

MINUTES
Board of Library Commissioners
of the City of Grand Rapids
November 30, 2021 – 5:15 pm
Regular Board Meeting

Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:16 pm.

1. ROLL CALL

Board Members Present: Rachel Anderson, Deborah Bose, Kelly Boston, James Botts (via phone), Sophia Brewer, Shelia Garcia Mazari, Kathryn Dilley

Board Members Absent:

Administration Present: Robert Adcock, Jessica Anne Bratt, Megan Biggins, John McNaughton, Briana Trudell, Patrick Beatty

Staff Present:

Public Present: Steven Assarian, GREIU; Dan Poortenga, GRPLF
Jennifer Kasper and Josh Naramore, GR Mobile & Parking Services

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Botts stated that he is attending the meeting via phone from his home for a medical reason.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING ON AUGUST 31, 2021

MOTION: By Commissioner Brewer, supported by Commissioner Garcia Mazari, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of August 31, 2021.

ACTION: AYES 6 – 0

Motion passed.

4. BOARD COMMENTS

Bose stated that she was contacted by two patrons. One mentioned children using the Library on the Lawn at the Seymour Branch and the other commented that Kent District Library was issuing GRPL cards at their events and was wondering about the collaboration.

Brewer reiterated the need for some sort of barriers between the street and the Madison Square Branch to prevent cars from hitting the building.

Dilley asked for more clarification around the library's involvement with the City of Grand Rapids Emergency Response team to which McNaughton clarified the current situation and stated that he'll keep them updated as things progress.

Boston asked about what GRPL has done regarding land acknowledgements for the branches. McNaughton stated that the library is currently working on them.

Garcia Mazari inquired about GRPL programming with Native American tribes. Bratt replied that the library is working on reimagining events and is working with other organizations to help foster awareness to create programming that supports knowledge and understanding. She added that the community can expect more heritage programming in the coming year.

García Mazari also commented that she received positive feedback and appreciation in regards to the library's Día de los Muertos altars and programming.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Brewer stated that the Board Training/Retreat met. Garcia Mazari added that the committee reached out to the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services to see if there are any trainings the board could attend. Boston added that they are thinking about planning a retreat in the new year.

Brewer stated that the Community / Legislative Relations committee talked about how GRPL's coverage in the city is separated by highways and that causes concern for access. She added that the board would like to reach out to those community members to see how they can better support them. Anderson recommended contacting the first ward commissioners for help. McNaughton stated that the southwest side is a target for the library internally.

Anderson stated that the Policy Committee met and reviewed the manual with EDI in mind. She added that García Mazari recommended that the library utilize an external resource to help with EDI within the policy manual. Anderson added that she would like for the library to create a more robust cyber security policy and she will bring suggestions to the board soon.

García Mazari stated that the library may want to consider adjusting their boilerplate job descriptions to make them more open to people with varying physical abilities when possible and she recommended that the library also move to making the buildings and website ADA accessible.

Anderson asked that if anything needs board action to bring it to her and McNaughton's attention.

6. STAFF & FOUNDATION REPORTS

A. Library Director's Report

McNaughton stated that he had gotten questions regarding the increase in material challenges and explained GRPL's process when they receive them.

McNaughton welcomed Megan Biggins, the new Public Service Librarian IV, to the board. Biggins addressed the board and told them a little bit about her background and expressed her excitement to be at GRPL. McNaughton then introduced Jessica Anne Bratt as the new Assistant Director.

McNaughton stated that GRPL had been visited by the first amendment auditors and commended staff for the way they handled the situation. He and the board then discussed this and the library's policy around filming in the library.

Brewer urged staff to take advantage of ALA's firm foundation around collection development policies and utilize the tools that they have in place.

Brewer stated that the library could work towards Strategic Initiative 2 – Creating Inspiring Spaces and Experiences by looking into makerspaces and rethinking the large tables throughout the spaces, considering how patrons may want to use the spaces in the future. McNaughton stated that the library will be conducting an audit in the spaces.

B. Financial Report

Adcock gave the board an update of where they are in the year and informed them about the upcoming FY23 budget planning. McNaughton stated that if a board member would like to go over the FY23 audit before it is approved they could contact him to set up a one-on-one meeting.

C. Foundation Update

Poortegna stated that the foundation contracts grant writers to help them apply for grants to obtain additional funds for the library. He then updated the board with the external grants that were awarded to the library for diversity and early literacy programming as well as hotspots.

He added that the foundation received over \$20k from their special 150 celebration mailing and that they used the commissioned posters as a Giving Tuesday incentive.

He also stated that the annual year-end appeal should have arrived in over 2,000 homes over the weekend and is looking forward to another successful appeal.

7. OLD BUSINESS

No comments.

8. NEW BUSINESS**A. Mobile GR Parking Lot Discussion**

Naramore introduced himself and his colleague Kasper.

He gave the board background on the parking structure. He told the board that the City has contracted FTCH to help create an engagement strategy and will partner with the library to get patron feedback as a way to understand what they want. He stated that this will occur in the next six months.

Anderson thanked Naramore for coming to the meeting and putting the library first. The board and Naramore then discussed what this process would look like and how these stakeholder conversations will go.

Botts stated that a board member should be a part of the planning process. Anderson and Botts stated that they are willing to be a part of the planning process.

Brewer thanked the city for coming and she wanted to make sure that they take the community's feedback so they are getting what they want and need.

McNaughton asked Naramore to address the Madison Square branch issues. Naramore stated that the City has looked at the five year crash history and the two incidents were due to driver error and not an issue with city planning. He then stated that ballards aren't a good idea in that area because their size will impede movement and accessibility.

9. INFORMATION ITEMS**A. Media Index**

No comments.

B. Statistical Report for October 2021

The board stated that they like the new design of the report.

C. Staffing Report

Brewer asked if they are seeing a big turnover at the moment. McNaughton replied that the main issue with staffing is due to COVID.

C. Summer Reading Challenge Report

No comments.

E. Board & Administrator, November 2021

No comments.

10. GRAND RAPIDS EMPLOYEES INDEPENDENT UNION

Assarian stated that when the parking lot is under construction his staff will need parking that is close and easily accessible.

11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR REGULAR BOARD MEETING: DECEMBER 14, 2021

Anderson asked the board to stick around after the meeting to let her know if they have anything to add.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Assarian asked if the library has discussed the new variants and how that will affect the library and its staff. Anderson replied that there isn't enough information on the new variant to reply to that but they are looking to the state to help make these decisions.

13. Adjournment

No comments.

Meeting adjourned at 6:14 pm.