

**GENESEE DISTRICT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING
at
Genesee District Library Headquarters
5:30 p.m.
4195 W. Pasadena Ave
Flint, MI 48504
July 21, 2025
Minutes**

Call to Order: 5:30 p.m.

Present: Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Steffey and Towarnicky.

Also Present: C. Stritmatter (Corporation Counsel), D. Conklin and A. Goldyn. Public: T. Carlton and S. Daniels.

Absent: Conerly-Moon and Ryals-Massey.

Public Comments: S. Daniels, a Flushing High School English teacher and Mount Morris resident, stated her concerns about the recent termination of the Mount Morris Branch Librarian. She asked that we reconsider the decision and bring the Librarian back. D. Hostetler thanked her for her comments.

T. Carlton stated she wanted to introduce herself to the new Board Members. She stated that she is the AFSCME 496 President and Chapter Chairperson for the Library.

Approval of
Consent Agenda: A. Figueroa moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion supported by J. Steffey. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Development: C. Stritmatter had nothing to report.

Corporation Counsel: C. Stritmatter had nothing to report.

GDL Foundation: J. Towarnicky reported that a meeting was held on June 18. She stated that funds were given to the Beecher-Vera B. Rison branch for improvements to the lift gate and the work should be completed. She stated they approve to spend \$2,800 to produce the new bags to sell to patrons.

Written Reports: D. Hostetler wanted to congratulate D. Conklin on his tentative breakout session at the upcoming Michigan Library Association (MLA) conference. D. Conklin stated that the webinar that he and C. Russ hosted was very well received and MLA asked them to host it again at the conference for a wider audience.

D. Hostetler inquired if House Bill 4250 and 4251, also known as the Freedom to Read Act, would require a change in our policies. D. Conklin stated that it would actually reinforce our current policies about request to reconsider certain materials. L. Johnson inquired if it would be appropriate to send out call to action letters in support of it. D. Conklin replied that MLA already does this and they also have lobbyists. J. Steffey inquired if this would protect us from what is happening at the Federal level. D. Conklin stated that the Federal level is more about funding than anything else. D. Hostetler inquired if it would help to contact our Senators about stopping the IMLS funding and D. Conklin replied no because he believes that it is almost done. D. Conklin stated that it

Written Reports
(continued):

will not impact MeLCat funding until next year. He continued to state he expects that the State of Michigan will continue to fund MeLCat; however, it will probably not be at the same level we are currently used to. D. Hostetler inquired if we know how many of our patrons access MeLCat and D. Conklin replied that it is in the statistical reports.

D. Hostetler stated that Scout, the new mascot, is really cute. He inquired if R. Allen and C. Milner were responsible for it. D. Conklin stated that the mascot idea came from A. Austermann, the Youth Services Librarian; however, R. Allen and C. Milner were the ones that created the artwork. A. Figueroa stated that Scout is very eye catching. She stated she was at Cross Roads Village for an event and quickly noticed that we had a person there with the Scout standing cutout.

J. Steffey stated that the Summer Reading Program results are fantastic so far. D. Hostetler stated it appears that people are reading between eleven and fifteen books each. D. Conklin stated that summer is our busiest time of year. J. Steffey inquired if we kept track of which school district participants are from and D. Conklin replied no.

L. Johnson inquired about a plan of action if the Federal Government decides to regulate library content. D. Conklin replied that there is already a national defense happening with the Government Speech. L. Johnson wanted to know if there was a plan to still provide access to materials that may become restricted on a Federal level. D. Conklin stated that if it becomes a Federal law, we will have to follow the law. D. Conklin stated that there is a lot of weird stuff going on right now on the Federal level; however, there are advocates fighting for libraries.

L. Johnson stated that there was a bomb threat last week for a couple Genesee County Government buildings. She inquired if we have any action plans for this type of situation. D. Conklin stated that each branch has emergency action cards; we provide additional training at our annual staff in-service day; and we have a safety and security committee that meets regularly to discuss ways to improve staff safety.

D. Hostetler inquired about the Bag of Books program. D. Conklin replied that it was originally started for book clubs, but has since expanded for younger readers. D. Conklin continued that each bag contains approximately a dozen copies of the same book for teachers or book club members to check out. D. Hostetler stated it sounds like a good program.

D. Hostetler stated he is very impressed that the Library has the highest level of funding with the Genesee County Employees' Retirement System. He congratulated A. Goldyn on a job well done.

D. Hostetler stated he noticed that the salaries and benefits were running under the projected time period budget. A. Goldyn stated that she tends to over-estimate the annual expenditures when creating the budget to create room for unexpected expenditures. She also stated that this year we have twenty-seven pay dates instead of the usual twenty-six, so it will eventually close the gap. J. Steffey appreciates our good financial position because of possible funding difficulties in the near future. A. Goldyn stated that after the 2008 financial crisis, she wanted to make sure that we had enough funds in reserve so that we would not have to lay off staff members again.

Monthly Statistics:

D. Hostetler thanked D. Conklin for the statistical narrative because it helps bring things into focus. He also stated he continues to be impressed with the growth of the digital content.

Finance Committee:

J. Steffey had nothing to report.

**Personnel/Policy
Committee:**

D. Hostetler stated they met last week to discuss Board development. He stated they discussed a possible Board retreat in the fall to learn more about the millage process. He stated they talked about a Board self-assessment and that A. Figueroa has a Google Doc form from other boards she has served on. A. Figueroa stated it was a great learning tool for those Boards. D. Hostetler stated they have asked D. Conklin to provide position statements for controversial topics. D. Hostetler stated they also talked about a Board member expectation list to track meeting attendance, as well as, library related webinars and conferences. A. Figueroa stated somewhere in the Trustee Manual it mentioned a Trustee 101 and 102 training. She stated she did not know how to access that training. D. Conklin stated to let him know if they want to attend any library related webinars/conferences because we have funding in the budget for it.

**L-4029 Tax Authorization
Form:**

A. Goldyn explained the form authorizes GDL to collect the property tax revenue needed to continue library operations. She stated the form needs to be signed by the acting Board Chair and Board Secretary. J. Towarnicky inquired where the numbers on the form come from. A. Goldyn stated that the first number is our requested millage rate and the rest have to do with the Headlee Rollback Act. A. Figueroa moved to have the appropriate members sign the form and be distributed to the local municipalities. Motion supported by J. Towarnicky. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Steffey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

**Flushing Branch Relocation
Proposal:**

D. Conklin stated that most are aware that the City of Flushing purchased a building to relocate our Flushing branch. He stated that the building is currently being renovated and should be ready in September. He stated that we will incur costs to add fiber internet and network connections, as well as, moving all the materials and equipment to the new building. He stated that Library Design Associates is really the only company that specializes in this type of move. He stated that our policy states that when it is impossible to have competitive bids, the Director may waive the requirement for bids, which is why there is only the one quote. J. Towarnicky stated that she saw the work that Library Design did at the Grand Blanc location and they are worth it. L. Johnson inquired if the City of Flushing could cover some of the moving expense. D. Conklin stated that according to our Service Agreements, we are responsible for the materials, equipment and staff, while the municipality is only responsible for the building. J. Towarnicky moved to accept the quote (\$46,875) for Library Design to move the contents from the current building to the new building. Motion supported by J. Steffey. Roll call: ayes - Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Steffey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

**Tax Increment Finance
Authorities:**

C. Stritmatter stated that we collect millage money from the taxpayers; however, there are various local Tax Increment Finance Authorities (TIFAs) that capture a portion of our millage funds to make improvements to a set geographical area within a municipality. He stated that we can opt out of these TIFAs when they are created. D. Conklin stated that it can be difficult to opt out of them, especially when they spend that money to make repairs or improvements to a library building in that community. C. Stritmatter stated the Board could pass a resolution to opt out of all TIFA captures, which would then be sent to all the local municipalities. D. Conklin stated that we estimate the in-kind use of the various library buildings to be \$750,000 a year, while it is estimated that the TIFAs only capture about \$150,000 of our millage money. C. Stritmatter stated that he will know on July 29 how much of our money the TIFAs receive each year. D. Conklin stated he believes it would be appropriate to table this discussion to the next meeting when more information is available. A. Figueroa moved to table this discussion until the September meeting. Motion supported by J. Towarnicky. Roll call: ayes - Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Steffey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

**Open Union Contract
Negotiations:**

D. Conklin stated that we have used the Williams Firm to assist with Union contract negotiations in the past. He would like approval to use them again. A. Figueroa inquired when the current contract expires and D. Conklin replied the end of this year. A. Figueroa inquired about the duration of the contract and D. Conklin replied three years. J. Steffey moved to approve hiring the Williams Firm to assist with the upcoming negotiations. Motion supported by A. Figueroa. Roll call: ayes - Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Steffey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

Board Comments:

J. Steffey stated she believes that her term on the Board ends next month and this is her last meeting. D. Conklin inquired if she will be moved out of the county by then and J. Steffey replied no. D. Conklin stated that she is allowed to continue serving on the Board until a replacement is appointed; she moves out of the county; or she decides to resign, whichever comes first. A. Figueroa stated it took six months to get a Board member appointed for Genesee County Parks. D. Conklin stated that would be a problem if it takes that long for us because the terms for two Board members from the County and two from Grand Blanc Township expire this year. J. Steffey stated she will continue attending the meetings until told she has been replaced. A. Figueroa told S. Daniels if she is interested in becoming a Board member, she can apply on the County website.

D. Hostetler stated that unfortunately L. Ryals-Massey's daughter recently passed away, which is why she is not at the meeting today. He stated that thanks to D. Conklin and A. Goldyn, flowers were sent on behalf of the Board. He stated it would be nice if you sent her a condolence card or email.

D. Hostetler stated he attended an American Library Association webinar titled "Teaching from the Manual While Flying the Plane – Helping Boards Navigate It All" on June 17. He stated it had to do with onboarding, orientation and Board development. He stated that information from the webinar was discussed at the Personnel/Policy Committee meeting.

L. Johnson stated the strategic plan ended in 2024. She inquired if the process for a new strategic plan had started. D. Conklin stated it has started and he hopes to have something to present at the September meeting.

L. Johnson stated she was reviewing our website. She noticed that on the community resources page, the links for the food pantries and other necessities is outdated. She stated that the Greater Flint Health Coalition's website has information about qualifications for certain food pantries. D. Conklin asked her to email him that link so that our Digital Services Librarian can get that updated.

L. Johnson inquired if the Community Relations, Outreach and Social Media department could come to a meeting to give updates. D. Conklin stated that we have several different people that fill those rolls. He stated that previously the various department heads attended a Board meeting and gave a "day in the life of..." presentation. He stated that perhaps this could be done again to benefit the new Board members.

Adjournment:

J. Towarnicky moved to adjourn at 6:36 pm. Motion supported by J. Steffey. Motion carried unanimously.