

FDL Public Library Board Minutes

September 19, 2024

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: On Thursday, September 19, 2024, in the McLane Meeting Room and via Zoom, the regular meeting of the Fond du Lac Public Library Board of Trustees was called to order at 4:29 p.m. by Board President, Dusty Krikau. Trustees present: Tiffany Brault, Rebekah Gary, Emily Hayes, Lauren Herlache, Dusty Krikau, Jay Myrechuck, Julie Schroeder, and Brendan Wood-Taylor. Members absent: Sharon Simon. Those also in attendance included Library Director Jon Mark Bolthouse, Assistant Director of Operations Lori Burgess, Youth Services Coordinator Sarah Davis, Public Relations Coordinator Ian Stepleton, Information Services and Outreach Coordinator Melanie Kearn, and Administrative Assistant Laurie Moore.

2. Approval of Minutes:

A. Discussion and possible approval of minutes from the August Regular Meeting of the Board. Motion to approve the minutes: Myrechuck; second: Schroeder; carried by unanimous voice vote.

3. Comments from the Public: Nick Teifke, the president of the Hope on the Block, spoke in support of Hope on the Block. Sister Peg Spindler with the leadership of the Sisters of St. Agnes, spoke in support of Hope on the Block. Elijah Shoults spoke in support of Hope on the Block

4. Correspondence (Discussion and Possible Action)

A. Bank Statement from Seefeld Trust for August

5. Approval of Financial Reports:

A. List of bills paid since the last regular meeting: Motion to approve the bills as presented: Brault; second: Wood-Taylor; carried by roll call vote: yes eight (8); noes none (0); absent and not voting one (1).

B. Statement of Accounts: Motion to approve as presented: Wood-Taylor; second: Schroeder; carried by unanimous voice vote. Krikau questioned what the \$8940.00 running through contingency in the Seefeld fund was for. Moore explained that is funds received from our current copier lease company that was withdrawn to help pay off the lease of our old copiers for 2024.

6. Director's Report:

A. Monthly Library Statistics: Moore shared updated stats with the board as there was a calculation error in the stats provided in the board packet.

* Bolthouse informed the board that the bids for the roof project at Chapter 52 came in under budget.

* Bolthouse is working on the final paperwork for the LED lighting project.

* Bolthouse shared that the Friends are doing a silent auction to raise funds this year instead of a raffle. Myrechuck asked if this would be an online auction or only in person. Bolthouse informed that the auction would be in person only starting on November 23rd.

* Krikau gave kudos to Burgess on her wonderful staffing charts in her report.

* Krikau noted the invite that was sent out to the board to attend Shelley Armstrong's retirement celebration.

* Krikau questioned how is in charge of the wage study program that was mentioned. Bolthouse informed the board that the coordinators are working on looking over the job descriptions, then the city works with a consultant to do the wage study.

* Schroeder gave kudos to the youth and teen department for all their engagement with the community. Krikau also commented on how she likes the shift of the teen area being just for teens.

7. Old Business: None.

8. New Business:

A. Hope on the Block cabinet placement at Library: Motion that Hope on the Block vacate the exterior of the library by November 1, 2024: Wood-Taylor; second: Herlache; carried by unanimous voice vote. Motion to issue a letter of support to Hope on the Block to continue their services: Hayes; second: Wood-Taylor; carried by unanimous voice vote.

Bolthouse shared that the library believes in the mission of Hope on the Block, but feels that with the current climate at the library, we would support it being at another location. Krikau questioned what the barriers are to having it located at the library. Bolthouse stated that with the political climate coming down on the library to have it placed elsewhere, he feels we need to continue to strive to offer our services to everyone.

Wood-Taylor asked if there was any group that has expressed interest in hosting the cabinet for Hope on the Block. Bolthouse feels that moving the cabinet may reinforce that this is not a library issue, but more of a societal issue. Wood-Taylor suggested possibly tabling the vote for another month to see if the new ordinance that was voted on by the city the previous week will help. Herlache inquired how the staff are feeling. Bolthouse shared that he was not aware of Hannah's outreach to the Sisters of St. Agnes. Krikau asked if there was any feedback regarding the people who were afraid to come into the library after the current changes that library has made. Bolthouse did share that he feels that it has helped.

Krikau asked Police Chief Goldstein to give any feedback he has regarding public safety and the Hope on the Block. He did give his support of Hope on the Block and feels it is a phenomenal thing, but share that with the location of it, they are seeing some unintended consequences. Examples given were people placing partially eaten food into the cabinet, along with the cabinet being an exchange point for narcotics. Goldstein also shared that he has seen some of the experience others are seeing at the library when he has come in with his own family, but does feel the changes the library has made are helping. He also shared that he was trying to get to the core of the issues by speaking with homeless at the library. He feels we need to find a more collaborative approach to all the resources. He did state that it takes 15 days for the ordinance to be enacted after the approval of city council.

Brault suggested to anyone who has not watched the city council meeting to do that. She stated that not all of the public comments are true, as you will hear during the meeting. She feels comfortable coming into the library with her family and said the perceptions sometimes are not always what is happening. She said we need to target the behaviors and not the people, and feels the library has become a target for people.

Herlache asked if the decision is made to move the Hope on the Block cabinet, how would that work for Hope on the Block? Bolthouse stated that would be Hope on the Block's decision where the cabinet moves to and feels it is hard at this time for them to say as he doesn't believe they have another location yet. Krikau did ask Nick Tiefke if he has any places that could/would take the cabinet that is currently at the library. Nick stated that he feels that it would maybe need to be redesigned if they had to relocate it, but it's hard to say right now as this is all such new news, and it would depend where the new location would be.

Schroeder asked Tiefke if he has any updates on if the goals of Hope on the Block are being met. He stated their goals were to provide essential items after hours and to provide resources for people to connect with. He has no specific stories of people connecting with resources, but he does hear about being in need being fed. Schroeder also asked what hosts of cabinets in other towns are doing and other things that we can possibly do here. Tiefke said that the city has already said that they won't allow a refrigerator to be placed. They have cabinets in place in Ripon and North Fond du Lac and has not heard any negative reactions from them. He said at the time it was placed the library was a strategic choice as the crowd that needed those resources were here. There would need to be some conversations going forward regarding what other locations would work if the decision is made to move the cabinet. He wants to be a partner in the solution for the city.

Myrechuck asked what exactly the code ordinance was for. Brault shared what was passed at city council last week and Krikau also clarified that it does not specifically mention Hope on the Block; they just became a part of the discussion at the city council meeting.

Gary questioned if allowing the cabinet to stay through spring would be okay, but Bolthouse feels that is too long and would want to act quicker on a decision being made. Krikau asked for Lori Burgess's opinion, as she is a library staff

member and also was a large part of the Hope on the Block. She was part of the initial idea for the cabinet as staff saw a need for help for the people experiencing homelessness. She wants to see it continue, but also understands the city and the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnerships view on this. She stated that whether it's here at the library or not, it won't change that there are people experiencing homelessness. She did state that the staff feel they are seeing a change in the library with the changes made to the library policies. She also stated that finding another location may be more difficult than we think and feels that the public sentiment and the feelings of downtown business owners may cause challenges.

Krikau wonders if a small cabinet behind a desk at the library to cover the weekends would be helpful. Brault stated that she does not want to tell Hope on the Block what actions to take. Teifke stated that there are several other libraries that do that, but it is not kept behind a desk. He would be willing to discuss this in the future. Bolthouse said he would want to discuss that option with staff before making a decision.

Bolthouse said he feels the heat is on and a decision needs to be made and Brault agreed. Hayes wondered if it would be possible to set a date for now and change it in the future if there is a delay on opening the warming shelter. Bolthouse stated that a special meeting could always be called to make a date change if necessary due to a delay in the warming shelter opening. Burgess did get clarification from Manuel Santos that the shelter will be open by November 1st. Emily asked if we can add to the motion that the library board does support Hope on the Block. Krikau stated that the motion cannot be changed, but a separate motion can be made in regards to that.

B. Behavior Policy revisions: The board decided to postpone this agenda item to a future meeting.

C. Study Room policy: Motion to pass the study room policy with the suggested edits: Myrechuck; second: Wood-Taylor; carried by unanimous voice vote. Krikau suggested to number the items, below the line that states that library staff will contact the police, to make it easier to follow. Krikau also asked if the max of 3 hours per day could be extended if the room is not in use. Kearn agreed that we could include that in the policy. Krikau also asked if there was a procedure to book the Zoom room. She requested that we direct patrons on how to book the room. Bolthouse will bring this policy back for more review at a future meeting.

9. Other: None.

10. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned by board president Dusty Krikau at 6:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Hayes
Secretary