



LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, October 19, 2022
4:00 P.M.

The Board met in regular session in a hybrid format via Zoom webinar and in person.

Chair Ghilieri called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

1) ROLL CALL

Board Members Present: Frank Perez, Amy Ghilieri, Lea Moser, Ann Medaille

Board Members Absent: None

County Staff Present: Library Director Jeff Scott, Deputy District Attorney Herb Kaplan, Assistant County Manager David Solaro

Public Present: Janet Butcher, Bruce Parks, Rene Resendiz, Roger Edwards, Valerie Fiannaca, Victoria Meyer, Bruce Foster, Vera Crump, Mary Jones, Wayne Gordon, & two unidentified individuals*

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

The following individuals spoke in opposition to Drag Queen Story Time (DQST) events: Janet Butcher, Bruce Parks, Rene Resendiz, Roger Edwards, Valerie Fiannaca, Victoria Meyer, Bruce Foster, Vera Crump, Wayne Gordon, and two individuals whose names were inaudible.

The opposed commenters shared concerns regarding:

- Statements made by the Library Director which some felt implied bomb threats had been made locally by individuals opposed to DQST events;
- An opinion that such events were of an adult nature and did not belong in libraries;
- Requests to add an agenda item to discuss DQST events during a future Library Board of Trustees meeting, and lack of acknowledgement or response by staff or Board members;

- Perceived threats to citizens' right to freedom of speech and religion;
- Personal religious and/or moral reasons for opposition to DQST or other children's events celebrating or featuring LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning) themes;
- An opinion that young children should not be exposed to transgender individuals, or a desire to shield commenters' children and grandchildren from encountering transgender individuals in public libraries;
- Disagreement with the maturity level of books and materials available in the teen sections of libraries;
- The rule requiring adults in attendance be accompanied by or be bringing a child to the event;
- An alleged article published in another state which indicated a DQST presenter had not been subject to a full background check and turned out to have a criminal record;
- The opinion that portrayal of females by drag queens or female impersonators was insulting to women;
- The adult nature of an image previously found on Ms. Ginger Devine's public Facebook site;
- A suspicion that children were being pushed towards unnatural genders;
- Questions as to why police officers, firefighters, astronauts, or other professionals were not hosting story time events rather than drag queens;
- A YouTube video which one commenter opined showed a DQST presenter in Texas performing inappropriately for a children's event; and
- An assertion that DQST events were intended to expose young children to themes that could destroy families, abolish religion, and promote socialism.

Vera Crump expressed concern regarding the Library System's promotion of an online survey for seniors and veterans. She stated some of these individuals did not have access to the internet and would not be able to take the survey.

Mary Jones noted she had seen multiple posts regarding bomb threats which had forced the closure of other public libraries hosting DQST events. In response to commenters regarding adults being unable to attend story time events without accompanying a child, Ms. Jones stressed the events were for *children*. She mentioned that hard copies of the previously mentioned senior and veteran surveys were available at WCLS branches for any who might not have internet access or who preferred to complete the survey on paper. She added that the survey also asked these populations about their ability to access the internet.

**We have attempted to record names of commenters as accurately as possible. To provide a spelling correction, please contact L.J. Burton at ljburton@washoecounty.gov.*

3) Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chair Ghilieri noted Agenda Item 3a, regarding the approval of minutes from the September 21, 2022 Library Board of Trustees meeting, would be postponed. She anticipated the Board would schedule a special meeting to approve the September minutes, and information regarding the date, time, and location of the special meeting would be posted on the Washoe County Library website soon.

4) Old Business

None.

5) New Business

a) Review and Approve Revised Bylaws

Deputy District Attorney Herb Kaplan discussed the provision in the current Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) bylaws regarding Robert's Rules of Order and suggested slight modifications to the same, which changes would mirror the language used by the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (BCC). He explained provisions pertaining to Trustee terms could be clarified regarding an appointment to the remainder of an unexpired term. Mr. Kaplan also discussed revisions to the bylaws to clarify the authority of the Chair. Mr. Kaplan recommended the Board approve the suggested changes.

On motion by Vice Chair Frank Perez, seconded by Trustee Lea Moser, the Board approved the revisions to the bylaws. All in favor; none opposed.

b) Possible Appointment of Board Members to Library Service Teams

Chair Amy Ghilieri stated it might be beneficial to appoint Trustees to attend monthly Teams meetings to learn about events happening within the Library System and share their observations at each following LBOT meeting.

On motion by Vice Chair Perez, seconded by Trustee Ann Medaille, the Board accepted Chair Ghilieri's suggestion and approved adding further discussion of this concept to a future agenda. All in favor; none opposed.

c) Library Director's Strategic Plan Update

Director Jeff Scott presented information on recent Washoe County Library System (WCLS) activities and updates to the Strategic Plan. He discussed promotions of Library

System events on KOLO News and K-UNR radio, including the “On the Kids’ Shelf” program and book lists. He explained Sierra View Library would be closed for renovations in support of the WCLS goal to provide welcoming spaces for patrons and community members. He noted a Kids’ Café had been held during the fall school break, and various library branches would serve as early voting locations from October 22 through November 4, 2022, and as regular voting locations for the November 8, 2022 election.

The Library System was taking steps to provide ongoing learning opportunities and training for youth services and events staff, and in October, would be partnering with the Holland Project to showcase local artists. “TeenTober” activities would also include teen craft events, the Lego robotics club, and a survey aimed at teenaged patrons to find out what else WCLS could do to help them feel welcome and supported.

- d) Proclamation for National Friends of Libraries Week October 16-22 in honor of Friends of Washoe County Library

Library Director Scott read a proclamation in recognition of the support provided to the Washoe County Library System by the Friends of the Washoe County Library.

6) Reports

- a) Library Director Updates

Library Director Jeff Scott spoke regarding a comment made in reference to bomb threats and library closures occurring due to extremist protests of Drag Queen Story Time (DQST) events at public libraries and other locations. He clarified he had been referring to recent news articles which had described libraries in other states throughout the nation having received bomb threats in response to their hosting of DQST events.

Director Scott noted Washoe County had advertised and accepted applications for the Board vacancy resulting from former Trustee Jean Stoess’ resignation. Applications had been accepted through October 14, 2022 and would be forwarded to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners for their review.

Director Scott mentioned that Sierra View Library would be closed for renovations through the winter, and he thanked staff who had volunteered to assist the Registrar of Voters with early voting activities. He noted many branches had recently undergone fiber internet upgrades, and the 2022 Staff Day had been scheduled for December 15 at the Downtown Reno Library. Director Scott also listed the names of staff members recently nominated for the Washoe Stars program, and he thanked them for their excellent work.

b) Sparks Library Report

Sparks Library Branch Manager Corinne Dickman welcomed new Trustees Lea Moser and Ann Medaille. Ms. Dickman reviewed the Sparks Library Report, a copy of which had been included in the agenda packet. She described recent events and accomplishments at the Sparks branch, thanking staff for their adaptability and dedication.

Ms. Dickman mentioned a new Karma Box would soon be installed at the Sparks Library for community members to donate non-perishable food, hygiene products, toiletries, and other useful items to those in need.

c) Marketing and Communications Team (MARCOM) Report

Staff members Jamie Hemingway and John Andrews reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was included in the Board packet. They explained the MARCOM team's mission was to provide clear, concise, professional marketing support and cohesive branding for the Washoe County Library System (WCLS), to help foster community trust, build financial value, and inspire both internal and external customers and patrons. The MARCOM team was a system-wide group of staff members who assisted with duties such as event marketing and social media coordination, video production, media outreach, the creation of branch signage, graphics, and Explorer publications, and development of the WCLS style guide.

A MARCOM request form was being created for staff to utilize, and a collateral review team had been designated. MARCOM participants were also working on the design of a vehicle wrap to be installed on the new WCLS courier van, as well as the redesign of WCLS library cards and the creation of TikTok content in partnership with the Youth Services and Library Events (YSLE) team. It was also noted that the Explorer publication was used to promote library events and resources year-round.

7) Staff Announcements

Debi Stears expressed appreciation for the support of the Friends of the Washoe County Library and the funds they consistently allocated to the Library System.

8) Public Comment

As a former information technology professional, Janet Butcher expressed appreciation for the work done by the MARCOM team. She shared concerns about TikTok being utilized in the libraries, noting it was considered a national security risk, and she hoped people would do their research before using the site. She acknowledged that, although bomb threats had not forced the closure of local libraries, such threats were still a concern. She worried

something similar could happen in Washoe County. Ms. Butcher also pointed out she had not seen any Nevada or U.S. flags in any of the slides or photos in the presentations.

An unidentified individual agreed with Ms. Butcher's concerns regarding TikTok. He mentioned a presentation of the North Valleys Library earlier in the year he had enjoyed.

Bruce Parks stated public comment had not been allowed after hearing an agenda item that was marked "for possible action". He was not certain whether this could be considered a violation of open meeting law, but said he would be following up with the appropriate authority to find out. He indicated the MARCOM team would find it difficult to recruit more friends of the Washoe County libraries until public trust issues were resolved.

Roger Edwards reminisced about taking his children to the library in the 1970s and 1980s and recalled how his family had enjoyed browsing the huge aisles of books. Now, however, he would be afraid to bring his grandchildren to the library out of concern for what they might encounter, and fears that public libraries were no longer safe places. He reiterated his opposition to Drag Queen Story Time (DQST) events.

Reva Crump felt the Asian American population was not celebrated as much as others. She suggested a book vending machine at the VA and requested a book box exchange. She reiterated opposition to DQST events and thanked the Board for updating its bylaws.

9) Board Comment

Trustee Ann Medaille wondered whether plans for future Drag Queen Story Time (DQST) events should be reviewed by the Library Board of Trustees. Deputy District Attorney Herb Kaplan stated any Trustee or the Board itself could request the addition of items to future agendas during the agenda approval process.

Chair Amy Ghilieri thanked attendees and public commenters for engaging in the Library Board's meetings and with the Washoe County Library System. She indicated she had no intention of calling for the resignation of the Library Director or recommending discontinuation of future DQST events. She pointed out that individuals and families who were strongly opposed to DQST or similar events could choose not to attend those events or participate in programming they found personally offensive.

Vice Chair Frank Perez stated he fully supported Chair Ghilieri's comments as well as the Library System staff. Trustee Lea Moser expressed agreement.

10) Adjournment

Chair Ghilieri adjourned the meeting at 5:43 P.M.