

ABILENE PUBLIC LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
June 15, 2020

The Abilene Public Library Advisory Board met in the Auditorium of the Main Branch Library at 4:00 PM, Tuesday June 15, 2020. A quorum was present.

Board Members Present: Clint Buck (Chair), Dorothy Davidson, Timothy De la Vega, Christina Curtis-Carr, Joe Specht, Elizabeth Norman

Board Members Absent:

Also Attending: Chris Gibson, Interim Library Director; Trent Dietz, City Attorney; Linda Camacho, Library Administrative Assistant; Janis Test, Information Services Manager/Librarian III

Media present: None

Mr. Clint Buck called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as submitted.

Library Director's Report - Mr. Gibson announced we have hired a new director, Mrs. Julee Hatton, who will be starting at the end of the month. We are happy to have made this selection. The action item for the new director is recruiting and building up the board members. Mr. Buck stated he had a chance to visit with the new director, who is coming from Nebraska, and feels she has a lot to bring to our library. He thinks the City of Abilene is very fortunate to be able to get Mrs. Hatton here. Mrs. Hatton has a good sense of who we are and the library's role in our community, she is an excellent hire. We are very excited about this.

Library Advisory Board Term Limit - Mr. Gibson went over the term bylaws as it has been a while since we last visited them. First off, we do not have term limits in our bylaws. We do have terms, but we want to establish term limits. We had originally talked about 2-year term limits, but what has been proposed in previous discussions were to have three 3-year term limits. We can stagger those out a little bit better over those consecutive periods. The previous way was to have two 3-year term limits and a 1-year rest, or set out, and then you are capable to run again for another two 3-year term limits consecutively. We also discussed recommending, or changing, the number of board members from 11 to seven, primarily to help us gain a quorum. In the past it has been very difficult to get six members together at one time.

In the future, it may be helpful and will be easier to take action at one time when we have a quorum, and it may be more feasible at this point to change our member number to seven. This would make our quorum four instead of seven. This proposal would have to go to City Council to vote and approve. Upon approval, this then would go into effect. What is happening is we are having people terming out, and they are not coming back so once that occurs they are not getting reaffirmed for their next term. This has slowly gotten us to this point, so if we go down to seven, we would only have one recruit that would be needed. If the board members were left at 11, we would need to start recruiting to get more people in. We are fortunate we have had three reaffirmed, Joe, Dorothy, and Tim. We have members who have

moved away and others who are not active and cannot participate like they used to. We would like to move this action forward. Does the board want to set a term or a period of time of 1-year, do you set out a 1-year or a 3-year period? Our board needs to decide what the appropriate time is.

Action 1 - Mrs. Christina Curtis-Carr made a motion to establish term limits for advisory board minutes. Motion seconded by Mr. Joe Specht. Motion carries.

AYES: Dorothy Davidson, Tim de la Vega, Christina Curtis-Carr, Elizabeth Norman, Clint Buck

NAYS: N/A

ABSTAIN: Joe Specht

Action 3 - Mr. Joe Specht made a motion to change the size of our advisory board from 11 to seven. Motion seconded by Mr. Tim de la Vega, Motion carries.

AYES: Christina Curtis-Carr, Dorothy Davidson, Tim de la Vega, Clint Buck, Elizabeth Norman, Joe Specht

NAYS: N/A

ABSTAIN: N/A

Action 1 - Establishing term limits for advisory board minutes. All agreed on the board.

Action 2A - What do we want the terms to be (how long the terms can be)? Two consecutive 3-year terms.

Action 2B - 1-year rest period (after which you can be reappointed for a 3-year term) will go into effect when City Council approves the changes

Action 3 - Change the size of our advisory board from 11 to seven. All agreed to the change.

All items carried and will be taken to City Council for approval.

Huber Service Chain - John Huber came in and reviewed all of our operations in each department. He came on location, and we also met remotely on a weekly basis. It was a great time to bring him in due to the Abilene Heritage Square (AHS) project. He reviewed how we operate and how we can take this to the new building. Mr. Huber then worked with senior staff, as well as others on staff, on how we perform duties from processing materials to greeting patrons at the front entrance. He also reviewed the schematics and concept designs to teach us on using fewer touches to complete procedures and service clients better. Being involved from the beginning of this process, I know why Lori was so big on wanting to bring Mr. Huber in. He did a good job talking to staff about why and how we need to change, as well as how to function and think more efficiently about how many times we touch materials. This also included how we transition them when creating new spaces at AHS, how long the transition is from the book drop, back to the processing feature, and why we do it the way we currently do. We did videos and flow charts, and Mr. Huber did a lot of data analysis on the amount of drops we had per day, how much time an employee spent on those materials (and can we outsource some of those things), and if we could get Baker & Taylor do more processing for us. It was a very interesting process. For someone

coming new from the whole operational side of libraries it was a great opportunity for me (Mr. Gibson). It was a learning curve that was pretty steep but a great learning experience, and staff helped me keep up on learning the back end of the library and their functioning end that no one sees. There was great feedback from staff, they learned a lot, they had a lot to take away from the talks, allows staff to rethink how we did some of our jobs, allowed us to talk about silos, and allowed us to start to tear away from the concept of "I'm the only one who can do this part." John called it the swarming effect. A process in which materials that come in a large mass can be processed by everyone so that the process is done at a faster time, allowing materials to get back on the shelves. This brings forth a way of new thinking.

Mr. Huber met with the AHS architects where we discussed the designs of the new library, whether to have an automated handling machine at the cost of \$250,000.00, on whether it's the right fit for the new library, etc. It was a good overall process. This was a very thorough process.

Printer Kiosks - We bought two EnvisionWare print kiosks with one being installed at the Main Library and the other at the South Branch Library. A technician came in for the installation and trained an employee, who then documented all the training materials for staff to access. The kiosks are working well, especially with COVID-19, as they can print straight from the kiosk while reducing money exchange between staff and patrons.

State Library Annual Report - I was so excited when I got to do this as coming into the Library as Interim Director, Mr. Gibson stated. This is another good learning curve as well on how much volume we handle, what we do, how much staffing time it takes, etc. This report was completed almost a month to the deadline. The City Manager signed off on this and the accreditation information still has to be processed, but that approval process will happen in July.

Mr. Gibson also went through the credit hours required by the state, which is 10. We did not have the Texas Library Association's Annual Conference hosted this year, which is where you get all your credits from. As Interim Library Director, I was able to get all 10 credits needed through taking part in the conference's virtual components. We had positive feedback, interaction, and good speakers. We hope they incorporate some continued education into the virtual environment.

COVID-19 Update - We currently have Mockingbird still closed. We have phases and an action plan for our phases for closures. Once we closed everything down we began Phase 1, which was minimal serve delivery, and we wanted to make sure we could support our online resources. We implemented the sterilization of the materials, we had a 7-day quarantine period and cleaned everything (which was a lot of staff hours). In Phase 2 we reopened our libraries on a limited basis. We closed off the second floor at the Main Library and limited use in our basement. We also continued the sterilization and quarantining of returned materials for 3-days. The same occurred at the South Branch Library, but we left the Mockingbird Branch closed for now, with staff from that location helping out at South and Main branches. Phase 3 will be the final phase in which we hope to open back to normal operations at all three branches.

We had 10 staff members working at the Health department because they were so overwhelmed. As we reopened in our second phase we had some staff members come back but still have five employees at the health department, hopefully returning back to us this summer as they get back on their feet so all

locations can open again. We are still waiting on Phase 3 to happen so we can get staffing back into place and will also drop sanitization requirements.

Abilene Heritage Square - We are in the concept design stage and have been meeting regularly with the architect. We have a few areas we are still working on such as the low and high tech areas of the makerspace and the V-Desk Studio. Changes have been made to the floor plan because of the Huber recommendation. It's a large space at 60,000 sq. ft. and we will share the auditorium, which is an indirect space so it's not ours full time. We have a space for the Friends of the Library, which will be in the back of the technical services area on the main floor. The main floor will also have several study rooms. We still have several meetings to go, but we are getting close to nailing the concept drawing once those schematics drawings are completed. We cannot wait to see this come to life.

Coffee and Conversations Program - Janis Test, the Information Services Manager at the Main Library presented this item. We have offered this program for about a year, offering a place for everyone to meet. We hoped to have the homeless come in and ask questions and get the help they are needing. The last time we met was in March and had five neighbors who came in and received help. We then had to cease because of COVID-19. We can open this back up when we get to Phase 3, hosted on the second Mondays of each month. It is a very worthwhile program.

Friends of the Library - Janis Test gave this update. The Annual Book Sale was on hold this year because of COVID-19. We also had to stop receiving book donations. Due to the COVID restrictions in place, there was no way we could have hosted this event, so it was postponed until 2021. A few volunteers have come in to start helping with the donations, but the storage building is almost full. As for the West Texas Book Festival, we do not know if we will have it this year or reschedule it. Tentatively, the board is thinking there will not be one because of the COVID-19 pandemic. They are still working on the Ricki Brown Librarian of the Year Award, but there will probably be no Texas author honored for this year. Some items have been broached like a virtual festival, or one day of events, but the question is where would it be hosted? At the library or the convention center, although they may be booked up.

Our very own Eddy Smith was featured on the front page of the newspaper as the Texas Library Association's Librarian of the Year. Congratulations and it was well-deserved as it reflects the caliber of people we have in our libraries. Eddy was very helpful when we began offering book deliveries to the public schools. It's a hallmark of Eddy Smith whenever there is a need to step in. We are grateful for him.

Mr. Buck wanted to thank Mr. Gibson for all his leadership and all he has done. He has done a remarkable job seeing the library through COVID-19, completed the state annual report, picking up where Lori left off, etc. Mr. Gibson says he could not have done it without the library staff. Thank you to all the library staff.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:59 pm

The next scheduled Advisory Board Meeting is August 3, 2020 at 4:00pm, at the Main Branch Library.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Camacho

Linda Camacho, Library Administrative Assistant