

Nashville Public Library Board of Trustees
Minutes
June 21, 2022
Edmondson Pike Library
5501 Edmondson Pike, Nashville TN 37211
12:00 noon

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

Library Staff: Kent Oliver, Susan Drye, Linda Harrison, Jena Schmid, Lee Boulie, Sherry Adams, Libby Cain, Jena Schmid, Emily Kriebel, Forrest Eagle, Kara Youngblood, Ashley Walker-Tyler

Others: Derrick Smith, Assistant Metropolitan Attorney at Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Lee Molette, Jerry Maynard.

- I. Call to Order / Roll Call
 - a. Joyce Searcy called the meeting to order at 12:05
- II. Metro Ordinance required to be announced at all Board Meetings – *Chair, Joyce Searcy*
 - 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, *Joyce Searcy, Chair*
 - a. Ms. Searcy thanked everyone for the support she’s received since her injury. She also thanked Ms. Varney for chairing the last board meeting. Mr. Oliver and Mr. Smith has kept Ms. Searcy up to date, especially with the Banned Books campaign.
- IV. Approval of Minutes
 - a. **Robert Oermann moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Katy Varney and passed unanimously.**
 - b. Mr. Rand questioned the motion determining whether the interim could become the permanent director. Mr. Rand stated that because he had not attended the last meeting, he wanted to put his input into the conversation. He stated that he thought anyone should be able to apply for the permanent position.

- c. Ms. Searcy states that after speaking with Mr. Smith, Metro legal, anyone who is interested in the permanent position, including the interim, would be able to apply to be a candidate for the permanent position.

V. Library Director Report, *Kent Oliver*

- a. Mr. Oliver mentioned that Mr. Simmons has been re-appointed to the NPL Board.
- b. Following the gun violence across the country in public spaces, library security remains a concern. Our security guards are not adequately armed. Next month, Mr. Oliver will be bringing a resolution to the table to arm our security guards with tasers and/or sidearms.
 - i. Mr. Simmons requested that the board receives as much information as possible of examples across the country to justify the need to arm NPL guards.
 - ii. Mr. Oliver clarifies that only some guards would be certified to carry, and not all. This is a complicated subject but would like to find a level of protection that NPL and the board are comfortable with.
 - iii. Ms. Searcy asked that if any board members have any questions about data to send a request to Mr. Oliver.
- c. Banned Books – News is still circulating across the country in an effort to ban books. Mr. Oliver will be at ALA this week and there will be discussion about this issue. NPL has been recognized as a library who has stepped up and not afraid to do so.

VI. Staff Reports

- a. Edmondson Pike, *Kara Youngblood*
 - i. Edmondson Pike has had a very good last year. They've also had a good summer reading start this year. The branch reached out to 800 students about summer challenge. Some summer reading programs have had up to 150-160 people attend while other have needed multiple time slots to accommodate everyone.
 - ii. Adult programs have increased in attendance. A new Associate has begun a Craft Saturdays that has been booked every Saturday.

VII. Old Business

- a. Library Director Request for Proposal (RFP) Update
 - i. Mr. Simmons met with Metro HR Kristin Wilson in the Mayor's Office, Shannon Hall with Metro HR and Sherry Adams from NPL. Both Hall and

Wilson warned about delays with metro procurement. It would be at least 4-6 months to have a search firm in place. Mr. Simmons asked when the RFP would actually go out, but neither were venturing to guess.

- ii. Ms. Drye mentioned that the RFP has been assigned to a buyer. There are a few executive search firms on contract but Metro HR did not think they were what the library was looking for. She clarified that “buyer” is someone in procurement. If we want a firm to be considered, we should contact them and let them know when the RFP is “on the street”. The buyer will send it out to anyone who fits within a commodity code. If not, then those firms will need to be registered as a Metro Vendor to be considered. Ms. Drye will notify the board when the RFP is published. She will also reach out to the firms to let them know they need to register as Metro vendors before the RFP publishes.
- iii. Mr. Rand requested clarification that though Mrs. Drye is in the running for interim director, that she could still be in charge of working through the RFP process. Other Board members clarified that yes, she can since they will be deciding the interim at the end of the meeting.
- iv. Mr. Oliver offered to call each firm individually with relevant information and keep each call consistent.
- v. In continuing his report, Mr. Simmons mentioned that if the Board wants to make any changes to the Library Director job description, it should be done quickly since it has to then go before the Civil Service Commission for approval which takes its own length of time. Any comments or changes to job descriptions should be sent to Ms. Adams. Ms. Adams stated that job descriptions should not be revised based on staff input alone. If any changes need to be made it would have a deadline of the middle of the month so that it could be brought before Civil Service the next month when they meet.
- vi. In talking to Shannon Hall, Mr. Simmons stated that NPL can have an evaluation committee that is composed of one library board member and two non-library board members. It could be former board members, foundation members, current or former. Ms. Drye mentioned that there is usually four people on an evaluation committee. When the committee is selected, Ms. Drye will need to be informed so she can inform procurement.

- vii. Mr. Smith clarifies that Ms. Searcy could appoint the other committee members and that the reason for odd number of members versus the even number is in case of a tie.
- viii. Ms. Drye mentioned that the evaluation committee is the deciding factor in the search firm contract if the board chooses to have a committee.
- ix. Ms. Searcy and Mr. Smith will get with procurement to decide whether to have an evaluation committee or not based on previous practice, best practice, etc. due to the nature of how long this process will take.
- x. Ms. Adams stated that Shannon Hall agreed that if there is an evaluation panel, it would be best practice to bring on Andrea Blackman and Razel Jones in helping to craft questions for the committee to ensure diversity, inclusiveness, equity etc.

b. Selection of Interim Director

- i. Ms. Searcy reiterated that anyone who is interested in the position of library director, including interim, will be considered. Ms. Searcy also stated that the resumes and cover letters that were submitted will make the decision to choose a new interim will be very difficult. It is a testament to Mr. Oliver and his ability to craft a team.
- ii. Ms. Searcy clarifies that board members need to separate the hats they wear, as a board member or a volunteer.
- iii. Mr. Oermann's review – The Board cannot make a wrong decision. Each person is more than qualified, and each will be wonderful. Ms. Drye has years and years of experience. Newer administrative staff are just as qualified than the veteran staff.
- iv. Ms. Varney's review – This will be a very hard decision. She loved Ms. Luke's four areas of focus in cover letter. Each was thoughtful and showed extensive knowledge. Ms. Luke brings diverse library knowledge and experience. Ms. Boulie's digital inclusion work has been excellent. That's where we are going as a city and a library. She walked Mr. Oliver and Ms. Varney through NECAT and that was impressive. Astounded by number of grants Ms. Boulie has been a part of. Ms. Drye has played a key role in so many difficult decisions. She is always professional and easy to work with during projects, which were plentiful. Ms. Harrison's experience throughout

the library has been impressive and extensive. Ms. Varney was blown away by her partnership piece.

- v. Mr. Rand's review – Mr. Rand made his decision prior to the meeting. The interim needs experience looking at what our community needs and knows the pulse of the community. He wanted the next person to talk about branches and people. He would like that person to be solution oriented and an innovator. NPL needs the person to make sure that the library is not a place to go, but it is a lifestyle, a transformation system. Mr. Simmons and Mr. Oliver have created an aristocratic team, but Mr. Rand would like this interim to be community oriented and the pulse of the community.
- vi. Ms. Ezell's review – We need someone who can take what Kent has created and marshall us though this complicated moment.
- vii. Mr. Simmons review – He stated that he could not add much to what has been said. He appreciated what went into these cover letters and resumes. Once the Board names someone, that person is going to take on duties that are going to take away from their current duties. In order to decide, he looked at how much redundancy and depth is in each department to see organizationally which candidate is best fit so the rest of the their department can also run independently.
- viii. Ms. Varney moved to name Terri Luke Interim Director. Mr. Simmons seconded.**
 - 1. Discussion was opened before voting. Mr. Simmons mentioned that the interim simply should have the same qualifications of the library director position, which includes Masters in Library Science which he felt disqualified certain interim candidates.
 - 2. A roll call vote was called. Mr. Oermann, Ms. Varney, Ms. Ezell, Ms. Searcy and Mr. Simmons were aye votes. Mr. Rand abstained.

Motion was passed and Ms. Luke was named Interim Director.

VIII. Adjournment

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 1:14pm

Next Scheduled Board of Trustees Meeting

12:00 noon – July 19, 2022

Main Library – Board Room

615 Church St. Nashville TN, 37219