

# MISSOURI RIVER REGIONAL LIBRARY

Board Meeting

213 Adams Street, Grimshaw Room

August 15, 2023

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The regular Board of Trustees meeting was called to order at 6:13 p.m. by President Stacy Fick.

Prior to roll call, Library Director Claudia Young introduced three (3) new Board members representing Osage County – Jessica Davis, Rebecca (Becky) Layton and Rodney Mulvania – and asked each to provide some background about themselves.

### 1. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Members present: President Stacy Fick, Vice President Kaye Bertels, Treasurer John Gulick, Secretary Anne Rottmann and members: Jeff Briggs, Jessica Davis, Kay Kasiske, Rebecca (Becky) Layton, Rodney Mulvania, Bob Priddy and Anita Randolph

Member(s) absent: Ithaca Bryant, Steve Nelson and Anne Steele

Also present: Claudia Young, Library Director; Natalie Newville, Assistant Director of Marketing and Development; Angie Bayne, Assistant Director of Public Services; Diane Clingman, Human Resources Manager; Debra Winter, Business Manager/Accountant; and Robin Coffman, Administrative Assistant

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sarah Fessler, Wardsville, addressed the Board regarding questions she had in regard to library policy and the failed August 8 ballot initiative. She inquired as to why she and her teenage child received information pertaining to required parental/guardian permission necessary to check out books/materials without the parent/guardian present, which went into effect July 31. Director Young explained the library's required implementation of the Secretary of State's rule 15 CSR 30-200.015, *Library Certification Requirement for the Protection of Minors*.

Ms. Fessler also wanted the Board to be aware that the unhoused/homeless patrons who utilize the library inhibit other patrons from using the library. Director Young indicated library staff and the Board are aware of the unhoused/homeless issue(s), but that the library is open to all patrons and the expectation is that all individuals adhere to the Patron Code of Conduct while in the facility. The library also serves as a warming center in the winter and a cooling center in the summer.

Ms. Fessler asked what was the plan when the library facility would have been closed for approximately two years for construction, if the tax levy increase had passed. It was explained that the library administration had identified a temporary location and library services would continue to be available to the community throughout the construction process.

And finally, Ms. Fessler indicated that the proposed tax levy increase would have increased her personal property and real estate tax, annually, up to about \$22,000 (almost doubling the amount currently paid). Ms. Fessler inquired as to the decision not to sunset the proposed tax levy increase and the “perceived” lack of accurate information about the tax levy. Director Young indicated that the Board and library administration discussed this issue at length with the library’s bond counsel prior to placing the initiative on the ballot. And, at that time, believed it was the most prudent path forward. It was also explained that the library administration participated in about 40 presentations to community organizations in June and July, as well as hosting three (3) sessions at the library; sent out postcards; disseminated fliers; provided numerous interviews; and messaged correct and accurate information through social media and email.

The Board thanked Ms. Fessler for her comments and input, and indicated that her and others’ input will be taken into consideration for future planning.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Jeff Briggs made a motion, seconded by Bob Priddy, to approve the minutes from the July 18, 2023 meeting. Motion carried.

**4. TREASURER’S REPORT AND APPROVAL OF MONTHLY EXPENDITURES (ATTACHMENTS A & B)**

John Gulick and Debra Winter, Accountant, reviewed the monthly financial report (Attachments A & B) with the Board. John Gulick made a motion, seconded by Kay Kasiske, to approve the Treasurer’s Report and Monthly Expenditures. Motion carried.

Debra Winter also reported the projected assessment revenue is anticipated to increase by 1.0118% for 2023.

**5. LIBRARY DIRECTOR’S REPORT - CLAUDIA YOUNG (ATTACHMENT C)**

Claudia Young, Library Director, thanked the Board for providing dinner prior to the Board meeting. She reported that July saw her and Natalie speaking engagements continue. She thought they had presented about 40 times since the ballot initiative was announced. The presentation given, along with Dake Wells, to a local chapter of engineers was highlighted as this group was definitely interested in the more granular details regarding the proposed construction project.

Claudia also reported that library staff and others walked in Jefferson City’s 4th of July parade and it was an excellent way to remind community members of the library and its programs/services.

**6. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Capital Facilities Committee** (Anita Randolph) No Report
- B. Executive Committee** (Stacy Fick) No Report
- C. Finance Committee** (John Gulick) No Report

**D. Foundation Liaison** (Kaye Bertels)

Kaye Bertels reported that the Foundation is hosting a trivia night fundraiser on Saturday, October 7, 2023 at the library.

**E. Marketing/Communications Committee** (Jeff Briggs)

Natalie Newville reported that the library's marketing focus is shifting away from the tax levy campaign. She indicated that the library mailed out two (2) postcards this past summer to encourage individuals to apply for a library card or to renew their library cards. The market penetration has increased from 21% to 26%; the goal is to reach 30%. Natalie also discussed that although the tax levy increase failed, the library's number of patrons utilizing the library and its programs, services and materials has increased and more people are discussing the library's services within the community.

**F. Planning Committee** (Ithaca Bryant) No Report

**G. Bylaws Committee** (Stacy Fick) No Report

**7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. Levy Campaign Results**

The proposed tax levy increase failed with the vote of 3,285 in favor and 5,653 against. There is data in which the staff and Board will delve to determine where we were successful and where we can improve in our messaging. A campaign report will be brought back to the Board for review. Two (2) letters were shared with the Board; one in favor of the tax levy increase and one opposed. Discussion among the Board and staff ensued. Topics discussed included:

- Should a tax levy increase be attempted again?
  - How much of an increase?
  - Should a sunset on the increase be included?
  - Should a rollback be considered instead of a sunset?
  - Do we focus on the next 50 years or a lesser length of time?
- Comments Board members received about the initiative:
  - The request was "too" much
  - People want to see a sunset clause on the increase
  - The unhoused/homeless negatively impact other patrons' use of the library
  - Is a 3rd (third) floor really necessary?
- How could our communication/marketing be improved?
  - The library's campaign was excellent – not splashy and low key
  - Voters reacted to the negative and misinformation campaign rather than researching the data the library made publicly available through different platforms
- What should be our next steps?
  - Keep a running list of comments and concerns re: increase
    - Hold focus groups for community perspective
    - Conduct a community survey
    - Engage more community members
  - The Board's Capital Facilities Committee needs to meet to review and prioritize facility issues of greatest concern

- Determine if the library should go out with another request for an increase
  - Review data

Board members reminded staff and themselves that although this is a setback, we are not to be discouraged. Comments, even from individuals who opposed the levy increase, indicated the library is an integral part of Jefferson City and Cole County.

#### **B. Dake Wells, Architects, Update and Next Steps**

- i. Notice to Affirm Construction Manager-At-Risk Project Delivery Method for Library Facility Expansion\*
- ii. Notice to Approve CM@R Selection Criteria to Publish in Request for Qualifications (RFQs)\*

**\*Items 7B i and ii are no longer relevant due to the failed tax levy increase.**  
No discussion and no action taken.

#### **8. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Consideration of Temporary Facility During MRRL Renovation/Construction\*

**\* Item 8A is no longer relevant due to the failed tax levy increase.** No discussion and no action taken.

#### **9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

**Meeting minutes approved September 19, 2023.**