

Minutes
Nobles County Library Board
Monday, September 11, 2023

- **The following board members were in attendance:** Peg Faber, Bridget Harberts, Jennie Kinser, Katie Kouba and County Commissioner Bob Paplow
- **Absent:** John Stewart
- **Present library staff:** Library Director Beth Sorenson and Office Support Marci Moshier
- **Others present:** Sam Martin (The Globe) and Jesse Flynn (Attorney)

Call to Order:

Peg Faber called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda:

Peg Faber would like to add Jesse Flynn to the agenda, under Public Comment.

M/S/P: Kouba/Kinser

Public Comment:

Jesse Flynn

- Jesse introduces himself to the board and explains that he's here to talk about the Law Library. He recaps that it is currently at the courthouse but people don't know it's there, plus they have to go through security, a metal detector, check in, etc., just to get inside and so there is zero usage. He continues that after looking into it, the Law Library couldn't fully be moved here to the Nobles County Library; it has to remain housed at the Court House but he is hoping that the Library Board would consider letting the Law Library have a small space here for materials. Possibly a bookshelf with reference materials, a desk with a computer and then they'd like to provide a print station that could be shared use with the library. The board questions if the staff would have to be involved at all, but Jesse responds that it's designed to run itself but people may have questions on printing. It's agreed by the board that they wouldn't want the staff to have to help any more than helping someone print. Jesse would like to have signage saying that these reference materials are available but there's more at the Law Library. Jesse adds that there is no time line but he wanted to bring this up to the Library Board so it could possibly be worked into the library's remodel plans.

Approval of Minutes:

The board reviewed the minutes from the August 2023 meeting.

M/S/P: Kouba/Harberts

Reports:

Financial:

The board reviewed the financial reports from August 2023 as well as the quarterly report of the Donation Funds.

- Jennie Kinser asks if the per diem issue has been resolved. Beth Sorenson responds that it has not and that the only information she has is that the board could get a \$75.00 per diem now for the rest of the year, according to the County Commissioner's information from February of 2022. Katie Kouba asks for clarification about the Board Per Diem Fund being over budget, that it's because our funds weren't budgeted for paying the County Commissioner? Beth responds that she is correct; according to our County Administrator other library funds should be under budget, so being over budget with this fund should wash out. Beth reminds the board that in the By-Laws, it says that we do not pay the County Commissioner. Beth continues that at a budget meeting in July she gave the Budget Committee two different numbers; one number is if the Library Board members are getting the \$75.00 per diem + mileage and the other number is if the County Commissioner's per diem is coming out of the library's budget. It hasn't been approved yet and we'll have to wait to see. Bridget Harberts voices that she's okay to wait and start the \$75.00 per diem next year in January. The other board members agree.
- The board makes a motion to stay at the \$35.00 per diem + mileage for the remainder of 2023 and in January of 2024 change to the current County per diem rate + mileage. M/S/P: Kinser/Harberts

- All in favor, none opposed.

Claims:

The board reviewed the claims from August 2023.

- Peg Faber comments that a lot of money is spent on toner and asks if the Law Library would cover some of that cost. Beth Sorenson responds that if we are switched over to a print station those fees will be drastically reduced.

M/S/P: Kinser/Kouba

Circulation:

The board reviewed the circulation reports from August 2023.

PCLS Report:

Bridget Harberts reports that Plum Creek's fiscal year ended in July and they went over many year-end summaries at the meeting. The Plum Creek Library System is working towards increasing internet speeds for the libraries they serve. Bridget continues that there was a surplus in Plum Creek's budget because of an increase in State funding and half of the surplus will go towards a new delivery van, and they have some money saved now to go towards that as well.

Old Business:

▪ **Library Remodel - Update**

- Bridget Harberts reported that the Focus Group had not met. She talked to Bruce Heitkamp last week and he was hoping to have a Focus Group Meeting before the October Library Board meeting.
- Bob Paplow updates the board that the consensus from the County Commissioners is that there will be no building outside of these walls; no additions. He adds that things might have to be scaled down, like the skylight. Peg Faber questions if the County Commissioners have mentioned a dollar amount, Bob replies that they have not mentioned a dollar amount.
- Bob Paplow also would like to hold off for 2-3 months and find out what the public wants to do, maybe donate to the project. He adds that if there are donations to help and put additions on, he would be for that too. The board worries that if someone came in and donated \$50,000, would the Commissioners use that and say they would give us less? Bob says he would not, but that he is only one of five Commissioners.
- Beth Sorenson expresses that she and the library staff have looked over the latest architect prints and that her perception is that nobody was really satisfied with anything the plans represented. They do not meet the basic needs of space, accessibility and safety. She voices that she feels like we're in the middle of a misguided venture that we're stuck in and don't know how we're going to get out of it. She'd like to just start over. Peg Faber speaks that the board has been doing this for years; sounds the same as it has every time we've gone through it. Peg continues that if we're not meeting the basic needs, why spend the money until we can get something that we want?
- Katie Kouba questions if there have been further conversations about Mike Woll's offer. Beth Sorenson responds that he asked her if the Library Board could get on board in working with him to raise funds. Peg Faber adds that he had some big ideas and they are forward looking ideas. Bridget Harberts questions if we should approach our building project assuming that Mike's project will be successful? Peg reminds the board that the Commissioners won't do anything other than inside this building.
- Bob Paplow says that we never had the basement space because of the Historical Society being here and now we have all of this extra space now compared to two years ago. Katie Kouba responds that we're using it all; the permanent book sale, meeting rooms and the Program Room. Bob replies that if we put another 10,000 square feet onto this building, would it still be efficient? Katie responds that we would use it, because we need it. There are services that we would like to provide or expand or do better that we're not currently able to do.
- More discussion on the possibility of fund raising and community support. Beth Sorenson reminds everyone that we did the Community Survey two years ago and people are supportive of the library; we know there's support but we don't know how that compares to dollars.
- Bob Paplow gives the example of building a house – if you have a price and it comes out way above, then you have to downsize to make it fit in your budget. Beth Sorenson replies that it has been said many times that we have to stick to a budget, but we don't have a budget to stick to. We don't know what a good plan is going to

cost us and we don't have a go ahead to do fundraising or grants or anything. Jennie Kinser adds that we'd like to know how much the County Commissioners are willing to fund. If we had a specific number then we can be more specific in talking with the architect. Jennie continues that even just knowing the maximum dollar amount would be very helpful in these conversations; the frustration is not knowing what our budget is.

- Discussion turns to what to do next and what to bring before the County Commissioners. Would the County Commissioners support the County funding the remodeling cost of the existing building and donations/fundraising/grants funding an addition?
 - The board would like the Focus Group at the next meeting to look at the plans again, encourage the architects to put in exactly what we want and once we have a plan that the board and library staff are excited about, then go to the County Commissioners. When the County Commissioners say yes or no, then we know how to move forward.
- **Budget - Update**
 - Beth Sorenson says that this was already covered earlier in the meeting, when the per diems were discussed.

New Business:

- **Employee Update**
 - Beth Sorenson updates the board that Roxanna Castillo (Circulation Assistant at 3/5 time) put in her two week notice and no longer works at the library. Chelesia Armendariz (previously Circulation Assistant – Youth Services) is now in Roxana's position. The Circulation Assistant – Youth Services position will be posted in-house tomorrow first; if it doesn't get filled then it will be posted publicly.
- **Patron Code of Conduct Policy – Review**
 - The board reviews this policy and approves it.
 - M/S/P: Kinser/Kouba
- **Unattended Children/Vulnerable Person Policy – Review**
 - The board reviews this new policy and approves it.
 - M/S/P: Kouba/Kinser

Other:

- **Program Results & Upcoming Events**
 - The board reviews the past program results and the upcoming events.

Adjournment

Peg Faber adjourns the meeting 5:44 p.m.

M/S/P: Kouba/Kinser

Next Meeting:

Monday, October 9, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in the library's Conference Room #2.

Respectfully submitted, Marci Moshier, Office Support