



# Library Advisory Board Meeting Thursday, September 28, 2023 Via zoom

## MINUTES

Members Present: Adam Groves, Quyen Aoh, Kara Murphy, Mary Ann Tempestini, Mari Howells, Mohamed Almorsy, Annie Rosenthal

Members Absent:

Others Present: Karen Pierce, Deana Cooper, Jessica Church, Diane Chido, A. J. Rao, Mary Rennie, Matt Martin, Freda Tepfer, Lorraine Dolan, Anna Schmitt, Correy Connelly, Libby Martin, Tammy Blount, Cole Shenley

### 1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by President at 12:05. President asked that all Board members introduce themselves

### 2. Approval of Minutes – AUGUST 17, 2023

Motion to approve by Kara, second by Adam. Minutes pass.

### 3. Public Comment (Limit to 10 minutes)

Mary Rennie- District 3-spoke in regard to Great Lakes Research and Education Center. Wrote letter to Councilman Spagel and Councilman Horton, objecting to the County leasing Library space for the new center. Plans were already established for a different site of which she supported while in Council. At last Advisory Board Meeting, Library Director announced the relocation of two Blasco Children’s Librarians to the Branches in anticipation of the upcoming Bayfront parkway construction. This construction will limit parking capabilities at Blasco. If library parking cannot support children’s programs, it cannot support additional extraneous programs. Mary continued with the reminding the Board that Blasco is designated as a District Center Library for both Erie and Crawford and receives funding from the Dept. of Education and is contingent on this role being filled. She asked council to stand against this action and to keep library staff intact for the good of the community. (Letter to council is included in minutes)

Cole Shenley- District 2&3-Expressed frustration as to what has occurred at Blasco over the last couple months. Involved with LBGTQ+ community and aware of display removal in children’s area in June. Frustrated that since there is no current display policy, no displays, such as Hispanic Heritage Month is permitted in Children’s Department though there are some within the other departments of the library. Frustrated that this continues and would like to see something change positively regarding this issue.

Freda Tepfer- District 3- it is important the library be a place of information and communication and not be a place where people promote their own social agenda. The library employees and board need to be a strong advocated for an inclusive society. Expressed concern of not having access to agenda ahead of meeting. Concerned that the library would rent space out to other entities or the fact that they are losing parking spaces for the public. Asks that County employees give up parking spaces for the public. She referred to Dept. of Planning parking.

## 4. Library Reports

### a. Report of Director

Complete report was in agenda. Karen reported that AFSME union contract has passed. Great Lakes Research & Education Center, being put together by Gannon is in preliminary stage. County Council along with the Advisory Board and Erie Regional Library Foundation were invited last week to tour the space. This space will facilitate programming for both county and city patrons. It will have environmental projects and water reclamation. This is part of project NePTWNE. Asking for feedback regarding opportunity. Feels will be a great asset to the community.

Kara- asked if the board could send her questions regarding the project.

Karen – happy to answer any questions to the best of her knowledge given what information she has. This is still in preliminary stage and not a done deal. Any questions can be send by board to Karen and she will respond.

Quyen- stated she would recuse herself from any discussion related to the Gannon-Blasco partnership due to conflict of interest.

Karen continued to review the remaining items in her report provided in agenda.

Karen announced that Antonio Howard will be the keynote speaker at the library Staff Development Day on Monday, October 9. She invited all Board Members to the presentation. The Foundation will also be introducing their new Development Director. Following the presentation, the staff will participate in painting a mural in the staff hallway at Blasco. When asked the hope/goal for the day, Karen explained that annually we have a full day staff training. It is normally a time to complete professional development. Her goal this year was for staff to completed their continuing education prior to the day so that we could focus on “on the job” training and begin to come together as a team, build bridges and work together as a single unit.

Karen reviewed the Armed Guard at Blasco as outlined in agenda.

Quyen -commented that the Board received an email concerning trauma informed training. Is this something that both the guard and staff have?

Karen- answered that the library brought in Ryan Dowd a few years ago for training. She also stated that the guard has both CPR and AED Machine training. The Library currently does not have an AED machine due to no trained employee on site but is considering the purchase with the addition of the guard. She will look into the contract of the guard to see what trauma training they have.

Kara- asked to include email from trauma nurse in minutes.

Karen- informed board that she has attended Erie Informed Trauma Conference in years past.

Mari- asked if the library has Naran available and if armed guard is trained to administer. Karen responded that all library locations have Narcan and guard is trained in how to administer.

Adam- asked if Sheriff’s office has seen credentials of security guards. Might help answer the questions and concerns. Karen informed board the Valentis security is contracted frequently by the city for special events when additional security is needed.

Mohamed- brought up de-escalation training for library and armed guard. Asked if this was included in credentials and be one of the focus’s. Karen responded that the guards work closely with the Peer Navigators housed at Blasco. A Peer Navigator is an employee of the Mental Health Association and have offices at Blasco. They help with housing resources, addiction, domestic abuse and recovery. Peer Navigators are available during most open hours of Blasco and akin to social workers.

Final report item was the policy committee- update in agenda. Using resources and examples from other organizations the library wants to create a policy that follows reflect our mission statement, which will also create a welcoming environment for all citizens of Erie County.

Quyen- asked for timeline regarding display policy. Karen- Hoping to have policies ready to review at October meeting.

Quyen- How frequent will committees meet and what would trigger the committee to take action?

Karen- Committees used to exist. Currently Sheryl reviews policies and brings them to attention when needed.

Reinstating committee will help make this a more routine practice.

b. Statistical and Other Reports-

Statistics provided in agenda and reviewed.

c. Review of Financial Report- Deana

Financial report provided as attachment. Waiting to see how wages and fringes will be affected with new AFSCME contract.

Kara asked how many open positions are at the library.

Deana responded that there is currently only one vacant par time position at this time. She discussed the posting process and what can delay the posting of a position.

d. Review of District Consultant

Provided in agenda. Jessica provided an update regarding state and the process for applying.

## 5. Board and Committee Reports

a. Report of County Council Liaison

No report

b. Report of ERLF- Diane Chido

Diane stated they meet bi-monthly. They have hired a new Development Director and will be announced shortly.

c. Report of Friends of the Library

No report

## 6. Unfinished Business

a. Display Policy update-

Karen addressed public comment made by Cole Shenley regarding Hispanic Heritage Display. Since the library did not have a policy in place, there were not parameters set to move forward and was not comfortable creating a dedicated display for Hispanic Heritage. She did ask the librarians to create literary displays integrated across all the tops of the shelving highlighting the Hispanic authors, illustrators, characters, culture and geographical settings. There wasn't a large front and center display but they were highlighted and represented throughout the department.

Kara- asked if there had always been a front display for Hispanic Heritage in the past. Karen responded that no official DEI policy was passed but stated while she's been at Blasco there was a previous display last year but may not consistently been throughout COVID. Not comfortable allowing displays until policy is in place.

Adam asked how line is drawn regarding material without a dedicated space. Karen responded that the highlighted material is integrated throughout the tops of the shelving units. Since there is no approved display policy, there will not be a dedicated, isolated display.

Kara- commented that until we have a policy, why are we not continuing past practices until a policy says otherwise.

Quyen- asked if there are any other dedicated displays in library?

Karen responded there are dedicated "themed displays" such as new fiction, new non-fiction, gardening and a few others throughout the area.

Quyen responded that we should apply the "no display policy" across the board to include themes and not just DEI. She advised to trust the staff to know what items to display until a policy is in place.

Kara agreed with bring back display.

Adam- will you be returning the 3-Tier unit to the children's department that previously held DEI displays?

Karen responded probably not. It is now being used elsewhere in the library.

Adam feels the display was a landmark in children's room in terms of monthly display that children could interact with the highlighted materials from the library. The absence has been noted and seeing the unit returned would be well received.

Quyen- stated that the board is/are not experts in library displays. A display policy needs to be done sooner rather than later but then be reviewed by the library staff who have the expertise.

## 7. New Business

### a. 2024 Board Meeting Dates

Discussion of alternative times for next year meetings. Making it amenable for members serving on the Board.

Annie asked to have the time moved to 9am or later in the afternoon. Adam is flexible. Mari finds noon convenient since it falls during lunch and least disruptive to the workday. Mohamed responded that mid-day is most mutual.

Quyen asked about in-person requirements. Asked that board set up preliminary schedule via email.

## 8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Adam, second by Kara. 12:55

## 9. Appendix

### a. Announcements – **Thursday, October 19, 2023 @ noon via zoom**