

ST. HELENS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

Monday, December 9, 2024 at 7:15 PM
Virtually over Zoom

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present

Chair Aaron Martin
Vice-Chair Fatima Salas
Member Robert Dunn
Member Jay Echternach
Member Ellen Jacobson
Member Jana Mann
Member Lynne Pettit

Members Absent

Member Colleen Ohler
Member Diana Wiener

Councilors in Attendance

Councilor Russell Hubbard

Visitors

None

Staff Present

Library Director Suzanne Bishop
Library Board Secretary Dan Dieter

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:17 pm by Chair Martin.

VISITOR COMMENTS *Limited to three (3) minutes per speaker.*

No visitor comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Minutes from regular board meeting, November 18, 2024, were reviewed.

Motion: Upon Member Dunn's motion and Member Jacobson's second, the Library Board unanimously approved the minutes dated November 18, 2024. [Yeas: Chair Martin, Vice-Chair Salas, Member Dunn, Member Echternach, Member Jacobson, Member Mann, Member Pettit; Nays: none]

OLD BUSINESS

2. BYLAWS UPDATE: Director Bishop introduced the changes to the draft bylaws document that were suggested by Member Pettit. The group discussed the changes. Motion: upon Member Dunn's motion and Member Mann's second, the Library Board unanimously approved the bylaws with the changes as presented. [Yeas: Chair Martin, Vice-Chair Salas, Member Dunn, Member Echternach, Member Jacobson, Member Mann, Member Pettit; Nays: none]

NEW BUSINESS

3. MAKERSPACE EXPANSION: Director Bishop described the current effort to expand to the space next to the current Makerspace. The Columbia County Economic Team (CCET) and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) have vacated their two office spaces, leaving a large room and a small office available for this expansion. The group discussed possible expansion costs, most of which would be the rent charged by the Columbia Learning Center (CLC), the group that funded the building of the library and is the current owner until 2035. The cost of rent could be problematic for the City's budget, but the group discussed other methods of raising the necessary funds. The current space is very popular, with 111 participants in programs from October 24 through December 6. The CLC will draft a letter of support and Director Bishop suggested that the library board draft one as well. There were several suggestions about how to raise funds for the space. Vice-Chair Salas asked how consumable materials are charged for. Director Bishop stated that the cost of materials used in the Makerspace is passed on to the user.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Bishop stated that going forward, Youth and Makerspace Librarian Wiersma has been devoting quite a bit of extra time to getting the Makerspace up and running and will be now pulling back from the Makerspace to devote more time to youth services programs. Staff are searching for community members to co-present and lead classes. They are talking about developing a teen advisory board which would be a group of teens that meet once a month to work on a project, etc. Over the holidays they are going to host a scavenger hunt in the children's room and offer "take-and-makes." In January, they are going to move the toddler story time to the auditorium, as it is getting too crowded in the children's room. Holiday closures include December 24 and 25, 2024 and January 1, 2025. The library will close at 5:00 pm on New Year's Eve. Director Bishop will be gone from December 31 through January 11. Reference Librarian Herren-Kenaga will be in charge during their absence. Our facilities updates include the replacement of some faulty recessed lights and passing our fire sprinkler alarm system inspection. There are three-year and five-year tests that we are planning as well. They are expensive so we will plan accordingly. Comcast is planning to move their lines from above-ground to below-ground next Monday, December 16, at around 5:30 pm. Because of this move, the library will be without internet access, which includes phone service, for about two hours. They have fully implemented doubling up staffing in the Makerspace, so they will have at least two people in the space for programs. Volunteers are also available to be one of the two as long as they have taken the child abuse training that is mandatory for library staff. Lastly, Director Bishop wanted to ask about having a board retreat. Member Jacobson stated that after completing the strategic plan last year, it would be good to check in and see how well the library is doing. This would potentially be a half-day activity, maybe on a weekend. They need to verify the proper process through public meeting laws. They will start this process by reviewing the strategic plan at the next board meeting.

COUNCILOR'S REPORT

Councilor Hubbard stated that with the new mayor coming on board in January, there's going to be some changes and directions will be different. The library will remain an important component of city services. He is excited to be representing the library, and he will definitely work on your new space. He thinks the retreat is a great idea. The board can all get together and work on things and get a good outline for its direction. It's all positive right now.

OTHER BUSINESS

Member Echternach volunteered to draft a support letter on behalf of the board for highlighting the benefits of the Makerspace to the community.

SUMMARIZE ACTION ITEMS

Chair Martin described the action items: Director Bishop will forward the bylaws to City Council for approval, Member Echternach will draft a support letter on behalf of the board and submit that to Director Bishop for distribution and approval by board members, and the strategic planning document will be added to the January board agenda to initiate the process of a strategic planning retreat.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Martin adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Dan Dieter
Library Board Secretary