

**LOUTIT DISTRICT LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
June 21, 2022**

The meeting was called to order at 5:50 p.m. by Vice President Kathy Osmun.

Board members present: Mary Jane Belter, Burton Brooks, Penni DeWitt, Lisa Menerick, Kathy Osmun, Cathy Rusco

Board members joining by phone: Dave De Young

Board members absent: Caryn Lannon

Library Staff present: Katie Alphenaar, Amy Bailey, Allison Boyer, Marianne Case, Sara Derdowski, Caitlin Hickey, John Martin, Kate Tobin

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

22-21 Motion by Brooks, seconded by Menerick, to approve the Agenda. The motion was carried 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 LIBRARY BUDGET

Ms. Osmun opened the public hearing at 5:52 p.m. Sara Derdowski reviewed the budget items and responded to questions from Board members regarding various of those items, explaining the underlying data and circumstances supporting each.

22-22 Motion by Brooks, seconded by Menerick, to close the public hearing at 6:05 p.m. The motion was carried 6-0; the public hearing was closed.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approve the June 7, 2022 regular meeting minutes.

22-23 Motion by Brooks, seconded by Menerick, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was carried 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Summarized comments from staff members include:

Allison Boyer read a written statement from staff member Elizabeth Griffin which expressed appreciation of Ms. Derdowski and Amy Bailey's leadership, urging the board to compensate them adequately. Ms. Boyer also reiterated her own previous comments from the Finance Committee meeting of June 16. She believes the Board needs to be consistent with all salaries and stay within 90-110% of the median shown on the salary study.

Kate Tobin stated she was present to show her support of Ms. Bailey and Ms. Derdowski.

Katie Alphenaar read a written statement from staff member Jeanette Weiden in support of Ms. Bailey and Ms. Derdowski. It expressed her positive experience with their leadership and disappointment in the decision to reduce their proposed salaries. Ms. Alphenaar also read a prepared statement of her own expressing points which included:

- Disappointment in how certain members of the Board have handled themselves with the discussion on the salary study and the Board’s “proven unfamiliarity” with the job descriptions, the qualifications of, and the work done by Ms. Derdowski and Ms. Bailey.
- That the Board should use the salary study if it chose to commission one, relying on data rather than feelings or personal opinions to set salary figures.
- She advocated moving forward with previously established compensation policy and the salary recommendations of the study.

TRUSTEE COMMENT

Summarized Comments from Trustees included:

Trustee Belter asked for a clarification of the scope of the salary study; were very large Grand Rapids area non-profits included, and were libraries in the size, funding, and classification of the LDL included in the study? Ms. Derdowski replied that the larger nonprofits were excluded and relevant libraries included. Ms. Belter also pointed out that Grand Haven Township’s salary included the geographic area from Lansing west, but focused on governmental units that were similar to the Township.

Trustee Menerick commented that the salary consultant did not specifically present information from libraries closest to Loutit at the meeting where the presentation was made. Ms. Menerick is unclear as to whether the consultant looked at the libraries closest to Loutit. She would like to have seen more in-depth information and feels the Board did not have enough time to review the study. Ms. Menerick also stated that her memory is that the Grand Rapids library was specifically mentioned by the consultant at the salary study presentation. Ms. Derdowski replied that her own memory was that it was the Grand Rapids area, including the lakeshore, which was mentioned and not the Grand Rapids library.

Trustee Brooks commented that it would be helpful to see specific comparisons to other area libraries. He stated that a salary study should be used as a guide, not a final determination of compensation. He commented on the difficulties posed by the shortened timeline. (Ms. Derdowski explained that the timeline was necessarily shortened when she (Derdowski) contracted Covid 19.)

Trustee DeWitt explained how Ottawa County’s salary study was conducted. She also stated that she believes the staff should be adequately compensated.

President De Young would like to look more deeply at the salary study and reexamine the salary philosophy, including the true range of the positions as well as the staff’s experience and job performance. He again expressed his concern for the sustainability of the Library’s finances, preferring to avoid the necessity of making hard decisions regarding operations in the future.

Trustee Osmun stated that people are the Library’s most valuable resource; the scope of the salary study is acceptable to her. She would like to give a message of trust to the staff by standing behind the recommendation of the Personnel Committee and adopting its recommendations.

Mr. Brooks recognized Ms. Menerick’s reappointment as Library trustee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration of a motion to approve a resolution to adopt a Budget for Loutit District Library for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year and to appropriate funds for said purposes, as follows:

Revenue/Expenditure	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
• General Fund	\$2,736,340	\$2,883,000
• Maintenance Fund	\$10,000	\$80,000
• Debt Service A Fund	\$290,065	\$252,600
• Debt Service B Fund	\$330,150	\$330,150

22-24 On a motion by Belter, second by Brooks, the Board approved the resolution to adopt the FY 2022-2023 budget as presented, on 6-0 vote by roll call: Belter – Yes, DeWitt – Yes, Menerick – Yes, Osmun – Yes, Rusco – Yes, De Young—present via phone, Lannon--Absent

B. Consideration of a motion to establish the following annual compensation rates for full-time employees opting out of the library’s health insurance plan, pursuant to section 11.1a, Insurance Waiver, of the library’s Personnel Policy:

- Family Coverage \$1,000
- Double Coverage \$750
- Single Coverage \$500
- These payments are distributed bi-weekly as part of the employee’s pay.

22-25 On a motion by Brooks, second by Menerick, the Board approved the health insurance opt-out rates as presented, on a 6-0 vote.

22-26 On a Motion by DeWitt, second by Menerick, the Board voted 6-0 to approve the Cell Phone Reimbursement of \$40 per month to essential library staff members as recommended by the Finance and Personnel committees.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Building and Grounds Committee
No report

B Finance Committee

As the Finance Committee has postponed approval of the minutes from the meeting on June 16, 2022, the Board will review those minutes at a later date.

C. Personnel Committee
Draft minutes from the June 9, 2022 Personnel Committee Meeting were received and reviewed.

D. Policy Committee
No report

TRUSTEE COMMENTS:

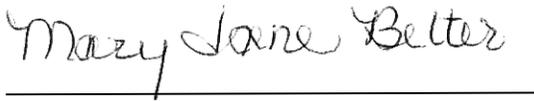
Trustee Belter asked for an update on the search for a building maintenance person. Ms. Bailey reported there has been a total of 3 applications, two of which did not place the candidates into consideration. One is still to be reviewed. Current staff is handling room set-up and calling in outside services as needed. Ms. Belter also requested the Board receive regular informational updates from staff.

Trustee Menerick talked about the upcoming garden walk and the Ferrysburg 4th of July celebration, at which she will distribute Library materials.

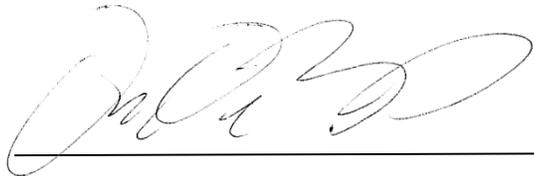
NEXT REGULAR MEETING

A. The annual meeting is scheduled for July 5, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. in Program Room A

Meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.



Secretary
Mary Jane Belter



President
Dave De Young

Prepared by Marianne Case

Attachments: written comments submitted by staff members:

Hi, my name is Katie Alphenaar. I am the Head of Reference & Information.

I attended both the Personnel and Finance meetings and I am very disappointed in how the board has handled themselves and the results of the salary study.

Salary studies are an unbiased, data based tool to determine equitable wages and salaries for all staff based on job duties. We paid for this study to ensure we were paying staff fairly and competitively. Not only is this important to ensure we are compensating staff fairly for the work they do, this is also imperative for attracting and retaining talent.

The results of the salary study should be equitably applied to all staff based on our compensation philosophy and previously discussed metrics. Some board members have proposed to adjust this philosophy and metrics after receiving the results of the salary study, which is a feelings based reaction and leads to biased treatment of staff.

This is evident in the statements from board members like "Amy is fairly young" (said in the Personnel meeting) and claiming that Sara's proposed salary is "a slap in the face of John" (stated in the Finance meeting, which John did not agree with). These statements are biased opinions and have no place in salary discussions.

If we've chosen to do a salary study, salaries should be determined off that data. Important factors in salary and wage determination may be:

- Job responsibilities (which is what the salary study accounts for)
- Experience
- Performance

However, the discussions at the Personnel and Finance meetings made it clear that those campaigning for lower wages for Sara and Amy specifically are not qualified to make these decisions, even if they did fall within the board's responsibilities.

There is a proven unfamiliarity with the job descriptions and qualifications of the Library Director and Executive Director positions. Those job descriptions were already approved by the board and Amy and Sara meet, if not exceed, all of the qualifications. Yet, at the finance meeting, board members were guessing at how many years of library experience would be required for the Library Director position and incorrectly stating how many years of library experience Amy has. A definite and correct knowledge of the job descriptions, requirements, and staff's qualifications should be a part of salary discussions and these things have been absent from the conversation.

That leaves performance. Board members are not here every day working with staff on day to day operations. They are not here for emergencies or on a Saturday. It is impossible for them to determine how well a staff member is doing and adjust salary or wage on a scale accordingly. If salaries are to be determined from performance by a group so far removed from the staff members daily performance they cannot attest to their daily duties, you must listen to staff

who work closing with the individuals discussed to evaluate their performance based on measurable metrics.

Facts and data should be the determining factors of salary discussions and not personal feelings and opinions.

I truly appreciate that the Personnel committee recognized this and voted to move forward with the salary recommendations based on the salary study. I urge the board to use the facts today and move forward with our previously establish compensations philosophy and the data presented in the salary study.

I understand that there is concern about the budget. However, Sara and Amy are already saving this library money with their flexibility in restructuring library administration to fix the error about requirements for state aid. In this reorganization, they have also absorbed a third job into their portfolios. That is another salary and benefits saved by the library. It is unreasonable to compare their positions to previous administration because their job descriptions are completely rewritten, which is why we need to use the salary study to evaluate the starting wage for these positions.

Additionally, with Sara as our Executive Director, we are in the remarkably unique position of having a leader who is intricately familiar with our library budget, fiscally responsible, and skilled in managing finances. That means our library leader is making financially informed decisions. This is wholly unique to our organization as financial literacy to the degree that Sara has is not a skill most library leadership possess or excel at.

As the members of the Personnel committee agreed: people are our greatest resources and I urge you to prioritize investing in and valuing our library staff—including leadership—in your discussions today.

Katie Alphenaar

6/21/2022

I am incredibly appreciative of Sara Derdowski and Amy Bailey's leadership, support, and vision. They are both incredibly talented, together make a fantastic team, and bring so much to the library in terms of skills, experience, energy, and a commitment to making LDL the very best it can be. I am **so** excited and optimistic about the future of LDL with the two of them at the helm! I consider their leadership **irreplaceable** and so I encourage the board to be sure that they are valued appropriately and compensated equitably.

-Elizabeth Griffin, Youth Librarian

Thank you for letting me include my thoughts during tonight's meeting, even though I am able to attend.

- First, I want to let the board know how happy I am with the choice of Sara and Amy as leaders for the library. During my time working with Sara Derdowski and Amy Bailey, they have supported and encouraged me to grow professionally. I feel their leadership will bring exciting new possibilities to the library that no director has been able to do before.
- Second, I'm disappointed in the decision to decrease their salaries at last week's finance committee meeting. It appears the decision was made by only looking at time worked as a director and not by evaluating their performance and management experience. Sara has been filling a management role at the library since she started in 2018. While Amy has not been at Loutit long, she has jumped in and is working to build open communication, streamlining operation, and improving services.
- Third, it is not fair to compare the jobs Sara and Amy are taking on to what John has done in the past. The new director roles are different. The library is looking to increase donor development. This is just one of the many new areas they are taking on.

Jeanette Weiden

21 June 2022