

Manchester Community Library
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 14, 2023

The Manchester Community Library is open to all as an inspiring gathering place for the community, providing opportunities and resources for personal enrichment and growth.

Trustees Present and Constituting a Quorum: Rhonna Cass, John Clark, Ruth Corbett, Fran Fauver, Ann Graham, Pattie Haubner, Kate Orme (via video), Linda Oskam (via teleconference), Bill Philip, Margi Putney

Honorary Trustees Present: Martha Heilemann, Christine Miles

Trustees Absent: Clark French, Peter Kinder, Katherine Monahan

Staff Present: Edward Surjan, Sally Hesse

Call to Order: Chair J. Clark called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm

Consent Agenda: A motion was made by B. Philip to accept the consent agenda, seconded by R. Cass. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Comments: In addition to his written report E. Surjan offered the following comments:

- Both of the recent new events (Super Saturday and the Community Conversation) were huge successes. Nearly 400 people attended the Super Saturday despite frigid temperatures and Surjan gave a special thank you to R. Corbett for her great efforts. The Community Conversation generated excellent publicity and goodwill. Surjan stated that Melissa Bell deserved kudos for spearheading this and that other organizations had already tentatively offered to host a follow up event.
- The Get Out the Vote campaign is proceeding with many moving parts including a direct mail postcard, testimonial videos and letters to the editor and social media posts. Surjan said there is a good chance there will be an endorsement from the Manchester Journal.
- Tomorrow, 2/15, will mark the inaugural Town Hall. There will be varying times and dates for each quarterly meeting.
- The initial report on financials for the first half of FY23 shows revenues up and expenses down. A detailed report will be available at the March meeting, although R. Cass stated that revenues continue to be a concern.
- Surjan and the Northshire Bookstore owners will be sending a joint letter to the VT State University administration opposing the recent announcement about the planned transition to a digital library on campuses. Surjan will also take part

on air in a VPR feature on rural public libraries.

- M. Heilemann asked about the MCL Collection Development Policy which Surjan described as “patron driven acquisition” in which both books and digital resources were equally acquired in collaboration with patrons.

Revised By-Laws: Clark announced that P. Kinder has stepped down as Governance Committee Chair and that position needs to be filled. He thanked Kinder for the excellent job of reviewing and recommending amendments to the By-Laws, which were provided to all Trustees 10 days ago for review, as required. Clark stated that the two major changes being recommended were extending Trustee term lengths to a maximum of 3 3-year terms and increasing the number of Trustees from 15-18.

A motion was made by F. Fauver to approve the By-Laws as amended. The motion was seconded by P. Haubner and unanimously approved.

Fiscal Year Change: R. Cass presented the Finance Committee recommendation to change our fiscal year in order to be more in line with standard dates used by many organizations, as well as the Town of Manchester. It should also facilitate receiving our appropriation on a more timely basis.

A motion was made by F. Fauver, seconded by K. Orme, to legally change the current MCL Fiscal Year calendar from August 1 - July 31 to July 1 - June 30. The motion was unanimously approved.

Finance will work with our auditors to initiate the IRS filing for this change. Additionally, budget timelines will be adjusted accordingly.

New Trustee Candidates: Clark referenced the biographies for two new candidates for the Board that had been provided prior to the meeting.

A. Graham made a motion, which was seconded by R. Corbett, to approve the Governance Committee’s nomination of Amanda Baer to the MCL Board of Trustees for a term of three years, 2022-2025. The motion passed unanimously.

P. Haubner made a motion, which was seconded by R. Cass, to approve the Governance Committee’s nomination of Melissa Bell to the MCL Board of Trustees for a term of three years, 2022-2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Advancement Update: S. Hespe reported that there was not much change in revenue from December to January, which is to be expected. C. Miles is leading a new

corporate appeal effort which will include letters to the top 20 business prospects imminently, with an additional 250 prospects identified for subsequent efforts.

Clark and B. Philip noted this was Hesse's last week at MCL and the Board thanked her for her excellent work.

Strategic Planning Update: Clark led a discussion about the organization and goals of the ad-hoc Strategic Planning Committee, stressing that this will be an ongoing process that should operate fluidly and nimbly.

Committee will be chaired by B. Philip. Members will be R. Cass, F. Fauver, M. Putney, E. Surjan and Clark as ex-officio. Input will be sought from Trustees, staff, donors and the community.

Topics that will be covered include a SWOT analysis, mission and vision, core values, dreams and aspirations, as well as priorities. Clark highlighted much unfinished business that needs to be addressed:

3 year financial plan paired with a facilities master plan

Fundraising and stewardship strategy

Website and social media upgrades

HR function

Board portal and Board professional development

Importantly, Clark stated that the key operating assumption going forward needs to be achieving a balanced budget for FY25. He stressed that the drain on our operating reserve from 3 years of deficit budgets is unsustainable.

E. Surjan then reviewed 8 core arguments for libraries as laid out in Expect More by David Lankes that may help frame strategic planning discussions:

Collective buying agent

Economic stimulus

Center of Learning

Safety Net

Steward of Cultural Heritage

Third Space

Cradle of Democracy

Symbol of Community Aspirations

How MCL currently reflects these themes may give some context for shaping the planning discussions to come. At the same time, we will need a reasonable degree of focus as we cannot be everything to everyone.

During the discussion that followed a few suggestions were made for consideration:

- the need to be educated about the Library world
- importance of looking closer to home and focusing on who our customers are
- should we revisit the idea of a community survey?

Trustees should expect to be invited to have individual conversations with members of the committee. The next committee meeting is March 13.

Old Business: Clark reported the staff breakfast was well received and thanked R. Corbett and K. Monahan for making it such a success.

Executive Session: A motion was made by B. Philip to enter Executive Session at 5:25 pm. It was seconded by M. Putney and passed unanimously.

A motion was made by F. Fauver at 5:51 pm to exit Executive Session. It was seconded by P. Haubner and passed unanimously.

Adjournment: A. Graham made a motion to adjourn, seconded by F. Fauver. The meeting was adjourned at 5:51 pm.

Next meeting: Tuesday March 14, 2023 at 4 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Orme
Secretary