

Nashville Public Library Board of Trustees
Minutes from May 17, 2022
Main Library
615 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37219
12:00 noon

Members Present: Kate Ezell, Robert Oermann, Katy Varney, Adriana Bialostozky, and Keith Simmons

Library Staff: Kent Oliver, Lee Boulie, Linda Harrison, Terri Luke, Andrea Fanta, Forrest Eagle, Nikki Glassley, Jena Schmid, Magda Underdown-Dubois, Rebecca Price, James Staub, Libby Cain, Bryan Jones and Megan Phouthavong Evans.

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

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

- a. Katy Varney called the meeting to order at 11:57AM

II. Metro Ordinance required to be announced at all Board Meetings – *Vice Chair Katy Varney*

- a. “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. Board Chair Comments, *Katy Varney, Vice-Chair*

a. Replacement Search Process

- i. Ms. Varney mentioned Joyce Searcy had an injury that has her out of the meeting today.
- ii. Susan Drye pulled together the interim process the board used before hiring Kent.
 1. The Board may appoint anybody to be interim. However, best practice would be to make sure whomever is appointed meets the Library Director minimum qualifications. If looking at civil service

Metro employees, the Board would need to go to the Civil Service Commission and ask that the employee's civil service status be suspended during time of interim.

2. Library Director is currently DP 2. Civil service employees chosen for the interim position would bump up to entry level. Anyone already above base pay would receive a 10% increase as interim.
 3. Ms. Drye suggested whoever is interested turn in a resume and be interviewed. Resumes would be turned into Mr. Oliver's office, and he can share with the Board. Derrick Smith, Metro Legal, stated it must be a public meeting if the Board convenes to interview. One on one conversations with candidates by Board Members can happen anytime.
- iii. Sherry Adams indicated each interview of application experience should be similar for each candidate. Questions should all be the same and each questioned the same way (individual or panel).
 - iv. Ms. Varney mentioned that the board should agree whether the interim would have the opportunity to become permanent or not. Mr. Simmons states that the interim should just be interim, and Mr. Oermann concurred. Ms. Varney stated that common best practice in many professions is the interim serves only as interim. Mr. Smith stated that he needed to check and see if board can eliminate interim as a potential candidate and get answer to Board members shortly.
 1. **Ms. Varney called for a motion subject to council's approval and advice that the person appointed interim director would not be eligible to serve as Chief Library Director. Ms. Ezell seconded. Motion passed.**
 - v. Mr. Smith recommended amendment to wording to remove "approval". **Mr. Simmons amends previous motion to remove "approval" from wording. Ms. Ezell seconds. Motion passed unanimously.**
 - vi. Mr. Simmons requested a list of senior staff and their duties, along with potential resumes. Mr. Oliver will get lists together.

- vii. Ms. Ezell asked Ms. Drye about potential list of questions for candidates. Ms. Drye stated if it is a group interview to bring questions to Susan and Sherry for consideration. Mr. Simmons asks if the board must have interviews at all. Ms. Drye says they do not.
 - 1. Ms. Adams indicated that job descriptions are generic, so they are not always functional job descriptions. Mr. Simmons asked for assistant director position function job descriptions.
- viii. Mr. Smith states that whether interviews are individual or not, the Board should rely on resources from HR to determine best practice and consistency between candidates.
 - 1. Mr. Simmons asked if the Board can ask Mr. Oliver for recommendations for interim position. Mr. Smith agreed this is appropriate.
- ix. After summarizing the conversation above, Ms. Varney stated that the board should make a decision on individual interviews or public meeting of candidates. Mr. Oermann suggested that individuals interested in the interim position speak to the Board at the next meeting stating why they would be a good candidate. He also mentioned that individual interviews can get tricky based on availability of board members, interview preferences, etc.
 - 1. Mr. Simmons suggested they get a list of job duties for Assistant Directors along with whoever submit resumes, and vote. Deadline for resumes given to Mr. Oliver will be **end of day June 7th**. The Board concurred.

b. Permanent Director Process

- i. Mr. Simmons stated that last time, Donna Nicely submitted her retirement letter in the summer, the Request for Proposal (RFP) went out in June 2011, and Mr. Oliver began June the following year.
- ii. Ms. Varney stated that there are two options for the search process. First, let Metro HR do the search. Second, partner with a search firm. Mr. Simmons called Beecher Hill to ask about a partnership. They said they

had done it with for profit HR departments but not nonprofits. They will not perform a search for less than \$25,000. By going through RFP process, you see capacity of search firms and in this case need to see full landscape. Ms. Varney explains that with the Foundation they worked with Benefactor Group. She called Benefactor Group to see if they'd partner in this search, and they indicated no. Their average price is not less than \$75,000.

1. Ms. Drye indicated that if we spend Metro Funds, the process from start to procurement may be 4-6 months. Metro procurement process, post it, people supply, evaluate, select, then go through contract process.
2. **Susan will start the process to procurement. Sherry will get a functional job description together for the Library Director position between now and the next board meeting.**

IV. Approval of Minutes: April 19, 2022

- a. **Kate Ezell moved to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded by Robert Oermann and passed unanimously.**

V. Library Director Report, *Kent Oliver*

- a. Recommended Budget
 - i. Metro Council Budget hearing is Thursday May 19 at 4:30pm. The library did well in the mayor's recommended budget. It is not the final budget until council approves.
 1. Important staff positions including security, HR, facilities, and others were requested in budget. Mr. Oliver calls this the "meat and potatoes" of the budget. He is grateful the mayor included them.
 2. 3.7 million in additional funding is what was approved in the Mayor's recommended budget. The library has not experienced new operational funding put forward at this level previously.

VI. Staff Reports

- a. Summer Reading – *Nikki Glassley*

- i. Reading is for Everyone is this year's theme. Ms. Glassley described why reading is so important, including that it sets kids up for success in school, it improves vocabulary and comprehension, as well as builds compassion and empathy.
- ii. The details of the program are as follows:
 1. As in previous years, the program is a minutes based program, with milestones at 600, 1200 and 1800 minutes read.
 2. June 1-July 31 are the dates summer reading will be available to the public. May 16 – August 20 is when summer reading will be available to MNPS facilities and early childhood providers.
 3. Summer reading festivals will be held in four corners of the city at Madison, Southeast, Bordeaux and Bellevue. Performers and ASL interpretation will be at each festival.
 4. Prizes include a multicolor crayon for young listeners at 600 minutes. Everyone else who finishes at 600 minutes will receive an NPL enamel pin. 1200- and 1800- minute finishers will choose coupons to local businesses.
 5. The goals this year are 15 million minutes read and 12,000 participants.
 6. English and Spanish reading logs will be on one sheet front and back, while Arabic and Kurdish will be printed and distributed to specific branches and other community organizations where these languages are prevalent.
 7. New resources for staff include an outreach toolkit, a program idea guide, and new software.

VII. New Business

- a. Policy for Outside Tour Groups – *Jena Schmid*
 - i. The reason for bringing a policy forward is that over the last year after opening the Votes for Women room in the Main Library, external tour groups began touring the Special Collections area without notification.
 - ii. The issues have been as follows:

1. Groups have not called ahead of time or scheduled, and library sponsored groups may already be in the space. Over 30 internal groups were scheduled in that space in April 2022 alone.
 2. External groups have routinely interrupted library groups on tour.
 3. External tour leaders who are not sanctioned by NPL have inappropriately interjected comments into library tour narratives.
 4. Tour groups come through research areas and researchers have complained of noise and interruptions.
 5. External groups are too large for certain spaces, creating safety issues, especially during COVID when the library was at 50% capacity.
 6. Tour guides request coming in virtually every weekend, which would conflict with library scheduled tours.
 7. External guides have been heard providing incorrect information.
NPL wants to ensure information disseminated is correct.
- iii. Ms. Schmid reached out to large libraries across the country and they have rules in place that any group coming into the library must schedule the tour with a library staff member or volunteer who has been trained to give tours.
- iv. Ms. Varney asked how big of a problem is this for external groups coming in? Ms. Bialostozky requested the number of people in tours causing disruptions.
1. Ms. Schmid replies that self-guided tours happen any time. The problem is external commercial tour groups, which the library has no way of figuring out numbers because they just show up unannounced.
- v. Ms. Varney highly suggests reaching out ahead of time, and not turning anyone away when they do show up to the library. Ms. Schmid agreed and will work with external groups to find a solution and handle it as it happens. She would not turn them away but let them know of the new policy for their next visit.

- vi. Mr. Simmons moved to approve the new policy; Mr. Oermann seconds the motion, and it passed with Ms. Bialostozky abstaining**

Nashville Public Library
Board
May 17, 2022

Resolution Title: Tour Group Policy

History/Background/Discussion:

In the past year the Main Library has accommodated a growing number of tour groups led by external tour guides. On occasion, these groups have been disruptive to other library users and programs. Additionally, many of these groups are charged fees, and while an exception is made for Nashville Public Library Foundation events, it has been the library practice to not allow private companies to use government spaces for commercial gain.

After experiencing several concerns with external tour groups, the procedures and policies of other large public library systems with a Main/Central library were researched, and it was discovered that several have developed statements that all tours must be led by library staff or volunteers. This practice alleviates conflicts that can occur when unsanctioned guides lead groups through a large public space and ensures that guides that have been appropriately trained by the library.

Recommendation: The Board approves the proposed Tour Group Policy

Draftor(s): Jena Schmid

Person(s) Responsible for Implementation: Library management

RESOLUTION 2022-05.01
TITLE

WHEREAS, Nashville Public Library trains its tour guides with specific curriculum that provides an accurate, engaging, and accessible interpretation of our institution's history, architecture, collections, and art, and

WHEREAS, it is not possible to ensure that outside tour guides would represent Nashville Public Library to its standards, and

WHEREAS, private companies cannot operate their business on library property for commercial gain, and

WHEREAS, in a large public building, it is necessary to be able to anticipate when and where large groups are moving through, and

WHEREAS, Nashville Public Library guides are trained to be mindful of not creating interruptions or issues for other library spaces, programs, and services, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Nashville Public Library Board of Trustees that all tours conducted in Nashville Public Library buildings are led by staff and volunteers.

VIII. Adjournment

- a. The meeting adjourned at 1:26 PM.

Next Scheduled Board of Trustees Meeting

12:00 noon – June 21, 2022

Edmondson Pike Library

5501 Edmondson Pike

Nashville TN, 37211

Respectfully submitted by Megan Phouthavong Evans