

**GENESEE DISTRICT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING  
at  
Genesee District Library Headquarters  
5:30 p.m.  
4195 W. Pasadena Ave  
Flint, MI 48504  
May 19, 2025  
Minutes**

Call to Order: 5:30 p.m.

Oath of Office: C. Stritmatter administered the oath of office to A. Figueroa, who replaced F. Hinz as a Genesee County Board of Commissioners appointee.

C. Stritmatter administered the oath of office to L. Johnson, who replaced R. Crites as a Genesee County Board of Commissioners appointee.

Present: Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Ryals-Massey, Steffey and Towarnicky.

Also Present: C. Stritmatter (Corporation Counsel), D. Conklin, A. Goldyn and J. Bias.

Absent: Conerly-Moon.

Public Comments: None.

Approval of  
Consent Agenda: L. Ryals-Massey stated she would like to revise the agenda so the 2024 Audit Report can be handled prior to Board Development. A. Figueroa moved to approve the revised consent agenda. Motion supported by J. Steffey. Motion carried unanimously.

2024 Audit Report: A. Goldyn introduced A. Gamble and K. Van Tifflin as part of the audit team from Lewis & Knopf. A. Gamble presented the highlights of the 2024 Audit Report. He stated that A. Goldyn is doing a fantastic job because there are not many entities that have their OPEB liability fully funded nor their pension liability above eighty percent funded. J. Steffey moved to approve the 2024 Audit Report as presented. Motion supported by J. Towarnicky. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Ryals-Massey, Steffey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

Board Development: C. Stritmatter had nothing to report.

Corporation Counsel: C. Stritmatter had nothing to report.

GDL Foundation: J. Towarnicky had nothing to report.

Written Reports: D. Hostetler inquired when the Linden branch would be packed up. D. Conklin replied that it was done in January and everything was loaded into two storage pods. He stated the pods are being stored behind the Loose Senior Center and have DampRid moisture absorbing buckets in them to help protect our materials.

D. Hostetler stated he was not able to locate the link on the website to make donations for the new Flushing branch building and D. Conklin replied it is on the scrolling banner and depending on the browser, you may need to click the side arrows to make it scroll to the next banner.

Written Reports  
(continued):

D. Hostetler stated he thought the free comic book day was a great idea to attract young readers. D. Conklin stated that it is a national event and you need to partner with a comic book distributor.

D. Hostetler inquired if there would be a big demand for the Flint Journal Historical Archive and D. Conklin replied yes because it has the local history. D. Hostetler inquired how far back does it go and D. Conklin replied it goes back to 1898.

L. Ryals-Massey thinks it is a great idea having K. Collins clean up the website.

L. Ryals-Massey thanked K. Flynn for providing programs at the Linden Senior Center while the branch is closed. She inquired when the full program listing will be available. D. Conklin replied that they will all be listed on the website's event calendar.

L. Ryals-Massey stated regarding the complaint that the children's area at the Flushing branch is too small, she wondered if it is time to establish minimum building requirements. C. Stritmatter stated that could be a problem since our library agreements stated that if the municipality provides the building, we will provide the equipment, materials and staffing. D. Conklin gave a brief explanation about the Library of Michigan's Quality Services Audit Checklist (QSAC), which tried to establish minimum building and other standards and the lawsuit that was filed by Herrick District Library against it.

L. Ryals-Massey was pleased to read about the meeting with the Governor's field representative and extending an invitation to our annual Black History Month Brunch. She also stated she hopes our new mascot will be attending the brunch.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired about the pros and cons of purchasing the Flint Journal Historical Archive. J. Bias stated that it would be something all of the librarians would use multiple times a week. He stated that he gets several calls a week from people looking for articles that pre-date our current microfilm copies of The Flint Journal. D. Conklin stated that information would be available 24/7 instead of currently having to wait until J. Bias' work hours. J. Bias stated that it is easy to use and the ability to find items quickly. L. Ryals-Massey inquired which other libraries have this collection and J. Bias replied only the University of Michigan-Flint. L. Ryals-Massey inquired what happens if The Flint Journal ceases publication and J. Bias stated that we will still own the database. L. Ryals-Massey inquired who updates the database. J. Bias replied that a company called NewsBank collects the newspapers, digitizes them and updates the database. J. Towarnicky inquired if there will be an annual maintenance cost for the updates. J. Bias stated that we just need to renew our annual subscription to NewsBank to receive the updates. D. Conklin stated that if anything happens to NewsBank, we would still own the database, but would need to make arrangements to host the database on our servers. J. Towarnicky suggested promoting this database at the programs held at local senior centers. J. Bias stated that it could also be promoted at our genealogy programs. D. Conklin stated that J. Bias will also provide training at our annual staff inservice. L. Ryals-Massey stated that she's not hearing any cons about this purchase. J. Towarnicky inquired if patrons will need to create a special account to use the database or will they automatically have access to it by having a library card. J. Bias replied they would have access via library card. J. Towarnicky inquired if patrons need to be in the building to use it or can it be used from home and J. Bias replied it could be used from anywhere. D. Conklin stated that University of Michigan-Flint paid over \$500,000 for this database so we are getting a bargain at \$218,305.

L. Ryals-Massey loves that D. Conklin will be doing a presentation at the annual Michigan Library Association conference. She also encouraged Board members to attend the conference at the end of October and GDL would cover the cost.

**Written Reports  
(continued):**

L. Ryals-Massey offered kudos to the staff on reuniting a lost child with the grandparent at Grand Blanc.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired if the Mt. Morris teen's parents were contacted regarding the bottled water incident. D. Conklin replied they were not because the teen could have been eighteen or nineteen and considered an adult.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired what happened after the person in charge of a rowdy group of young kids was given the Patron Code of Conduct. D. Conklin stated that the person took control of the kids.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired if the Goodrich patron possibly had dementia. D. Conklin replied it is possible and that responding officer knew the patron's situation and took her home.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired if Board members are allowed to participate in the GDL Road Trip event and D. Conklin replied absolutely and encourages it.

**Monthly Statistics:**

L. Ryals-Massey thanked D. Conklin for the summary as it makes it easier to understand the statistics. She inquired when the new Digital Librarian will host online programs. D. Conklin replied K. Collins has a bit of a learning curve for this and as soon as he's comfortable, the online programs will begin again.

**Finance Committee:**

L. Ryals-Massey stated that she will be acting as the Chairperson of the committee until Board elections are held in September. She stated she would like L. Johnson to serve on the Finance Committee. She stated she will get with A. Goldyn to see if there is any upcoming business that needs to be taken care of.

**Personnel/Policy  
Committee:**

L. Ryals-Massey stated she would like A. Figueroa to serve on the Personnel/Policy Committee given her background in Human Resources. She stated that D. Hostetler is the Chairperson of this committee.

**Purchase of NewsBank  
Flint Journal Historical  
Archive:**

J. Towarnicky inquired who actually owns the database and J. Bias replied that NewsBank owns it. J. Towarnicky inquired if there was a way to partner with University of Michigan-Flint to share access to it. D. Conklin replied there is not due to access rights already purchased by them. L. Johnson stated that normally you would need to login to a portal with your university email address in order to access certain databases. L. Ryals-Massey inquired if J. Bias could give the Board a demonstration of the database. J. Bias stated he could not give a demonstration on the historical database, but he could do a demonstration of the current version. J. Towarnicky stated it is our job to make information available and it would be a good service for the local communities.

J. Towarnicky moved to approve the purchase of the Flint Journal Historical Archive. Motion supported by D. Hostetler. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Ryals-Massey, Steffey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

**Board Comments:**

A. Figueroa stated that she appreciates being appointed to the Board. She stated the participation is fabulous.

L. Johnson stated this meeting has been fabulous.

Board Comments  
(continued):

D. Hostetler stated that he attended an American Library Association webinar in April and was underwhelmed. He stated it was an Ask the Expert forum about a library in Massachusetts going for a bond proposal and meeting with various local groups. He inquired if this was something we will be doing for our upcoming millage campaign. D. Conklin replied this is something we continuously do throughout the year. D. Conklin stated that taxpayer money cannot be used to promote a “yes” vote. He stated taxpayer funds can only be used to promote informational messages about the services we provide. He stated that a special outside committee will be formed that will create and promote a “yes” vote campaign. L. Ryals-Massey stated since we want to be on the May 2026 ballot, when should we preparing the ballot language and holding committee meetings? C. Stritmatter stated that we don’t want to start too early and D. Conklin stated we will have some preliminary information available at the July Board meeting.

L. Ryals-Massey provided an article from a library in Ohio that has to do with the current book banning trend and how serious it is becoming. She said it is awful that someone was allowed to checkout one hundred books about Jews, African Americans and LBGTQ and set them on fire. She stated that fortunately members of the community have come together trying to replace the books that were burned.

L. Ryals-Massey stated there is an issue at the Flint Township-McCarty branch with patrons using the bathroom there. She stated that the library is in the building with the senior center. She stated there are a couple of influential members at the senior center that do not want library patrons using their bathroom. L. Ryals-Massey stated that she will reach out to County Commissioner D. Weighill about the situation.

L. Ryals-Massey stated she also attended a webinar and found some information that may be useful to the Board members. She asked D. Conklin to purchase three separate books: Board Fundamentals, Culture of Inquiry, and Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards. She stated these books will be available for any Board member that would like to check them out. L. Ryals-Massey stated the Personnel/Policy Committee is trying to put together a training curriculum for Board members.

Adjournment:

6:38 pm.