



SHOREWOOD LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
June 14, 2023 Approved Minutes - Amended

Trustees Present: Donna Whittle, Alex Dimitroff, Ling Meng, and Jon Smucker

Attending virtually via Zoom: Elvira Craig de Silva

Others Present: Library Director Jen Gerber, Library Office Manager/ Confidential Secretary Angela Andre, Librarian Hayley Johnson, and Interim Circulation Supervisor Carolyn Curran

**Not Present:** Interim Superintendent JoAnn Sternke

1. **Call to order:** at 5:19 pm, the meeting of the Shorewood Public Library Board of Trustees was called to order by Board President Whittle.

2. **Statement of Public Notice:** Ms. Andre confirmed that the meeting had been posted and noticed according to law.

3. **Citizens to be heard on items not on the agenda**

*Hayley Johnson's statement to the Board:*

My name is Hayley Johnson. and I am the Community and Adult Services Librarian at the Shorewood Public Library. I have been employed here since 2014: I will be here nine years in August. I want to preface that my supervisor, Jen Gerber, has not asked me to be here or to speak.

I am here to publicly and officially express my support for Jen Gerber as Shorewood Public Library's Director of Library Services. I think Jen is an exceptional leader, and she brings a fresh, innovative perspective to our team, the library, and the Village of Shorewood. Jen is a total professional.

She knows what she's doing, and she does it well. Jen has a firm grasp of library principles, and her experience from outside of Milwaukee County has already opened up new opportunities and brought more collaborations our way. Some recent highlights for me include the vinyl collection which has been well-received by staff and patrons (plus we got on the cover of Shorewood Today), the increase of funding from the Friends of the Shorewood Public Library without having to submit funding proposals, and the recognition and promotion of long-time staff members like Angela Andre. I also think Dan Holt and Carolyn Curran are doing an excellent job of handling the interim circulation management duties. Watching everyone grow as they take on new initiatives and duties has been great.

One of the things that I appreciate the most is Jen's management style. She recently shared

her approach with all library staff, and it's simple: it's a circle. Everyone has an important role to play on the team, but no one is above anyone else. This team-friendly approach is different than what we've experienced in the past. which was more hierarchal. but it's important as we move forward. It doesn't matter if you've been here 40 years or 40 minutes. you have a seat at the table; your contributions, thoughts, and ideas matter. On a personal note, it's refreshing to be treated as an equal professional in an environment where I can grow as a librarian.

I know things have seemed rocky recently, and they probably have been for some time. However, I don't want to dwell on the past because I am so excited about the future. We have a bright future, and a strong leader to show us the way.

Thank you for your time.

#### *Carolyn Curran's statement to the Board:*

I sent an email recently declaring my support and enthusiasm for Jen as our library director, a director we interviewed and voted to accept as a staff. This clerk commends her leadership.

The conversations Jen held with staff post the departure of the Assistant Director who was the Circulation Supervisor were handled very honestly and openly. She offered to answer any questions; she invited any and all comments. She immediately took steps to ensure our customer service is not lacking when the Assistant Director, without warning, quits on her staff.

I trust Jen completely and am delighted to work with her. She has brought much positivity to our community with the vinyl record collection and the yoga program, just to mention a couple.

One of our missions is diversity, and Jen has brought this to us. To have people of color come to the library to attend the new yoga program, taught by a local Black business-owning woman, is refreshing. It feels more like we are part of the Milwaukee community, not just a largely homogenous and white suburban population. To hear all demographics, different ethnicities, and different age groups discussing the vinyl, playing a record, and teaching a child to play a record, makes me look forward to my job!

So, I'm really excited to have some more duties myself and to work closely with Jen and the rest of the staff and just see the library continue to flourish and blossom.

#### 4. Consent Agenda:

**ACTION:** Trustee Smucker motioned for approval of the entire consent agenda. Trustee Dimitroff seconded. All voted in favor; motion carried.

Trustee Whittle asked how often the e-resources stats would be shared with the board. Director Gerber indicated that statistics will be reported quarterly and presented annually by Librarian Lizzie Hjelle.

#### 5. No items pulled from the consent agenda

#### 6. No additional topics not on the agenda

## 7. Informational: Library Director's Report

### **New Digital Phone System**

The Library's new digital phone system has been successfully installed. All staff were able to participate in online synchronous training. The Village covered the expense for the phone upgrades, however, the library will be paying \$400 for a unit that will allow the library to be able to use an intercom system for closing times and emergency announcements. We do have the money for this expense in our Technology line.

### **New Position: Inclusive Services Librarian**

In the review of statistical data from the DPI Annual Report, reference services have increased dramatically post-COVID; reference transactions have increased 17% over last year, and the time spent on each transaction has lengthened. Additionally, the reference team is stretched very thin, representing 4.8 of the total 13.21 full-time equivalent (FTE) of the Library staff.

A new Inclusive Services Librarian position and job description was developed in response to the above statistics and in consultation with Dr. Abby Phillips, a UW-Milwaukee SOIS Assistant Professor who currently teaches the course on Public Libraries within the MLIS program, the Village of Shorewood's EDI consultant Dr. Deborah Blanks (Kairo Communications), and the Library's reference team.

In addition to general librarian duties, this position shall provide programming and reference services focused on community-based equity through proactive continuing education, intentional partnerships, and collaboration with diverse and historically underrepresented groups in alignment with the Shorewood Public Library's Equity Commitment.

### **Interim Circulation Services Manager(s)**

Two of the circulation clerks (Dan Holt & Carolyn Curran) have received additional duties as co-Interim Circulation Services Managers. They will take on leadership roles in the circulation and shelver departments.

They will be working as a team along with the Library Director to reach out to all staff to keep schedules, time-off requests, and tasks on track, and assist with hiring a new circulation services clerk. They are receiving increased compensation for these duties, an expenditure that does not affect the library budget.

**Summer Library Internships:** Through a partnership with the UW-Milwaukee School of Information Studies (SOIS), we have hired two Library Interns. Both interns were selected through an application and interview process, each working approximately 15 hours per week for 12 weeks.

Both of the selected interns are students in the UW-Milwaukee SOIS Masters program and will assist the reference team with patron service at reference and children's desks, curate lists for collection development in the Library's DVD and teen collections, and Summer programming and events.

**Milwaukee Earn & Learn Internship:** The Library has been approved to participate in the Employ Milwaukee Earn & Learn Program this Summer; Library Associate Susan Lyles has stepped into a leadership role to mentor this intern in various library tasks such as assisting with materials labeling and processing, shelving, and displays.

**Student Tech Help Volunteer:** A UWM student has volunteered her time to assist patrons with

troubleshooting their devices, learning new software, navigating a new computer, e-mail, computer programs, apps, laptops, tablets, e-readers, phones, and more.

**New Library Board Member:**

The Village Board has appointed community member Kara Espera as the newest Library Board Trustee. Trustee Espera will attend the Village Board, Committee, and Commission Training on Thursday, June 15th; following the Village training, Director Gerber plans to connect with her prior to her first Library Board Meeting which is expected to be in July.

**Summer Reading Program:**

The Library's Summer Reading Program kicked off last week with high participation. This year's program is already on track to break pre-pandemic registration numbers.

New this year, patrons can participate in the Adult Summer Reading Bingo Challenge, funded by the Friends of the Library on the heels of a very successful Adult Winter Reading Program.

8. Informational:

- [Library Director Year in Review \(July 25, 2023 – present\):](#)

Ahead of her yearly review, Director Gerber wanted to share some of the significant changes that have come about since her start as library director.

**Connect library services and library staff to Shorewood Public Library's Equity Commitment:**

- Began a monthly Yoga for All series that is free and open to everyone, supports BIPOC-owned local businesses, and helps bring equity to the field of wellness. Every session to date has packed the room and is attended by a diverse population with various levels of yoga experience.
- Researched, developed, and created an Inclusive Services Librarian position. This position is new, innovative, and the first of its kind in the state of Wisconsin. Its purpose is to design, conduct, and evaluate programs and services to help achieve the Library's Equity Commitment, mission, vision, and values; plan, develop, and facilitate materials, services, and events for underrepresented members of our community; including, but not limited to, diverse, and multicultural (BIPOC, New American, ELL) audiences, individuals with disabilities, and the unhoused.
- Juneteenth Day – Researched, advocated, presented, and obtained funding to acknowledge the federal Juneteenth Day holiday as Black Independence Day. Obtained support and funding to provide Juneteenth Day as a paid day off for benefited library staff. One year later, the Village of Shorewood has followed the Library's lead and will soon provide Juneteenth Day as a paid federal holiday for all benefited Village staff beginning in 2024.

**Encourage and champion leadership opportunities for all library staff:**

- Encouraged, currently managing, and supporting the Library Associate position to take the lead role in developing expectations and learning outcomes for the Employ Milwaukee Earn & Learn Intern.
- Encouraged, currently managing, and supporting two staff members in Library Clerk positions to take critical interim leadership circulation and shelver responsibilities.

- Successfully advocated and funded an increase in hours and competitive salary for a permanent full time Library Clerk position.
- Successfully researched, advocated, and funded an increase in salary and revised position description to acknowledge the valuable responsibilities, importance, and skills of the newly created Library Office Manager/Confidential Secretary position.
- Successfully advocated and obtained funding for an increase in hours and competitive salary for an updated professional Librarian position, thus increasing hours of an initial 32-hour position to 40-hours.
- Encouraged continuing education opportunities not only within the professional librarian staff, but also encouraged new opportunities for professional growth for the Library Office Manager/Confidential Secretary position, the Library Associate position, and the Library Clerk positions.

**Develop meaningful and valuable partnerships within the Shorewood community:**

- Worked in collaboration with two members of the UW- Milwaukee School of Information Studies to create a Shorewood Library Summer Intern Program to provide reference team support and additional assistance to patrons during the library's busiest time of the year.

**Identify and enhance Library Board policy and procedure:**

- Researched, expanded, and drafted the Library Board Bylaws to reflect current practice within Chapter 43 of the Wisconsin Statutes and Open Meeting Laws. This Library's Bylaws had not been updated or reviewed since 2003 (20 years)
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- Worked with several staff members on the Library Art Inventory Project which produced an inventory document of all of the Library-owned paintings, prints, sculptures, and other artwork. The result of this project includes the format and a photograph of each piece, the date produced, the artist (if known), and a brief description, and now serves as a resource for library staff and the community.

**Develop, fund, and pilot new ideas, proposals, and projects for Shorewood Public Library patrons:**

- Developed a brand-new circulating collection: vinyl records and record players. Through intentional collaboration in curating this collection with all staff, it is diverse and meaningful to the staff. Patron response to the vinyl collection has been incredibly positive and it remains in high demand. Wait lists for some titles and for the circulating record players, which are part of the collection, are over a year long. Patrons and staff are also able to interact with this collection at the Library.
- For the first time in its publishing history, the Shorewood Public Library and library staff secured the cover of *Shorewood Today* magazine (December 2022 issue) with its innovative approach to partnering professional librarians with library clerks, shelvers, and the community for collection development of the new circulating vinyl record collection.

**Enhance library funding and services:**

- Through months of meetings, presentations, and proposals to the Friends of the

Shorewood Library Board, advocated for an increase in grant funding by 36% every year, beginning in 2024, for the next 3 years. This increase in funding will support the Adult World Languages Collection, additional revenue for the popular Lucky Day Collection; children's, teens, and the newly created adult summer reading programs, and a Pedal Library (in 2024).

- The Shorewood Public Library is currently the only library in the state with circulation, programming, internet use, and reference statistics at pre-pandemic levels. Use of the Library is robust, the community is supportive of our services, and the statistics serve as validation of community engagement and the value the Library has within the Shorewood community.
- [Suggestions for Future Annual Performance Evaluations](#)  
Director Gerber noted that the library director position is the only position in the entire village of Shorewood, of any department, that is evaluated by their staff. She wanted the trustees to be aware of that difference and to say that she is not 100% comfortable with this method. There may be interpersonal issues or disagreement on policy; a conversation that could have been misinterpreted or was not clear. Such things may skew the evaluations towards more emotional responses. Going forward, Director Gerber would like the board to consider allowing her to add her own contributions so that the Board can consider what she brings to this community and this library.

## 9. Informational: Personnel Committee Report

Trustee Dimitroff reported that the committee met with Jen, discussed the Inclusive Services Library position, and asked for two changes. One change, which Trustee Dimitroff felt was non-negotiable as an industry standard, was that the position must be required to hold an MLIS (Masters of Library Information Science). Director Gerber made that change to the position requirements. Trustee Craig de Silva wanted assurance that should teen participation increase, there is some flexibility to making teen services a bigger role in the position than might be assumed from the description.

Trustee Smucker asked if Director Gerber could tell them about the "circle" management style that was referenced by Librarian Hayley Johnson in her statement to the Board.

To preface, Director Gerber explained that when she began working here there was very clearly a hierarchical system in place; one that she wasn't familiar or comfortable with. The hierarchy placed the library director at the top, followed by the assistant director, the librarians, then the clerks, the shelvers, the associate, the aide, and the office manager position. This management style was causing information to be filtered and prevented Jen from getting all of the information that she needed or didn't even know to ask for. This was a struggle for her this first year.

Previous to the assistant director's resignation, Jen has had conversations about the management style with which she is most comfortable. The style can be illustrated by a circle. In the middle of the circle are the patrons, whom we want to keep happy and serve as best we can. Along the outside of the circle are all the library staff members and their roles. All are

equally valuable and all are working towards the same goal. Every individual contributes something and their role is critical to how the library operates as a whole.

When she started working here, Director Gerber was told that, because the Director is at the top of the hierarchy, not only must she do everything that falls under her job description: managing the budget, personnel, committees, boards, and policies; but she is also expected to know how to do all of the jobs of the other positions. The reality is, she cannot do all of that in addition to her own job.

This is not a happy place when people feel that they're confined to a certain lane or under a hierarchy that makes them feel they can't go directly to the director. The ultimate goal is that the patrons in the center are happy and that happiness radiates out to the staff which keeps the organization healthy and develops a positive workplace culture. This is where she wants the library to end up.

Trustee Whittle asked how the reporting structure works. Is there a sequence of communication or is everybody supposed to come to the Director now? Director Gerber stated that whether internal or external, policies are in place to dictate practices; to ensure that conversations are heard and ideas are shared. She wants to get away from meeting only with the Assistant Director every week and instead, she meets with the entire reference team every week. She wants to hear from everybody and it's important that she knows everything that's going on and that the staff knows everything that's going. Eventually, she would like to expand to all-staff meetings.

Related to Trustee Whittle's question Trustee Dimitroff asked who does the evaluations of staff. Director Gerber stated that right now, she herself will be doing annual reviews of all staff.

Trustee Whittle asked if the Director sees some cross-training in the future to relieve the pressure of feeling like the Director has to know how to do everything. Jen answered that cross-training is already being done. Even the interns that have been here two weeks already know how to do circulation, check-ins, and shelving. Everyone is able to help each other out in some way. This is a show of trust and that everyone and every job is valued.

In terms of the evaluation of the director, Director Gerber noted that she would like to have a conversation during the review process to talk about what was accomplished in the past year and what the impact has been in the library, in the community, through your partnerships, what is being heard from the librarians and the rest of the staff. She would like to establish yearly goals and examine whether or not to expand objectives for the next year. She would love to sit down and have that conversation and then meet back the next year to talk about the objectives that were set, achievements, and how we met those objectives.

Trustees Smucker and Whittle noted that it may be helpful to reinstate regular strategic planning meetings to set objectives and measures for the Director and the Library. Trustee

Dimitroff wanted to remind everyone that the Board does not run the library, the Director and her staff run the library. Objectives must come from the library staff and not the Board. The Board can review and discuss them but they should originate from library staff.

#### 10. Informational: Finance Committee Report

Jen reminded the trustees that the Village Finance Director is very new and still working on learning the budget process for each department. So, the budget calendar may have shifted a bit but the process is underway and we should have the Q2 report soon.

#### 11. Informational: Nominating Committee Report

Trustee Smucker thanked Trustee Whittle for her role as president this past year.

The nominating committee nominated Trustee Dimitroff, in her final year on the board, to be the board president next year for the one-year term.

They nominated Trustee Smucker for the first inaugural vice president (which was previously labeled as the secretary role).

#### 12. Action Item: Election of Officers

Alex Dimitroff has been nominated for president. Hearing no further nominations, nominations for the office of president are closed.

**ACTION:** All voted in favor of electing Alex Dimitroff for the office of President of the Shorewood Library Board of Trustees; motion carried.

Jon Smucker has been nominated for vice president. Hearing no further nominations, nominations for the office of vice president are closed.

**ACTION:** All voted in favor of electing Jon Smucker for the office of Vice President of the Shorewood Library Board of Trustees; motion carried.

#### 13. Action Item: Committee Assignments

Newly elected President Dimitroff stated that she wasn't comfortable assigning members at this point but did offer some suggestions which were shared with the trustees. For the Personnel Committee: Trustees Craig de Silva and Whittle. Nominating: Trustees Meng and Craig de Silva. The chair of each committee can be decided by the members. Trustee Dimitroff will serve on the Renovation Committee along with Trustee Smucker.

**ACTION:** Trustee Smucker motioned to approve the committee assignments as suggested. Motion seconded by Trustee Whittle. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

#### 14. Action Item: Library Board Meeting Dates

In compliance with Article IV of the Library Board Bylaws, regular meetings of the Library Board shall be held each month with the exception of a Summer recess; the schedule is to be set by the Board at its annual meeting.

The following Library Board meeting dates are proposed:

- July 12, 2023
- August 9, 2023 ~~summer recess~~
- September 13, 2023
- October 11, 2023



- November 8, 2023
- December 13, 2023
- January 10, 2024
- February 14, 2024

- March 13, 2024
- April 10, 2024
- May 8, 2024
- June 12, 2024 -annual meeting

**ACTION:** Trustee Whittle motioned to approve the proposed meeting dates with an amendment that they do not include a summer recess this year due to pressing personnel and budget issues that need to be addressed sooner than September. Motion seconded by Trustee Smucker. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

The August meeting will be held on August 9, 2023

#### 15. Informational: Friends Liaison Report

Director Gerber reported that the Friends are working on their grant for 2024. They are increasing library funding from \$22,000 up to \$30,000 for the next three years. In addition, they want to fund one major project each year. Staff was polled for ideas, Jen ran the numbers and presented four project options. The Friends chose the Pedal Library project which they will vote on at their next meeting.

#### 16. Informational: DPI Trustee Essentials: TE 12: *Library Standards*

#### 17. Communications

None

#### 18. Items for Future Consideration

None

#### 19. Convene to Closed Session

Trustee Smucker motions to convene to closed session. All vote yes (Trustee Whittle, Smucker, Dimitroff, Meng, Craig de Silva), none vote no. Entered closed session at 6:47 PM.

The Board and the Library Director discussed personnel developments.

Director Gerber was asked to leave the meeting at 8:30 PM.

The board discussed a sensitive and private personnel matter.

Trustee Smucker motions to exit closed session. Alex Dimitroff seconds. All vote yes (Trustee Whittle, Smucker, Dimitroff, Meng, Craig de Silva), none vote no. Library Board votes to exit closed session at 9:08 PM.

#### 20. Adjournment

Trustee Dimitroff motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 PM. Motion seconded by Trustee Smucker. All voted in favor and the motion passed.