



Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Coeur d'Alene Public Library Board of Trustees

February 22, 2023

Meeting held in Library Community Room

Trustees Present:

Jim Windisch, Board Chair
Ann Smart, Board Vice Chair
Steve McCrea, Board Member
Katie Saylor, Board Member
Fay Sweney, Board Member

Others:

Kiki Miller, City Council Liaison
Lily Givens, Student Representative
Holly Stetson, Library Foundation
Angela Flock, Young Adult Coordinator
Michael Priest, Library Director

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Jim Windisch at 4:00 p.m.

Public Comment: Beverly Moss, Coeur d'Alene, spoke in support of collection development by library staff. She realizes that there are books in the collection that will not appeal to everyone. Her opinion is that parents should therefore be making the right choices for their family. Noting that many families within the community depend on library services, Ms. Moss believes it would be a disservice to have those choices restricted.

Terry Montayne, Coeur d'Alene, began by reciting the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. He emphasized the importance of freedom of choice in developing critical thinking skills, which he believes to be necessary within a democracy and for a minor's self-actualization. Mr. Montayne stated that the library has rules and policies in place that cater to parental rights and that he supports the library's mission.

Marianna Cochran, Rathdrum, said that the recent election of conservative candidates to the Idaho State Legislature proves that voters are rejecting the status quo, which includes the library board. Ms. Cochran thinks that the library contains books that sexualize minors, feminize boys and promote transgender topics. While she feels that her opinions are being dismissed by library boards and administrators, she believes a growing number of citizens will support her viewpoint at the polls.

Bette Ammon, Coeur d'Alene, thinks that librarians have a good working knowledge of book selection and collection development. They aim to provide materials for all members of the community. What librarians do not know are the rules each family has within their households. Ms. Ammon felt that that there were many different opinions about what was right or wrong for minors to read, and that each other's choices should be respected.

Cecil Kelly, Coeur d'Alene, said he trusts the library board to do what is right for the community and its families. He cited the reported suicide rates among LGBTQ+ youth and attributes this to the sense of rejection by society that they often face. Mr. Kelly thinks this can be countered by the library having materials that reflect their experience.

Viper, no city of residence given, stated that he is against censorship and is respectful of diversity, but that he believes in protecting children above all. When materials that feature sexual content are placed at the eye level of a minor, he feels it can cause harm to an impressionable mind. He read an excerpt from *Identical* by Ellen Hopkins that included sexual content.

Jane, Hayden, does not support restricting parental rights within the library. She outlined how she assists her children when browsing library collections, selecting titles and topics that are appropriate for her family. Jane's opinion is that reading LGBTQ+ materials does not "turn" people queer. Nor does she think that books groom children. She believes people groom children and that the solution is stricter punishments for sex offenders.

Consent Calendar: Motion to approve the consent calendar with the addition of an executive session pursuant to Idaho Code 74-206(1)(f), Steve; second, Ann. Approved.

Director's report: In late 2021, the Foundation received a generous \$10,000 donation from the Fleschner Family Charitable Foundation that was earmarked for the Children's Library. Developing a plan for spending the funds has met several delays. After meeting with Paul Fleschner in August of 2022, it was decided that it would be used to add decoration to the lower-level entrance that better indicates the presence of the Children's Library. The proposal received support from Scott Fischer of Architects West, one of the original architects for the building. A Call for Artists for the project has finally been posted and the library hopes a range of submissions to review come mid-March.

Staff have been preparing the Children's Library while Holly, Youth Services Librarian Sharalee Howard and Michael search for vendors who can assist with updating the space. In order to rework the floorplan to accommodate new features, the project called for 15-20% reduction in the number of picture books on shelf. This led to an overdue weed of the picture book collection, many of which were quite dated and in questionable condition. If available, replacements were ordered for popular and classic titles.

Loosely connected to the project above was the need to clear out unused items from the large storage space on the lower level known as "Area 51". It is now in better shape overall with some room to spare when required. Former Youth Services Librarian Mandi Harris has the opportunity to offer her time to the library through her doctoral coursework. She will be conducting a combination of research and user experience surveys to compile a Futures Report. The report will forecast themes and connections the library could pursue that meet identified needs within the community. The findings should greatly benefit the library as it evaluates and adds services and partnerships.

Trustees praised Outreach Coordinator Char Beach's efforts in the community to connect citizens with library services, Communications Coordinator JD Smithson's promotional efforts through a variety of media, and the 7-week 4-H Outside of the Box art class Sharalee conducted in collaboration with the University of Idaho Extension Office.

City Council liaison: Kiki shared that recent City Council business was focused upon the Coeur Terre annexation and short-term rental compliance, both of which will be discussed again at upcoming meetings. She drew attention to the city-owned Jewett House and that the Historic Preservation Commission is discussing having it listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Friends: The next Friends of the Library meeting will be held on February 28.

Foundation: Holly said that Mudge & Millie author Susan Nipp's presentations and book giveaways at local schools were ramping up. During visits, Susan personally gives a paperback copy of the Africa book to every student, the Foundation donates a hardcover copy to each classroom, and Figpickels Toy Emporium donates a hardcover to the school library. Holly has obtained a quote from architect Jef Lemmon for the cabin/playhouse project in the Children's Library. She is now waiting on architectural designs from Architects West for a comparison. The Foundation has planned a fundraising event on April 26 at 7 p.m. featuring current Jack Ryan series author Marc Cameron at 7 p.m. on April 26.

ICfL Facilities Improvement Grant: With the understanding that the funding is yet to be approved by the Idaho State Legislature, Michael outlined that the library is seeking to apply for \$425,000 in building upgrades through the Facilities and Capital Improvement grant that is slated to be administered by the Idaho Commission for

Libraries. In broad terms, this incorporates updates to the HVAC system, teen areas, the four study rooms, the room that houses the Library of Things collection and the Nelson Room. The application requires a signed letter of approval from the board. Motion to approve the library's application for the ICfL Facilities and Capital Improvement grant, Steve; second, Fay. Approved.

Draft Communications Policy: Michael presented a draft Communications Policy that encompasses most aspects of library communication and seeks to provide guidance for staff, trustees and the public. Steve felt that section G. Release should be reworked to state that staff shall ask permission of attendees before taking photographs and video at library sponsored programs and events for publicity purposes. Fay recommended that the line "Staff shall avoid speaking to the public while being filmed and refer those patrons to the Library Director or, if the Library Director is unavailable, a supervisor" under section B. Staff and Trustee Conduct should be reworded for better clarity. The policy was tabled for the March 22 meeting.

Information on Kids Book Club program: Michael shared that the Kids Book Club format was changed for the February 18 program. Sharalee did not select a single book that all the attendees read prior to the program. Attendees instead read a book of their own choice. The book discussion still centered around a few general questions such as overall thoughts, interesting plot points and themes, and favorite characters. Sharalee reported that the group of regular attendees expressed positive feedback about the program despite the change. She sees it as a viable option moving forward as needed. Ann noted that attendees had also expressed positive feedback about the previous format.

Executive session pursuant to Idaho Code 74-206(1)(f): Motion to move the meeting into executive session at 4:50 p.m. pursuant to Idaho Code 74-206(1)(f) "To communicate with legal counsel for the public agency to discuss the legal ramifications of and legal options for pending litigation, or controversies not yet being litigated but imminently likely to be litigated." Roll call: Steve, Aye; Katie, Aye; Ann, Aye; Fay, Aye; Jim, Aye. Motion carried.

Motion to exit executive session at 5:35 p.m. and return to the regular meeting, Steve; second, Ann. Approved.

Next regular meeting – March 22, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in the Library Community Room

Adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Priest