

Nashville Public Library Board of Trustees
Minutes
February 16, 2021
WebEx – 12:00 noon

Members Present: Keith Simmons, Adriana Bialostozky, Kate Ezell, Robert Oermann, Charvis Rand, Joyce Searcy, Katy Varney

Library Staff: Kent Oliver, Bernadette Hukan, Stephanie Rodriguez, Terri Luke, Lee Boulie, Jena Schmid, Susan Drye, Larry Jirik (WebEx Support), Corey Frederick

Others: Derrick Smith, Assistant Metropolitan Attorney at Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Shawn Bakker, Nashville Public Library Foundation President

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

Keith Simmons called the meeting to order at 12:06 PM.

II. Metro Ordinance required to be announced at all Board Meetings

“Pursuant to the provisions of § 2.68.030 of the Metropolitan Code of Laws, please take notice that decisions of the Nashville Public Library Board may be appealed to the Chancery Court of Davidson County for review under a common law writ of certiorari. Any appeal must be filed within sixty days after entry of a final decision by the Board. Any person or other entity considering an appeal should consult with an attorney to ensure that time and procedural requirements are met.”

III. Motion to Approve Conducting Meeting by Electronic Means and Suspending Rules

I move that the items on the meeting agenda constitute essential business of this Board, meeting electronically is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Tennesseans considering the COVID-19 outbreak, and any rule that conflicts with Governor’s Executive Order 16 permitting electronic meetings be suspended.

Robert Oermann moved to approve conducting the meeting by electronic means and suspending the rules; the motion was seconded by Kate Ezell and passed unanimously.

IV. Board Chair Comments, *Keith Simmons, Chair*

- a. Mr. Simmons noted that the Library Board elects officers in April. He stated his personal situation has grown more complicated. Mr. Simmons stated that he will not stand for reelection as Library Board Chair. Having served on the Library Board for about 25 years,, he mentioned that he would like to stay on the Board but turn the position over to another Board member. He explained that he came to chair the Library Board due to his interest in the director search that resulted in the hiring of Kent Oliver.

If one of the Board members is interested in the chair position, they should speak to Mr. Oliver or Mr. Simmons. He emphasized the importance of the chairperson having strong connections in city hall and being a sounding board for Mr. Oliver.

V. Approval of Minutes: January 19, 2021

Mr. Oermann moved for approval of the minutes from the January meeting; the motion was seconded by Joyce Searcy and passed unanimously.

VI. Library Director Report, *Kent Oliver*

a. FY2122 Budget Updates

- i. Mr. Oliver stated that the library's operating budget was due to Metro on February 16. He explained the complexity of this year's process and thanked NPL Admin, especially Susan Drye and Angela McElrath-Prosser, for their work. He noted the added focus on outcomes, outputs, and strategic planning for these budgets. Bernadette Hugan assisted Mr. Oliver with the background strategic information for the Mayor's Office, which is due during the week of February 22. NPL was also asked to present an operating budget that reflected a 2% budget savings. The assistant directors listed positions that each division could leave vacant. These positions have been identified, and the materials budget from Limitless Libraries will see a minimal cut.
- ii. Mr. Oliver discussed his list of budget improvements that were submitted to Metro. These improvements would be funded by additional money added to NPL's baseline budget. Nine improvements were submitted by the assistant directors this year, and Mr. Oliver prioritized them based upon the greatest impact on strategic planning.
 1. Restore positions lost in the move from EBS to R12 systems. Six positions were lost when Metro went from one finance system to another. These positions would cost around \$216,000.
 2. In order to continue curbside service after NPL reopens, the Bellevue, Bordeaux, Edmondson Pike, and Green Hills Branches require additional staff positions; ten positions total, equaling \$321,000, would be needed.

3. One additional staff position, as well as a computer, would be needed in the Production Services Department to maintain NPL Universe, virtual programming, production, and staff training.
 4. An additional Librarian 1 position, upgraded from Library Associate, within the Children's Department at the Main Library would oversee Summer Reading Challenge. Summer Reading Challenge duties have rotated around the system and this would assign it to one staff member. The cost for this upgrade is \$4,600.
 5. Adding a staff member to the Equal Access Department would move a currently grant-funded position over to a Metro-funded position.
 6. Two Special Collections positions—a Librarian 1 and a Library Associate—would be created to help with the digitization of Special Collections and Archives. This would cost \$79,000.
 7. Branch Services requested two additional Librarian 1 positions.
 8. The NAZA contract restructure was requested, which would shift four positions to Metro-funded positions and cost \$474,000.
 9. Collections budget should be moved to the operating fund. This request would cost \$4 million.
 10. The final request was for added library travel reimbursements totaling \$7,000.
- iii. Ms. Varney commented about contractual obligations for moving NAZA positions to Metro-funded positions. She asked if they would still work on NAZA.
 - iv. Mr. Oliver confirmed that they would still work on NAZA. He added that the currently vacant 51 positions are not part of this list, since the list was created under the expectation that those were filled.
 - v. Ms. Ezell explained that the Mayor's budget focus seems to be toward education and neighborhoods. Even though the library plays a significant role in both categories, NPL is not seen as a major player these categories in Nashville.
 - vi. Mr. Simmons agreed and noted that this has been a topic of Library Board discussions for some time. No matter who the mayor is this message does not seem to be communicated. He mentioned the advocacy campaign that was put on hold due to the pandemic. He explained the importance of the Mayor placing additional NPL funding on his budget. He stated that the Mayor would agree with us, but

other priorities seem to be placed ahead of NPL. He expressed his frustration with NPL receiving the short shrift.

- vii. Mr. Oliver said that this would be discussed under the advocacy portion of the meeting. The prioritization piece is staff-focused on several items. If NPL does not add staff, services will need to be reduced. Curbside service is a very staff-intensive service, and NPL expects that customers want curbside service to continue. NPL would like to put a request in for more locations for curbside, but the cost of adding even more staff does not make sense right now.
- viii. Ms. Searcy asked if the Mayor plans to increase the overall budget.
- ix. Mr. Oliver confirmed that the budget will not be increased. He admitted confusion in asking for additional positions while planning for a 2% reduction. He has not been given any sense of which way the budget will go.
- x. Ms. Ezell asked about strategies that could be revisited to help pressure the Mayor's Office concerning the budget.
- xi. Mr. Oliver explained that the Advocacy Committee is currently making positive strides. He stated that Board members could continue to have individual interactions with council members as well as staff in the Mayor's Office or Metro's Finance Office.
- xii. Mr. Oermann commented that the Mayor was not a library supporter when he was a member of Metro Council.
- xiii. Ms. Searcy noted how impactful an advocacy push framed around equity could be towards council members.
- xiv. Ms. Varney agreed and stated that the Advocacy Committee has a good plan. What the committee lacks is a sustained effort. She mentioned the roadblock to advocacy that the pandemic caused. Now the group just needs to implement their plan.
- xv. Ms. Searcy mentioned that she might have a lead to advocacy within the Council.
- xvi. Mr. Oliver brought the conversation back the capital budget and 4% budget, stating that requests were submitted for both. There are \$1.6 million in the upcoming bond for repairs throughout the system, but this did not include Richland Park as part of the repairs. NPL requested \$4 million for books and materials in the 4% budget. He explained that he would like to see the hiring freeze go away. Mr.

Oliver made the point to the Mayor's Office that NPL could not reopen all buildings at this staffing level.

- xvii. Mr. Simmons noted his worry about the Collections budget. He remarked how difficult it is to check-out a book without queuing up and stated that \$4 million is not enough for Collections.
- xviii. Mr. Oliver commented that he wished NPL could have \$6 million for Collections.
- xix. Mr. Simmons mentioned that people have been working through this problem and that checkouts have been great through the pandemic.

b. NPL Advocacy, *Kent Oliver*

- i. Mr. Oliver stated that an ad hoc advocacy group was formed through the Nashville Public Library Foundation (NPLF) with the purpose of actively supporting the library and the budget. The group is comprised of NPLF staff as well as community members. Three advocacy points have been created as the focus of the group: 1. The library needs a commitment from Metro for Collections to receive a \$4 million annual budget. 2. There are currently 51 library staff vacancies, and library staff must be stabilized. 3. Without additional staffing, the library will be challenged to continue curbside service, virtual programming, and other services.
- ii. Shawn Bakker stated that the group along with Ms. Varney were working on the best way to craft and refine these three points into a message. The group hopes to send out information during the first week in April, which is Library Awareness Week, and it will continue to investigate how to connect with Metro Council members. She welcomed any Library Board member who would be interested in helping with this effort.
- iii. Mr. Oliver explained that several staff members presented information at the recent Metro Council Parks, Library, and Arts Committee meeting. At the meeting, Mr. Oliver's remarks addressed these issues, while Lee Boulie spoke about NPL Universe; Terri Luke discussed curbside service; and Niq Tognoni talked about Studio NPL. The committee is led by Council Member Nancy VanReece. Mr. Oliver noted the evening seemed like a success, and there are library supporters on the committee.

- iv. Mr. Simmons asked about the amount of funding that Collections received from the 4% fund during this fiscal year.
- v. Mr. Oliver stated that Collections had received \$3 million this year. Last year, Collections received \$2 million and even less the previous year. He stated that \$4 million would be a really nice increase from where Collections have previously been.
- vi. Ms. Searcy stated the reason the library should receive this funding should be added to the advocacy points. She noted that the library should be seen as a way to develop the city's educational as well as economical goals.
- vii. Mr. Oliver agreed, but remarked on the need to communicate these three simple points. He reiterated the need for a commitment from NPL supporters and for NPL to be on the forefront of their minds. NPL submitted its budget to the Mayor's Office, and the two groups will meet next month. The Mayor's Office will make budget recommendations to Metro Council at the end of April. The Council will work on the budget in May and June.
- viii. Ms. Varney noted the Council can adjust the budget after the Mayor submits his recommendations. She noted that NPL is a victim of its own success. Everybody on Council know the library does great things. NPL can communicate how it is suffering, but the Council sees all the great things the library does. She explained that NPL should reiterate that it cannot continue to get overlooked in the budget.
- ix. Mr. Oliver noted a suggestion for a "scorched earth" approach. If NPL does not receive funding, services will be retracted.
- x. Adriana Bialostozky asked about a timeline for the removal of services, if funding is not received. The timeline would make the ultimatum more concrete.
- xi. Mr. Oliver described how NPL staff are working on a reopening plan. During the process, NPL will be able to define how many staff will be needed to move forward. Current staffing levels are low, limiting how many locations NPL can reopen. He also commented on how staffing in the Equal Access Department has been minimal with little additional funding from the state.
- xii. Ms. Varney praised the idea for a timeline in making the situation more visual. The advocacy group will work with Mr. Oliver and NPL staff to obtain accurate staffing numbers.

- xiii. Mr. Simmons commented that in previous administrations the mayor followed by the finance director were the most important people in terms of making budget priorities. He is unaware how decisions are made currently in the Mayor's Office. He noted everyone's hesitance to pressure the Mayor's Office due to all the issues they have faced. He recommended going to the Council, if the advocacy group could not reach the Mayor or the Finance Director.
- xiv. Charvis Rand commented that no one wants to see a closed library in their district.
- xv. Mr. Oliver stated that he will keep the Board posted concerning advocacy efforts.

c. COVID and NPL Update, *Kent Oliver*

- i. Mr. Oliver explained that current NPL usage statistics are steady, and customers continue to take advantage of curbside service. NPL has also seen an increase in the usage of e-materials. He noted that current COVID statistical trends have caused him to anticipate reopening locations in the near future. Staffing numbers will dictate how libraries will open.
- ii. Mr. Oliver then commented on the inclement weather from the week of February 15. The library was closed on Tuesday due to staff and customer safety. Staff have been completing a good bit of work-from-home hours during the pandemic and this type of work could supplement administrative leave during inclement weather closures. NPL is looking at possible closures throughout the rest of the week.
- iii. Mr. Oliver commented that Board members all have various memorandums of understanding related to NAZA, Limitless Libraries, and the Country Music Hall of Fame to approve. He thanked Derrick Smith for his work in putting these together.

VII. NPL Foundation Update, *Shawn Bakker*

- a. NPLF is currently in conversations with long-standing funders, such as Phil Bredesen, John Ingram, and Dollar General. Topics in these conversations include projecting the library's role in the community in 20 years, how to take the library's current services to scale, and the library's role in education. NPLF is also looking for new partners and is currently in talks with Amazon. NPLF continues to listen in the community about past and potential funders and how the library can align with their

funding interests. Ms. Bakker stated that there will be more information to come on this.

VIII. Staff Reports

a. EDI Committee Report, *Susan Drye*

- i. Susan Drye explained the history of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee, which dates back to 2015. In 2019, the committee decided to focus on internal issues, and in 2020, this focus turned toward racism. In June 2020, Ms. Drye became the chair of the EDI Committee, showing NPL's prioritization of equity, diversity, and inclusion as well as installing an EDI champion within NPL's administration. A member of the Library Board, Mr. Rand, also agreed to serve on the 11-person committee. The revamped committee revised the original mission statement to reflect the committee's internal focus. A subcommittee met to create definitions for equity, diversity, and inclusion in respect of NPL's goals. The committee is currently putting together a climate survey to benchmark staff views of where NPL is in terms of equity, diversity, and inclusion. An email about the survey will explain how NPL is prioritizing these issues. Once the survey is completed, the committee will set a plan to achieve goals informed by the survey. NPL administration has already agreed to hold a mandatory virtual Civil Rights Civil Society course for managers and PICS. Terms used within this course will align with those from the EDI Committee.
- ii. Ms. Searcy suggested using Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) instead of EDI.
- iii. Ms. Drye stated that she knew that some organizations called the initiative DEI. However, NPL wanted the focus to be on equity. For that reason, NPL purposefully named its initiative EDI instead of DEI.
- iv. Mr. Rand agreed with Ms. Drye. He complimented her on the job that she is doing leading the committee. He noted that he has learned some things while serving on the committee.
- v. Ms. Bialostozky commented that language should be mentioned among the differences listed in the group's definition of diversity. She expressed the importance of diversity within the committee and the need for staff retention.

- vi. Mr. Simmons agreed that this is important work. He asked if the committee could give the Board a regular update on their work.
- vii. Mr. Oliver stated that a quarterly update could be given to the Board. Mr. Oliver commended Ms. Drye on her presentation and noted that her service provided a direct link to NPL administration. He also stated that having a Board member on the committee shows NPL's commitment to the initiative moving forward. He thanked Mr. Rand for serving on the committee.
- viii. Ms. Ezell asked if Board members could take the Civil Rights Civil Society course.
- ix. Ms. Drye confirmed that this would be possible.

IX. New Business

a. Conference Center Policy Update, *Jena Schmid*

- i. Upon request of Mr. Simmons, Mr. Oermann agreed to chair the remainder of the meeting.
- ii. Jena Schmid explained the recent revisions to the Conference Center Policy. Changes include the revised title, adding where the Gallery space can be rented with a fee structure, including a non-discrimination statement, and simplifying the fee structure. Other items in the policy were not changed.
- iii. Ms. Varney asked if this policy allows the Black Lives Matter events if they were not open for non-black members.
- iv. Ms. Schmid stated that organizations renting the space can control who is allowed into events. However, if the library sponsors the event, it must be open to the public.
- v. Mr. Oliver noted the issue to which Ms. Varney referred originated with the use of public meeting space at a branch. Any public meeting space is open to the public. This policy is more about the Conference Center in particular.
- vi. Ms. Bialostozky commented that language should be added to the non-discrimination policy.
- vii. Ms. Schmid also noted changes in the fees regarding food and beverage cleaning.
- viii. Ms. Ezell asked about limits for bringing food or beverages into the space.

- ix. Ms. Schmid commented that this is addressed in the procedure in terms of food and beverages that may stain the floor. Space renters would be charged for any damage caused during an event. Mr. Smith added input on the portion of the policy concerning liability and damages.
- x. Mr. Rand confirmed that the price points are reasonable.
- xi. Ms. Schmid stated that the proposed prices are low compared to other places.
- xii. Mr. Rand moved to adopt the new Conference Center Policy with the proposed changes; the motion was seconded by Ms. Varney and passed unanimously.

Nashville Public Library
Board
February 16, 2021

Resolution Title: Conference Center Policy

History/Background/Discussion:

The Use of Library Facilities and Meeting Rooms at the Main Library Policy was last revised and approved by the Library Board on December 12, 2017. Since then, the Conference Center has been changed to add another available space for meetings, the former Art Gallery. As this addition was necessary, the policy was reviewed, and the following revisions are suggested:

- Addition of the Gallery space.
- Simplification of the fee structure
- Addition of a non-discrimination statement
- Change of policy title

Recommendation: The Board approves the proposed revisions to The Use of Library Facilities and Meeting Rooms at Main Library Policy

Drafter(s): Jena Schmid

Person(s) Responsible for Implementation: NPL Facilities Coordinator, Georgia Varble, and Conference Center staff

RESOLUTION 2021-02.01
Conference Center Policy

WHEREAS, on December 12, 2017, The Nashville Public Library Board of Trustees approved and adopted The Use of Library Facilities and Meeting Rooms at the Main Library policy and

WHEREAS, the Nashville Public Library Board of Trustees is required to authorize all fees charge by the Nashville Public Library, and

WHEREAS, Library Leadership regularly reexamines library policy to conform to best practices recognized since its last update,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Nashville Public Library Board of Trustees to adopt the revisions to the Conference Center Policy, formerly titled The Use of Library Facilities and Meeting Rooms at the Main Library Policy.



Conference Center Policy

Policy Information

Approved Date: [Date]
Effective Date: October 20, 2009
Keywords: Conference Center, meeting rooms, Main Library

Policy

Overview

In support of the Library's mission and vision to connect our community, Nashville Public Library (NPL) provides Conference Center meeting rooms at the Main Library to individuals, groups, and organizations in the public and private sector. The use of the Conference Center facilities shall be in accordance with the policies set by the NPL Board and NPL procedures.

This policy applies to the use of the Conference Center meeting rooms at the Main Library during normal operating hours. Other meeting spaces within Main Library are reserved for library operations. This policy does not apply to private events held at Main Library after operating hours. (See [Private Events Policy](#))

The NPL Director and NPL Board have the authority to make exceptions to the rules set out in this policy.

Use of Library Facilities

- NPL does not discriminate when making its facilities and meeting rooms available for public use. NPL does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, or disability in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services, or activities.
- Permission to use NPL facilities and meeting rooms does not constitute or imply NPL endorsement of the policies or beliefs of the group or organization using the room. Clients must not use advertising and publicity which imply that their programs are sponsored, co-sponsored, endorsed, or approved by NPL, unless NPL has given permission.
- NPL has priority use of facilities and meeting rooms.
- All NPL-sponsored events are open to the public and media.

- Activities held in the Conference Center may not interfere with regular library operations and library-sponsored events.
- NPL will determine the number and nature of events to be held in its facilities.
- NPL reserves the right to review each prospective use and determine whether that use falls within the scope of this policy.
- NPL staff or representatives may enter premises at any time and on any occasion.

Fees

Room Rental

- No rental fee is charged to government agencies, NPL sponsored events, or the Nashville Public Library Foundation (NPLF) during operating hours.
- NPLF Business Members are charged the non-profit rate.
- NPLF Corporate Sponsors can use Conference Center spaces free of charge once per calendar year (subject to availability).
- Waiver of fees applies to room rental only and does not include incidental expenses.
- If any additional library space is needed, an additional setup and teardown fee will be applied.

	Auditorium	Conference Room 1A or 1B	Conference Room 1	Conference Room 2 or 3	Gallery
Non-Profit	\$125/hour	\$75/hour	\$125/hour	\$10/hour	\$100/hour
Profit	\$200/hour	\$125/hour	\$200/hour	\$35/hour	\$150/hour

Audiovisual Services (AV)

- Standard AV services are provided free of charge. Standard support for our conference rooms include a podium with microphone, up to 2 wireless microphones (handheld and lapel available), and a screen for PowerPoint and/or video presentations. An AV technician will be provided to assist with set up only.
- AV support for Auditorium events includes the same equipment package with the addition of general stage lighting. An AV technician is required for the duration of events in the auditorium.
- Fees may be applied for additional AV services. Rates vary depending on need.

Food/Beverage Cleaning Fees

- An additional cleaning fee of \$1 per person will apply when food and/or beverages are served.

Other Fees

- NPL reserves the right to collect payment for costs incurred through the use of its facilities and meeting rooms.

- *Last-minute* changes made by clients are subject to additional *labor charges*.
- Other fees may be applied based upon individual requests.

Denial of Use of NPL Facilities

- NPL reserves the right to accept or deny usage of facilities at any time, in accordance with this policy.
- NPL has the right to preempt any event for an NPL event. In such rare instances, NPL will put forth every reasonable effort to assist in reserving another date or NPL meeting room.
- Use of the premises may be terminated at any time if the conduct of the group or any member of the group is disruptive to Library service, abusive or dangerous to individuals, the building, NPL materials, exhibits, or furnishings in the building.

Damages and Liability

- Depending on the scope of the event, the rental applicant may be required to show appropriate liability insurance, in addition to any required permit or license. For example, but not limited to, the service or consumption of alcohol. (See [Alcohol Policy - Main Library](#))
- NPL is not responsible for the loss of or damage to any equipment or materials owned or rented by a client using its meeting rooms, neither before, during, nor after the event, nor at any time.
- NPL may collect payment if users cause damage to its facilities and meeting rooms. Any client using the meeting rooms shall be held responsible for willful, intentional, negligent, or accidental damage to the NPL building, grounds, collections, or equipment caused by the group or organization, its members, or those attending its program. Intentional damages include, but are not limited to, leaving a room excessively dirty or messy after an event.
- Clients must fully release and discharge the NPL Board, the Metropolitan Government, and their officers, agents, or employees from any and all claims for injuries, including death, damages, or loss, which may arise, or which may be alleged to have arisen out of, or in connection with the meeting or any use of the meeting rooms.
- The client must further indemnify, hold harmless, and defend the NPL Board, the Metropolitan Government, and their officers, agents, and employees from any and all claims, damages, costs or attorney's fees for any injuries or damages arising in part or in whole from the accidental, negligent, intentional, or willful acts or omissions of the client, its members, or those attending the event.

b. Donelson Update

- i. Mr. Oermann asked Mr. Oliver about an update on the Donelson building project.

- ii. Mr. Oliver stated that the project is on hold and depends on the status of the upcoming bond sale. If the bond sale is successful, NPL hopes to find out about moving forward with construction.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:31 PM.

Next Scheduled Board of Trustees Meeting

March 16, 2021

Location: TBD

Respectfully submitted by Corey Frederick