

North Central Washington Libraries
Board Minutes

March 19, 2020

I. Call to Order:

Denise Sorom called to order the March meeting of the North Central Regional Library Board of Trustees at 1:02 PM March 19th, 2020 at the Distribution Center, Wenatchee, WA.

II. Attendees:

The following persons were present: Board Members Gail Huntley, Denise Sorom, Kathleen Allstot*, Deborah Moore*, Katherine Meade*, Jim Mitchell*. Barbara Walters, Executive Director, Angela Morris, Director of Public Services, Michael Macy, Director, Finance and Administration, Chad Roseburg*, Associate Director of IT, Kim Neher*, Project Manager, Brianna More, Director of HR, and Tim Dillman, Executive Assistant

* Attended via telephone or videoconference.

III. Visitors:

Denise welcomed Ann Antonsen, Director at Baker Tilly.

Tim made some brief comments regarding the uniqueness of the meeting and logistics of the conference call. Resolutions will be sent out following the meeting for electronic signature.

IV. Consent Agenda:

Denise asked if there were questions for items in the Consent Agenda which included the:

- a. March Meeting Agenda
- b. Minutes of the February 20, 2020 regular board meeting
- c. Payroll & Vouchers
 - i. February Payroll for \$502,505.39 and Benefits for \$188,813.09
 - ii. February Accounts Payable for \$1,017,314.02
 - iii. Staff Reports

Kathleen Allstot moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Gail Huntley seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

V. Baker Tilly Presentation

Ann Antonsen from Baker Tilly presented on the salary study compiled by the firm. The presentation covered the objectives of the study, methodology, benchmarks used for the study, the safe evaluation form, and pay philosophies. Ann then explained the development of the compensation plan. Denise asked Ann to explain the difference between the 6% and 3% increases discussed. Ann explained that the new salary plan has 6% increases between job classes and 3% differences between steps.

Brianna asked Ann to explain why Baker Tilly is recommending a 3% step increase when traditionally it has been 4%. Ann answered that 3% is closer to the industry standard and would be more sustainable than 4%.

Ann walked the board through the proposed pay plan. Ann reviewed the three options presented to NCW Libraries for the implementation of the plan. Ann discussed the recommendations that were made to NCW Libraries. Ann finished the Baker Tilly presentation by describing the ongoing support that Baker Tilly would provide NCW Libraries.

Denise asked Ann if once an employee has been placed at a certain step does NCW Libraries have discretion when it comes to performance. Ann said that Baker Tilly recommends if an employee is not meeting expectations, they should not be moved up a step. Ann said a step system also does not prevent you from rewarding an employee who is showing great performance.

Denise asked Michael and Barbara if, assuming the board chose option 2, does it look like the library has the funds, given the current economic climate. Michael answered that as of the end of February the library has \$14.7 Million in reserves. Michael said that this represents over a year's worth of expenses. Michael also commented that revenue would not see impacts in the immediate with tax revenues set to come in April. Barbara added that the library would also be more prudent with hiring. Brianna also added that the salary study shows that NCW Libraries is under library industry FTE averages.

Tracy asked Brianna and Michael to speak to how the Washington state minimum wage increase in January impacted NCW Libraries. Michael answered that the library had 125 employees whose wages were raised to \$13.75. Tracy asked for clarification on whether this is a 7% increase over where the district is now. Michael said that is accurate. He added that option 2 would be a \$141,000 increase over what was budgeted for salaries for 2020.

Deborah echoed Denise's concerns from earlier. She said that looking long term there may be several people who can't make mortgage and tax payments. Deborah would like to approve the new salary schedule but would want to hold off on the implementation of it.

Barbara said that one concern is the study has shown NCW Libraries is underpaying staff and not approving it means the district continues to knowingly underpay staff.

Denise spoke to the fact that the library has not had to lay off staff. Barbara clarified that 125 library assistants were laid off when the libraries closed. Denise thought that proved the point of the optics of laying people off while full time staff receive raises. She expressed that these are uncharted times and the library doesn't know if levy rates will be driven down. Denise said she approves of the recommendation but has unease over approving a 7% increase.

Deborah agreed with Denise. She said it doesn't feel like the right time, until the board is able to see where the economy is headed.

Gail commented that she is impressed with the job that was done. She wonders what options there are for delaying the decision. Michael asked Ann what happens to the numbers presented-do they become old? Ann answered that the numbers are still valid for 1-3 months. In a year Baker Tilly

would have to refresh the numbers.

Denise said that she didn't think anyone proposes even a 3-month delay. She would feel more comfortable waiting until the April board meeting. Gail said a one-month delay seems reasonable. Denise added she didn't feel the board would be upholding their fiduciary responsibility if they didn't take some pause in considering the ramifications of approving the new salary schedule. Everyone agreed with this sentiment.

Kathleen moved to table Resolutions 20-04 and 20-05 until the April board meeting. Deborah seconded. The motion to table carried.

Barbara expressed appreciation for all staff and the executive team. She shared that she is incredibly grateful that Brianna is here to walk the library through this time. Barbara read a few comments from staff around the district regarding library closures.

Ann was thanked for her presentation and left the meeting at 1:40 pm.

VI. COVID-19 Response

Kim walked the board through the district's progressive responses to the COVID-19 pandemic to date.

Denise gave a huge thank you to the entire team for their work on this. She said she is glad the district continues to provide library services even with the branches closed as it is a lifeline to the communities the district serves. Deborah added that the messages to the public have been well received and told Barbara she has done a nice job.

VII. Resolution 20-06

Barbara introduced Resolution 20-06 which updates the emergency closure procedures and resolution passed several years ago.

Gail moved to approve the resolution. Katherine seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Resolution 20-08

Barbara explained the new telecommuting policy. Denise asked about how telecommuting agreements would be reviewed to ensure that they are working for individual employees. Barbara said the policy outlines a trial period and during the trial period there are frequent check ins.

Kathleen moved to approve the resolution. Deborah seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Resolution 20-07

Barbara explained the rationale for a Pandemic Response Policy. Kathleen asked if there is a specific definition of a pandemic. Kim answered that the library would follow the World Health Organization's definition for the purposes of the policy. Barbara walked the board through the

details of the policy. Denise and Gail commented that the policy looked very thorough.

Kathleen moved to approve the resolution. Katherine seconded. The motion passed.

X. Resolution 20-10

Barbara explained why the board was being asked to pass a policy specific to COVID-19 and how it differs from the more general pandemic policy. Denise asked who would be authorized to verify an employee has symptoms. Barbara said this decision would be made by supervisors.

Gail moved to approve the resolution. Deborah seconded. The motion passed.

Jim Mitchell left the meeting at 1:55 pm

XI. Financials

Michael started by letting the board know that at only 2 months into the budget year it is hard to see any themes or make any projections. Michael said that for the library's cash position there is over a year's worth of cash available.

The Wenatchee Library project is \$35,000 ahead of budget due to a recent change order that saved significant money.

Michael notified the board that Lifeline in Omak is going to allow NCW Libraries to park the bookmobile in their garage and will provide some storage space in addition.

Denise asked if the year worth of cash is in the general fund. Michael clarified that it is across all accounts.

Brianna asked if developing trends in the economy would be apparent right away with the first tranche of 2020 taxes. Michael said that he doubts it would.

XII. Resolution 20-09

Michael explained that this is a resolution to update the signers and authorized personnel for deposit account, credit card accounts, payroll account and revolving account.

Kathleen moved to adopt resolution 20-09. Deborah seconded. The motion passed.

VI. Announcements:

Denise asked if there were any announcements. Barbara said thank you to the entire board. She acknowledged that it was difficult decision to hold off on passing the salary study but she respected their decision. Denise said that the board has a huge amount of respect for the staff and ultimately wants to get the salaries to a level more in line with market rates.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled on April 16th, 2020 at the Wenatchee Distribution Center located at 16 N. Columbia, Wenatchee, WA 98801. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 2:27 pm.

