



**VIRTUAL LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2021**

**4:00 P.M.**

**The Board met in regular session virtually via Zoom webinar.**

Chair Marsh called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

**1) ROLL CALL**

Board Members Present: Amy Ghilieri, Wayne Holland, Zanny Marsh, Jean Stoess

Board Members Absent: Jean Stoess (arrived at 4:16 pm); Ted Parkhill

County Staff Present: Assistant District Attorney Keith Munro, Assistant County Manager David Solaro

Public Present: None noted

**2) PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

**a. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD MEETING OF APRIL 21, 2021**

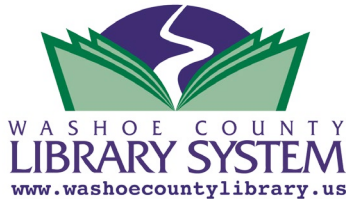
On motion by Trustee Holland, seconded by Trustee Ghilieri, which motion duly carried, the Board approved the minutes from the April 21, 2021 meeting. All in favor, none opposed.

**4) OLD BUSINESS**

None

**5) NEW BUSINESS**

a. Thank the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners for supporting the Washoe County Library Budget



Chair Marsh and Library Director Jeff Scott indicated that staff and the Library Board of Trustees wished to formally thank the Board of County Commissioners for their support of the Washoe County Library budget. Chair Marsh read the proclamation.

b. Resumption of in-person meetings

Chair Marsh discussed Governor Steve Sisolak's rollback of COVID-19 restrictions effective June 1, 2021, and the sunset of the emergency directive issued in June 2020 that had allowed public bodies to meet remotely. She asked whether there were any potential concerns regarding the possible resumption of in-person meetings. Trustee Holland proposed a motion to move forward with the planning process to begin in-person meetings in June 2021. Trustee Ghilieri seconded the motion, with a question as to whether there would be at least a week's notice provided to Board members when the locations of the future in-person meetings were decided.

Director Scott answered affirmatively, noting the first in-person meeting would be held at the Downtown Reno Library in case there were any issues, and he pointed out Zoom could still be utilized to offer partially-virtual meetings if the Board desired.

Trustee Holland wanted to know whether social distancing would still be required at the in-person meeting; Director Scott was not certain whether Governor Sisolak would also relax social distancing and mask requirements in June.

Trustee Ghilieri indicated that continuing partially-virtual meetings, at least through August 2021, would be helpful for her due to scheduling conflicts.

Trustee Stoess arrived at 4:16 p.m.

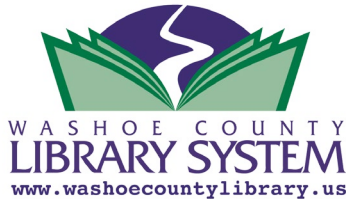
Chair Marsh provided a brief recap of the Board's discussion for Trustee Stoess, who indicated agreement with the proposed motion and holding the first in-person meeting at the Downtown Reno Library.

On motion by Trustee Holland, seconded by Trustee Ghilieri, which motion duly carried, the Board directed staff to move forward with the planning process to resume in-person meetings in June 2021.

c. Acknowledgement of 3rd Quarter Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Cash and Non-Cash Donations received by the Library System between January 1 and March 31, 2021, for a combined total of \$1,489.76

Director Scott briefly reviewed the highlights of the donations recently received by the Washoe County Library System and thanked staff for putting the report together.

On motion by Trustee Ghilieri, seconded by Trustee Stoess, which motion duly carried, the Board acknowledged the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Cash and Non-Cash Donations received by the Library System between January 1 and March 31, 2021.



6) Reports

a. Library Director's Report to include administration, collaborations, programs, and activities

Library Director Jeff Scott discussed the recent return of browsing hours and public-access computers, noting things had gone well, with only a few issues regarding temperature checks. He explained staff were in the process of hiring for many of the positions that had been frozen during the pandemic, and he hoped to hire more in the near future so the Libraries could continue reopening and expanding public hours. He discussed the COVID-19 contact tracing project, which was drawing to a close in mid-June, and the ways in which staff's efforts had helped to reduce the number of children out of school due to COVID exposure; he noted schools had been able to stay open in part due to the dedication of the 40 Library staff members who had worked to support the contact tracing project. Without those individuals, Director Scott noted, the community would have only had four contact tracers, and would not have been able to keep up, resulting in further community spread of infection. He expressed appreciation for Library staff whose contact tracing efforts helped keep case counts low until the vaccine rollout had gained traction.

Director Scott reviewed updates regarding the budget as well as the addition of Sunday hours for the public at selected branches. He thanked County Manager Eric Brown and the Board of County Commissioners for their support of the Library's budget, noting how exciting it was that the Library was hiring more new staff than it had in at least 15 years, and would soon be able to offer expanded hours to the public.

Director Scott discussed the summer meal program at various branch locations in partnership with the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, through which children could receive take-home lunches. Other services were not expected to fully return until after Labor Day. He briefly described the new On the Shelf radio program, put together by the Youth Services and Library Events team, and welcomed LJ Burton, the Library System's new Administrative Supervisor and human resources representative.

Trustee Ghilieri wondered how staff had been treated by members of the public regarding enforcement of face mask mandates and asked whether everyone was okay. She indicated she had heard some members of the public were at times combative or refused to comply with the requirements in other places. Director Scott responded staff had been instructed to report any incidents, but so far there had only been a few instances where patrons had not wanted to comply with face mask or temperature check requirements. Trustee Ghilieri inquired as to the time limit for public browsing and whether tables would be available, as students were preparing for finals week. Director Scott replied seating would be brought back June 1, and the hour time limit for browsing tended not to be too strictly enforced.

Member Ghilieri expressed enthusiasm regarding the new positions that would be funded in the new budget and wanted to know whether the funding for those positions could be impacted if the 2024 tax initiative was not renewed. Director Scott indicated that, while it was certainly important to ensure the 2024 tax initiative was renewed to support future Library operations, the positions in question were permanent and budgeted for in the Library's operational fund. He expressed confidence that expanded



services and added operating hours at selected branches would be much appreciated by the community, and public demand would provide compelling support to renew the tax initiative in 2024.

Trustee Stoess opined the atmosphere in the branches since the reopening had been wonderful; she described happy families, patrons taking selfies, and many positive comments. She was glad to welcome everyone back again.

- b. Quarterly Youth Services and Library Events (YSLE) updates to include January, February, and March 2021, and update on the future of virtual events

Staff members Beate Weinert and Judy Hansen provided updates on the Youth Services and Library Events programming, noting it would be difficult to predict where the community and Library services might be by fall 2021, in relation to the ongoing pandemic. A transition back to in-person services for events was being planned; reservations would be based on capacity limits set by each branch. Prior to COVID restrictions, the Library System's early literacy events had been well-attended, with between 80 and 100 people attending some of the toddler time presentations. Virtual story times were now also being offered, and a system for reservations had been implemented, and toddler time continued to see the largest demand. Some drop-in spots would be saved as well, so families who showed up unaware that reservations were required would not have to be turned away. Outreach and early literacy would be staff's primary focus moving forward, while working together with community partners such as the Children's Cabinet, United Way, and others to come up with creative ways to help get more library services out into the community.

Other discussion included:

- arts and culture events, including magic shows at the libraries and working with the University of Nevada Reno regarding their Performing Arts Series events
- attempts to accommodate a larger audience using a virtual platform for the adult book clubs; club members ended up preferring a physical group over the virtual option
- the difficulty of engaging pre-teen and teen age groups virtually
- partnership with the Nevada Historical Society and their continued virtual series; the group had not yet decided whether to continue virtually or resume in-person meetings
- potential hybrid events, including hybrid story times, and the effect of "Zoom fatigue" on various age groups, and
- the pre-recorded "Break with Baby" programming and other early literacy initiatives.

Statistics collected since the launch of virtual event programming in March 2021 was reviewed; staff felt there had been a good return on investment with increasing public attendance and engagement. Chair Marsh wondered whether the Libraries had been able to serve more patrons with fewer events through virtual programming; she felt there was an increasing public demand for library services, and it might be interesting to see how that changed with the implementation of virtual programming as well as what might happen as branches returned to more in-person services. Ms. Weinert believed offered to bring back more information in the future regarding virtual program attendance. She noted the Library System had previously been offering as many as 16 in-person early literacy programs per week at multiple branch locations.



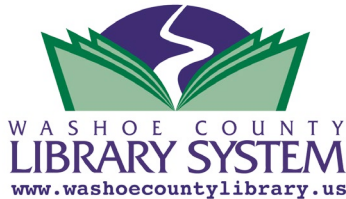
With summer quickly approaching, staff hoped to make opportunities for learning and literacy as fun and engaging as possible for children who had fallen behind. Ms. Hansen described the Tales and Tails theme for the 2021 Summer Reading Challenge, which would run between June 1 and August 31, and ways in which children could participate. 1,600 children would receive activity bags, including reading materials and activities for different age groups from 0 to 18. Another 400 bags had also been reserved for community outreach partners. Each child would have an opportunity to earn up to three free books; once the bags had run out, children could still receive a reading log and an age-appropriate free book. There were also educational activities for children to earn a free book, even if they did not wish to read, and each activity came with virtual resources online. She expressed appreciation to all the staff members who had volunteered time to help stuff bags for the Summer Reading Challenge, and Ms. Weinert thanked Director Scott for purchasing t-shirts for staff to wear to promote the programs. Staff hoped the Washoe County Library System would be featured in an upcoming partnership with the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in June, to further promote the Library and available programming.

Librarian Méla Garcia described growing up in Elko, Nevada, where the public library had used programming on the local PBS radio station for public outreach; this was where the inspiration for the Washoe County Library's new "On the Shelf" radio program. The first two-minute segment targeted parents and caregivers of pre-kindergarten aged children, and granddaughter of a staff member had contributed vocals for some of the songs. Ms. Garcia expressed gratitude to Library leadership for allowing staff to develop the "On the Shelf" program, and to the various staff members who had contributed to the project.

Chair Marsh asked whether the newly-opened Our Place shelter would be receiving Summer Reading Challenge bags; Ms. Weinert confirmed Our Place was on staff's list of targeted community partners. Trustee Holland wanted to know if PBS had a way to track the number of listeners the programming might reach; Director Scott mentioned this information would be available in a Media Reach Report. Trustee Stoess asked whether it would be possible to receive a recorded copy of one of the radio programs via email. Noting the file would be rather large to send over email, Director Scott offered to play one for the Board. Ms. Weinert mentioned that most of the files were still in working format, not yet finalized for publication. Director Scott played audio from the segment "Hooray for Fish" for the Board and the public.

Excerpts from the Library Explorer publication were discussed; there was positive feedback from members of the Board as well as staff, and compliments regarding the professional presentation, artwork, and content of the Library Explorer document. Director Scott noted this year's version was larger, not having been published in a year. Trustee Stoess wondered when might be a good time to plan for future Drag Queen Story Times, which had ended up being some of the best-attended events in the Library's history, but she understood why staff might have chosen to forgo in-person events this summer. Ms. Weinert agreed it was difficult to predict how things might be in the fall, but staff would do their best to prepare for whatever might happen. Chair Marsh looked forward to hearing what was planned for the next quarter.

- c. Tacchino Trust update to include expenditures and balance



Director Scott reviewed a recent request to increase budget authority for renovations at the Sparks and Northwest Reno branches; he noted this should be ready soon.

- d. Quarterly Stats Report to include statistics for January, February, and March 2021

Director Scott reviewed library utilization statistics from the spring, noting the grab-and-go service had continued to be popular even with branches beginning to reopen to the public. Patrons had also heavily utilized the Library's wifi services; it had been an extraordinary year, as evidenced by the statistics noted in the reports. He expressed pride that the Washoe County Library System had managed to adapt and continue to provide many resources for patrons throughout the pandemic, noting not all other communities had been as successful in those types of efforts; in Nevada, even Clark County initially seemed to have struggled in providing virtual resources for patrons. He thought the Washoe County Library had done an excellent job, managing to provide even more services to a growing number of attendees, despite being limited by restrictions on in-person services. He hoped to hear success stories from other library systems that had also pivoted and adapted services in response to the pandemic, perhaps at future conferences such as the American Library Association.

- e. Quarterly Financial Report to include gift fund expenditures for January, February, and March 2021

Director Scott provided a brief overview of the quarterly financial report, noting there had not been much recent activity, but more would be seen in the future as branches reopened.

- f. Board Task Report to include Board tasks to be followed up

Chair Marsh noted tasks related to the fine-free policy had been deferred, but a final report would be needed to wrap that up. There was a brief discussion regarding the 2024 tax initiative as well as moving forward with planning for the Library Director evaluation when the Board began meeting again in person in June 2021. There were no other items added to the report.

## 7) Staff Announcements

South Valleys Library Branch Manager Julie Ullman read a thank-you note sent to the Library, which described how access to library materials and resources helped a community member learn to sew, cook, and stay active through the pandemic when many other community resources were not available. Ms. Ullman felt the thank-you note was representative of the excellent service and resources provided by all Washoe County Library branches to their communities, and she expressed pride regarding the hard work and accomplishments of the Library staff over the past year. She noted she had heard many similar comments from other patrons expressing gratitude for the Library System.

Trustee Holland announced that another patron had donated \$1,500 to support the Library System and had been very complimentary of the Library's staff and services. Trustee Holland himself complimented staff's work on the presentation for the "On the Shelf" radio program.



Trustee Stoess reiterated it had been wonderful to see many patrons so happy to return in person to the Libraries, and she believed staff seemed to feel the same. She was thankful it appeared the community might be nearing the end of the pandemic and she hoped things could reopen fully again soon.

Chair Marsh thanked the Library and legal staff for their thorough, informative reports, their work on various Library projects, and their commitment to helping the community navigate unprecedented times. She said staff's dedication was well-noted and extraordinary.

8) Public Comment

None

9) Board Comment – Limited to Announcements, Strategic Plan Activity Updates, or Issues Proposed for Future Agendas and/or Workshops

There were no further Board member comments. Chair Marsh adjourned the meeting at 5:40 p.m.