

HARVARD CITY LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES

July 15, 2021

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Ann Almgren. Also present were board members Faith Bennett, Trent Bruha, Michelle Faler, Lisa Haderlein, Heather Kriete, Jessica Reuter, Kelly Wood and Library Director Karen Sutera.

Meeting Minutes: The minutes from the June, 2021 meeting were presented for approval. With no changes needed, a motion was made by Lisa Haderlein, seconded by Kelly Wood, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Review and approval of bills: Bills for July, 2021 were presented by Karen Sutera. Bills totaling \$5,483.21 were approved for payment on a motion by Heather Kriete and seconded by Trent Bruha. Motion carried.

Citizen's comments: None

Financial Reports: Karen Sutera presented the June financial reports. Revenue from the first of two tax installments was received in June. Combined with the revenue received in May, the total property tax revenue received to date is \$235,458.01. This is \$30,000 higher than expected but could include last payment from the prior year. If so, that would make up the \$30,000 deficit from FY 20/21. \$3,000 was transferred from the Illinois Funds account to the Fines account to be spent on budgeted expenses. All other fund balances are sound at this time.

Librarian's Report: Karen Sutera presented the Librarian's report. See attached. Karen shared that the computer that manages the HVAC system is no longer working. The computer is original to the building and at least 20 years old. She has reached out to Northern Mechanical to begin the control upgrade project immediately. The original cost estimate was \$88,000 which was back in July, 2020 so an updated cost estimate will be sought. The request to close the access road between the Library and pool was brought before the City Council by Alderwoman Lisa Haderlein on behalf of the board. The Council referred the request to the Transportation Committee. Lisa will report on status at the next meeting. Karen also shared that Jamie Rachlin of Meristem Advisors has completing his review of the Library's finances. He would like to meet with the board in August to discuss his findings. The board will meet on Thursday, August 19 at 7PM with the financial analysis the sole topic of the meeting. Karen will send a reminder to all board members.

Old Business: Karen shared that staff are seeing increased resistance to mask wearing by patrons. The vast majority are complying with the mask requirement, either by wearing their own mask or using one provided by the Library. However, there are a few who are quite adamant in their resistance to mask wearing. Library staff would like to keep the mask requirement in place until at least September when students are back in school but it may not be possible to do so. Karen asked the board to allow staff to make modifications to the mask mandate as needed. The board agreed to this approach.

New Business:

Review proposal to eliminate fines on children and young adult materials effective Sept. 6, 2021

Karen presented a proposal to eliminate fines on children and young adult materials. Late fees, or fines, can accumulate quickly on children and young adult materials when returned after the due date which causes a barrier to library service. However, the library realizes about \$5,000 in fines revenue each year which cannot be ignored. Rather than eliminate fines completely at this time as many libraries are doing, eliminating fines on children and young adult material will enable the library

to remove a financial barrier to library service while still providing some income. A motion was made by Lisa Haderlein, seconded by Heather Kriete to eliminate fines on children and YA materials effective September 6, 2021. Motion approved unanimously.

Election of officers

Now that the board has nine members seated, election of officers should be considered. According to the City Library board bylaws, election of officers should take place at the April meeting with new officers beginning their term in May. Currently, Ann Almgren is serving as board President with Trent Bruha as Vice-President. The position of Secretary is open. Since we are roughly halfway through the year, the board can either elect officers now for a term to expire in April or could keep the current officers and appoint a secretary to serve until April at which time regular elections could be held. The board will consider these options and decide which action to take at the September meeting. In the interim, all were asked to consider filling the Secretary position which is open.

Library agreement with City of Harvard

Lisa Haderlein shared that the City Council had recently reviewed the current City of Harvard strategic plan to determine what action items still needed to be addressed. One of those items was developing an intergovernmental agreement with the City Library board. Karen shared that an attempt at reaching such an agreement had been made once before but that it was not successful. Karen offered to share the background of the discussions with Lisa and the remaining board members to familiarize the board with efforts made to date.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm on a motion by Jessica Reuter, seconded by Michelle Faler, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Sutera, Director

Next meetings: August 19, 2021 (for purposes of discussing Meristem Advisors financial review)
September 16, 2021
October 21, 2021
November 18, 2021

Harvard Diggins Library Directors Report

For period: May 21, 2021 – June 17, 2021

Submitted by: Karen Sutera

At the library this month:

- The Reading Colors Your World summer reading program has gotten off to a good start. As of June 9, 54 kids, 24 teens, and 35 adults had registered for the program. This is well below pre-COVID participation numbers but comparable to 2020 numbers. All programs have been held outdoors with the exception of one adult program which was held indoors due to heat. The outdoor programs in particular have gone very well.
- Library staff are working with classes at Brown Bear so that they can participate in some of the summer reading program activities. While the students need to register for the program individually, staff have scheduled some group activities specific to Brown Bear students.
- The engagement letter with Meristem Advisors was signed this month. Three fiscal years of financial data was sent for analysis. Karen will be meeting with Jamie Rachlin of Meristem Advisors on Wednesday, June 16 at 10AM to discuss the project further.
- The Friends of the Library will resume foyer book sales this month. The goal is to reduce the quantity of donations on hand to make room for future donations. The sale will be a bag sale with visitors invited to fill their own bag for a suggested donation of \$5.
- Landscaping the StoryWalk is on hold currently due to the extremely dry conditions. Karen will contact Harvard Nursery in early August to assess the situation and make a determination whether any planting will be done this year.
- Karen met with the Park board on Tuesday, June 8 to discuss closing the access road between the Library and pool. Various methods of closure were discussed, including a gate, concrete barrier or stakes spaced equally apart to allow for pedestrian and/or bike traffic. After discussion, it was agreed that if the City Library board wishes to pursue the closure, the issue should be brought before the City Council to decide how best to move forward. This topic will be discussed further at the June library board meeting.

Facility Maintenance/Capitol Projects:

- Roof repairs recommended by NIR Roofing were complete. Finke Concrete has been contacted regarding repairing the concrete sidewalk which was damaged this winter from snow plowing. Anderson Brothers drywall has also been contacted about repairing the craft in the wall in the kid's area.

May 2021 Library Statistics

Since all programs are virtual at this time, the program statistics reflect either participation in the virtual program, views of a recorded program, or counts of participants who picked up craft kit supplies.

	This month	Prior year
No of patron visits	1,525	0
*Programs offered in May	# of virtual programs	# attending/viewing
Adult	0	0/0/20
Teens	3	0/20
Kids	15	62/30/42
Family		
Total physical items circ'd	1,616	
Total digital items circ'd	382	
# item received in delivery	931	
# items sent out in delivery	951	

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only virtual programs were offered in May. These included take-and-make crafts for teens, storytime videos, homeschool book club and Among Us gaming.*