as primary FOIA contact; seconded by Dave. Motion carried 6-0. The FOIA request submitted by Mike and Sharon Miller on November 30, 2020, will be handled by Dave and a letter extending the response date will be sent to the Millers.

The discussion continued regarding the director position. Lacey made a motion to establish a Search Committee in the event that Denise does not agree to return, with Beth and Dave as Co-Chairs and Lacey agreeing to be a committee member and all Board members encouraged to participate. Motion was seconded by Char and carried 6-0.

Public Comment was invited again. Ten citizens voiced their opinions. Sandy Schwoerer, member of Friends, library volunteer, and former Board member, thanked the board members for their service and spoke in support of Denise. Rhonda Miller, acting President of the Village of Carlock, spoke in support of Trustee Miller, complimented the library facility and its work with young families, but criticized past handling of tax money. Joan McMullen, member of Friends and Dry Grove resident, would like to see the Board strive to make the Library a place the employees want to work. Leanne Welch, library employee, wants the Board to show Denise their support. Eric Larson, library employee, was critical of Trustee Miller and said it is currently difficult for all library employees to do their jobs and urged the Board to work aggressively to improve the situation. Pat Luber, member of Friends and long-time Community Club member, is thankful for the library's services and resources and supported Denise. Erin Judd, community member, called the Library "fantastic" and expressed support for Denise. Jan Reimer, life-long resident of the community and member of Friends, praised the Library and its services under Denise's leadership. Kim Bruninga, 5-year resident of Carlock, current story hour leader and president of Friends, applauded Denise as director and colleague. Isaac Judd, Village Board trustee, said his family loves using the Library but also supported Trustee Miller's motives of improving the Library, and urged resolution of the current disagreements through Board action.

Beth noted that there are currently three trustee positions up for election on April 6. There seems to be wide community interest in the positions which is encouraging.

A motion was made by Lacey to adjourn; seconded by Char. Motion carried 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Randall, Secretary