

**Minutes of the meeting of the  
Mount Vernon City Library Board of Trustees  
January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**Board members present:** Katy Armagost, Hal Verrell, Frank Replier, Margaret Redfern

**Absent (or Excused Absent)**

**Library staff present:** Library Director Isaac Huffman, Library Specialist Carissa Mason

**Visitors:**

**A. Call to order:** Mr. Verrell called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

**B. Approval of minutes from the December 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 meeting:**

Ms. Armagost moved that the minutes from the December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting be approved as submitted. Ms. Redfern seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Ms. Armagost said that at the last meeting, Mr. Huffman said that the library under spent in budget, but that some line items will go over. Ms. Armagost asked if they are allowed to take money from the underspent lines and put them into the overspent lines.

Mr. Huffman responded: yes and no. From an auditory perspective, they want to look at if they overspend the allotted amount or not.

**C. Visitors:** none, but Mr. Huffman said new visitors will coming in future meetings to see about the new Board Chair's position

**D. Surplus material:** Ms. Redfern moved that items withdrawn between December 6<sup>th</sup> and December 27<sup>th</sup> be declared surplus and transferred to the Friends of the Mount Vernon Library. Mr. Replier seconded the motion; all were in favor.

**E. Budget reports:**

Mr. Huffman said that for Revenue, the big news is that the library got the final property tax drop. It is about \$19,000 over than expected. Some items were under collected, namely copy service and collection fees. The library over collected in public printing. For Expenditure, they have not finished the year-end close. This is because there is a cleanup period to make sure that items from December are put into the 2017 budget. The last day for 2017 invoices to be submitted is January 12<sup>th</sup>. This includes things like payroll, which has not dropped yet. Mr. Huffman suspects about \$30,000 will go out from the second payroll. Mr. Huffman said that probably \$20,000 worth in invoices will go through. There will still be a \$43,000 transfer into the library fund. Thus, the library will over contribute to the fund this year. This means that they have probably banked enough money for a future project into the library fund due to this over-contribution.

The budget is balanced and works well, next year will not have luxury of salary saving that 2017 had. Mr. Huffman said that they have already started careful monitoring and policies for the next year. Additionally, it is hard to change codes on invoices. Ms. Redfern asked who is in charge of this. Mr. Huffman and Ms. Mason responded that Rebecca Wade in the Finance Department handles this.

Mr. Huffman said that to combat line item invoice mistakes; he has made item line code labels. The most common error was transcription error on invoices. For example, writing the last digits as 111 vs. 110. The previous method was to write out a code by hand.

Ms. Armagost said this was a good idea. Mr. Huffman has talked to Anita Thornton, Beth Bermiani, and Michael Thompson, who process the big three categories of invoices to monitor invoices. Mr. Huffman said that he would have spent the budget a little closer having known that certain things were going out of the budget.

Mr. Verrell said he was impressed.

Mr. Huffman replied that the library did buy several new items this year including: new furniture, new blinds, new kids' computers, and a lot of supplies. However, they could have gotten more.

**F. Approval of Disbursements:** Ms. Redfern moved that disbursements from Period 12 in the amount of \$17,535.56 be certified as reviewed. Ms. Armagost seconded the motion; all were in favor. Ms. Redfern asked about soil purchases. Mr. Huffman replied that the library received a donation of tulip bulbs, and have planted them.

### **G. Monthly Statistical Reports:**

Mr. Huffman said that consistent issue this year is that patrons are down 2.5%. Therefore, Mr. Huffman is doing work to build more patron use in the library. Mr. Huffman said that the library is going to do better marketing, outreach, and engaging in new ways to turn around circulation. However, the Mount Vernon City Library still has more than double in usage statistics than other libraries in this area. Mr. Huffman said that Anacortes Public Library has double the budget and half the circulation numbers. The highlight is that program attendance is increasing. The latter half of adult programming has done well.

Mr. Huffman announced that the library wants to reconsider its card renewal period. Currently, they have a 1 year renewal on a card. However, it is not the policy on large scale library systems to renew this quickly. It is unlikely that people will move before 3 years of residency, so it is unlikely that a resident will change before 3 years.

Some patrons might see a yearly renewal as a hassle, and this is a deterrent to coming to the library.

Mr. Huffman said that he wants to present statistics differently next month. Anything that is a small number or is not applicable is going out of the stats report. For example, we do not need to know about map circulation if it is 0%. Mr. Huffman said that for his own reference in budgeting planning, they recently ran a cost per circulation report. Youth Services are the bulk of the physical circulation. 55% of book circulation is Youth Services. However, the DVD circulation complicates this, because it is high all around. Nonfiction circulation has continued to decline. The value line for nonfiction is not as good as adult fiction circulation. For example, cookbooks used to be high circulation

items, but they have been usurped by online recipes. However, value still comes from physical books.

Mr. Verrell said he would like to see a 5-7 year trend to see overall stats.

Mr. Huffman responded that they have just updated Blue Cloud, which is the analytics layer in circulation. Blue Cloud can create these graphs.

Mr. Repplier asked if the recent Lego kits were under equipment or Youth Programs.

Mr. Huffman replied they were Youth Programs. However, it is an interesting thing, because Mr. Huffman believes that the Lego Kits should be counted as a material thing.

Mr. Huffman announced his new goal is to create STEM kits. He wants Skagit Valley libraries to create two STEAM kits, and then circulate them amongst the libraries. This means they can have 12 different sets to circulate. Mr. Huffman said that by 2020, they can have the system up, running, and supported. Additionally, it is possible to create STEM activities that take a lot of time to create, but not a lot of dollars to create.

Currently, the libraries are not having regional meetings, since right now only 4 out of 7 Library Directors are available.

## **H. Director's Reports:**

### **a. Board Recruitment Update:**

Mr. Huffman announced that he has reached out and called people to meet up next week and talk about the Board Chair position. Candidates will attend a Board Meeting, and then apply. So it might be a couple of months before they have another Board Chair.

### **b. Building Planning:**

Mr. Huffman said that the two parts of building planning are working on the next step on a new building and continuing inner library renovation. Mr. Huffman thinks they are about 5 years out for new library. Mayor Boudreau has formed a subcommittee to go after a building site and defining a project. Mayor Boudreau has assigned previous City Council member Bob Fielder, and they have identified a list of three sites for potential building. This does not mean that these three sites are the only potential sites.

Ms. Armagost asked who gave the list of sites. Mr. Huffman replied Chris in City planning and Mayor Boudreau. If you are interested in the building planning, now is a good time to talk to Mr. Fielder.

Ms. Armagost said voters need a place to have in their heads.

Mr. Huffman said he does not want pitch for more space, but for better and interesting services. He said they are not selling more feet, but the ability to run new style programs that they cannot in the current space. This is the idea behind the STEM kits, to explore what else the library can offer. They are also doing more youth play sessions in a different way. They are now full lessons. "Play and Learn" used to be set up as a come any time drop in. The new format is more didactic. In February to continue this trend, they will try a new activity to have a STEM program build with an engineer. They will have Esco Bell from City Hall who built the flood wall work with children. They want to offer dynamic programming. One move is that the Directors Office sign is changing to Directors

Office/ Community Room. Mr. Huffman's goal is to find groups that will use the Directors office space. Additionally, the library currently has 3 computers not dedicated to internet access. They want to find something that draws people in to replace one of these stations, such as VR, 3D printer, etc.

**c. General Update:**

Mr. Huffman announced that the library is at full staff. They also have an on-call employee for the first time ever. This is a former staff member who can come on call. Additionally, staff member Laura Schumacher is transferring from part time to full time. Part of this move is to take over the former Assistant Directors position. Ms. Schumacher will also take over staff scheduling.

For technology, the library purchased a new children's computer. They already have dedicated funds from the Friends of the Library project to expand this. The Oculus trial got stuck for a month, due to a release form issue. Hopefully this will be resolved soon. Ms. Armagost asked why the project was stalled. Mr. Huffman said that the Washington State Library is going through their legal review. They need a liability and consent form to acknowledge potential motion sickness and harm. This is mostly for parents to allow children to use it.

The library is also going to figure out how staff can better use their space. A Sub-goal from this is to use the Directors Office for Storage. If something is in office for 30 weeks without use, they might not need it at the library. They will also change up some work stations.

Ms. Armagost said she had never been in the back room before, and asked if it was easily movable.

Mr. Huffman replied no, it has cubicles, but the cabinetry is bolted to the floor. Cubical can be bad for community and work environment,

Mr. Repplier asked what the library can do to make the director's office more attractive.

Mr. Huffman said they have an extra screen and projector, and that they could go in the office.

**I. Around the Table:**

**i. Election of Officers:**

Ms. Armagost made a motion to affirm the current roles until new Board Members are later appointed for 2018. Ms. Redfern seconded, all were in favor.

**ii. Reading of Municipal Code:**

Mr. Huffman said that he wants to schedule Kevin Rogerson during his next availing to come and talk about Board duties. They need to establish what the duties are, what duties the Board Members want, and what they do not

want. They can rewrite the code and define it slightly more to feed more into the library's vision.

Mr. Verrell said that his reason for wanting to leave the Board was that so much work is just a rubber stamp. He felt that for Mr. Huffman's predecessor, the Board drove them to do things. However, he feels they do not have to do this push for Mr. Huffman. Mr. Verrell would like to know what Mr. Huffman would want to the Board to do.

Mr. Huffman said a couple of administrative tasks and review public complaints or challenges for materials. Also, if internal disputes occur, to have Board Members review on this. For instance, if debating to switch non-fiction and fiction areas, there might be strong candidate in both camps. They would need Board Members to be the deciding factor. Mr. Huffman said he also needs to be able to share what he is doing and have a second pair of eyes on it. A problem with leadership is people often agree with you merely because you are the boss. Mr. Huffman wants to prevent this.

Mr. Verrell said, so you recommend more definition of who we are.

Mr. Huffman replied yes, for the duties to be more defined in that advisory capacity. Instead of going over discarded items, they could have a time where Mr. Huffman can talk about issues in the library and have Board Members advice. When Mr. Huffman looks at the manual, there are only a few defined things. in the policy, there is probably more they should bring to the Board Members, such as employee disputes, major purchases, strategic planning. Mr. Huffman wants to present a strategic plan to the Board. The idea is that the Library Director will every year present the stat plan, top 5 operating goals library, and two unique projects to attempt in year. The Library board will advise these and help see them through or dismiss them.

Mr. Verrell said he does not know why they go through the disbursements once they are done, since there is not much anyone can do after the fact.

Mr. Huffman said that he would like for the Board to have more advisory control over thins. For example, the library used the digital platform Hoopla for past year. Some staff believe this resource should continue at the same level. Others want to really grow it and sell it as a resource.

To Mr. Huffman, but it would be help to day to staff on split issues such as this, "let's get an advisory on the board on this."

Mr. Repplier asked if 10K were to go into expanding Hoopla, would that have to come away from another item.

Mr. Huffman said yes. All circulation is in individual titles, not core package. This shows that people are buying the curated items. He would like to grow digital curation as a function that can carry across all other areas. This is controversial because none of the digital sources do that; it is easier to put in Hoopla because they do not need to curate it. Mr. Huffman thinks that they should curate digital items the same way they curate print items. For example, they would buy two print versions of something, and one of the digital, and vis versa.

Mr. Verrell said he would love the board to be on the roadmap for technology. However, for the introduction of Hoopla to the library, it was presented to the

Board as already a decided thing. Mr. Huffman said he believed that the Board should be reviewing these things.

Ms. Armagost asked are we talking about the role or the actual problem.

Mr. Verrell and Ms. Redfern replied: both.

Ms. Armagost asked who is going to rewrite the policy.

Mr. Huffman said that as municipal code, it is owned by the city attorney. It is ultimately his to write and propose to the City Council for approval.

Ms. Armagost clarified that Mr. Huffman is proposing to expand and explain more in the code.

Mr. Huffman replied he wanted a focused section on when it comes to powers and duties, and to see the advisory capacity more defined.

Ms. Armagost asked the Board what they thought about taking a paragraph to tackle. The next meeting can have paragraph 1 to focus on. Or have an outside group work on it.

Mr. Huffman said he would

Ms. Armagost said can see it can go on hours and hours, and they do not know if they want to divide it up and take it a little at a time.

Mr. Verrell said that there is no deadline.

Mr. Huffman said as a tentative plan, they can have Mr. Rogerson come to the next meeting, and tackle one paragraph each meeting.

Ms. Armagost said let's plan to include new members too in conversation to move forward.

Mr. Huffman agreed and said he will try to get Mr. Rogerson to come.

Mr. Verrell asked does Mr. Rogerson need red writing? Bulleted ideas?

Mr. Huffman said exactly, they need to know what he needs first.

Ms. Armagost asked about the public library trustee manual.

Mr. Huffman said that he would make sure each member had an updated copy.

Mr. Huffman said he will work on :

1. Getting Mr. Rogerson 2. A set of polices 3. Will work through each game plan

### **iii. Adoption of Meeting Calendar:**

Mr. Huffman said when the first Thursday of the month fell on first or second, the meeting was moved to the next week. This is because there are no meaningful statistics and financial issues yet, so the Board would not be looking at much.

Mr. Verrell asked if March 3<sup>rd</sup> was okay.

Mr. Huffman said it was probably fine, if a bit iffy. The schedule was accepted.

**Ms. Armagost** wanted to report back on the cards for new Council Members. She wrote, on behalf of the Library Board Trustees, we look forward to working with you. Mr. Huffman said that during Council Meetings, they Library continues to piggy back with Public Works on the second Wednesday of the month at 6pm. Mr. Huffman said that they must assign a City Council

Member to each department. Iris Caris has been assigned as the official person for the library. Mr. Huffman sends them a PowerPoint a day before everybody else to give feedback.

**Ms. Redfern** said that in reference to the back staff are being a mess, in her past job capacity, some staff did not have a physical space, but a cart to keep their things in.

**Mr. Replier** wants to let the board know that his wife mentioned that the reading list at the end of the aisles was great. So, thanks for doing that. Additionally, with all new stuff in library, have you thought about advertising 'come on down, see the new library' in the Sunday supplements in the newspaper? This could coincide with new tulips planted at the library.

Mr. Huffman agreed that they need to reconnect people with those types of services. Mr. Huffman said that Peter Donovan at the Mayor's office let his library card lapse. However, he has a 5 year old now which is the perfect time to reengage. A good concept is an open house for the library. Ms. Armagost said do not forget new residents. Mr. Replier said when he first moved there, receive welcome package and message from Comcast, probably a way to get list of this. Mr. Huffman agreed, it would be easy market outreach this way.

**Mr. Verrell** mentioned those stick figure families you see on cars. He thought of the silhouette of a girl or boy and a book, with the Mount Vernon Library logo. These would cost about 4-5 dollars each, but he thinks it would be cool to get more exposure. Mr. Huffman said this idea is perfect for Friends of the Library to fund, because it is awareness of the library.

**K. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 PM. The next meeting of the board of trustees will be on Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM at the library.

Minutes by Carissa Mason, Library Specialist