



**LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023
4:00 P.M.**

The Board met in regular session in a hybrid format via Zoom webinar and in person.

Chair Amy Ghilieri called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1) ROLL CALL

Board Members Present: Frank Perez, Amy Ghilieri, Lea Grace, Ann Medaille

Board Members Absent: None

County Staff Present: Library Director Jeff Scott, Deputy District Attorney Dania Reid, Assistant County Manager David Solaro

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

Bruce Parks stated the presentation given in November was anything but fair, and that it had been biased and more propaganda than anything. He thought reading to kids was fundamental to their development and ability to succeed in school, but he was not convinced it was acceptable to read to kids in drag. He stated his objective was not hate or fear, but he believed drag queen story time events were confusing to kids and subjected them to pedophiles. He mentioned that the Friends of the Washoe County library donated money to the library and noted a woman had resigned her position because she did not support the drag queen events.

Misty Carter said she had sent an email that morning imploring the Board to strongly reconsider drag queen story time events and ban them. She said she received a response to her email, but it was not the response she had been seeking. She wanted to know what the objective was for having men dress as woman and read to children, and why they did not ask someone to dress up as a firefighter rather than in a sexual way. She discussed gender confusion amongst children and stated the drag queen story time event was garbage which needed to stop.

Stacy Piro spoke regarding her opposition to the drag queen event, which she felt was a horrid use of libraries. She said it made no sense to come to meetings anymore as the Trustees did not communicate and those opposed to the events had been ignored.

Valerie Fiannaca said she would not go away until the events ended. She believed she got the Library's attention since Director Scott had posted a response to public comments made at a recent meeting of the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (BCC). She hoped the Library Board watched BCC meetings. She mentioned that Commissioner Herman had questioned the District Attorney (DA) three times regarding the Nevada Revised Statutes and the Library's avenues of funding; the DA responded that Director Scott had the ability to do any programming he chose, however, the BCC had final approval on funding. Ms. Fiannaca said that, while the protestors did not want the libraries to go away, the BCC could take away their funding.

Sandee Tibbett spoke regarding her opposition to the drag queen story events, stating drag queens did not belong in front of children. She opined this was a form of child abuse and endangerment, and a perverted agenda was being pushed on kids. She wanted the Board to stop hosting drag queen story events at all Washoe County Libraries.

Renee Resendez described an individual named Cloe Cole who transitioned hormonally at 15 years old. Cloe was now 18 and was suing doctors, saying she had been confused at the time, and that they had pushed her to make the decision to transition, which she later regretted. Ms. Resendez stated transitioning could be intriguing for children and that they would accept whatever influence they had around them as they were very easily influenced. She opined the drag queen story time events were not innocent, but harmful.

Janet Butcher commented that, after the last BCC meeting, comments had been made regarding the Friends of the Library being the organization which funded the drag queen story time event, not the BCC. Ms. Butcher said interim Library Public Information Officer public information officer Jamie Hemingway had been quoted by the Reno Gazette-Journal saying that a large portion of the community approved of the event, and that performers had been background checked and approved to work with children. On further research, Ms. Butcher noticed that performer Christopher Daniels was part of the MacBeth theater, and Ms. Hemingway served as the Library's liaison to the Friends. Ms. Butcher implored the Board to maintain the safety and innocence of the children.

Bruce Foster also spoke regarding his opposition to the drag queen story events and read a verse to the audience.

Alan Munson expressed his appreciation to the Board, saying he had grown up in libraries and they were awesome places, however, he opposed the drag queen story events. He said children should not be exposed to such things, and that the community did not want the program in libraries.

Roger Edwards stated he had worked for 27 years at the High Desert State Prison, where he once had to end visitation for a prisoner who had a wife and two daughters, due to inappropriate behavior. He opined the Library was condoning similar behavior and breaking the law by allowing it to continue. He implored the Board to keep children safe.

Mark Bartolucci stated he did not want one penny of his taxpayer dollars being used for drag queen story time events.

Mary Jones pointed out that one did not have to be a taxpayer to donate to the Library or to the Friends of the Washoe County Library.

Sarah DePaoli stated there were many opinions on the topic, but if some parents did not support the drag queen story time events, they and their children could simply choose not to attend them. She indicated there were also many families who appreciated the events, and these families were grateful that the Libraries continued to offer them. She looked forward to those opposed making their choice to not attend the events in the future.

3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Bruce Parks commented regarding a spelling error on page two of the February 2023 meeting minutes. He said his statements had not been accurately recorded, pointing out that there was no mention of his discussion of the American Pediatric Society's opposition to drag queen story time events, nor anything in the minutes regarding the 'Gays Against Groomers' website or other information he provided during the February meeting. He opposed the minutes' use of words such as 'felt' when summarizing his comments, saying he would prefer terms such as 'commented' or 'stated'.

Trustee Medaille supported the correction of spelling errors in the February 2023 minutes and revising references to Mr. Parks' comments with verbs such as 'stated', 'said,' or 'commented' in place of the word 'felt'. Director Scott explained the Board could move to approve the minutes with the indicated revisions, if desired.

On motion by Trustee Medaille, seconded by Vice Chair Perez, which motion duly carried, the Board approved the minutes of the February 15, 2023, Library Board of Trustees meeting with the above-mentioned revisions. All in favor; none opposed.

4) OLD BUSINESS

None

5) NEW BUSINESS

a. Presentation: Washoe County Library Strategic Plan Update

Director Scott reviewed a power point presentation regarding the March 2023 Strategic Plan Update, a copy of which was provided within the Board packet.

- Nevada reading week had begun February 27th and would continue through March 3rd in partnership with some schools, while others were closed due to inclement weather. Director Scott would be meeting with staff soon to get a better idea of a date for the Sierra View Library reopening.

- The ADA restroom for the Downtown Reno Library was expected to be completed by May 2023, and elevator repairs would be done in the fall of 2023.
- Installations of the book machines for Cold Springs and Sun Valley were scheduled for March 2023.
- Pending Board approval, Saturday hours at Incline Village Library would begin April 1st.
- The Challenge Program, which was self-paced with no time limit required to complete, was underway; over 60 staff members were currently participating voluntarily, and signups had increased after a recent announcement had been sent out. Director Scott shared a slide listing the various Challenge topics staff could choose to learn about.
- Libraries were celebrating Black History Month with events, displays, book lists, and more, and promoting awareness of the 81st anniversary of an executive order signed by President Roosevelt in 1942 which allowed Japanese Americans and anyone deemed a “threat to national security” to be forcibly sent to internment camps across the country.

b. *For Possible Action: Hours of Operation Change for Downtown Reno & Incline Village Library*

Director Scott reviewed the proposed schedule changes for the Downtown Reno and Incline Village Libraries, which would allow the branches to be open on Saturdays.

A trustee asked why the branches had been closed on Saturdays to begin with. Director Scott responded that most of the changes had been due to the pandemic, but public events were slowly returning throughout the County, and many occurred on Saturdays, so branches hoped to take advantage of the increased traffic.

On motion by Chair Ghilieri, seconded by Trustee Medaille, which motion duly carried, the Board approved the hours of operation changes for the Downtown Reno and Incline Village Libraries. All in favor; none opposed.

c. *For Possible Action: Meeting Room Policy*

Director Scott stated the only change made to the meeting room policy was the confirmation of the legal age required to book before- and after-hours use.

Bruce Parks said meeting rooms were an asset to the libraries and community groups that could not otherwise afford to host their functions. He applauded the efforts of the Board to avoid incurring liability that might cause increases in insurance premiums. He hoped the meeting rooms would be made available to the public as much as possible.

On motion by Trustee Medaille, seconded by Vice Chair Perez, which motion duly carried, the Board approved the revisions to the meeting room policy. All in favor; none opposed.

6) REPORTS

a. Library Director Update

Director Scott discussed the results of Washoe County's recent Korn Ferry classification and compensation study. He explained many staff would be receiving salary adjustments in line with the County's goal of becoming a preferred employer in Northern Nevada by offering competitive pay rates to attract and retain qualified staff.

Interviews had just concluded for full time LAII vacancies, and interviews for seven part time openings would be conducted next. Human Resources would soon be opening new recruitments for Library Aide, Library Assistant II, and Library Assistant III-level positions. Assistant Library Director interviews were scheduled for the end of March and first part of April 2023; there were currently nine qualified candidates for the position.

Director Scott added that Library Legislative Day was Thursday, March 9th, and he thanked everyone who had signed up to participate.

b. Spanish Springs Library Report

Spanish Springs Branch Manager Jana MacMillan conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which had been provided in the Board packet.

- The branch hosted early election day voting and collaborative events with the Washoe County Parks and Recreation Department and Children's Cabinet.
- In November and December, the Branch had received a Zoom Room, which could be booked online, and staff assisted with the Sparks Hometown Christmas Parade outreach and various community holiday events.
- Some new programs had been launched, including Dungeons and Dragons and Code-It and Build-It 3D Printing workshops. On Thursdays, the branch hosted a STEAM craft studio.
- The Stay and Play program and Lego Robotics group events were designed to help get kids to visit with one another. The branch also hosted various literacy events such as toddler story time and pajama times.
- The Sensory Sound Garden had been installed and was a popular attraction for patrons of all ages; the branch had also launched a new wishing well.
- Spanish Springs staff had been featured in the On the Shelf KUNR radio program.
- Ms. MacMillan introduced the Spanish Springs Library staff.

c. Maker Team Reports

South Valleys Library Branch Manager Julie Ullman conducted a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Maker Services Team Report, a copy of which had been included in the Board packet. She described weekly maker activities in the Quad, such as t-shirt and bag making projects with pressed-on art. Robotics Program staff member Chris discussed the expansion of Robotics activities at the Spanish Springs branch.

Ms. Ullman mentioned a Cricut program was available in library branches which could help patrons cut designs in vinyl and paper. She reviewed collaborations with the Parks Department and the Nevada Discovery Museum, staff attendance at STEM and community outreach events, and work with Sustain Tahoe as well as a recent collaboration with the Sparks Library.

7) STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

8) BOARD COMMENTS

Trustee Medaille asked how she could go about learning more about the tool library. Director Scott responded that things like that would occur during work on the Strategic Plan, and once staff had begun conducting more surveys, they would have the tools to move forward.

Vice Chair Perez expressed appreciation for the progress made so far on the Strategic Plan.

Chair Ghilieri said she had noted a few things kept coming up during meetings and she wanted to address them again. She stated the Trustees were appointed, not elected, and their positions were voluntary. She also added that the Board was not responsible for reviewing Library programming as it was completely out of their jurisdiction. Finally, she reiterated that the Library Board of Trustees had no intention of asking Director Scott to resign.

9) ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ghilieri adjourned the meeting at 5:36 p.m.