

**Minutes**  
**Nobles County Library Board of Directors**  
**Special Board Meeting**  
**Monday, December 7, 2020**

- **The following board members were in attendance:** Kathy Craun, Peg Faber, Andrea Duarte-Alonso, Mary Ingenthron, Charlene Wintz and County Commissioner Gene Metz
- **Absent:** None.
- **Present library staff:** Library Director David Bradford and Office Support Marci Moshier
- **Others present:** None.

***Call to Order:***

Kathy Craun called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

***Purpose & Action:***

Community Assessment Survey: Review and discussion of competing proposals to conduct assessment survey. (Final action to be taken at December 14, 2020 library board meeting.)

- Kathy Craun would like to go through the proposals one by one.
- **1.) Library Strategies Consulting Group (The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library)**
  - David Bradford explains that this group was recommended to him by the State Librarian. David continues that this group has been doing this for years and is library focused. Andrea Duarte-Alonso adds that she was reached out to by Alayne from this company. Alayne was looking for someone to support them and the assessment they would do in Worthington, as well as offered Andrea to be a consultant. Andrea did tell her that she was on the library board and also informed Kathy Craun that she had been contacted by Alayne. Kathy adds that this may be a conflict as Andrea is on the board, but believes that when it came to voting for this that Andrea would abstain from that vote. David continues that he's not sure how much in-person meetings each group would be able to do but that some of it will need to be done in-person. Charlene Wintz voices that it appears this group is thorough, by looking at the goals and objectives listed and agrees that some in-person meetings will need to happen. Kathy Craun agrees that their process is more in depth and that they're impressive.
- **2.) Southwest Regional Development Corporation**
  - David Bradford comments that this group knows the community better than anyone, has great local connections, great communications and visuals to get people interested. He feels the biggest concern with this group is that they know businesses and not libraries. David also adds that if we were looking solely to gather data from the community that this is probably the group to go with but that they wouldn't be as good at library analysis. Charlene Wintz asks David if this is the one where we would have to do more work but David was told by this group that they have more time as they moved some of their staff around to cover different areas.
- **3.) Fast Forward Libraries (Standerfer Consulting)**
  - David Bradford explains this group reached out to him, after seeing something in The Globe. This company did a project with Prairielands. Prairielands told David that they were great and gave them a good recommendation. David continues that this is a small crew from Illinois but they just do libraries, they're into details with emphasis on the 'big picture' and not small details. The problem with this company is that they're out of Illinois. They would come here once or twice but it would be a lot virtual meetings.

▪ **Discussion:**

- Kathy Craun asks the board to share their thoughts about each of these groups. She adds that there are plus and minuses with each group. Peg asks the costs of each group – David answers that the Saint Paul group is estimated at \$14,000-\$16,000, Fast Forward group is about \$10,000 and Southwest Regional was more unsure but up to \$15,000. David continues that he is hoping to use some of this year's unused budget and that he's hoping to put a large down payment down this year yet. He adds that we could seek other sources next year, such as the Friends of the Library, grants, etc. Gene Metz speaks up that with this kind of thing, there is a reserved fund for studies and that a lot of other studies have been funded out of reserves. He adds that it would be good if some of it could be used out of the library budget but that David needs to talk to Tom Johnson first to make sure it's okay to spend some unspent library funds or if he'll be asking the County Commissioners to fund this study.
- Overall the board members are in favor of the Saint Paul group and also express concerns that Saint Paul would need to know how important in-person meetings are. David adds that the Saint Paul leadership is made up of all men but that Fast Forward is all women. This project from the library-end will be led by himself and new employee Daniel. David adds that Daniel recently took a class pertaining to community assessment. The board agrees that the Illinois group (Fast Forward Libraries) is just too far away.
- David asks the board if there are specific questions that they would want him to ask the Saint Paul group? It sounds like the in-person meetings need to be asked about, possible number of trips down and what their process is with outreach when COVID is going on? Gene once again questions how receptive people will be to surveys if COVID is still around and that he's really concerned about the timing of it. He thinks we may need to see the community fear settle down. David responds that it may take longer because of COVID but he'd rather keep things moving. It'll take a little bit to get the right answers but he doesn't want to wait a year. Andrea adds in that when she spoke to Alayne that they were planning two focus groups, one virtual and one in-person that would take place in May or June if they got the contract. Andrea comments that it seems like they have their own schedule. Kathy Craun would like the Saint Paul group to be asked if COVID restrictions would hinder this process, if they would push it back? Instead of May or June maybe push it back to June or July? Kathy also adds that it's a very diverse group and having one huge group meeting wouldn't get us the answers or the true sense of what we need. David adds that the groups would be 8-12 people. He adds that we might be conducting some of them ourselves and that Saint Paul would do it under our banner, they facilitate and help so we know what to ask. Charlene Wintz voices that the group needs to be the people that don't use the library and that we need to reach out to them, as well as smaller towns to the east and south of Worthington, such as Brewster and Round Lake.
- Kathy Craun wraps up the discussion by asking David to get answers to those questions from the Saint Paul group and possibly put those in with next week's regular board meeting packet. David states he will start to put an actual agreement together this week too and possibly have something in writing for Monday. David questions who would all have to sign off on it and Gene answered that Tom Johnson and the County Commissioner Chairperson (Justin Ahlers) would have to sign off on it too.

***Adjournment:***

David Bradford reminds the library board that Monday's board meeting is either in person or Zoom.  
Kathy Craun adjourned the meeting.

***Next Meeting:***

Monday, December 14, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. in the library's work room or there is a Zoom option as well.

Respectfully submitted, Marci Moshier, Office Support