

**Minutes of the Annual Organizational Meeting of the
MidPointe Library System Board of Trustees
Middletown Library, Community Room
Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 1:00 p.m.**

I Call to Order by President Pro Tem

Mr. Richard Szopinski, President Pro Tem, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

II Opening Exercise

III Roll Call

The roll was called, and the following members were present:

Mrs. Kristin Bramblett, Mr. Michael Huff, Mr. Bill Jones, Mrs. Eleanor Stewart, Mr. Richard Szopinski, and Mr. Keith Wright.

Those absent: Ms. Deborah Houser

Also present were: Mrs. Nicole Condrey, City of Middletown Board Liaison; Via, Condrey service dog; Mrs. Amy Abernathy, Middletown Branch Manager; Mr. Travis Bautz, Library Director; Ms. Cari Hillman, Community Engagement Director; Mrs. Brielle Maynor, Public Services Director; Mrs. Deborah Slater, Fiscal Officer; Ms. Kathy Stengel, Human Resources Director; and Ms. Emily Vance, Deputy Fiscal Officer.

Mr. Szopinski welcomed Mr. Huff to the board and asked him to give a review of his background. Mr. Huff commented that he is a Middletown native, is retired, and has since opened a business in Middletown.

IV 2022 Board

Oath of Office, New Trustees:

Mr. Michael Huff was appointed by the Middletown City Commission to serve on the Board of Library Trustees for a four-year term. This four-year term will expire December 31, 2025.

Mrs. Slater, Fiscal Officer, gave the oath of office to Mr. Huff as Trustee of the MidPointe Library System Board of Trustees.

Mr. Bill Jones was appointed by the Middletown City Commission to serve on the Board of Library Trustees for a four-year term. This four-year term will expire December 31, 2025.

Mrs. Slater, Fiscal Officer, gave the oath of office to Mr. Jones as Trustee of the MidPointe Library System Board of Trustees.

Election of Officers, Oath of Office:

Mr. Szopinski, President Pro Tem, opened the floor for nominations for President of the Board. Mr. Szopinski nominated Mr. Wright for President. Mr. Jones seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, the nominations were closed, and Mr. Wright assumed the office of President of the Board of Library Trustees.

“Aye” Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-01

Mrs. Slater, Fiscal Officer, gave the oath of office to Mr. Wright as President of the MidPointe Library System Board of Trustees.

Mr. Szopinski opened the nominations for Vice-President of the Board. Mr. Szopinski nominated Mrs. Bramblett for Vice-President. Mr. Wright seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, the nominations were closed, and Mrs. Bramblett assumed the office of Vice-President of the Board of Library Trustees.

“Aye” Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-02

Mrs. Slater, Fiscal Officer, gave the oath of office to Mrs. Bramblett as Vice-President of the MidPointe Library System Board of Trustees.

Mr. Szopinski opened the nominations for Secretary of the Board. Mrs. Bramblett nominated Mr. Szopinski for Secretary. Mr. Jones seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, the nominations were closed, and Mr. Szopinski assumed the office of Secretary of the Board of Library Trustees.

“Aye” Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-03

Mrs. Slater, Fiscal Officer, gave the oath of office to Mr. Szopinski as Secretary of the MidPointe Library System Board of Trustees.

Board Meeting Calendar:

Mr. Bautz reviewed that the trustee meetings have been changed to the third Wednesday of each month unless there is a holiday conflict. Mr. Bautz recommended holding the December meeting on the second Wednesday due to the Christmas holiday falling during the third week of December. The board agreed for the December meeting to be held on the second Wednesday, which is December 14, 2022. The board accepted the calendar as presented. The 2022 meetings will be held at various MidPointe branches throughout the year as indicated on the calendar.

Mr. Jones motioned, seconded by Mrs. Bramblett, to adopt the board calendar as presented.

“Aye” Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-04

Board Committees:

Mr. Bautz identified openings on the Facilities, Finance/Audit Committee and the Human Resources Committee. He added that Mrs. Houser expressed an interest to serve on the Human Resources Committee. Mr. Bautz asked board members to think about which committee they would like to serve on and to let him know so the vacancies can be filled.

V Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Szopinski motioned, seconded by Mr. Jones, to approve the agenda as presented.

“Aye” Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-05

VI Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Mr. Bautz introduced Mrs. Condrey and asked her to introduce herself. Mrs. Condrey commented that she is excited to be at the meeting to support the library and the board and will be attending as many meetings as she can.

VII Approval of Minutes

Mr. Jones motioned, seconded by Mrs. Bramblett, to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of December 14, 2021.

“Aye” Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart

“Nay” None

“Abstain” Szopinski, Wright

Motion Approved 22-06

VIII Fiscal Office

Hiring of the Fiscal Officer:

Mr. Wright stated that the next agenda item is the re-hiring of the Fiscal Officer. The Fiscal Officer is appointed by the Board of Trustees for a one-year term from organizational meeting to organizational meeting and serves at the discretion of the board. The employment is governed by the policies of the library as adopted by the Board of Trustees. Mr. Wright asked if there was any discussion regarding re-hiring Deborah Slater as Fiscal Officer. There was none. Mr. Szopinski motioned, seconded by Mrs. Bramblett, to re-hire Deborah Slater as the Fiscal Officer for the time period of the 2022 organizational meeting until the 2023 organizational meeting at a part time bi-weekly salary of \$3,072.00 annualized for 2022 at \$79,872.

“Aye” Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-07

Oath of Office, Fiscal Officer:

Mr. Wright gave the oath of office to Mrs. Slater as Fiscal Officer of the MidPointe Library System.

Oath of Office, Deputy Fiscal Officer:

Mrs. Slater, Fiscal Officer, gave the oath of office to Ms. Vance as Deputy Fiscal Officer of the MidPointe Library System.

IX Fiscal Officer's Report

Financial Report, Investments, and Donations:

Mrs. Slater reviewed the December 2021 financial report. She commented that the 2021 general property taxes were estimated to be \$3,250,000 and we receipted \$3,365,000, so we were pleased to receive \$115,000 over our estimate. The Public Library Fund (PLF) was estimated to be \$5,300,000, and we receipted \$6,088,388 which was \$780,000 more than the projections. Mrs. Slater added that we are being fiscally prudent, getting ready for the expansion of library hours, and with ongoing Liberty project, the library is doing well financially for these projects.

Mr. Szopinski motioned, seconded by Mrs. Bramblett, to approve the Financial Statement, Investments, and Donations for December 2021 as presented by Mrs. Slater.

"Aye" Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 22-08

(Report on file in Fiscal Officer's office)

Resolution for the Appreciation and Acknowledgment of Staff, Volunteers, and Citizens:

Mrs. Slater discussed the purpose for the annual resolution. The board discussed that approximately \$125,000 will be used for this. Mr. Wright read the resolution. Mrs. Bramblett motioned, seconded by Mr. Szopinski, to approve the Resolution Approving Expenditures for Appreciation of Staff, Volunteers, and Citizens as presented. A copy of the resolution is made a part of these minutes.

"Aye" Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 22-09

Mrs. Condrey was excused at 1:30 pm.

RFQ (Yankee Road – Liberty Project):

Mrs. Slater reported that the property closing was held in December 2021 and the library now owns the property. The next step is a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) which provides for architectural services such as the architectural requirements needed, the interviewing, and selection timeline. The recommended firm will be presented to the board to be voted on and finalized. The facilities committee will be an integral part of the selection of the architect. The anticipated schedule is to release the RFQ on 1/24/2022, they are due to the library on 2/11/2022, reviewed by the facilities committee, optimistically three candidates will be announced to be interviewed, then the interviews will begin on 2/21/2022. The architect recommendation will then be brought to the board for approval. Mr. Bautz added that contractors have been reviewing the property to determine initial demolition needs. Mr. Jones motioned, seconded by Mrs. Bramblett, to approve the Request for Qualifications (RFQ): Architectural/Engineering Services For Liberty Branch Library as presented.

“Aye” Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-10

Credit Card Policy Update:

Mrs. Slater reviewed a change to the policy to change the language that mentions the policy, to match the name of the actual policy. Mr. Szopinski motioned, seconded by Mr. Jones, to change the Credit Card Policy as presented.

“Aye” Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-11

X Director’s Report

Annual Statistical Report:

Mr. Bautz reviewed the 2021 year-end statistics. Circulation was down over 2019 due to the Covid impacts. Overall, circulation was up 5% over 2020. Liberty was up by 73%, Library on Wheels is still down due to not being able to go on school visits until later in the year; Middletown was down 2%, Monroe was down 24% and did not reopen until after Thanksgiving in November 2021; Trenton was down 2%; and West Chester was up 15%. He mentioned that the 2021 numbers are not quite up to the 2019 levels. He added that compared to 2020, print is up 14%; digital is up due to so many patrons streaming content; over 12,000 new library cards were issued; door count was up; programs and attendance were up; and pc usage was down. Patrons are still not coming in to the 2019 level yet. Overall, library usage increased in 2021 over 2020.

Public Policy Manual Update:

Mr. Bautz reviewed a change in the policy to add the appeal process to the Patron Behavior, Safety, and Security section of the policy. Mr. Jones motioned, seconded by Mrs. Bramblett, to approve the change to the Public Policy Manual as presented.

“Aye” Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-12

Project Updates:

Mr. Bautz reported that there have been newspaper articles about the West Chester Township trustees concerns that the library would not be paying for the expansion, although the township asked the library that if they expanded the building if we could provide services which we told them we could. Also, one trustee came into the building during the latest covid outbreak right after the school across the street released students for the day and remarked that the library is underused except for students. Mr. Bautz asked the board if they would like to step back and not pursue this project until township officials decide if they do indeed wish to expand their building. The board discussed that the township approached the library first, that we were willing to provide additional services for the community, and we should draft a response to the township that we will step away from the West Chester expansion and not do any more work regarding the project until township officials can reach a decision.

XI Public Services Report:

Mrs. Maynor reported that the Laptop Loan Agreement changes will be brought to the board to update the formatting and include the new Chromebook lending. Liberty had 457 items borrowed from the hold lockers and the school outreach resumed after the holidays. At LOW programming to nursing homes and assisted living centers has resumed. Mrs. Abernathy reported that at Middletown, they have been working with a case manager with Access Counseling who contacted Shared Harvest to begin SNAP benefits; art work from students at Summit Academy is being displayed in the library; we distributed 792 meals through the winter dinner that began in September with 248 meals given out in December alone; the call center answered 4,922 calls in December with one agent taking more calls than all calls answered in November due to questions about the distribution of covid tests; passport services began in November and have processed 15 applications so far this year; outreach has resumed and there were 47 programs in December; facility-wise, the kitchens are being remodeled in the staff areas and the community room kitchen. Mrs. Maynor reported that at Monroe there were 16 outreach visits during December and the interior painting was completed; at Trenton passport service is steadily busy; and at West Chester, they welcomed new branch manager, Rebecca Rasnick; a senior program on Friday's from 10:00 – 2:00 called Friends, Food & Fun recently began with Meals on Wheels providing a lunch; AARP tax aide assistance will be on site beginning February 2nd on Monday's and Wednesday's through tax preparation season; the makerspace reopened January 3rd to patrons on an appointment only basis and public services staff received refresher training on the makerspace machines.

XII Community Engagement Report

Ms. Hillman reported that there were 2,682 minutes of virtual programming watched in December with a total of 10,647 total minutes in 2021; the January 2022 eNewsletter was sent out and there were 19,883 patrons who opened the newsletter; the digital collection was noted in a Ohio Digital Network Project publication; the Martin Luther King Jr. march was canceled due to public health concerns and a food drive would be held in the event's honor. A new coffee shop in West Chester, Crimson Cup, asked us to present a storytime which was well received. The Friends, Food & Fun pilot program is a partnership with the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio, Meals on Wheels Southwest OH & Northern KY, and the West Chester Collation of Seniors. This program will provide an informational program once a month along with an opportunity for seniors to mingle, socialize, and have lunch together. The makerspace reopening was overwhelmingly received by the public. Recent Google 5-star reviews mentioned that we have great resources and gorgeous buildings.

XIII Human Resources

Staffing Updates:

Mr. Szopinski motioned, seconded by Mr. Jones, to approve the following personnel changes:

Approve the employment of Emily Burch, effective 12/12/2021, part time, non-exempt, Middletown, library specialist, call center, at pay level two;

Approve the employment of Rebecca Rasnick, effective 12/26/2021, full time, exempt, West Chester, branch manager, public services, at pay level six;

Approve the employment of Arden Mae, effective 1/2/2022, full time, non-exempt, Liberty, library associate, public services, at pay level one;

Approve the employment of Sharley Crew, effective 1/2/2022, part time, non-exempt, West Chester, library specialist, makerspace, at pay level three;

Approve the employment of Joanna Spuzzillo, effective 1/9/2022, part time, non-exempt, Middletown, library associate, public services, at pay level one;

Approve the employment of Marilyn Overton, effective 1/9/2022, part time, non-exempt, Middletown, library specialist, call center, at pay level two;

Approve the promotion of Lauren Turner, effective 1/9/2022, full time, non-exempt, West Chester, from library associate to library specialist floater, public services, at pay level three;

Accept the resignation job abandonment of Sierra Davis, effective 12/13/2021, part time, non-exempt, West Chester;

Accept the resignation job abandonment of Arden Mae, effective 1/6/2022, part time, non-exempt, Liberty;

Accept the resignation of Marilyn Overton, effective 1/10/2022, part time, non-exempt Middletown.

“Aye” Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-13

Employee Handbook Update:

Ms. Stengel reviewed changes to the Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy to reflect the change from a reimbursement process to a request in advance process while recognizing unanticipated expenses that would need to be reimbursed. The board discussed the wording of the changes. Mr. Jones motioned, seconded by Mr. Szopinski, to approve the Travel and Expense Policy as presented.

“Aye” Bramblett, Huff, Jones, Stewart, Szopinski, Wright

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-14

XIV Board Comments

-The board discussed library Covid-19 procedures and processes.

-Mr. Bautz commented that a records commission meeting will be held in February so from 1:00 – 1:10 will be the records commission meeting and the regular meeting will be immediately after that meeting adjourns.

XV Adjournment

Mr. Wright adjourned the meeting at 2:18 p.m.

22-15

President

Secretary