

Board of Trustees Regular Meeting  
Branch District Library  
Conducted Virtually on Zoom/YouTube Due to the Coronavirus  
Monday, February 15, 2021 5:30 pm

**MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order**

BDL President Ben Jewell, called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Roll Call / Attendance**

Board Members Present: Ben Jewell, attending from Coldwater, MI; Tom Lowande, attending from Union City, MI; Martha Watson, attending from Coldwater, MI; Susan Brooks, attending from Coldwater, MI; Karen Smith, attending from Bronson, MI; Sue Smith, attending from Quincy, MI; and Kim Langworthy, attending from Coldwater, MI.

Board Members Absent/Excused: Sue Smith

Others Present: John Rucker, Kimberly Feltner, Jessica Tefft, Lisa Wood, Julia Baratta, and Tim Taylor via Zoom, and 5 people via YouTube.

**4. Time for Public Comments.** No public comments were made.

**5. Consent Agenda (Items A-J)**

Motion by Martha Watson, supported by Tom Lowande, to approve the Consent Agenda and place the items within on file. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

- A) BDL Regular Meeting Minutes: January 18, 2021
- B) Bills: December 2020
- C) Bills: January 2021
- D) Financial Statements: January 2021
- E) Branch County Penal Fine Report: *January report not yet available.*
- F) Administrative Reports: February 12, 2021
- G) Branch Reports: February 12, 2021
- H) Monthly Statistical Report: December 2020
- I) Monthly Statistical Report: January 2021
- J) Publicity and Comments: February 12, 2021

**6. Approval of the Agenda**

Motion by Karen Smith, supported by Susie Brooks, to approve the Agenda. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**7. 2020 Audit Report**

Tim Taylor from the accounting firm of Taylor, Plant & Watkins presented his firm's audit report of the Library's financial performance and status for the year ending December 31, 2020. In summary, the Library's financial status is very good, in part because spending was well under budget in almost every category resulting in an increase of about \$180,000 to our unassigned fund balance. That was the result of operational changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Motion by Tom Lowande, supported by Kim

Langworthy, to approve and accept the audit report. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**8. Funding Request: Union Township Branch**

Julia Baratta, Union Township Branch Manager, requested approval to spend \$1,215.61 from the Union Township Branch Trust Fund to purchase 40 different animal and insect puppets to use for story times, programs, and decorations. Motion by Martha Watson, supported by Kim Langworthy, to approve the request. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**9. Amnesty Proposal**

Director John Rucker proposed that the Board approve a one-time only, no strings attached, complete amnesty for almost \$54,000 still owed to us by our patrons for lost or damaged items. We abolished fines for overdue materials some time ago, but we did not stop charging patrons for lost or damaged material. The proposal to wipe out those debts and allow everyone to start fresh is in consideration of the effect of the pandemic on our patrons and the fact that we would not like anyone to be prohibited from using the Library due to those old fees. Board members expressed concerns about the amount of money we would be forgiving and asked questions about the number and ages of patrons this would affect. Answers to the questions were not immediately available. Motion by Martha Watson, supported by Tom Lowande, to table this matter until the March meeting so additional information can be researched. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**10. Michigan Library Privacy Act Changes**

The *Michigan Library Privacy Act* was recently revised. Among the revisions is to authorize libraries to share surveillance video with law enforcement without a warrant provided that no records of library materials usage are included in the video. This change had been requested by both Michigan libraries and law enforcement agencies. Most of our policies simply say we will abide by the *Privacy Act* so no changes are needed. However, President Jewell recommends a small change to our already quite short *Policy for Responding to Requests from Law Enforcement Officials*. The current policy with the proposed changes is as follows:

“The Branch District Library makes every effort to respect the privacy of its patrons. No private information will be released to law enforcement agencies ~~without a subpoena, warrant, or other proper legal request~~ except as is required by or in compliance with State and Federal Law. The Library Director, or the Director’s designee, are the only Library Staff authorized to respond to such requests.”

Motion by Tom Lowande, supported by Karen Smith, to approve the recommended policy change. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Director Rucker will contact local law enforcement agencies to inform them of the changes to this policy.

**11. National Library Workers’ Day**

Martha Watson explained what the Board has done in recent past years to recognize and celebrate all of our employees in honor of National Library Workers’ Day which occurs this year on April 6<sup>th</sup> this year. We have placed an ad in the *Shopper*, passed a resolution and, except for last year, provided treats for an all-staff meeting. That wasn’t possible last year, and probably won’t be possible this year, due to pandemic restrictions on group gatherings. Motion by Tom Lowande, supported by Kim Langworthy, to table action on this until the March meeting. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**12. Director’s Evaluation Process**

Martha Watson briefly walked through the process proposed by the Personnel Committee which is pretty much the same as we have used in previous years minus specific objectives for 2020. We did not do those since we didn’t know what would or would not be possible given the pandemic. The evaluation process will occur over the next 2 months. Director Rucker will do a self-evaluation presentation at our March meeting. Trustees will be provided with evaluation forms to complete and

return to Martha by March 31<sup>st</sup>. Martha will compile the individual ratings into a single overall evaluation which will be discussed and finalized at the April meeting. Motion by Martha Watson, supported by Tom Lowande, to approve the proposed evaluation process and timetable. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**13. COVID-19 Update**

This was an informational item and no action was taken. The main news was that we have all healthy employees and have had no recent reports of anyone ill with the virus or exposed to someone who has the virus.

**14. Announcements**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Branch District Library Board of Trustees will be held virtually on Monday, March 15, 2021, at 5:30 pm. Connection details will be posted on the Library website.

**15. Additional Public Comments** – No additional comments were made.

**16. Adjournment**

Motion by Tom Lowande, supported by Karen Smith, to adjourn the meeting. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Martha J. Watson  
BDL Board Secretary

The Branch District Library will provide necessary and reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon one week's notice to the Branch District Library by writing or calling the following:

Branch District Library, 10 E. Chicago St., Coldwater, MI 49036  
(517) 278-2341  
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