



**City of Scottsdale
Library Board
Retreat Minutes**

Tuesday, March 28, 2023, 1:00 p.m.
ASU SkySong, 301 Ingenuity Room
1475 N. Scottsdale Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85257

PRESENT: Chair Janet Smigielski, Vice-Chair Freda Hartman, Board Members Natalee Esposito, Shiela Reyman (arrived at 1:21 p.m.) and Enid Seiden

ABSENT: Board Members Sam Campana and Fred Klein

STAFF: Bill Murphy, Assistant City Manager, Kim Campbell, Senior Assistant City Attorney, Melissa Orr, Acting Library Director, Mandy Carrico, Senior Library Manager Alicia Brillon, Manager

Call to Order

Chair Smigielski called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present as listed above.

Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

RETREAT MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome/Meet and Greet

Chair Smigielski provided an overview of the retreat intent and purpose. She introduced present Board members, as well as guests, Bill Murphy, Assistant City Manager and Kim Campbell, Senior Assistant City Attorney. Mr. Murphy gave a brief outline of his time with the City. He noted the importance of the strategic plan to the library and talked about upcoming events, including those taking place at the new Civic Center over Easter Weekend. City staff is working to promote renewal of library cards by holding events, such as the one at the stadium recently. He added that he is most proud that of all libraries in the Valley, Scottsdale was the only one to stay open during the entire pendency of the pandemic. The success of the drop-off curbside approach has been very well received by residents, as has been the self-check-in at Appaloosa. Library staff continues with innovative approaches and will continue to do so. Chair Smigielski concurred that the Scottsdale

libraries have accomplished wonderful things, commending staff for successfully maintaining service during the pandemic.

2. Purpose of the Library Board

Melissa Orr, Interim Library Director, introduced Kim Campbell, Senior Assistant City Attorney, who has provided legal guidance for the library for over seven years. The intent of the discussion is to provide legal framework particularly applicable to the library, prior to the Board discussion on purpose and mission of the Library Board. The City Council originally formed the Library Board and appointed its members via enactment of an enabling ordinance. The ordinance states that the Library Board shall advise the City Manager and the City Council on general policy related to the operation of the library. The Library Board recommendations are intended to be advisory only and shall not be binding on the City Manager or City Council. A brief overview and purpose of the Board and Commission Member Tool Book was provided. A core responsibility of a Library Board Member is to consider all stakeholders involved in any issue and to restrain personal opinions one might hold on a particular issue. Procedural rules and guidance, Board Member roles and authority to act were reviewed.

Board Member Seiden asked about the appropriateness of a scenario where a Board Member would offer an opinion, such as a letter to the editor. Mandy Carrico, Senior Library Manager, opined that offering opinions not particularly pertaining to the Library or City may be expressed. However, opinions directly regarding the library or City may be viewed by the public as comments representative of the Library Board and should not be made. Ms. Campbell advised that for issues of opinion directly related to the Library or the City, the Board Member should coordinate a response with the staff liaison to ensure appropriateness and that personal views versus views of the Library Board should be distinguished.

Board Member Reyman arrived at 1:21 p.m.

Ms. Orr continued with discussion on how Board Members may fulfill their role, particularly in terms of education on the Scottsdale Library overall. There has been previous input by Board Members that they did not receive adequate training when beginning services on the Board. She worked with the City Clerk Supervisor to gain a greater understanding of the onboarding process. This should have entailed an initial application and direction on conditions of appointment. Once appointed, the process continues with code and ethics training, video training, learning about terms of service and conditions of appointment, open meeting laws, use of electronic devices, accessing board and commission web pages, location of agendas and minutes. Board Members should complete ethics code training on an annual basis.

Ms. Orr cited the American Library Association ALA Library Bill of Rights and asked for Member input on its intent and purpose. Chair Smigielski stated that it offers guidance to all United States libraries towards enabling patrons and communities to engage in library services. Ms. Orr added that library workers learn about the Bill of Rights as part of their training and onboarding process. It provides guidance that materials should not be excluded due to origin, background and views and that points of view on historical issues shall not be removed. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their roles. Meeting rooms available to the public should be offered on an equitable basis regardless of individual beliefs or affiliations requesting use. All people, regardless of origin, age, background or views possess the right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. It is also important for Board Members to have an understanding of the vast services offered by the library, the totality of which was greatly increased during the pandemic. Some such services include homebound delivery, library shops, meeting rooms, books to go, Book Mates, art exhibits, Pony Express, Little

Free Libraries, Ask a Library Librarian, Seed Library at Mustang and interlibrary loans. Material resources include physical books, movies, local author collections, board games, culture passes, downloadables, Hoopla, Cloud Library, Freegal, TumbleBooks for Kids, databases and other resources.

The Library Mission statement is: "Putting people at the heart of dynamic library services." The vision statement is: "Preserve the past, enrich the present and illuminate the future." Members should also familiarize themselves with the Strategic Plan. One of its overriding goals is to create a culture of inclusivity. Chair Smigielski commented that there is much to be proud of with respect to the creation of the Strategic Plan three years ago as a new concept. The Plan provided a vision for implementation in the library and provided a way to convey this vision to the public.

Ms. Orr noted the importance of being familiar with the City's local government and officials as well as community members. Members should also understand how the Library is governed. The Library works closely with the Arizona State Library at many levels, including for grant opportunities. It also works with the Arizona Library Association (ALA) and holds a membership with the Urban Library Council. The Library should also develop a good relationship with local, state and federal government. Board Members have the opportunity to attend budget meetings that involve operations of the Library either in person or online. City Council receives copies of the Board minutes, which are also posted on the City's boards and commissions page as well as the Board's annual report. Board Members should know and support Library policies, such as the material selection policy and the behavior policies.

Vice-Chair Hartman addressed the repeated theme of the importance of educating the community regarding available resources. It has also been advised that Board Members seek input from the community as part of its education function. She posed an outreach idea, where a Board meeting session would take place at a library location in an open access format in order to engage with the community. It had previously been indicated that this would not be permitted, unless staff served in a functional capacity with the Board taking a backseat in the facilitation of the activity. Ms. Carrico stated that a Board meeting would constitute a formal event, which includes the opportunity for public comment. However, Ms. Orr is speaking from an organic perspective, where a Board Member would have occasion to speak to members of the community on a more informal basis. Vice-Chair Hartman clarified that the idea would be an informal format. Chair Smigielski said there is a fine line between talking about Library services and talking about the Library Board itself. Ms. Campbell stated that while the intent may be to hold an informal Board member meet and greet at a library location, from a legal perspective, it has the potential to appear as a formal Library Board meeting.

Vice-Chair Hartman clarified that the meeting could take place in a Library branch meeting room on a completely informal basis with no agenda, but just to facilitate meeting and interacting with community members to receive comments and input. Ms. Orr commented that during the development of the strategic plan, it was challenging to gain participation in the focus groups. There may be more organic options centered around the appointment of Board liaisons at branches. Board Member Reyman commented that without City staff in attendance at an informal meeting, Board Members may be placed in an uncomfortable position of not being able to answer questions from members of the public or perhaps answering a question incorrectly.

Chair Smigielski commented that the first question to answer is whether such a meeting idea is legal. Ms. Campbell stated that the best opportunity for public participation in a Board Meeting is to attend a meeting and exercise their right to provide comments. Vice-Chair Hartman stated that some people may have challenges getting to a Board Meeting at a specific time and place. However, community

members are more inclined to vocalize comments while visiting a branch. Chair Smigielski suggested that as there is no immediate confirmation of the legality of the idea, that it be added as a future agenda item for discussion. Ms. Carrico added that it may be helpful for the Library Board announcements and agendas to have verbiage which would encourage the community to take the opportunity to attend and provide their opinions about the Library. Ms. Campbell said there would be no legal concerns with adding this language.

3. Branch Liaison Role and Best Practices

Board Member Reyman stated that the role of a liaison is to convey branch information to the Board. Chair Smigielski commented that branch liaisons are rotated every year. However, each time this occurs, the branch manager must essentially reeducate the incoming liaison. This creates more work for Library staff. Discussion ensued regarding the effectiveness of the board liaison relationship in terms of interaction and input derived from staff as well as patrons. Ms. Carrico commented on the benefits of the interaction between the branch liaison and branch manager. Interacting with the branch liaison leads to the formation of a relationship conducive to sharing information and ideas. Branch Managers do not interact with the Board as often as they do with their liaison. Board Member Reyman provided an overview of the liaison assignments. The liaisons are responsible for bringing issues from their assigned Libraries to the Board for updates, discussion and action as necessary.

Chair Smigielski added that the Board typically makes its liaison assignments on an annual basis in June. Board Member Esposito suggested the possibility that liaison assignments run through the Board Member's term on the Board, unless the Board Member desires to switch. This will assist in cultivating relationships with staff and provide greater avenues of communication. Board Member Reyman added that liaisons are welcome to visit as many libraries as they wish, whether they are serving as its liaison or as visitor. Branch Managers are willing to have the liaisons attend branch meetings. Liaisons are also able to wear their badges, visit their assigned libraries and interact with Library visitors and attend events. It is important to respect library staff by assisting as much as possible without the appearance of trying to take control. Discussion ensued and consensus was reached that the Board does wish to continue to serve in a liaison role to the branches. It was agreed that this discussion should also be agendaized in order to afford the ability to make motions and vote on specific decisions.

Board Member Reyman disagreed with the concept of Board Members serving as liaisons to their assigned Library for the duration of their Board tenure. It is important for the Libraries to have confidence that there is more than just one Board Member speaking for them. Board Members will certainly regularly visit their home branches. They are free to attend events and wear their badges. In response to a question from Board Member Esposito, there was consensus that Board Members are not required to wear a badge each time they visit a library, particularly when they are visiting with family members and children on a personal basis.

Chair Smigielski expressed support for continuing to rotate liaison assignments, however, it may be helpful for the assignments to be for a term of longer than one year. Board Member Esposito concurred. Ms. Carrico commented that from a staff's perspective, there would be appreciation for longer, more meaningful connections that can be developed over a longer term. Alicia Brillon, Manager, suggested the possibility that each branch have a primary and second Board liaison. In this scenario, should the library lose its primary liaison for some reason, a secondary would be available until the primary liaison is replaced. Board Member Reyman commented that while this is a good idea, there are only seven total liaisons and this structure may stretch them too thin.

Discussion ensued as to the role of the branch liaison, with the main responsibilities identified as working with the library branch manager and attending events and staffing tables. Board Member Seiden commented on the importance of a conference between the exiting and oncoming branch liaison, during which time important updates, information and historical information can be shared. This will greatly assist the oncoming liaison and provide continuity of understanding with library staff.

Board Member Reyman summarized the discussion thus far, adding that other specific roles of the liaison is to educate patrons and providing help to staff in the educational process. This applies directly to available library services, resources and accessibility. Also important is education to library patrons about their ability to provide input to staff via patron comment cards. It was reiterated that the discussion of the liaison roles and responsibilities should be further addressed at an upcoming regular Board meeting.

4. Library Projects/Programs of Interest to the Board

Board Member Esposito stated that she was interested in seeing the development of adult English-speaking learn to read classes. This would not be an ESL program but would be designed to assist English speaking adults with their reading skills. Board Member Reyman asked whether the Library currently offers adult reading programs. Ms. Orr stated that there are currently no such programs for English speaking individuals. Historically, there have not been requests for English speaking reading programs. Such programs typically require volunteers as they do not have a primary staff role. However, community members are welcome to request availability of such programs via submission of a proposal. There is also the option of working with the volunteer supervisor. The Scottsdale Library system belongs to AVACA a group of libraries and professionals who work with volunteers. This would be one avenue to determine interest, skills and availability of a volunteer who would be willing to provide these services. However, even with the participation of volunteers, considerable staff time is involved in setting up the room and other logistics. Adult services staff could confer and determine the viability of such a service. There are also challenges with advanced planning and time restrictions. The adult and youth coordinators review programs with ongoing basis. All of these factors, conditions and individuals would play a role in the creation and operation of such a proposed class or program. Ms. Carrico added that trends are analyzed to determine demand for a requested service and whether such programs would be duplicative of opportunities already available in the community.

Ms. Orr discussed the ESOL program, which was offered for quite some time through community centers via a fee. The library has since taken on the program on a free of charge basis, with an intent to offer the service at all branches. The ESOL program offers levels from beginner to advanced. Over time, there began to be requests for citizenship classes, such as those being offered in Chandler. Prior to COVID, the Library had developed ESOL preparation classes for citizenship. Interest and demand are the driving factors for programming decisions. For the proposed reading class suggested by Ms. Esposito, it is important to keep in mind that Library staff do not teach recurring classes. A volunteer would have to be available. Ms. Carrico added that even when a volunteer is available, competition remains for space, staff time and resources.

Ms. Orr commented that while staff are amazing, they are also overwhelmed at times. Scottsdale staff is overworked in comparison to other cities, as they continue to work under very high expectations. This needs to be considered when proposing new programs and services. There are also occasional issues with volunteers not showing up when scheduled and the repercussions of reactions from upset patrons. Room rentals are active once again, which means that the Library is sometimes in competition with outside entities for space availability. The Library has had a return of volunteers necessary for the services reestablished after COVID, however the total has been greatly

reduced from approximately 300 to approximately 100. A number of past programs are no longer working and much reevaluation has been done.

Ms. Orr stated that Scottsdale is known for its Knowing and Growing youth programs. The STEM and STEAM programs are top-notch and very well received and utilized. Some programs are made possible through grant opportunities. There may be challenges in continuing with successful programs in cases where grants are time or funding limited. In addition, programs should not provide extra work for staff. Service suffers when too much is asked of staff. Ms. Carrico added that the pandemic forced a significant volume of retirements, causing a loss of institutional knowledge and experience. Currently, over one-third of Library staff have been on board for less than two years. There has also been a shift in the nature of complaints, which have become more personal and cultural.

Ms. Orr noted that staff does evaluate youth and adult programs in terms of interest and participation, with a current effort to obtain survey responses from attendees. That input is helpful in terms of suggested changes, things that are being done well as well as ideas for other programs and services. As part of the strategic plan, they are more carefully evaluating methods and means for evaluating programs. Board Members are also encouraged to send their ideas directly to her, as she can forward the ideas to the relevant parties for discussion and possible action. In addition, Scottsdale has good relationships with libraries in surrounding cities, so patrons can be referred to available sources in and out of Scottsdale.

Vice-Chair Hartman asked about programs that are delivered online as well as the feasibility of adding additional web-based programs. Such services would be helpful to otherwise homebound patrons. Ms. Orr stated that online programs were the only programs offered during the pandemic. This included story times and other programs. There were challenges, including reduced interest levels and reporting issues to the state library for statistics. Only the first 24 hours of participation were counted for statistical tracking. As soon as the COVID restrictions were lifted, interest in online programs plummeted. Staff time had to be rededicated to in-person services. It is also notable that running the story time program online took twice as long as the in-person structure. Some online adult programs continued for some time. Ms. Carrico agreed that doing a program online takes twice as long, including the setup, recording and editing. The public was very clear that as soon as the library was open to in-person participation, they were no longer interested in online programming.

Vice-Chair Hartman commented that during the strategic planning process, there was discussion that there are pockets of patrons who cannot attend in person. Such programs offered via Zoom would require no recording or editing. Ms. Carrico commented that services can be offered based on participation, however for the sake of time and resources, they have to be withdrawn, if there is no demonstrated interest. Ms. Orr said there were a few popular online programs, including Kahoot! trivia game activities. However, this became very expensive and had to be cut. Some advanced computer classes were also popular. However, the volunteers themselves preferred to be in person and did not enjoy the online format.

Board Member Reyman made a suggestion on the YouTube boot camp program. Having a survey on the first night and the last night would be more effective than having one every week. She also commented that the online presence has made a big difference for those interested in online access to classes and programs. It may be feasible to engage with companies who are willing to host classes and this would free up Library staff and resources. Board Member Seiden added that notices could be placed on libraries inviting volunteers to participate in online programs.

Ms. Orr stated that a space is being created in the Loft for art programs and crafts. It is hoped to develop it into an open space. The intent is to allow makers to come in for up to two hours per day to use the sewing machine, die cut machines and other crafting equipment.

5. Community Outreach

Vice-Chair Hartman addressed the ways in which Board Members may engage with the community. This relates directly to developing a stronger connection with senior centers. Another topic for discussion is the level at which Board Members engage in community events. Library events occur on a continual basis and these are tracked on a calendar. There may be some events, such as National Library Week, where the Board may wish to participate and celebrate. One of the keys is having advanced notice sufficient to allow the Board time for consideration and potential planning. It would be helpful for the Board to have a roster of events planned for the entire year. In addition, there are other City events for which the Board may not receive notification, however some of these luncheons, celebrations and recognitions may be highly relevant to the Board. She would like to have the Library Board included on the notification list for what have historically been non-Library related events, but which may be of significant interest. Ms. Orr commented that National Volunteer Week is coming up in April and there will be a Volunteer Tea event. The Library Board could be featured on social media in conjunction with the event.

Chair Smigielski asked for input on the previous offer for the Library Board to have a table at big events. Ms. Orr stated that some information is included in the Board retreat packet. Available resources to the Board for this purpose include packets of information to be used in public interaction, including location information, resources and programs. The Friends of the Library attend large events and offer giveaways, such as bracelets, glow sticks and fidget spinners. Community engagement opportunities include the Old Town Farmer's Market, occurring the first Saturday of every month between October and May. Other activities include October GAIN parties, family read aloud nights and parade participation. It is notable that the City just completed its survey. Besides fire and police, the library received the highest satisfaction rating.

Ms. Orr discussed impending library programming beginning at the Civic Center for a number of events. A grant was written for \$15,000 to have an author affair. Authors will be paid to appear for different age groups. The culminating event is a book fair featuring author collections. Other opportunities for participation, such as Cesar Chavez, Pride parade, Juneteenth, Exclusively Little, All Things Senior, library cardholder event, Paiute Expo, the Bunnanza Event, Halloween Family Fun, Library all staff conference and Story Time.

In response to a question from Vice-Chair Hartman, Ms. Orr noted that there are opportunities for Board Member participation on one or more library committees, particularly in terms of the strategic plan. Vice-Chair Hartman clarified that Board Members would not be engaged in decisions regarding execution, however they may be interested in participating in discussions regarding objectives and strategies. She also commented that if the Board moves forward with increased engagement, they are essentially making the strategic decision to raise the profile as a Library Board. It is worth discussing whether this is a desirable direction. Chair Smigielski stated that every City board has to make a similar determination. Board Member Reyman recommended that outside committee participation by Board members should be on a rotational basis, so as to avoid having just one person participating on an ongoing basis.

Discussion ensued regard outreach to senior centers with suggestions for the possibility of a mini-library installation, attending outreach events. Ms. Orr commented that the Hold It locker will be going

in at the Granite Reef Senior Center. A second chance collection is now installed at the Via Linda Senior Center.

6. Closing and Retreat Summary

Chair Smigielski thanked everyone for their participation and commented on the quality of the retreat experience and discussion. An upcoming agenda item will include a list of takeaways. Board Member thanked staff for their work, time and attention.

7. Adjournment

BOARD MEMBER SEIDEN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 4:49 P.M. BOARD MEMBER REYMAN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A VOTE OF FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR SMIGIELSKI, VICE-CHAIR HARTMAN, AND BOARD MEMBERS ESPOSITO, REYMAN, AND SEIDEN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

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