

Session 22-06, a Regular Meeting of the Library Advisory Board was called to order by Chair Kate Finn at 5:30 p.m. on August 16, 2022 at the City Hall Conference Room located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.

PRESENT: BOARDMEMBERS KUSZMAUL, BAILY, FAIR, MCKINNEY, FINN, AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON

ABSENT: BOARDMEMBERS SPRINGER AND DOLMA (both excused)

STAFF: LIBRARY DIRECTOR BERRY
DEPUTY CITY CLERK TUSSEY

AGENDA APPROVAL

BAILY/KUSZMAUL MOVED TO ACCEPT THE AGENDA.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

RECONSIDERATION

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. May 17, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

FAIR/BAILY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 17TH REGULAR MEETING MINUTES.

There was no discussion.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

VISITORS/PRESENTATIONS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Library Director Reports for May, June, and July 2022
i. 2021 & 2022 Statistical Reports

Library Director Berry summarized his three written reports and responded to questions from boardmembers.

B. Legislative Update

Chair Finn provided a verbal report on a 2023 federal funding bill that would provide up to \$20 million to improve public and tribal museums and libraries. Discussion ensued on the importance of

advocating to the newly-elected legislators on keeping up with Don Young's support of libraries. She provided an update on SLED funding and how Governor Dunleavy had vetoed the library funding again. Once the election is over they will have a better idea of where to focus their lobbying efforts.

C. Fundraising Update

Boardmember Kuszmaul spoke to The Homer Foundation's quarterly report she provided as a laydown item, highlighting the donations received. She shared the update from Mooserun Metalsmiths that there was a delay in their metal fish order for the outdoor donation wall. She is hesitant to advertise a display/recognition event until they have them in-hand. There was discussion on a notably large anonymous donation and questions from Boardmember Baily regarding the endowment fund and its management.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Memo from Library Director Re: Reorganization of City Offices

Chair Finn introduced the agenda item by reading the title. She noted that this topic will not be on City Council's next meeting agenda. Boardmember Baily requested that if this topic is expected to be on the agenda, that the board be notified so they can plan to attend.

Chair Finn shared the conversation she had with City Manager Dumouchel and how their previous comments are to be submitted to City Council; his comments will be in addition to theirs. Library Director Berry will be the one to notify the board when it comes before Council.

Boardmember Fair reiterated what he understood from the lengthy discussions at their April and May meetings – their request was for Mr. Berry's services be temporary up to a year, and that a stand-alone IT department be separate from the Library. Mr. Berry explained how the initial proposal referenced is from the City Manager's proposal, and he cannot project exactly when that proposed IT department would take fruition; there were delays in hiring another IT staff person and they are back to advertising for the position.

Discussion ensued on the practicalities of how the proposal would shake out, that any plans from the City Manager are still in the planning stages, and the crisis status of the City's IT staffing needs.

Chair Finn recapped the motion the LAB made at their last meeting opposing the reorganization and facilitated discussion with the board on if they were still in agreement with it. The motion read as follows: KUSZMAUL/MCKINNEY MOVED THAT THE LAB EXPRESSES ITS NON-SUPPORT FOR THE CREATION OF A NEW DEPARTMENT CALLED LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES, AND ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE PROPOSAL HAS AWAKED PASSION IN THE COMMUNITY AND CONCERN FOR ITS IMPACT ON LIBRARY SERVICES. THE LAB RECOMMENDS THAT THE CITY PRIORITIZE THE CREATION OF AN IT DEPARTMENT TO ADDRESS ALL THE IT NEEDS, AND IF THE CITY CANNOT DO THAT IN AN EXPEDITIOUS MANNER THAT AN ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE WOULD BE TO FORMALIZE THE LOAN OF THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR TO CONTINUE HELPING WITH A TIME LIMIT OF A YEAR.

In response to discussion comments concerning the Library Director's job description and the City Manager's responsibilities as staff manager, Deputy City Clerk Tussey clarified the duties of the LAB as outlined in Homer City Code, specifically their role as an advisory body.

FAIR/KUSZMAUL MOVED TO REITERATE THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE SAME MOTION MADE.

Boardmember Fair opined that the motion previously made at the May 17th meeting is fine the way it is.

Chair Finn confirmed that she would be reading this motion again to City Council when she goes in for the LAB report.

Boardmember Kuszmaul shared comments made by Mayor Castner on the importance of boards and commissions; he wanted those groups to be very active, informed, to truly “advise”, and that they should not feel their role is diminished when providing input.

In response to Chair Finn’s inquiry on if other bodies within the organization were affected by these changes, Ms. Tussey explained which other advisory bodies and their assigned staff liaisons have been impacted by the departmental/division restructuring; it has not just been the library.

Boardmember McKinney pointed out a typo in the original motion, noting that it should read “...the proposal has awakened passion...” and not “awaked passion”.

VOTE: NON-OBJECTION: UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Memo from Library Director Re: Update on Materials Challenges
 - i. Homer Public Library Collection Development Policy
 - ii. Petition to Remove LGBTQ+ Books from the Children’s Section
 - iii. Library Director’s Response to Petition to Remove Materials
 - iv. Article from Alaska Watchman dated July 26, 2022
 - v. American Library Association (ALA) 2021 Statement on Banned Books
 - vi. American Library Association (ALA) Materials Related to Book Challenges

Chair Finn introduced the agenda item by reading the title and deferred to Library Director Berry.

Mr. Berry spoke to the petition he received July 1st and his response to it. Not much has progressed since then until the end of July when the topic gained more attention statewide. Another petition has garnered more signatures but has yet to be submitted to any other deciding body.

Mr. Berry responded to questions and explained how the established process and policy operates, and if a petition is brought before City Council directly it would be re-routed to the LAB.

Boardmember Baily noted that since the LAB is the appeal body according to policy, he suggested the board remain impartial in their discussion about the matter. They should not make or suggest making any decision that might be the type they would have to make during an appeal hearing. Deputy City Clerk Tussey commented that Boardmember Baily’s advice is strongly supported by the Clerk’s Office and City Attorney.

Boardmember Kuszmaul commented that she would like to ensure the board is clear on the appeal process. In response to questions from boardmembers, Mr. Berry explained the logistical process if an appeal is brought before the board and spoke to the established process by Council. Boardmember Kuszmaul noted that the Library Bill of Rights, included as an attachment to the adopted policy, has

recently been updated to include language on libraries advocating for the protection of people's privacy.

Discussion ensued on Boardmember Kuszmaul's suggestion to make available a pamphlet provided by the American Library Association on the Library Bill of Rights, recent events at other public libraries concerning collection challenges and videoing within the library, and what would happen in the case of someone recording library employees.

Boardmember Kuszmaul requested the Collection Development Policy be reviewed at their January regular meeting when the LAB conducts their annual review of library policies.

B. Memo from Library Director Re: Budget Expectations for FY2024/25

Chair Finn introduced the agenda item by reading the title and deferred to Library Director Berry.

Mr. Berry spoke to and responded to questions from the board on the upcoming budget cycle, how the planning phase is coming up, and what he intends to bring up at his financial planning meetings with the City Manager. He explained all the library building repairs that are needed and his efforts to work with Building Maintenance on gathering project costs. These expenses will likely be funded through the capital improvement budget rather than through ordinary operating funds.

C. Memo from Library Director Re: Update on Library Western Lot Project

Chair Finn introduced the agenda item by reading the title and deferred to Library Director Berry.

Mr. Berry reiterated his update given during his staff report and that is summarized in writing in his memo. There were no further questions or discussion from the board.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Pathways to Resilience Article dated August 5, 2022
- B. Library Board Training Resources Provided by the Alaska State Library
- C. LAB 2022 Calendar

Chair Finn noted the informational materials provided. In response to Boardmember Kuszmaul's question on the Pathways to Resilience article, Library Director Berry explained how the item was submitted by Boardmember Dolma and not in response to any particular incidents at the library.

Mr. Berry pointed out the Alaska State Library resource training events that are coming up and asked any boardmembers interested in participating to contact him.

Chair Finn agreed to attend the August 22nd City Council meeting and requested that boardmembers volunteer for future meetings.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY STAFF

Library Director Berry and Deputy City Clerk Tussey had no further comments.

COMMENTS OF THE BOARD

Boardmember Fair complimented the library staff for how much they assist him when he's conducting research projects, and it's so nice to have a cooperative group to work with.

Boardmember Kuszmaul commended Boardmember Baily for his legal expertise and how helpful it was to the board. She thanked him for joining and that the board should always find ways to encourage new members.

Chair Finn commented on the community involvement and input from various local groups and organizations that help support the community and the library, such as Kenai Peninsula Votes (KPV) helping people get out to vote and the candidate forum.

Boardmembers McKinney, Baily, and Student Representative Johnson had no comments.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Finn adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, September 20, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom Webinar.



RACHEL TUSSEY, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK II

Approved: September 20, 2022