

MINUTES
BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS
OF THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

July 30, 2024 | 5:15 pm
111 Library St NE | Board Room

Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.

1. ROLL CALL

Board Members Present:	Rachel Anderson, Kelly Boston, Kathryn Dilley, Sheila García Mazari, Kristin Kopec, Kevin Peterson, Lauren Woolsey
Board Members Absent:	
Administration Present:	Robert Adcock, Megan Biggins, Natalie Drew, Lindsay Laplow, John McNaughton, Patrick Beatty
Staff Present:	Erin Hart
Public Present:	Steve Assarian, GREIU; Jax Johnson

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL AND REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS ON JUNE 25, 2024

MOTION: By Commissioner Woolsey, supported by Commissioner Kopec, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve the minutes of the regular board meetings of June 25, 2024.

Woolsey comments that all votes should be AYE 5 - 0 instead of AYE 7 - 0 as there were two people absent from the June regular board meeting.

ACTION: AYES 7 – 0

Motion passed.

3. BOARD COMMENTS

Kopec announces that she will be moving to Grand Rapids Charter Township and will need to step down as commissioner within the next couple weeks. She adds that she is very disappointed to need to step down and has enjoyed her time serving as commissioner and giving back to the community. The board congratulates her on her new home and expresses that they will miss her.

Boston thanks Kopec for her service. She also comments that she brought her 2 year old in for Summer Reading Challenge prizes and her daughter was very excited.

Peterson comments his appreciation of seeing the news on the parking lot presentation to the City and it was good seeing McNaughton represent the library. He also comments that United for Libraries is offering a free virtual training right now for Michigan library board trustees.

Dilley comments that she had inquired about Media Literacy programs and mentions that Laplow told her that Kent District Library (KDL) is hosting a class on October 8. She says that she will look to see if United for Libraries offers Media Literacy classes or programming as well. She adds that McNaughton sent an interesting email to the board about Project 2025. McNaughton explains how this could impact public library services. Dilley asks if GRPL could get a physical copy of the Project 2025 information so the board can refer to and cite specific parts. Biggins comments that our Circulation Department is trying to obtain a physical copy of it and has found that physical copies are very hard to get right now. McNaughton thanks Biggins. Dilley also asks if GRPL has any Media Literacy programs being planned. McNaughton and Biggins answer that we had a Media Literacy Summit in Spring 2023 in partnership with Grand Rapids Community Media Center, and that we are pursuing continued partnership programming possibly occurring in the Spring of 2025.

Anderson comments that the primary election is August 6 and she encourages early, absentee, and day-of voting. McNaughton adds that KDL's gap millage will be on Kent County ballots. Anderson explains the process of voting in the primary election. Dilley comments that she also works as a poll worker and agrees with the explained process.

Woolsey comments that she attended the Sci-fi Book Club in July. She adds that it was well attended and everyone had great conversations.

Anderson calls to amend the agenda to add the discussion of the removal of a board member to the New Business section.

MOTION: By Commissioner Anderson, supported by Commissioner Boston, the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve an amendment to the current agenda to add the discussion of the removal of a board member to the New Business section of July's regular board meeting.

No comments.

ACTION: AYES 7 – 0

Motion passed.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Legislative

Peterson provides an update on MLA's Advocacy Day. He says that the state budget for 2025 was increased with a \$1 million addition to State Aid. He adds that this is the first time that State Aid funding has grown in his lifetime. He thanks Director of Collections, Ann Neff-Rohs, for her work and advocacy.

b. Policy

No comments.

c. Board Retreat

No comments.

5. STAFF & FOUNDATION REPORTS

A. Library Director's Report

McNaughton comments that he and CEO Maggie Lancaster from the Grand Rapids Children's Museum (GRCM) presented the STEAM Center project to City Commissioners in July and received overwhelming

support. He adds that the next STEAM Center Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for August 22 where they will be discussing a joint feasibility study and community workshops. He says that there are currently a lot of ideas for the space but nothing is solidified yet. He concludes that he wants to make sure the library's interests within this project are also being met. Dilley asks if the library is part of the fundraising efforts. McNaughton answers yes and that Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation (GRPLF) President, Dan Poortenga, has been invited to the Steering Committee as well. McNaughton explains where GRCM is in the process of information gathering, and concludes that the new Mobile GR Director, Jessica Smith, will be joining the Steering Committee as well.

McNaughton announces that they have selected a new Deputy Director, Jen Vander Heide, who is returning to GRPL in September after leaving the organization in 2022 to move to Germany. He adds that she will be in to introduce herself at a future regular board meeting.

McNaughton concludes that the Staffing Study, led by ReThinking Libraries, will be kicking off on August 12.

Anderson congratulates McNaughton on hiring a Deputy Director. McNaughton says that he will be reexamining his role now that GRPL has a Deputy Director. Boston comments that she is looking forward to hearing McNaughton's vision for his role.

B. Financial Report

Adcock comments that we likely won't have final numbers for FY24 until September.

C. Foundation Update

Because GRPLF President Poortenga was unable to attend this meeting, McNaughton reads an emailed statement from him: "The GRPLF has had a great response to our appeal mailing that went out last month--both from current donors and new donors! The grant request for FY25 One Book One City and Summer Reading Challenge was submitted last week to the Michigan Arts and Culture Council and we are currently working on a grant request to the Wege Foundation. The Board looks forward to its August meeting where it will review grant requests from library staff."

6. OLD BUSINESS

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. ALA Conference Reports

García Mazari provides a write-up to the board detailing her attendance at the conference. She comments that she attended sessions about censorship and describes the changes in ALA's upper management due to health reasons. She stresses the importance of focusing on mental health within the library industry.

Woolsey comments that she likes the highlighted exhibits and thanks García Mazari. She asks if any GRPL staff attended the conference. Biggins answers that Neff-Rohs attended. Biggins adds that more staff are attending trainings and conferences since the Clerical Aide to Library Assistant conversion that took place in November 2023.

McNaughton announces that he will be attending the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) and Directors Summit conferences this year.

B. Full Day Closure for Staff Training Day

McNaughton explains the training topics and why we would like to close for a whole day.

Anderson clarifies that it is a full-closure for all branches.

Peterson asks if we hear requests from staff members for additional training days. McNaughton answers that we receive requests for two in-service training days from staff members every year.

MOTION: By Commissioner Peterson, supported by Commissioner Woolsey, the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve a full day closure for all locations on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, allowing for staff training from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

No comments.

ACTION: AYES 7 – 0

Motion passed.

C. Discussion of Removal of Board Member

McNaughton explains the process of posting the open commissioner role.

Anderson proposes postponing appointing a new commissioner until after the November elections. Woolsey comments that she will see if the vacancy will allow for someone to be a write-in for the upcoming election. García Mazari says that they won't be on the ballot in November. Anderson clarifies that if we appointed someone, they would be serving for a full 2 years until the 2026 election. Woolsey asks if onboarding the appointed commissioner would happen in January with the elected commissioners. Anderson answers yes. McNaughton reads the City Charter aloud regarding the appointment of a commissioner. Woolsey thinks Anderson's idea sounds reasonable because it won't conflict with the November elections and will allow more time for people to apply, which will be more accessible.

Woolsey comments that we'll revise the documents that we used a year ago when Peterson was appointed. Anderson says she will pull everything together and have it ready for everyone at the August regular board meeting. She adds that she hopes we can post the position following the August meeting.

Boston adds that going forward, everyone should be conscientious about absences from board meetings so there is a full quorum.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Media Index

Anderson comments that the number of articles featuring the library is increasing. She commends Director of Marketing & Communications Katie Zychowski and the Communications Department team for making the library so visible with a great mix of media.

Boston comments that she is part of a group of moms on Facebook and many of the members were very vocally supportive of the Social Justice Begins with ME programming.

B. Staffing Report

García Mazari comments on Carl Meyering's retirement and thanks him for his many years of service to the library.

C. Statistical Report for June 2024

Peterson asks if the stats of issued library cards are only newly issued cards or if the numbers include renewals with rebranded cards. McNaughton says he will check and report back. Dilley asks about the expiration date on library cards. Biggins answers that they expire every 3 years.

9. GRAND RAPIDS EMPLOYEES INDEPENDENT UNION

Assarian comments that he likes the new staff round tables. He adds that he learned at a round table that part-time staff are capped at 20 hours per week due to City rules. He adds that adding 5 extra hours each week would help and asks the board to organize together and call a meeting with the new Mayor to have this changed.

Peterson asks McNaughton if we have the City's policy available. McNaughton responds yes.

McNaughton commends Director of Human Resources Natalie Drew for recently implementing the staff round tables.

10. AGENDA ITEMS FOR REGULAR BOARD MEETING: AUGUST 27, 2024

Year end reports.

Old Business: Discussion of removal of board member.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Johnson comments that they are a big fan of the Dungeons & Dragons for Teens programs and has a great time attending them. They say that they volunteered at Comic Geek Out this past Saturday and had a lot of fun. They add that they received a comment from a 10 year old boy requesting a Dungeons & Dragons program for kids.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: By Commissioner García Mazari that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:59 pm.