

**Rochester Hills Public Library  
Board of Trustees Meeting**

**June 13, 2022**

- I. The Board of Trustees of the Rochester Hills Public Library held a regular meeting on Monday, June 13, 2022. The President called the meeting to order at 8:00 pm in the boardroom of the library. The presiding officer was Madge Lawson.

A quorum of the board was present including Robert Bonam, Anne Kucher, Julianne Reyes, and Chuck Stouffer. Melinda Deel was absent, with a previously communicated conflict.

Guests included Library Director Juliane Morian, City of Rochester Liaison Alice Moo and Oakland Township Library Board President, Michael Tyler.

Twenty members of the public were present.

- II. Approval of the Agenda
  - A. On a motion by Ms. Lawson, seconded by Mr. Bonam, the board unanimously approved amending the agenda and moving the committee update to next month.
- III. Public comments:
  - A. Sheryl Heyniger, a resident, commented about desire to learn more about how library boards operate and that she supports the current diversity efforts of the RHPL in its collections and program offerings.
  - B. Ian Hooper, a resident, offered public comment in support of minorities and diversity of collections and program offerings.
  - C. Jared Sartwell, a resident, commented that the Rochester Hills Public Library is a positive factor in the community. He stated that it counterbalances some of the privilege that special interest groups try to assert when it comes to controlling the diverse collections and programs currently offered by the library.
  - D. Sylvia Halpert, a resident, commented that she has appeared before the board a number of times to speak about books she thinks should not be available at the public library. She stated that the library was well meaning, but its efforts to include so many groups in the community were not a good use of library resources in her opinion. She commented that people today are drawn into inappropriate behavior by what they are exposed to.
  - E. Heidi Miller, a resident, commented that she is a member of the LGBTQ community and said that from a young age she knew her identity and was born this way, not just experimenting with a lifestyle. She said she appreciates the library including people like her and representing her in collections and programs.
  - F. Jill Dunphy, a resident, addressed other public comments and said that change is hard, and it is hard to counter a belief that has been taught to you for many years, but that recognizing LGBTQ individuals is long overdue. She said that no one of the LGBTQ community is recruiting anyone to a lifestyle and instead you are born into that identity. She said she appreciate the library's efforts to help youth figure out what they are going through with trusted material and professionally curated information resources.

- G. Michelle Hooper, a resident, commented that she has family members in the LGBTQ community and want to see all children included in library programming and appreciates the RHPL Pride Crafternoon program.
  - H. William Whitworth, a resident, said he is part of the LGBTQ community and is happy to see the Pride Crafternoon program at the Rochester Hills Public Library. He expressed concern over the number of book challenges that are occurring and wished that people would stop.
  - I. Jessica Gupta, a resident, said she is a therapist and has been working with adolescents for over ten years. She said the amount of shame and embarrassment surrounding those in the LGBTQ community that she has witnessed in this role is unacceptable. She said that youth in the LGBTQ community are at a higher risk of mental health issues or self-harm because society has trouble accepting their individual lived experience. She appreciates the library offering programs that help LGBTQ youth feel loved and accepted as they are.
  - J. Erica Johnson, a teacher in Rochester Hills, expressed high praise for the library being a good resource for students especially in the summer months. She commented that some of the elementary students she teaches have revealed they are part of the LGBTQ community even at a very young age. She said not all family members support LGBTQ youth in their family units and having library resources that reflect the entire community is pivotal to the health and well-being of all adolescents.
  - K. Mercedes Wirsing, a resident, expressed concern about human trafficking in the state and nation. She said she is mostly concerned about technology and predators targeting people.
- IV. Minutes – On a motion by Mr. Bonam, which Ms. Kucher seconded, the board discussed the meeting minutes of May 10, 2022. Mr. Stouffer requested an addition to the minutes under IX.B.1 to state that he would object to any infringement of free speech on social media by employees. The board accepted the change and unanimously approved the minutes as corrected.
- V. Treasurer’s Report was reviewed and filed.
- VI. On a motion by Mr. Bonam, which Ms. Reyes seconded, the board unanimously approved the monthly bills for May 2022, which totaled \$364,365.95.
- VII. Communications
- A. The board reviewed and filed the communications with no major discussion.
- VIII. Director’s Report and Statistical Report
- A. The board review and filed the director’s report, statistical report with minor discussion regarding firearms in the library and the update on construction in the west parking lot.
- IX. Other Business
- A. The board heard a presentation from Clare Membiela, Library Law Consultant, presented a framework by which to evaluate material challenges and the legal implications therein.

The board and liaisons engaged in discussion with Ms. Membiela asking for clarification about how to handle a special interest group that wants to remove material, how to handle the request of a special interest group that wants specific material to be added to the collection, and to confirm that it is illegal to remove materials from a library based on viewpoint alone, which Ms. Membiela confirmed. Ms. Membiela further clarified that a even a library board is considered a single entity (since it operates as one public body) and cannot remove material based on board viewpoint even if it was unanimous in its belief. Ms. Membiela instructed that a statement of concern form completed by a library patron is considered a patron record and is protected by the Library Privacy Act and should be discussed only in closed session. Deliberation surrounding a material challenge should be conducted in an open meeting without revealing private information about the patron.

- B. On a motion by Mr. Stouffer, which Mr. Bonam seconded, the board adjourned to a closed session to receive a statement of concern filed by a patron (per the Michigan Open Meetings Act privilege of considering material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute).

A roll call vote was taken to enter into closed session: Bonam-Aye, Kucher-Aye, Stouffer-Aye, Lawson-Aye, Reyes-Aye. Passed 5 to 0.

- C. The closed session convened at 9:39 pm.
- D. The closed session adjourned at 9:48pm.
- E. The regular meeting resumed at 9:49pm in order to deliberate the appeal as part of the regular public meeting.
- F. Ms. Lawson noted that as President of the Board she assigned the task of reading the material in full to Ms. Kucher per policy and requested her recommendation and summary of that review. Ms. Kucher made a motion to deny the challenge request, seconded by Mr. Bonam, and discussion ensued.
  - 1. Ms. Kucher provided a verbal summary of the work in question, "Sexuality: A Graphic Guide" by Meg-John Barker and Jules Schelle. Ms. Kucher discussed the educational background of the authors and explained their authority to write on this subject matter. She commented that the material included scientific information and historical perspective on the topic of human sexuality. She provided examples to the group of information passages that she viewed as relevant to contemporary culture and exploration of this topic.
  - 2. Mr. Stouffer inquired if the material appealed to prurient interest. Ms. Kucher responded that it did not.
  - 3. Ms. Reyes commented that certain pictures were offensive to her and would meet the legal criteria of obscene in her view. The board discussed that the material should be viewed as a whole, not in parts, according to the legal definition of obscene material.
- G. A roll call vote was taken to retain the material in the collection and deny the challenge request to censor: Bonam-Aye, Kucher-Aye, Stouffer-Nay, Reyes-Nay, Lawson-Aye. The motion to retain the material and deny the request passed 3-2. Ms. Morian will follow up with the written decision of the board to the patron.

- H. The board engaged in a discussion regarding capital investment projects related to Outreach Services.
  - 1. Mr. Stouffer commented that when the Board decided to purchase the first community bookmobile, they expressed a desire to support the vehicle fully as an extension of the library.
  - 2. In terms of prioritizing need, the Board supported the idea of replacing the Community Bookmobile first, followed by the Early Literacy Bus, and view the locker system part of a longer-term plan.
  - 3. Mr. Tyler commented that he felt the community would be willing to support a small millage for a short duration of time if it could be packaged as a comprehensive investment in Outreach services. He felt that having a tangible capital project such as a new community bookmobile, new early literacy bus, a utility vehicle for deliveries, and a locker system would be well received as long as it could be financially justified.
- X. Board Comments
  - A. There were no additional comments from the Board of Trustees.
- XI. Questions from the Liaisons
  - A. Mr. Tyler stated that he would recommend the board consider adopting a guideline for public comments that instructs members of the public to address the board, not fellow members of the public.
- XII. The regular meeting adjourned at 10:32 pm.

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Chuck Stouffer, Secretary