

**CITY OF NOVI LIBRARY BOARD  
MINUTES, VIRTUAL MEETING  
March 25, 2021**

**Call to Order by Interim-President, Kat Dooley**

The meeting was held virtually with assistance from the City of Novi. The meeting was called to order by Kat Dooley, Interim-President, at 7:00 p.m.

1. Welcome new Board Members: Brian Bartlett, Sreenivas (Sreeny) Cherukuri and Kathy Crawford

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Roll Call by Secretary, Torry Yu**

1. **Library Board**

Kat Dooley, Interim-President  
Brian Bartlett, Board Member  
Sreeny Cherukuri, Board Member  
Kathy Crawford, Board Member  
Tara Michener, Board Member  
Geoffrey Wood, Treasurer  
Torry Yu, Secretary

**Student Representatives**

Sarah Chang (left virtual meeting at 7:10 pm)  
Tarun Tangirala (left virtual meeting at 7:10pm)

**Library Staff**

Julie Farkas, Director  
Barbara Cook, Bookkeeper

**Library Attorney**

Tom Schultz  
Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler

**Approval of Agenda**

Trustee Michener mentioned she sent an email to Trustee Dooley and Director Farkas to make sure that the violence and hate surrounding the Asian American/Pacific Islander situations occurring in the world are talk about. Trustee Michener will follow up with this under DEI Committee Meetings section of tonight's Board Meeting.

A motion was made to approve the Agenda as presented.

1<sup>st</sup> – Kathy Crawford

2<sup>nd</sup> – Geoff Wood

Roll Call Vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. No further discussion.

## **Consent Agenda**

1. Approve Minutes of:
  - A. February 25, 2021 – Regular Meeting
2. Approve Claims and Warrants of:
  - A. Accounts 268 and 269 (#600)

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda (items 1 and 2 above) as presented.

1<sup>st</sup>- Kathy Crawford

2<sup>nd</sup>- Geoff Wood

No discussion

Roll Call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously

## **Presentations**

1. None

## **Reports**

1. Student Representatives Report  
On page 20 of the March Board packet.
2. President's Report (Interim President- Kat Dooley)
  - A. 2019-2022 Strategic Planning Goals  
On page 21 of the March Board packet.
  - B. 2020-2021 Goals Document Update – N/A
  - C. Election of Officers 21-22: Begin nomination process in March, slate provided and election at April meeting, officer duties go into effect at May meeting.
    - i. Deadline for trustees interested in consideration for an officer position is 3-31-2021
3. Treasurer's Report (Geoffrey Wood)- pages 23-35
  - A. 2020-2021 Library Budget Fund 268  
The 2020-2021 Library Fund 268 budget (COVID column) calls for revenue of \$3,123,886 with expenditures of \$3,167,505 consuming \$43,619 of the fund balance.
  - B. 2020-2021 Contributed Budget Fund 269  
The 2020-2021 Library Contributed Fund 269 budget (COVID column) calls for revenue of \$46,500 and expenditures of \$51,050 consuming \$4,550 of the fund balance.
  - C. Financial Report February 2021  
On page 27 of the March Board packet.
  - D. Library Fund 268 Expenditure and Revenue Report ending February 28, 2021  
Revenue ending February 28, 2021 was \$3,169,518  
Expenditures ending February 28, 2021 was \$1,868,487
  - E. Library Fund 269 Contributed Fund ending February 28, 2021  
Revenue ending February 28, 2021 was \$17,352.  
Expenditures ending February 28, 2021 was \$6,138.
  - F. Balance Sheets for Funds 268 and 269 as of February 28, 2021  
Ending Fund Balance for Fund 268 as of February 28, 2021 was \$3,563,825  
Ending Fund Balance for Fund 269 as of February 28, 2021 was \$1,718,193

G. 2019-2020 Annual Report

On pages 34-35 of the March Board packet

Trustee Cherukuri inquired if the \$3.5 million in fund 268 is an accumulated surplus over the years. Trustee Wood answered that is correct. Trustee Wood explained that at the end of this Fiscal Year (June 30, 2021) the Library is budgeted to consume \$43,619 of that money. However, the Library is currently trending to consume less than the \$43,000.

4. Director's Report (Julie Farkas)

On pages 36-58 of the March Board packet.

Staff members celebrating anniversaries for March are:

- Robin Dircks – Support Services- 8 years

April is Financial Wellness Month- Smart Money MI Kids Read 2021. 8,000 books were packaged and shipped to Michigan Libraries for the annual Read program promoting financial literacy in Michigan. This year the book is called "Give It" by Cinder McLeod. Director Farkas sends a huge thank you to Community Financial Credit Union for assisting with the book packaging and another huge thank you to Community Financial and Vibe Credit Unions for sponsoring financial literacy programs.

Two out of the three companies provided quotes for the Lending Library Kiosk wrap design. The information is on pages 41 and 42 of the March Board packet.

COVID usage update is on pages 43-44 of the March Board packet.

A. Information Technology Report (page 59)

B. Facilities Report (page 60)

C. Information Services Report (pages 61-66)

D. Support Services Report (page 67)

E. Library Usage Statistics Report (pages 68-76)

F. Friends of Novi Library – N/A

G. City of Novi Historical Commission – Agenda March 17, 2021 (page 77)

**Matters for Library Board Action**

1. Consider amendment to Holidays Policy (HR Policy) Re: Juneteenth based on memo from Director Farkas.

Director Farkas apologized to Trustee Michener and the Board for the miscommunication on her end last month in terms of providing information about Juneteenth. Director Farkas provided a letter explaining what documents she referred to when providing her answer, last month. The letter is on page 37 of the March Board packet. Director Farkas brought back the Library Holiday policy on pages 38 and 39 for the Board to have a discussion on.

Trustee Michener appreciates the apology and she said it is for her, but it is also for the community who wants Juneteenth to be a paid Holiday. She said when this was brought forth in the beginning of June it was a commitment to the Black community with the understanding that Black people were not free on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and this was a unanimous vote to make it just like the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Adding there was verification that was reached later to make sure that it wasn't a staff development day, in-service day or anything of that nature. Trustee Michener added that when she brought things back last month, she was really clear because she realized if it (that

Juneteenth be treated exactly as July 4<sup>th</sup>) was not put to a vote as soon as possible, there is a risk of motive changing or purpose changing. She believes that is very detrimental to the trust of the Black community, those who support the Black community, and those who support diversity and history, as well.

Trustee Michener quoted verbatim, Board members statements from the February 25, 2021 Board meeting in regards to the Juneteenth closure as a paid Holiday. After reading the statements, Trustee Michener said that when it is clear, (to be a paid Holiday, based on last Board meetings transcripts) she does not know if there really is a mistake. She hopes that the Board takes the optics of this very seriously, it does not look good and it does not feel good. This coming back a third time was dismaying for her. Especially thinking this is something that the Board has already covered. She employs the Board to vote as a paid Holiday like every other Holiday on the calendar.

Trustee Crawford commented that she is new to the Board packet and to the budget and although budget is not always her strong suit, she is very concern about all of the lost revenue, when she reviews page 23 of the budget. She said (lost revenue) amounts to upwards of \$90,000. Also, Trustee Crawford mentioned additional costs as a result of COVID, such as PPE and other ongoing COVID expenditures; items not covered in grant money. She can't justify adding an additional expense to the Library when Trustees do not know what the libraries losses are going to be. Adding that there is an expense to add a paid Holiday. She has nothing to say about the value of the Holiday, that is not what she is talking about. She is looking at the expenses, right now, and it is something that she can't justify adding any kind of expense to the budget.

Trustee Cherukuri said his concerns are twofold. He is concern for Holidays, and the possibility of Holiday's becoming another chance for some businesses to capitalize on; for example, by featuring a sale. He mentioned in June schools are closed and the students minds are largely shut down for the summer. His personal preference is that this would be a great day to really feature Juneteenth's meaning. The importance of the emancipation proclamation and other seminal documents to our Country. Adding that the students in Novi will not be educated at the schools or library about Juneteenth on Juneteenth. He said this is his personal opinion and not to the lack of importance of the day and what it means. Trustee Cherukuri reviewed the current offerings to employees; 10 paid Holidays (one of which is floating), 6 personal leave days, 12 sick days and 10-25 days of vacation. Stating this vastly exceeds the offerings of the private sector and industry statewide. He does not believe it is a time to add benefits at a time when others are trying to get by. Also, he said that a floating Holiday gives people the capacity to celebrate these important Holidays.

Trustee Bartlett also looked at the Holiday list and would like to know how the libraries 10 paid Holidays compare to other folks (businesses) in the City. In his last position, ADP managed the benefits and he was informed that 10 is the standard in the US. He added that if the Board is looking to fund this (Juneteenth), he suggested replacing the floating Holiday with Juneteenth as a way to make it revenue neutral. He added that this year the library revenue is down and this would be an option to remain revenue neutral. Trustee Bartlett was surprised to see two Holiday's in the private sector and not on the Library list; Presidents Day and Martin Luther King Day. The Library remains open and holds Martin Luther King Day celebrations rather than closing the Holiday.

Interim President Kat Dooley said she wanted to be clear about the motion on the table. Stating Juneteenth is a Holiday and the motion is to approve whether the Holiday (Juneteenth) is paid or not. (37:00)

A motion was made to approve Juneteenth as a paid Holiday, just like 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

1st- Trustee Michener

2nd- Trustee Yu

Discussion:

Trustee Michener had no additional comment.

Trustee Wood stated there is a lot of value in this day off. He says he has been vocal and voted in support of this day off (Juneteenth). He said he is strongly behind the DEI initiatives. He feels it is prudent to use the funds for the community DEI efforts instead of for an internal Holiday. Adding that these funds would be better suited to bring people together and support the community.

Trustee Dooley has researched Juneteenth and the validity and importance of the Holiday. Adding that the Board is aware of the importance of the day citing their actions of approving this day off, last summer, largely due to Trustee Michener championing it. Trustee Dooley said she is a firm believer that the times are changing and a lot of companies are developing this (Juneteenth) as a paid Holiday and adding it to their package of benefits. Trustee Dooley also noted that it is almost 17 years of Juneteenth being recognized by the State of Michigan, not as a formal Holiday, but it has been recognized in terms of the importance of the celebration. She said the spirit of the Holiday is about independence and emancipation and it is supposed to be treated like July 4<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, Trustee Dooley is still in support of this as a paid Holiday like July 4<sup>th</sup>. Trustee Dooley appreciates all of the Trustees feedback.

Roll Call Vote was taken and the motion did not carry with 3 yes and 4 no votes.

2. Adopt amendment to B2 Closure Policy with updated language.

Trustee Michener asked what the difference is between in-service and development day. Director Farkas said she does not see a difference in it but the language the staff uses is in-service and it makes it easier for the staff to recognize the language in terms of training.

A motion was made to approve to adopt amendment to B2 Closure Policy with updated language.

1st- Torry Yu

2nd- Brian Bartlett

Discussion:

Roll Call Vote was taken and the motion carried with 6 yes votes and 1 no vote.

### **Public Comment**

Interim-President Dooley asked the speakers list their first name, last name and address. Interim-President Dooley stated this is a public meeting and it does not have to be a Novi address. Library attorney, Tom S. clarified that due to the meeting being virtual and public the street name should be given without the numerical part of address.

Betsy Beaudoin, Cranbrooke in Novi MI in Village Oaks. She watched the meeting last month and was definitively under the impression that Juneteenth is a paid Holiday, Mrs. Farkas assured Trustees that was happening. Betsy is disappointed that the Board would not honor its word that was given to the residents and Trustee Michener on this topic, last month. She is not sure how that came to be but wanted to express her complete disappointment in what appears to be another inappropriate action by this Board. She hopes the Board can do better for the African American Community in Novi.

Jason Michener, Harrier Place Novi MI. Jason said he tries to abstain from calling in during public comment as his wife is a Trustee of the Board. He said it is important for him to comment on what has transpired as a white male in the City of Novi and a resident since 2004. There was a promise made. For those members (Trustees) that were not present; there is no excuse. The minutes were read verbatim by Trustee Michener to the Trustees. Jason said that Trustees had the videos to review, as is their duty, to review packets and information coming to them, before the meeting. Jason said there is no excuse, reversing the decision that was promised and made not just to Trustee Michener but to the public of Novi. He said it is unconceivable for the Trustees to tell the Black members of Novi that they know better how to spend their money, when they have been asking since June of last year that Juneteenth be recognized as a paid Holiday. Jason said the level of trickery and deceit; he has never seen it. Jason said it blows his mind and leaves him at a loss for words. He does want to note that he is not the only voice, although he may be the only one that is able to call in and speak. There are many, many others in the community of Novi that are probably just as shocked and horrified as he is. He holds the entire Board accountable and said it is an egregious action by the Board and a breach of trust. Especially since the Board gave away \$5,000 to the café as a token of good faith. As a token of good faith, he would have thought the Board would have extended that good faith to the Black residents of Novi making them feel they are equal to anybody else and their Holiday is just as important, since they have been telling the Board that verbatim. He is deeply disappointed and sad and said this is a very sad day.

Paula Henry, Stonehenge Novi, MI. Paula also wanted to add how disappointed she is with the outcome of the vote. She is very upset because the Board made a promise and said one thing and now it is changed to another. She is very disappointed being President of Parents of African American students in Novi. Juneteenth was a paid Holiday and now it is no longer a paid Holiday. She wanted to put on record how disappointed she is as a member of the Black community. The Trustees have been going round and round about this and now the letter H was forgotten and now it is something else. She wanted to make it very well know how disappointed she is with the lack of integrity. Additionally, she thanked the Trustees that did vote for it; she appreciates their support.

DeJuan Woods, Berkshire Point Novi MI. He said listening to the discussion today is disappointing, is the best way to put it, for so many reasons. Particularly, the Trustees that are trying to say this is a financial issue. Additionally, he pointed out that Trustee Crawford (in all due respect) saying that putting resources towards staff to take Juneteenth off is too costly is really insulting. He mentioned the Trustee that offered to switch it to a floating Holiday and he would be for it. DeJuan said then put that up to a vote as that would be a fair compromise. In fact, he would say if that Trustee who offered that very good suggestion could be put on the floor, he thinks a lot of the residence in this community, not just African Americans (allies such as Caucasian, Indian and Asian communities) who are concerned about these issues in this country and recognize that unity is the most important solution to a lot of the problems that are impacting the country today. This was very disheartening for him; the attempt to connect the finances of the Library to a paid Holiday when there is a viable solution that is out there. He hopes that the Board will reconsider their vote or at least add the opportunity to switch it to the floating Holiday.

### **Committee Reports**

1. Policy Committee: Review current public policies for the Library  
(Michener-Chair, OPEN, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
  - Staff Committee consists of: Julie Farkas, Barb Rutkowski, Maryann Zurmuehlen, Betty Lang, Keith Perfect, Dana Brataniec and Hillary Hentschel.
  - Committee is currently reviewing policies referenced in the Guest Behavior Policy (P7, P12, P13, P17 and P20)
  - Update: Trustee Dooley as Interim-President will be a part of the committee currently.

2. HR Committee: Review HR Policies for the Library, Director Review & Goals  
(OPEN – Chair, Wood, Dooley, Staff Liaison – TBD)
  - Staff Committee consists of: Julie Farkas, HR Specialist (open position), Lindsay Gojcaj, and Kirsten Malzahn.
  - HR Policy staff review has been suspended until a new HR Specialist is hired.
  - New posting for HR position as of 2/19/21. Closing date for posting: 3/17/21; Interviews planned for 3/26/21.
  
3. Finance Committee: Financial plan based on building assessment review, Library endowment investigation.  
(Wood- Chair, OPEN, OPEN, Staff Liaisons – Julie Farkas & Barbara Cook)
  - No Report
  
4. Events/Marketing/Fundraising Committee: Outreach opportunities  
(Yu – Chair, Michener, Dooley, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
  - a. Library/ Community Events Attended by Library Board Members in the Last Month:
    - Trustee Dooley 3/10/21: APALA/NNLM Webinar: Addressing the Stigma: Mental Health and Wellness Resources for Asian/Pacific American Communities.
    - Update for new Trustees: Trustees please email Director Farkas events attended prior to the next meeting and these will get updated in the Board packet for transparency.
    - Trustee Dooley plans to share what she learned from the Addressing the Stigma: Mental Health and Wellness Resources for Asian/Pacific American Communities webinar to the DEI committee at the next meeting. Trustee Dooley said as an Asian-American, Bi-racial person, it was nice to hear that perspective.
    - Trustee Dooley also attended the City Civility seminar.
  
5. Strategic Planning Committee  
(Dooley – Chair, Yu, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
  - No Report
  
6. Building/Landscape Committee: Entrance Project  
(OPEN – Chair, OPEN, Wood, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
  - Filters for the air duct cleaning project were on order. The air duct cleaning project had to be rescheduled for the week of March 29<sup>th</sup>. Both boilers have been repaired and are working properly. We are currently waiting on a part for an elevator repair for CAR 2.
  - Update: Trustee Wood mentioned that the Library is getting into a phase with the building where the Board has to start thinking about the cost to maintain or fix things as they break. Trustee Michener asked about the boiler issue which essentially caused a shut down and affected Library finances. She asked if there is a preventative maintenance schedule for the boilers and was it being followed? Was any action taken after the first boiler failed? (To inspect or otherwise ensure the health of the remaining boiler). What was the actual cause of failure? Is the Library sure the issues will not be repeated? Director Farkas will get the answers for the Board for the next meeting.
  
7. Bylaw Committee: Review of Library Board Bylaws  
(OPEN – Chair, OPEN, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
  - Committee met on 2/17/21 to discuss draft based on attorney review.

- Update: No action being taken; no standing members –draft is stalled
8. DEI: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee  
(Michener – Chair, Dooley, Staff Liaisons – Julie Farkas, April Stevenson, Barb Rutkowski, Maryann Zurmuehlen, Gail Anderson, Dana Brataniec, Tia Marie Sanders)
- Next committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 30, 2021
    - i. Update: A DEI committee meeting was held after the last Board meeting. Not all members were present. Understanding terminology/language was discussed at the meeting. For example, you could have a Board that looks diverse, but is not inclusive.
    - ii. Members emailed quite a bit. A listening session was held in October and there is a list of work to do that the members discussed.
    - iii. Seeing more opportunity for dialogue on DEI issues and consideration for another listening session.
    - iv. Trustee Michener has multicultural counseling background and discussed that they have to do better when it comes to working together. Bystander training is another consideration to discuss. April is working on a book audit to encourage learning through the window and the mirror.
    - v. Communication was sent to the Director, via email, in regards to LGBTQ+ to focus on that community and to use budget dollars toward that initiative. The DEI members have not seen this email yet. Looking at accessibility in all forms and fashion.
    - vi. Trustee Michener said she sees an opportunity for an Asian American statement of support.
    - vii. DEI committee is reading Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man.

Trustee Dooley responded via email to the DEI Committee about the statement of support for the Asian American Community. She said when it comes to the Asian American Community, which she is a part of there really is a lot to unpack which is why she is hoping to have conversations in the DEI committee to discuss. Historically, in matters of race they have been taught to be quiet and put their heads down and take the hate and take what was it being said in terms of micro aggressions and things of that nature. Trustee Dooley said mental health is the biggest concern that community is dealing with and she does not want to be reactionary. She still stands by actions are super important, but understands Trustee Michener's statement that words and actions are tied. Trustee Dooley would like to talk to members of the Asian community to understand what they want before action is taken. Trustee Michener wanted to note that she spoke to several people of the Asian Pacific Islander community about this and she is involved in several groups and is not just throwing ideas out as she has educated herself. Trustee Dooley said she is looking forward to Trustee Michener bringing those conversations to the DEI Committee on their behalf and thanked Trustee Michener.

### **Communications**

1. 2/15/21: Letter from Linda Mulder, Re: Library Services
2. 2/23/21: Email from Katie Hayes, Re: Response to January 28 Meeting
3. 2/24/21: Email from Danielle Ware, Re: Novi Public Library Guest Behavior Policy- Action Required
4. 2/24/21: Email from Betsy Beaudoin, Re: Addressing racial justice and equity in our library
5. 2/25/21: Email from Jessica Moore, Re: In Support of Trustee Tara Michener
6. 3/8/21: Email from Aaron Klenke, Re: Library Services

## Closed Session

1. **Closed Session to discuss a confidential written legal opinion that is subject to attorney-client privilege.**

### A. Memo: Attorney-Client Privileged Correspondence- Closed Session

A motion was made to move to closed session to discuss a confidential written legal opinion that is subject to attorney-client privileged.

1<sup>st</sup>-Kathy Crawford  
2<sup>nd</sup>-Sreeny Cherukuri

Trustee Michener asked why the Board is moving to closed session stating in the past Board members received a sealed Inner office envelope with information about the matter being discussed, before entering into closed sessions. Attorney Tom S. said it is a confidential matter so the reason to move to closed session can't be revealed however, anyone uncomfortable to move to closed session can vote no.

Roll call vote was taken. 6 yes votes and 1 no vote, the motion carried and the Board moved to closed session at 8:19pm.

A motion was made to move from closed session and to reopen to the public at 9:01pm.

1<sup>st</sup>-Brian Bartlett  
2<sup>nd</sup>-Sreeny Cherukuri

Roll call vote was taken and the vote was unanimous.

A motion was made for Interim-President Dooley to proceed with recommendation from closed session.

1<sup>st</sup>-Kathy Crawford  
2<sup>nd</sup>-Brian Bartlett

Roll call vote was taken and the vote was unanimous.

## Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn at 9:07 p.m.

1<sup>st</sup>— Tara Michener  
2<sup>nd</sup>— Torry Yu

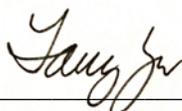
Roll Call vote to adjourn was unanimous.

## Supplemental Information

- Library Board Calendar – 2021
- Library Closings -2021

## 2021 Future Events

- **Timeframe March 5- April 19, 2021: Library is currently in Phase 4 of COVID library operations-with recommended visits of 1 hour (Grab&Go); public computers available (1 hour use); 48 hour quarantine of materials; limited seating is available; café and book nook open; programming virtual through May 2021**



Torry Yu, Secretary

April 22, 2021

Date