

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Jamilyn Penn called to order the regular meeting of the Pierce County Rural Library District Board of Trustees at 3:35 pm. Board members present were Jamilyn Penn, Pat Jenkins and Neesha Patel, Pam Duncan. Abby Sloan was excused. The meeting was conducted in person, with the option of virtual attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Puyallup resident, and staff member, Juli Powell and Lakewood resident Casey Crook provided comments regarding the Lakewood Library.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of August 10, 2022, Regular Meeting
2. Approval of August 2022 Payroll, Benefits and Vouchers
3. South Hill and Gig Harbor Parking Lot Repavement – Approve Contractor Change
4. IT Infrastructure Replacements Purchase Approval
5. Resolution 2022-12: To Declare Furnishings and Equipment Surplus to Public Service Needs

Trustee Duncan moved for approval of the consent agenda. Trustee Patel seconded the motion. Motion carried.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

There were no Board member reports.

ROUTINE REPORTS

Executive Director Report – Executive Director Gretchen Caserotti commended the Staff Experience and Leadership Teams who participated in the recruitment efforts over the summer months. 748 applications were reviewed and 210 interviews were conducted.

Caserotti will share information on the leadership structure and reporting relationships with the Board in the near future once staff have been notified.

She reported the Lakewood Library building is being prepared for the winter season. Behind the scenes efforts are continuing, including community outreach, planning interim services with community partners and working to obtain a lease agreement for interim Library.

Fundraising Performance Report – Foundation Director Dean Carrell reported the Foundation nearing the end of its 2022 annual goal commitment to the Library. The Foundation reported the trivia bee will be held on November 12, 2022, at the Foss Waterway Maritime Museum. The event has raised over \$20,000 in corporate sponsorships. Director Carrell commended Major Gifts Officer Christina Greene for her efforts in securing a \$1 million gift from a generous donor. Additional information will be shared in the future.

Trustees congratulated the Foundation team for their successful fundraising efforts. Trustee Penn encouraged the trustees to participate in the trivia bee this year.

Metrics Dashboard – Deputy Director Melinda Chesbro reported the Library is now approaching the time of year where current services can be compared to pre-COVID services allowing for a truer representation of monthly and year over year statistics.

July Financial Report – Finance and Business Director Cliff Jo reported interest rates are increasing, which indicates the Library's return on investments will increase considerably. The report reflects expenditures being made due to work related to Lakewood, Sumner, Buckley and Bonney Lake libraries that had been on hold during the pandemic.

Director Jo noted the winning bidder for the Gig Harbor parking lot indicated their bid was under-quoted and asked to withdraw their proposal. The Library then selected the next lowest bidder and is still within the budget allocated for this project.

Public Services Report – Deputy Director Connie Behe reported study and meeting rooms are now open for staff and the public. In person in-building programs will be reinstated in October. The restriction to eat food in the libraries has been lifted. Behe praised Lakewood staff for their efforts to continue to provide services to its community despite the building closure.

Chair Penn asked how the Library plans on educating the community about the direction the state is going with regard to the lifting of the governor's emergency orders. Behe noted the importance of providing information on pandemic safety but not enforcing behavior outside of the health department guidelines. She added contact tracing is not provided by the Library.

Director Caserotti noted the Library's risk management committee monitors public health and safety issues.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Lakewood Library Building and Services Update – Deputy Director Behe shared and acknowledged the concerns of the staff and customers of the Lakewood Library. She noted the Library was focused on the critical safety issue and failed to communicate this to the public early enough. As a result, the Library recognizes it did not effectively cultivate relationships, causing distrust in the community. The Library is committed to sharing information with the public with as much notice as possible.

Behe reported the Library is tracking the feedback it is receiving and listening to the issues and values of the public and the Lakewood officials. She and Director Caserotti are committed to being more present in community events and civic group gatherings to listen and learn from the public what is of concern or needs clarity. They are also attending City Council meetings regularly.

Director Caserotti noted Library administrators meet weekly to review and compile commonalities and themes from the feedback received in an effort to understand and be more responsive to their concerns.

The Board expressed appreciation for the transparency around the building closure and the need to improve communications. Trustee Duncan expressed her willingness to assist in aiding the Library in its outreach efforts.

Current Library Services and Fall Plans – Deputy Director Behe reported on the work of the interim services team. Outreach continues to daycare and assisted living facilities. The City of Lakewood has agreed to allow the Library to hold programs in the Council chambers. Weekly story times will be held in various locations throughout the city and pop up libraries will be in place throughout the community. The bookmobile has been repaired and will provide access to the collection. A book drop will also be installed in a suitable location.

Behe shared her appreciation for the efforts of Library teams to divert as many resources as possible to continue to develop innovative ways to provide services to the residents of Lakewood.

Lakewood Library Buildings Advisory Committee – Marketing and Communications Director Mary Getchell reported the third advisory committee meeting will be held on September 16, 2022. At the meeting, the Library will provide financial information related to various building sizes and the City will share information relating to the possibilities of co-housing a senior/community center. The committee will also review responses to the survey that was issued in August asking for feedback about the direction of Library services and needs in the community. Over 2000 people had responded to that survey.

The committee is working on an evaluation matrix to aid in making their recommendations to the Board on November 17, 2022.

Lease Update – Finance and Business Director Cliff Jo reported the Library is still negotiating on a lease for the Lakewood Library.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 4:31 pm, Trustee Duncan moved to recess to Executive Session, per RCW 42.30.110, to discuss property matters and a periodic personnel evaluation for approximately 30 minutes. Trustee Jenkins seconded the motion. Motion carried. The session was extended for 10 minutes and ended at 5:12 pm.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (CONT.)

Policy Updates:

Selection of Library Materials

Trustee Patel noted she had been hearing about protests to books in libraries across the country and inquired how the Library would handle group pressure to remove an item. Caserotti noted the importance of a clearly understood and legally sound policy in such cases. Deputy Director Behe informed the Board that training is available for the Trustees to aid them in understanding their roles and responsibilities in response to materials challenges. De-escalation training is also being considered for staff who may also feel intimidated by the pressures imposed upon them in these matters.

When asked about the new appeals process clause in the policy, Director Caserotti noted the formalization of this step establishes the legal connection to collections and the perceived sense of authority of the Board in the checks and balance of governing bodies and executives in government process.

Caserotti noted the appeals process clearly states the Board's role is to examine whether staff followed the policy. She added this policy keeps the Library legally protected from exposure as well as honoring the public in the process.

Trustee Duncan noted this formalization of the appeals process demonstrates the Library's commitment to the public's feedback.

Trustee Jenkins moved to approve the revised Board policy for the Selection of Library Materials with the amendments as presented. Trustee Duncan seconded the motion and it was approved.

Provision of Public Art

Director Jo reported the policy was revised to release the Library of ownership and account for the disposal of public art, which was not addressed in the original policy. The new verbiage allows the Library to surplus art consistent with its surplus policy.

Director Caserotti noted the importance of adding this clause to the policy in preparation for any situations concerning public art disposition in the future as the Library plans for building updates.

Caserotti also noted one of the projects planned for 2023 is to conduct a comprehensive policy review process. She will provide more information at a future meeting.

Trustee Jenkins moved to approve the revised Board policy for Provision of Public Art in Pierce County Library System Buildings with the amendments as presented. Trustee Duncan seconded the motion and it was approved.

Fiscal Management

Trustee Duncan moved to approve the revised Board policy for Fiscal Management with the amendments as presented. Trustee Patel seconded the motion and it was approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:39 pm on motion by Trustee Jenkins, seconded by Trustee Duncan.

Gretchen Caserotti, Secretary

Jamilyn Penn, Chair