



Harrisburg Library Board Minutes March 14, 2019

The Harrisburg Library Board met on this date at the Harrisburg Public Library, located at 354 Smith Street, at the hour of 6:32pm. Presiding was Chair Cassandra Barney. Also present were as follows:

- Heather Long
- James Blake
- Jayne Detering
- Librarian Cheryl Spangler
- City Recorder/Asst. City Administrator Michele Eldridge

Absent was Vice-Chair Violet Stone.

Matter of Approving the Minutes

- Cassandra Barney **motioned to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2019 meeting.** James Blake **seconded.** **The motion passed unanimously.**

Library Policy and Review

- President Barney felt that sometimes the policy would never be completed! The concern they have now, is in relation to late fees, and fines. Barney wanted to eliminate the concerns of Library Patrons who don't return to the Library, because they can't afford to pay the late fees on a book.
- Eldridge noted that technically, the fines and fees were defined by ordinance, and by resolution respectively. However, there wasn't any formal library policy in relation to those, and how the Library Board wanted to handle different types of situations. She recommended that the Library Board create a policy to define how they wanted the Librarian to handle situations that weren't black and white.

Discuss and Recommend Changes to the Current Library Fee Schedule.

The Library Board discussed the fee schedule, and as discussed previously, wanted to possibly abolish all late fees. President Barney had heard about other Libraries enacting a 'clean slate day' in which all books could be returned, and the fees against the library patrons was wiped clean. They had heard from patrons who didn't come into the library, because they couldn't afford the fines and late fees, or had lost a book, and couldn't afford to replace it, or weren't sure if a different book could be recommended. Long asked about revenue brought in from the Library, and Eldridge told her that it's fairly low. Most of the money received is in relation to copies that are made. The budget line was typically \$500 to \$800 a year, but that also includes donations that are made, as well as book sales by the Library, and funds given by the Harrisburg Library Guild. It was typically about \$25 to \$40 a month, which was the amount for copies, or late fees. Cheryl should be keeping track of the details. Spangler agreed, and said that the amounts that didn't include donations were quite low. She noted that the Evergreen

program was also limited to about .10 cents per day for overdue books. Barney commented that the Corvallis Library doesn't charge late fees on children's books, and Blake related that Deschutes County has decided to not charge late fees on any books either. After further discussion, ***The consensus from the Library Board was to propose a suspension of all late fees and fines for a six month trial period, starting from July 1st to Dec 31, 2019, and to declare an amnesty period during the grand re-opening of the Library, in order to encourage the return of library materials without any punitive actions.***

Discuss and Recommend to the City Council a Possible Amendment to Harrisburg Municipal Code (HMC) 2.20.110.

The Library Board discussed this issue, and decided that they wanted to hold off on changing anything in the ordinance for the time being. They weren't sure how they wanted to address lost or damaged books during the recommended trial period. It was suggested that they look at other library policies in relation to lost or damaged books before they made a decision. In addition, while the fine of up to \$500 per item per day should be changed, they weren't sure what to change it to. (Eldridge suggested the overriding the fine of \$500 per offense.) Spangler has a procedure in the Evergreen system, which stated how the consortium wanted to handle lost or damaged books. It doesn't allow other books to be checked out. But that can be overridden. The board talked about the possibilities of forgiving all lost books during this period, but Eldridge reminded them that technically, someone who doesn't return a book, could be considered as stealing a book. They are preventing that resource from being used by other library patrons. Spangler liked the ability of someone to donate a book of equal value, if they don't want to pay the replacement fee for a lost book; Barney liked this as well. The board was concerned about people taking advantage of the system, but also wanted to create a policy that was not as punitive. They returned to wanting to find out what other libraries are doing in relation to the lost and damaged books. They wanted to put a positive spin on something that Library patrons find rather vaunting.

Discuss new Library Operations and Programs.

The Library Board was asked to look at other libraries, to find out what they were doing, and to come with recommendations during the months the Library was closed. They wanted to start out on July 1st with a new roster of programs to offer to patrons.

Discuss changes to Library Hours

When a holiday is on a Monday, the Library closes down, but because Monday is the one day a week in which the library is open later, the board (in the distant past) has preferred that those hours shift to the next Tuesday. It was put into effect back when more people didn't have computers at home, and local farmers needed to use the computers in the Library at least one evening a week. People were becoming really confused by the policy, and Spangler wanted to simply say that the hours during the weekdays remain the same. The Library Board agreed with her reasoning. Eldridge said that initially, she thought there was a policy, but had found no formal policy or Council motion stating this, and the only place it was stated was in the website, and in the Library itself. ***The consensus was for the practice to be eliminated. If the Library is closed for a holiday on a Monday, the hours on Tuesday would remain the same as what is posted in multiple areas.***

Others:

- Eldridge told the Library Board that the Library would be closed down after Saturday, March 23rd, until July 1st for the remodel. Cheryl will be working 8 to 5 Monday through Thursday, plus two hours every other Friday. Friday reading times would be at City Hall from 12:00 to 1:00, and on Saturdays, at the H.A.R.T. Center, for two hours. Notices are on the front door, on Facebook, and on the City's website. Cheryl and possibly other staff members will be working on boxing up all the books for removal this week and next.
- Long asked if they could go onto their own Facebook accounts, and ask friends, family, and potential patrons, about what kind of programs they wanted to have?
- Eldridge explained the importance of not exchanging ideas between Library Board members outside of a regular board meeting, and the concept of serial meetings, which violate state open meeting laws. If they used their own Facebook accounts, and kept the conversation with their own friends, family, and patrons they know, it wouldn't be a problem. She encouraged it, as some of the Councilors did the same thing. It's important to find out what the citizens using our resources would like to see the most.

With no further others to discuss, the Library Board adjourned at the hour of 7:25pm.