

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the
MidPointe Library System Board of Trustees
Trenton Library, Community Room
Wednesday, March 16, 2022, 1:00 p.m.**

I Call to Order by President

Mr. Szopinski, Secretary, 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. Deborah Houser, Mr. Michael Huff, Mr. Bill Jones, and Mr. Richard Szopinski.

Those absent: Mrs. Kristin Bramblett, Mrs. Eleanor Stewart and Mr. Keith Wright

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

IV Oath of Office

Oath of Office – Deborah Houser

Mrs. Deborah Houser 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 Mrs. Houser as Trustee of the MidPointe Library System Board of Trustees.

Mr. Szopinski asked Mrs. Houser to introduce herself. Mrs. Houser commented that she is the assistant superintendent of Middletown city schools and prior to that worked at the state of Ohio as a preschool inspector, was principal at a Dayton public school in Oakwood, taught in Kentucky, and at Wright State. She added that she is excited to be on the board.

V Adoption of Agenda

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

“Aye” Houser, Huff, Jones, Szopinski

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-21

VI Public Comment

Mrs. Condrey asked if there were any topics she could share about the city. Mr. Bautz commented that news about events going on in the city would be of interest. Mrs. Condrey shared that there is a new acting city manager; downtown is seeing some revitalization particularly with the Journal News building; and the Towne Mall project with Warren County is continuing.

VII Approval of Minutes

Mr. Huff motioned, seconded by Mr. Jones, to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of February 16, 2022.

“Aye” Houser, Huff, Jones

“Nay” None

“Abstain” Szopinski

Motion Approved 22-22

VIII Facilities Subcommittee Report

Mr. Bautz reported that the subcommittee interviewed four architectural candidates for the Liberty project. Mr. Jones added that the process was interesting, the candidates were all highly qualified and the final decision came down to who the subcommittee felt could do the best job. The candidate that the subcommittee selected is LWC Inc, based out of Dayton Ohio. They have done many libraries in the past and shared those during their interview. The board discussed the building size of 20,000 – 25,000 sq ft; that we have worked with LWC as they were the architect for the Middletown building in the early 1980’s; they brought their entire team to the interview; all services such as an estimator and a construction manager was included in their fee; the cost estimates were tight; they tend to have small change orders; they are able to pivot if supply chain issues or material price increases occur; they provided a general timeline with an ultimate goal of being completed at the end of 2023; and their references were favorable. Mrs. Slater read the motion. Mr. Jones motioned, seconded by Mr. Szopinski, to hire LWC Inc. for architectural services related to the Liberty Township branch design and authorizes the Executive Director to execute any and all necessary contracts and documents related thereto.

“Aye” Houser, Huff, Jones, Szopinski

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-23

IX Fiscal Officer’s Report

Financial Report, Investments, and Donations:

Mrs. Slater commented that the audit is underway and board members will receive a questionnaire from the auditors to complete and return to them. She reviewed the February 2022 financial report. She commented that the Public Library Fund (PLF) revenue was \$614,497.94 which is up by approximately 3% for the month. The board discussed funding limits; encumbrances; reserves; the long-term facilities plan; that we have been saving for approximately seven years so there is no need to borrow money for the Liberty project; and that it is anticipated that the current balance would be reduced to approximately \$6 million after the Liberty project is completed. Our fund balance was a concern for the Butler County Auditor and we worked with him regarding our plans of needing the funds for the Liberty project.

Mr. Jones motioned, seconded by Mr. Huff, to approve the Financial Statement, Investments, and Donations for February 2022 as presented by Mrs. Slater.

“Aye” Houser, Huff, Jones, Szopinski

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-24

(Report on file in Fiscal Officer’s office)

X Director's Report

Monthly Statistical Report:

Mr. Bautz reviewed the February statistics. Circulation overall was down by 5%; Liberty circulation was up by 8%; Library on Wheels (LOW) was up by 300%; Middletown was steady; Monroe was up 50%; Trenton was down by 6%, and West Chester was down by 17%. Audio visual was down by 21%; print circulation was flat; digital was steady; patron visits were up 69%; there were over 200 programs and attendance; PC usage was up by 56%; Wi-Fi usage was up by 74%; meeting room use was the highest to date since we re-opened during the pandemic; there were 43 passports accepted and that service will be offered at all locations soon; community engagement had 97 minutes per day watched with 173 engagements per day; over 400 new patrons were registered; and the call center had a normal month of 1,640 calls. One thing to note is that circulation tends to follow the US economy, so when the economy is good, patron usage of our service is lower.

Mr. Bautz discussed a letter that was sent to the property owners that are adjacent to our newly acquired Liberty property. The purpose of the letter was to keep property owners apprised of what was going to occur on the property such as removal of trees, demolition of the buildings, regrading, and installation of a temporary fence.

XI Public Services Report:

Mrs. Maynor reported that changes are being reviewed to the Laptop Loan Agreement to include Chromebooks; the SearchOhio resource sharing service has suspended operations to switch over to a different courier service; several staff members will be attending the Public Library Association (PLA) conference virtually or in person later this month, and the Access Counseling Services case manager assisted 31 patrons since mid-October and collaborating with our staff trainer to develop de-escalation training for library staff. At Liberty 532 items were borrowed from the hold lockers in February; the new branch manager has recently started, and interviews are underway for other openings. At LOW, the branch manager is working with Butler Tech to provide bookmobile driver training; and vehicle options for the lobby stop service are being explored. At Middletown, various building renovations are in process or completed; and the replacement chiller is anticipated to arrive in May. At Monroe, preparations are being completed to begin passport services in April and the branch manager has joined the Lions Club of Monroe and is attending their meetings. Jennifer Riley-Johnson reported that Trenton saw almost 1,000 students in grades pre-k through 3rd grade at the schools; program attendance is increasing; the sensory room will return this summer with larger items that are easy to sanitize; and the teen specialist is starting a teen writing contest. At West Chester, preparations are being completed to begin passport services in April; new chairs for the community rooms have arrived and are being used; the West Chester Farmers Market will be using the library's parking lot due to the construction across the street; Edge Teen Center will offer 5 days of after school programming this fall; the front entry is getting some new plants; and quotes are being obtained for light poles and lobby lighting. The board discussed how library services are promoted and advertised through in-house, billboards, newsletters and social media.

XII Community Engagement Report

Ms. Hillman reported that the latest newsletter had a 30% open rate which is very good; we received a favorable patron comment about our virtual and in-person programming; we very recently received a video donation of a film from the 1930's which we are having

digitized and then placed on our YouTube page. In-person programming has returned to the Monroe branch; Community Shred Days that are open to the public are on Saturday, May 14th from 11:00 – 1:00 pm in Middletown and Monday, May 16th from 11:00 – 1:00 pm in West Chester. The puzzle exchange at West Chester has been so popular that one will be launched at Middletown very soon. 10,619 children are registered for the Ohio Governor’s Imagination Library in Butler County, of which 5,744 are from the MidPointe service area. Upcoming community events and partnerships include the “Pathway to Professions event that was unfortunately just cancelled; a partnership with the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cincinnati; a partnership with GE Aviation as they create care packages for those serving overseas in the military; we have recently added a book to our collection written by two Lakota elementary students; and we have a partnership with Premier whereby they will be providing medical testing, vaccines, free yoga and their mammography mobile unit.

XIII Human Resources

Staffing Updates:

Mr. Jones motioned, seconded by Mr. Szopinski, to approve the following personnel changes as presented by Ms. Stengel:

Approve the employment of Jamie Aubin, effective 3/13/2022, full time, exempt, Liberty, branch manager, at pay level six;

Accept the resignation of Rae Blubaugh, effective 2/17/2022, part time, non-exempt, Liberty, library associate, public services;

Accept the resignation of Jesseca Crosen, effective 2/26/2022, part time, non-exempt, West Chester, library specialist, makerspace;

Accept the retirement of Martha Matthews, effective 3/11/2022, full time, non-exempt, Middletown, programming supervisor, community engagement; and

Correct the resignation effective date of Joanna Spuzzillo to 2/6/2022 which was reported as 2/9/2022 in February 2022.

“Aye” Houser, Huff, Jones, Szopinski

“Nay” None

Motion Approved 22-25

Ms. Stengel reported that turnover was 4.444% for February and 6.642% year-to-date, with four new hires and six terminations YTD and there are currently 9 openings. Face masks are now optional for staff when the CDC community level in Butler County is at the low and medium level; they will be required at the high level.

XVI Board Comments

Mr. Jones commented that Jim Foster retired as the economic developer in Trenton. Mr. Foster was very involved with the Barktoberfest event.

XV Adjournment

Mr. Szopinski adjourned the meeting at 2:07 p.m.

22-26

President

Secretary