

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the
Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library
Board of Trustees**

Call to Order: A meeting of the Alpena County Library Board of Trustees was called to order on Monday, July 22, 2024, at 5:00 pm. by President Joseph Garber.

Present:

Board of Trustees: Joseph Garber, Dustin Budd, Lauren Mantlo

Staff: Debra Greenacre, Jessica Luther, Beth DeCaire

Friends: Diane Guigar Pilgrim

Excused: Michelle Cornish, Quintin Meek

Approval of Agenda: Garber added an item to designate new signatory privileges to the agenda.

Review and Approval of Minutes: It was moved by Budd with support from Mantlo to accept the minutes from the June 19, 2024, regular meeting. The motion passed.

Financial Reports: The Financial Reports were reviewed. Garber directed it to be filed as presented subject to final audit.

Review and Approval of Bills: It was moved by Mantlo and supported by Budd that both sets of bills as presented be approved. The motion passed.

Director and Leadership Team Report: The written report was reviewed. Greenacre added that the book bike and new copy machines had arrived. She thanked those members of the community who have demonstrated their support for the library staff.

Friends of the Library Report: Guigar Pilgrim reported that the bookstore sales are steady but slow. The annual book sale is scheduled for the week of August 5th and they are looking for volunteers.

Public Comment:

Bruce Heath, Sanborn, read from a book about a LGBTQ teen he checked out from the teen section.

Judi Stillion, Alpena, former library director, stated her support for the staff and the board.

Molly Stepanski, Posen, Alpena business owner, spoke against the removal of books, expressing that there are diverse needs within the community. She expressed concern that there are library trustees seeking to undermine the library.

Alison Borowski, Alpena, shared a statement from a friend who was unable to attend in support of the library. She shared that she grew up at the library and access to books helped her overcome a reading comprehension issue and would not have been able to pass AP Literature and Language classes without it.

Doug Pugh, Alpena, affirmed his support of the library, appreciates the services being provided, and regrets the difficulties the library is facing.

Julie Byrnes, Alpena, read selections from *Let's Talk About It: The Teen's Guide To Sex, Relationships, And Being A Human*.

Michael Kramer, Alpena, expressed his disgust that the library is pitting the community against itself.

Jon Fitzpatrick, Alpena, thanked the library board and staff. He expressed that the library was very valuable and has offered good resources for children whose parents may not be comfortable talking about certain topics.

Nonie Muller, Alpena, read from *All Boys Aren't Blue* and stated that children are being groomed by reading books like it.

Paige Allia, Alpena, stated that access to educational materials is essential to preventing sexual violence in our communities.

Diane O'Connor, Alpena, shared that her father, Quentin Lund was the chair of the library board when the library was built and he would have expressed admiration and gratitude to the library staff and board for holding up everyone's First Amendment rights.

MaryAnn Crawford, Alpena, stated that she would hate to see the library close and encourages everyone to vote yes on the millage renewal.

Julie Gandulla, Alpena, addressed those in opposition to the library and said a rational solution is needed. This issue does not justify cutting off library services.

Mark Hunter, Alpena, addressed the question of appointing an interim director, recommending the appointment of Tina Markowski. He stated that Markowski has the necessary degree and would be a good choice as the permanent director. He warned the board that the commissioners will likely try and replace them.

Stacie Anderson, Alpena Township, stated that as a parent it is her choice what her children check out from the library. She added that the community is changing and the library needs to reflect those changes. She thanked the board and staff for their service.

Taylor Oliver, Alpena, shared a story about her daughter almost stumbling upon a book with what she described as graphic content. She stated that if the millage doesn't pass it is the fault of the library staff.

Sara Grochowski, Alpena, stated that moving a book from the children's area to the adult area is what is referred to as soft censorship.

Dion Stepanski, Posen, Alpena business owner, stated that these books demonstrate real human experiences and help counter the pornography heavy culture. He stated that educational books are just that, educational.

Karen Hansen, Alpena, shared that she had sexual education classes in 6th or 7th grade at St. Bernard's school and they listened to sex tapes as part of it.

Diane Bauer, Alpena, stated that she thinks it is weird to put a children's book in the adult section.

William Bushey, Alpena, shared that the library provides resources for everyone and every child should have access to what they need. He stated that he uses the library to study and it would be a shame to shut down the only place people can go to study.

Cindy Johnson, Alpena, expressed her empathy for the staff and board at this time. She extolled the value of the library providing access to lifelong learning, programs, books, and services to everyone regardless of income. She stated that the library is a community hub where connections are made.

Old Business:

- A. Collection Development Policy:** Garber reported that the attorney had only recently sent back the review of the proposed age-appropriate standards and the discussion on that feedback will need to occur when all board members are available. Luther shared the updates to the caregiver and parental resources. She stated that she and the youth services department are working on reorganizing the youth nonfiction based on the "browse" system to make it more navigable.

New Business:

- A. Bond Administration Payment:** A resolution to transfer funds from the Library General Fund to the Building Authority for the bond administrative fee in the amount of \$500 was presented. It was moved by Mantlo with support from Budd to adopt the resolution as presented. The motion passed. A copy of the resolution is attached to the minutes.
- B. General Legal Advice:** Garber requested that the board engage Foster Swift to consult with on legal issues as needed. Budd requested that the cost and scope be presented to the full board.
- C. Director Search:** It was moved by Budd with support from Mantlo to authorize the Library Personnel Committee to begin the process of assembling a search committee and to reach out to Brian Mortimore for his advice as the hiring consultant.

- D. Interim Director:** The Library Personnel committee recommended the appointment of Luther as Interim Director for a period of 30 days to be reassessed at that time. Budd stated he did not support the appointment. It was moved by Garber with support from Mantlo to appoint Luther with a pay increase for her and DeCaire to be determined at a later date. The motion passed with Budd in opposition.
- E. Presentation: Youth Department-** Tina Markowski and Autumn Tencate presented on the Summer Reading Program and upcoming activities.

Board Comment:

Budd expressed his frustration at the length of time spent on the book challenge discussions and feels that the root cause of the issue has not been addressed. He added that he does not support children being exposed to sexually graphic material.

Mantlo shared that the community's concerns have not fallen on deaf ears and feels that reclassifying the youth collection is a good compromise, she added that the job of a library trustee is to uphold the Constitution.

Garber stated that the discussion on the book challenges are not a simple matter and that moving books is not the right solution. He stated that the board has stayed true to the fundamentals of free speech and the Constitution.

Adjournment: It was moved by Budd with support from Mantlo to adjourn the meeting. Garber declared the meeting adjourned at 6:51 pm. The next regular meeting will be Wednesday, August 21, 2024, at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Garber
President

Jessica Luther
Recording Secretary