

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Mount Vernon City Library Board of Trustees
April 5th, 2018**

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

Absent (or Excused Absent)

Library staff present: Library Director Isaac Huffman

Visitors: Lyn Olson

A. Call to order: Mr. Replier called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

B. Approval of minutes from the March 8th meeting:

Ms. Armagost said that under “Update on Security” Ms. Armagost said that “wild life force is now like a law informant, and it did not use to be this way.” She would like to clarify that wildlife management in the park is more like law enforcement.

Mr. Armagost said that in the “Adjournment Section” the date is wrong. It should say when the next meeting is.

Ms. Armagost moved that the minutes from the March 8th, 2018 meeting be approved as amended. Ms. Redfern seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mr. Verrell said that additionally, updating the minutes online is way behind. The last update was March 2017.

C. Visitors:

D. Surplus material:

Mr. Huffman said that surplus materials will be approved next month

E. Budget reports:

Mr. Huffman said that for the expenditure side, they are looking at .25 for one quarter of the year. Mr. Huffman said they are doing fine at just 23% of the budget expended. The budget seems normal, nothing stands out to him. The library is a little ahead for repairs and maintenance. This is because they bought an expensive faucet for the women’s restroom. The library is currently spending more through the Endowment line than the book line. The Bichler Endowment came out about \$1,000 more than expected.

For revenue, it is normal for March. About \$23,000 dollars came in from property tax. More people are using public printing now that there is a better printer. Mr. Verrell asked what the library charges for printing.

Mr. Huffman said 10 cents for black and white, 50 cents color. Mr. Verrell asked if paper was not a big cost element. Mr. Huffman said it is not; the library still makes profit from copies at the current charging rate.

Mr. Huffman said that the library gets \$13,000 dollars from the county to support nonresident patrons.

Ms. Armagost said that out of county residents still pay some money.

Mr. Huffman said that nonresidents pay \$80 and the county pays \$80, so the library gets \$180 out of that. This comes in October/November.

F. Approval of Disbursements:

Mr. Huffman said that Disbursements will be approved next month

G. Monthly Statistical Reports:

Mr. Huffman said that statistics are down a little bit, following the general trend. For Circulation, they are 4,500 items down. The trend is that there are more digital check outs and less physical check outs. King County posted their 2017 statistics; they are at about 25% digital. The Mount Vernon Library is doing about 10% digital and 90% physical. Thus, the Mount Vernon library needs to grow their digital collection. Mr. Huffman said that the library does not have an accurate door counter, because the old door counter was not working well, and the new one has been working worse. It counts an internal and an external count, and last time it had a count of 400 people that never left the library.

Mr. Huffman said that in May, the library is doing a summer music series with the Parks Department .

Mr. Armagost asked if this on the river walk.

Mr. Huffman replied no, they are doing a different series of children's concerts as part of the summer reading.

Mr. Armagost asked if the library is going to continue its partnership with the Farmers Market, which starts around May.

Mr. Huffman replied yes. Betsy Riser is on the Board for the Farmer's Market, and the library plans to attend a few days.

Mr. Huffman said that library weeding has continued. The library bought some of the Magic Treehouse books, because they had some missing ones. However, the series has decided to reorder the books. This means the library needs to reorder the series.

Mr. Verrell asked if the old ones would go to the book sale?

Mr. Huffman said maybe not this run, but eventually they will go to the Friends of the Library. Mr. Huffman wants to shoot for about 78,000 items in the physical collection. They are at 80,000 right now, so he is looking to get rid of about 1,000 more.

Ms. Armagost asked do you need to have a more robust physical collection?

Mr. Huffman said he wants a larger physical collection in the long run, just of the right kind of materials. Beth Bermanni buys for the Children's department. Last year she spent

all of her budget within 14 cents. Mr. Huffman said that common thought is that a library should have high circulation titles and as many as available. However, marketing shows that actually depth of collection is what people want.

Mr. Huffman was there are three pieces of strategy for upcoming programs. One is to put effort into summer reading. The library will use the time off of programing to prepare for the next round. The second piece is to outreach to Latino community. They library went to the Latino marketing summit last week. The third piece is a big event that they are going to promote out to the community. Mr. Huffman wants to do this with Skagit Reads. Ms. Redfern wanted to comment that some of the weeding is done with damaged, dirty books.

Mr. Verrell said that the assumption is that digital books have taken over paper. However, print books exceeded digital

Mr. Huffman said that there is about a 60/40 in general market. Mr. Huffman said that people tend to prefer what they grow up with. If you learn to read on a physical book, you will probably read physical books. A lot of kids now are reading on digital platforms, but they still have physical books.

Ms. Armagost said that when you are reading something informational, it is easy to page back and remember where information was on a physical book. Mr. Verrell said that physically writing can help cement things in the brain. In cases with children with dyslexia, physical writing and reading can help more than digital screen reading and scrolling.

H. Director's Reports:

- a. Update on Building and Focus groups:** Mr. Huffman said they are going to do focus groups for the new building. The feasibility phase is from now to June. At end of June they will vote on physical engineering. The feasibility phase's purpose is to understand the limitations of plans. They are going to target what works for people with programs and services, and build a structure to fit those needs. A standard multipurpose room is a 100 people. They learned from previous focus groups that the golden number for events is 200. There are very little large-event capacity places in this area. This factor will be a unique draw in feature for the library. Ms. Armagost said that was part of the mayor's plan in the Vancouver Seattle central meeting room that was big enough that businesses could use it too. Mr. Huffman said that the focus group list is designed now as: key library stake holders, community center stake holders, downtown association, downtown business groups and chamber of commerce, and the community at large that they have been signing up. They have also been collecting a list of question in a survey for people to appraise ideas. For example, "what kind of copy services do you want?" They have already hired people to appraise the site. They have also sent out a packet of information on focus groups out to the county.

Mr. Verrell asked if Mr. Huffman has read the 2014 works from some of the stake holders?

Mr. Huffman said the 2014 captured the themes of what a library is. A library needs to be a community center, place of early education, place to share ideas,

needs to have access to materials for lifelong learning, and a place to create. Mr. Huffman mentioned Dokk1, a Netherlands library. They took their library as a cultural center to have more community space. This means that libraries need to have things that mirror the community around the library. Mr. Huffman would like to think about what sort of art, artifacts, etc. should be in their new library. Mr. Huffman mentioned that 90% of all library district referendums pass. This means that people see libraries as important municipal services. Mr. Huffman says he brings that up because libraries are community supported. Ms. Armagost said that reading through; it seems they are very community focused. For example, a kitchen for the community center responds to the needs of the community. Mr. Huffman said. Ms. Armagost said she was looking at the parking lot section. It says 78 spaces needed. Ms. Armagost said she does not understand why they are getting rid of current spaces.

Mr. Huffman said that the library will need 78 spaces. The plan is to replicate what is there; The current need, the library's need, and the downtown need for parking space. This would be talking about 240 spaces, which is not very clear there. A parking garage is a part of the plan.

- b. Change to the Code of Conduct:** A change in the code of conduct is needed with large bags in the library. Staff concern is when patrons have large bags that restrict access to areas. Mr. Huffman has talked to social worker Erin Von Femp on what is important to offer. Almost every library system just bans large bags. Ms. Olsen said there are no public lockers where they can put their things. Mr. Huffman said that yes, that is a challenge. Mr. Replier said there is size of baggage and content of baggage difference. Ms. Olsen asked how they would know if they have things in their bag. Mr. Huffman said for the books, we have security tags. However, they never really know what people may have on them. Mr. Verrell said that has right or abilities to create bylaws. To his knowledge, has never heard of bylaws. Mr. Huffman said original establishment of Library had a board that was more advisory. Mr. Huffman wants current board to have more advisory roles in money. Mr. Verrell said that—like he's said before—the Board's approval of disbursements is like a rubber stamp. Advisement of the Board comes in if things in the library collection are challenged. Mr. Huffman said he will have someone read through the policy manual and see which section says stuff about the board. Mr. Verrell asked if it was an internal document or online. Mr. Huffman said it was probably online. Mr. Verrell said that in first paragraph, he does not understand why city library is not capitalized in "Mount Vernon city library" since that is the name of the library. Mr. Huffman said that he agrees. Mr. Verrell read the **Library Board powers and duties, Section A.** Ms. Armagost said they do not have polices down, it is relying on Director. Mr. Huffman said we do not have a collection development policy. We do have a policy for collection deletion or inclusion. Mr. Verrell said I see our role as if there is a crowd protesting that there should be no information related to marijuana in the library, the director needs the Board steps in to say that the board has decided that is a part of our open information. Mr. Huffman said that they bring to the board patron complaints. Mr. Huffman said the library get complaints

fairly regularly about Harry Potter being witchcraft. Ms. Armagost asked Mr. Huffman what he thought he wanted to change in the policy. Mr. Verrell said the Citizen Request, more about if citizens have a problem. Ms. Redfern said it says for reconsideration, which means they were previously addressed. Ms. Redfern said I think it is a backup for what has already determined, but the patron wants another response. Mr. Huffman said his basic collection development philosophy is that they should something that offends everyone. They are succeeding when displaying all viewpoints of community, which includes something you will disagree with. A library preserves culture history of community. Mr. Verrell asked if they have had any trouble with defacing books? Mr. Huffman said they have had people stealing, but not defacing. Odd things have happened, like 3 copies of the Karma Sutra were inserted into shelves, so people have left materials at the library. Ms. Redfern has seen materials with LGBTQ content turned around like they should not be looked at. Mr. Verrell read **Paragraph b**: Ms. Armagost said it felt complete and did not have anything to disagree with. Mr. Huffman said that yes, it was pretty robust. Mr. Verrell said the word “adopt” in the first line might be wrong. Ms. Redfern said I think you are right because it makes it sound like we have power. Mr. Replier said he thought they did have that power to set hours, like to change if the library was open Sundays. Mr. Huffman said no, they have to get a city ordinance for that. Ms. Armagost offered to change the word to “affirm. Ms. Redfern and Mr. Verrell said to change “adopt” to “approve.” Ms. Armagost said that paragraph C does not have to do with the Board Members. The Board Members opted for putting “Director” instead of “Board.” Mr. Huffman said it might be good to ask the city attorney what they need to have in here. Mr. Huffman can sign contracts without monetary value or with very little monetary value. The final changes are: the library director shall submit an annual budget, approved by the board, submitted to the mayor, and to cross out the last section. Mr. Verrell asked, should the board be doing an annual review? Or could they provide some recommendations to mayor? Ms. Armagost recalled that the mayor did provide a form. Mr. Verrell replied that the form was hard to fill out because he does not interact with Mr. Huffman often. Mr. Huffman said that he follows the same director evaluation as other city heads. However, other department heads do not have a Board in the way the library does. Ms. Redfern said the Board should be available to the mayor regarding the library director’s performance. Mr. Verrell said the Board shall provide input upon request to the mayor.

I. Around the Table

Mr. Replier mentioned that a number of people have told him that every time they request something at the library, they library gets it. Mr. Huffman said they have a portion of the budget dedicated to requests.

Ms. Redfern mentioned the Friends of the Library and Foundation are doing the book sale. She thinks the volunteer slots are filled, but Mike Bonacci, the Volunteer

coordinator is happy to find space. Ms. Olsen asked if the library had a place to drop off books for the sale. Mr. Huffman said the drop off is at the library.

Ms. Armagost is pleased with the how the meeting went. She wrote a letter to all the City Council members that she has a strong, supporting feeling for the two levels of government working together to create the new Library. Mr. Repplier said he got the impression that millions are coming in for the project, but he was not so sure about that. Mr. Huffman said they were close, but he thinks they are going to have to come up with more money.

K. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM. The next meeting of the board of trustees will be on Thursday, May 3rd at 5:30 PM at the library.

Minutes by Library Specialist Carissa Mason