

**Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Branch District Library
Conducted Virtually on Zoom/YouTube Due to the Coronavirus
Monday, November 16, 2020
5:30 pm**

NOTE: In accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act, which allows public bodies to use telephone or video conferencing technology through December 31, 2020 to meet and conduct business, the Branch District Library Board of Trustees live streamed this meeting via Zoom and YouTube to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Instructions were provided in the meeting notice for how the public could watch or listen to the meeting and provide public comment. All votes taken during the meeting were done by roll call.

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; and Sue Smith, attending from Quincy, MI.
Board Members Absent/Excused: Karen Smith and Kim Langworthy
Others Present: John Rucker, Kimberly Feltner, Keeley Briggs, Ashley McCall, and Lisa Wood on Zoom, plus 4 anonymous YouTube participants.
- 4. Time for Public Comments.** No public comments were made.
- 5. Consent Agenda (Items A-H)**
Motion by Tom Lowande, supported by Martha Watson, 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: October 19, 2020
 - B) Bills: October 2020
 - C) Financial Statements: October 2020
 - D) Branch County Penal Fine Report: September 2020
 - E) Management Reports: November 13, 2020
 - F) Branch Reports: November 13, 2020
 - G) Monthly Statistical Report: October 2020
 - H) Publicity and Comments: November 13, 2020
- 6. Approval of the Agenda**
Motion by Martha Watson, supported by Susie Brooks, to approve the Agenda. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.
- 7. Budget Hearing: Final Reading of the 2021 Operating and Special Revenues Fund Budgets**

Library Director John Rucker presented a report on a couple of corrections to the proposed 2021 budgets which had their first reading at the Board's October meeting. He also presented two proposed changes which were approved by the Finance Committee for submission to the full Board:

A) Two salary range steps were incorrect. One changed from \$15.68 to \$14.95 and the change affected the pay rates of 4 positions. The other changed from \$18.72 to \$18.73 and affected 1 position. The Board did not need a separate motion to approve these two rate corrections as they would be approved as part of a later motion to approve the full budgets.

B) One of the proposed new changes is to increase the per diem rate for BDL Trustees from \$25 per meeting to \$50 per meeting. The \$25 rate is in our bylaws and has been in effect since the BDL was formed in 1991. It is capped at 24 meetings in a budget year. In October this year, the County Commissioners increased the per diem rate of the Commissioners and members of other county boards from \$30 to \$50 which is why it was thought that this might be a good time to update the per diem rate for our trustees. After discussion, it was determined to take no action at this time but, rather, to consider again when we do a complete review of our bylaws.

C) The version of the Operating Budget heard at the October meeting included a cost of living rate increase (COLA) for all staff of 2.0%. It was noted that Branch County approved a COLA of 2.6% for its non-union employees. Discussion centered around giving BDL employees COLA's similar to other local public employees if we could afford to do so. With the correction of the rate errors noted in paragraph A above, a 2.6% increase for all employees would only put us about \$326 over projected revenues for 2021. Since we know we have budgeted some items that will not be spent in their entirety, the extra \$326 will not put us over budget in reality. Motion by Martha Watson, supported by Tom Lowande, to change the COLA for all employees from 2.0% to 2.6%.
By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

There was no other discussion about the proposed final 2021 Operating and Special Revenue Fund Budgets.

Motion by Martha Watson, supported by Sue Smith, to approve the final 2021 Operating Fund Budget with the changes noted in paragraphs A and C, above. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Martha Watson, supported by Susie Brooks, to approve the proposed final 2021 Special Revenues Fund Budget. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

8. Update to the *Employment Handbook*

On October 14, a series of emergency MIOSHA Rules (Rules 705164_7) went into effect. Most of these rules essentially are the same as the recently invalidated Covid-19 Executive Orders, which the BDL's policies and procedures already cover. However, one is new: Rule 5 item 8, states that "The employer shall create a policy prohibiting in-person work for employees to the extent that their work activities can feasibly be completed remotely." To that end, Director Rucker proposed amending the *Employment Handbook* to add a section addressing working from home under any circumstances, not just during the current pandemic. Motion by Martha Watson, supported by Sue Smith, to amend the *Employment Handbook* to add a new Section 13.6 "Working from Home". By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The *Handbook* has been updated on the BDL website to include this new language.

9. Open Meetings Act (OMA) Update

This was an informational item and no action was taken. The OMA was recently amended to address virtual meetings by public boards. The first change noted by the Board is reflected in the attendance roll call in item # 3, above: any member of a public body who virtually attends a public meeting must announce at the beginning of the meeting the place (town, township, or city and state) from which they are participating. So as long as that law is in effect, we will have an oral roll call at the beginning of every meeting for that purpose.

Beyond that change, we can continue to meet as we have been through 31 December 2020. Beginning 1 January 2021 and through 31 December 2021, virtual attendance at public board meetings may be used only in 3 instances: 1) a trustee is away on military service, 2) a trustee has a medical condition which prevents them from attending in person, or 3) there is a statewide or locally declared state of emergency. From 1 January 2022 onward, only trustees away on military service would be permitted to virtually attend board meetings. Taken as a whole, these changes would invalidate our Virtual Attendance Policy by January 2022. Since it appears that the pandemic will be with us for at least several more months, it is possible that the Legislature will change the law again to allow public boards to continue meeting virtually as we have been beyond 31 December 2020.

10. **BDL Board Meeting Dates for 2021**

Every year the BDL Board specifies when it will meet during the next year. Motion by Martha Watson, supported by Susie Brooks, to approve the following list of regular board meeting dates and places for 2021. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. All meetings will begin at 5:30 pm unless otherwise specified on the meeting notice.

January 18, 2021	Coldwater Branch
February 15, 2021	Coldwater Branch
March 15, 2021	Coldwater Branch
April 19, 2021	Coldwater Branch
May 17, 2021	Lucille E. Dearth Union Twp. Branch
June 21, 2021	Sherwood Branch
July 19, 2021	Quincy Branch
August 16, 2021	Bronson Branch
September 20, 2021	Alganssee Branch
October 18, 2021	Coldwater Branch
November 15, 2021	Coldwater Branch
December 20, 2021	Coldwater Branch

11. **BDL Holidays and Closing Dates for 2021**

The Board has traditionally specified the holidays during which the BDL will be closed every year. This year, the Board is adding other dates that our branches will be closed for staff training. Trustee Martha Watson expressed concern about recognizing and closing on Good Friday which is a traditional special day for Christianity, but not for other religions and noted that we have a fairly large population in our service area of people whose religion is not Christianity. While the same could be said of Christmas, it was also noted that Christmas has become widely recognized as a secular holiday. There was much discussion about this subject and about what other day might be substituted were the Board to decide to drop Good Friday as a scheduled holiday. While it was clear that there were differences of opinion on this matter, Watson chose to put the matter to a vote. Motion by Martha Watson, supported by Ben Jewell, to approve the proposed list of holidays and closing dates with one change to replace April 2nd, Good Friday, with President's Day which is Monday, 15 February 2021. By roll call vote, the motion carried by a vote of 3 in favor and 2 opposed. Director Rucker noted that February 15th is also a day we had just approved as a board meeting day and questioned whether we could open just for the board meeting. There was general agreement that that should not be a problem.

12. **COVID-19 Update**

This was an informational item and no action was taken. Director Rucker reported on the BDL's reversion to providing curbside service only. However, we will be offering other curbside services such as notary service, printing, photocopying, and short-term use of BDL laptops in the parking lots.

13. **Announcements**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Branch District Library Board of Trustees will be held virtually Monday, December 21, 2020, at 5:30 pm. Connection details will be posted on the BDL website.

14. Additional Public Comments – None.

15. Adjournment

Motion by Martha Watson, supported by Sue Smith, to adjourn the meeting. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 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
info@BranchDistrictLibrary.org