

**GENESEE DISTRICT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING**

**at**

**Genesee District Library Headquarters**

**5:30 p.m.**

**4195 W. Pasadena Ave**

**Flint, MI 48504**

**March 17, 2025**

**Minutes**

Call to Order: 5:30 p.m.

Present: Crites, Hostetler, Ryals-Massey, Steffey and Towarnicky.

Also Present: C. Stritmatter (Corporation Counsel), D. Conklin, and A. Goldyn. Public: T. Carlton. L. Ryals-Massey stated that T. Barnes has resigned from the Board effective March 9, 2025.

Absent: Conerly-Moon.

Public Comments: None.

Approval of

Consent Agenda: J. Steffey moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion supported by J. Towarnicky. Roll call: ayes – Crites, Hostetler, Ryals-Massey, Steffey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

Board Development: C. Stritmatter had nothing to report.

Corporation Counsel: C. Stritmatter gave an overview of the situation with Windstream, a telephone service, and how they dramatically increased prices. He stated Windstream required a forty-five day termination notice; however, during that time the price increase took effect and they claimed we had to pay the increased amount. He stated that it would be better to negotiate a final payment amount rather than to fight it in Court. He stated that they will not settle for less than fifty-one percent of the total, which would be \$30,296.40, and recommends paying that settlement amount. R. Crites moved to authorize C. Stritmatter to offer a final settlement amount of \$30,296.40 to Windstream. Motion supported by J. Steffey. Roll call: ayes – Crites, Hostetler, Ryals-Massey, Steffey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

GDL Foundation: J. Towarnicky stated a meeting was held last week. She stated that at the December meeting they donated \$1,000 to the annual Black History Month Brunch. She stated at last week's meeting they donated \$1,000 for the Summer Reading Club and up to \$1,500 to retrofit or replace the security gate at the Beecher branch.

Written Reports: J. Towarnicky inquired about the ice skates at the Grand Blanc branch. D. Conklin replied that the ice skates were delivered just two weeks ago. He stated that they will be available when the ice skating rink opens again next year.

J. Steffey stated she concerned about possible loss of funding from the Universal Service Fund and inquired if there is anything the Board can do to advocate for the libraries. D. Conklin replied contact your Federal level representatives. R. Crites inquired how much GDL received last year and A. Goldyn replied it was \$146,000. D. Conklin explained that access to the free databases provided by MeL.org could disappear if the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS) loses its Federal funding. He stated that the vast majority of our funding is through the millage.

Written Reports  
(continued):

L. Ryals-Massey inquired if we will have to cover the cost of network wiring for the new Flushing location. D. Conklin stated that since the Linden location was not rewired, those funds will be used for the new Flushing building. He stated the only cost would be moving the internet fiber connection to the new location, which would cost approximately \$13,000. L. Ryals-Massey inquired about having to rewire the Linden location and D. Conklin stated at this time he does not know which building it will be in.

L. Ryals-Massey stated we will have to watch to see what happens with the IMLS situation. She stated the latest newsletter from the Michigan Library Association had a list of current event stories that appear to be an attack on libraries. She stated it appeared to be a form of suppression because it is controlling what information people have access to. She stated this is why she advocates for the library.

L. Ryals-Massey offered kudos on the My City Magazine articles. She also offered kudos to K. Collins for cleaning up the old/unused links on the website.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired about employees being paid while the branches are closed for inclement weather. A. Goldyn stated that full-time employees are paid in accordance with the union contract.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired about the incident at the Grand Blanc branch with the woman wanting to take pictures of female staff members, which included a minor. D. Conklin stated that he spoke to the woman and she was trying to help a friend that had previously helped her. He continued to say that the police did get involved and the patron has been banned from entering the library for a certain period of time.

L. Ryals-Massey offered kudos for donating the old 3D printers for the STEM initiative at the Salvation Army Life Center in the Beecher area.

J. Towarnicky inquired if we had heard anything about the state of the mall with the closure of the Macy's store. D. Conklin stated he had not heard anything about the mall closing. L. Ryals-Massey inquired if D. Conklin was looking for a new location when the lease expires at the mall. D. Conklin stated that he was not looking for a new location because that location was intended just as a marketing tool.

D. Hostetler offered congratulations to A. Goldyn on being appointed as Chairperson of the Genesee County Employees' Retirement Commission.

D. Hostetler stated he did not recall receiving a fraud survey from the auditors last year. A. Goldyn stated this is the first year they have sent it to all the Board Members. She asked that everyone complete it and return it as quickly as possible.

Monthly Statistics:

L. Ryals-Massey inquired about the user statistics for the online subscriptions and D. Conklin explained how it is handled by the vendor.

Finance Committee:

Nothing to report.

Personnel/Policy  
Committee:

D. Hostetler stated that the Director's evaluation will be handled under new business.

2024 Budget  
Adjustments:

A. Goldyn stated the additional amendments do not increase the overall budget total. She stated it is simply reallocating funds to the various budget line items. J. Towarnicky inquired if the consultant budget included the auditors from Lewis & Knopf. A Goldyn replied that it was for our E-rate consultant and IT consulting services to get the fax

2024 Budget Adjustments  
(continued):

machines to work using the VOIP system. L. Ryals-Massey stated that an E-rate consultant is a must because the paperwork is so convoluted. J. Steffey moved to approve the budget adjustments. Motion supported by D. Hostetler. Roll call: ayes – Crites, Hostetler, Ryals-Massey, Steffey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

Director's Evaluation:

D. Hostetler stated there was full Board participation in providing feedback for the Director's 2024 evaluation. He stated that D. Conklin's average evaluation score was 3.8 out of 5. He distributed a list of 2024 accomplishments and the goals for 2025. J. Steffey inquired if D. Conklin sees the need for public computer access changing in a significant way. D. Conklin stated that he has noticed empty computer stations when visiting branches. He stated that he recently asked the Branch Librarians to track the number of computers being used during peak times. He stated that it would reduce computer replacement and electricity costs if some of the unused computer stations were removed. D. Hostetler moved to approve the Director's 2024 Evaluation and 2025 Goals. Motion supported by J. Towarnicky. Roll call: ayes – Crites, Hostetler, Ryals-Massey, Steffey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

Board Comments:

D. Hostetler stated that the American Library Association is offering a free webinar on Community Outreach and Board Development for anyone in Michigan on Tuesday, April 8 at 2 pm. He stated that he would be happy to share the link if anyone else wants to attend and J. Towarnicky stated she would like it. D. Hostetler stated that you have to leave a comment or question in order to register for the webinar.

R. Crites stated that the Board used to hold meetings once a month, but then went to every other month due to difficulty reaching a quorum. He stated that it seems to be more difficult to retain Board Members now than when we met monthly. J. Towarnicky stated that when people apply to be on the Board, they need to be committed to attending meetings. L. Ryals-Massey offered kudos to T. Barnes for his honesty and integrity about stepping down from the Board. She continued to say that in the future she would like to revisit the possibility of going back to monthly meetings.

R. Crites inquired if we are really underspending on the budget the last few years and A. Goldyn replied that we have had a surplus the last couple of years. She stated it has been done intentionally so we can withstand an economic downturn without having to make cuts in staff or services.

D. Conklin stated the Board received a card from the family of Raynetta Speed thanking us for the flowers. He stated that Raynetta was a member of our Black History Month Brunch Committee. He stated that a moment of silence was held at the Brunch in February in her honor.

L. Ryals-Massey stated she has asked D. Conklin to talk a little about the millage renewal campaign process. D. Conklin stated that he would like to start holding millage committee meetings in December. He stated that we are not allowed to use any GDL building, funds or paid staff time to promote a "yes" campaign. He stated that in the past we have used Corporation Counsel's office for the campaign meetings. He stated that the Genesee District Library Foundation and local Friends' Groups will be asked to donate to the "yes" campaign. He stated that we are only allowed to spend funds on informational advertising about the date of the vote, what the millage is for, and services the library offers. R. Crites inquired when the millage would be on the ballot and D. Conklin stated he believes it will be on the May 2026 election ballot. C. Stritmatter stated that the ballot language would need to be approved by the Genesee County Election Commission some time in February 2026. J. Towarnicky stated that due to the timeline and increasing popularity of absentee voting, we should make sure to start getting our message out earlier than usual.

Board Comments  
(continued):

L. Ryals-Massey stated that the Michigan Library Association had a webinar on service animals. She stated she knows that we have a service animal policy in place but inquired if the Branch Operations Manager learned anything new that would require us to revise our policy. D. Conklin replied that since she is new it was good for her to attend; however, the service animal policy does not need to be revised.

J. Towarnicky stated that she has been locked out of her previous email address and provided her new email address to the Board.

Adjournment: 6:43 pm.