



**CITY OF NOVI LIBRARY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING- MINUTES
December 15, 2021**

Call to Order by President, Kathy Crawford

The meeting was held at the Novi Civic Center, Council Chambers, 45175 Ten Mile Road Novi, Michigan 48375, and was called to order by Kathy Crawford, President, at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call by Secretary, Brian Bartlett

1. Library Board

Kathy Crawford, President
Kat Dooley, Vice- President
Brian Bartlett, Secretary
Sreeny Cherukuri, Board Member
Tara Michener, Board Member
Geoffrey Wood, Treasurer (absent/excused)
Torry Yu, Board Member

Student Representatives

Abhay Kakarla
Rida Salim

Library Staff

Julie Farkas, Director
Barbara Cook, Bookkeeper

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made to approve the Agenda. Trustee Michener commented that on the last page of the agenda (page 4) the wording of Executive Session should be amended to read "Closed Session". Executive terminology is better suited for corporate entities.

Director Farkas had a page clarification under Matters for Board Action, item 2 currently reads pages 73-74 and the corrected pages are pages "72-74". A motion was made to approve the agenda as amended.

1st – Trustee Dooley

2nd – Trustee Cherukuri

Discussion: No Further Discussion

Roll Call Vote was taken. 6 yes votes and 0 no votes. Trustee Wood is absent/excused.

Consent Agenda

1. Approve Minutes of:
 - A. November 17, 2021- Regular Meeting

2. Approve Claims and Warrants of:
 - A. Accounts 268 and 269 (#609)

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda (items 1 and 2, above.)

1st- Trustee Bartlett

2nd- Trustee Yu

No discussion took place.

Roll Call Vote was taken. 6 yes votes and 0 no votes. Trustee Wood is absent/excused.

Presentations

1. No Presentations scheduled

Public Comment

Jason Michener, Harrier Place, Novi, MI.

- Hopeful that Juneteenth as a paid Holiday will be passed this evening. Did notice it was recommended by the HR committee.
- Jason discussed fines/ fees. He commented that a fine is a punitive matter and does not believe the library should be involved in disciplining the Novi residents. He offered millage as more appropriate for fund raising, commenting that the millage is 0.78 and could be moved to as high as 1. Jason discussed how millage is more equitable.
- Jason acknowledged a previous public commenter as an example of a library guest who no longer uses the library, due to the current fines policy. The Novi library cancels user's library privileges due to outstanding fines.
- Jason commented that the City Attorney is present again this evening and perhaps cutting this expense is a start to cutting expenses and allowing the library to operate more efficiently. He added that cutting this expense (the attorney present at board meetings) does not impact programming or the community.

Sharon Trumpy, Harvest Drive, Novi, MI.

- 212 days ago the board unanimously approved the statement by President Crawford. *The Novi Public Library is committed to ensuring that every Novi community member, library guest, Board of Trustee member, library staff and volunteer, is treated with dignity and respect. Discrimination, bigotry and racism will not be tolerated.*
- 184 days ago the board received a formal staff complaint against Trustee Cherukuri. With the staff member stating he is mismatched for the DEI committee and does it a disservice.
- 156 days ago a community member stated their concern about Trustee Cherukuri's public social media posts.
- 121 days ago Trustee Michener made a formal complaint against Trustee Cherukuri alleging mistreatment during a DEI committee meeting.
- 107 days ago a community petition was delivered to President Crawford requesting the removal of Trustee Cherukuri from the DEI committee as chair. (over 280 community members signed petition)
- 93 days ago President Crawford said she is pausing the DEI Committee indefinitely. President Crawford said it is possible to find offensive social media posts on other public figures social media accounts. Sharon then read some of President Crawford's public social media posts.
- Trustee Cherukuri approached a young black female after the last meeting and said his social media posts remain intact because nothing he said is offensive. Sharon read Trustee Cherukuri's public social media posts.

- Trustee Michener serves on three board committee's DEI, bylaws and policy. Since Trustee Michener has made her formal complaint not one of these committees has held a meeting. Other committees held meetings and it seems as though Trustee Michener has been excluded since lodging her complaint, which looks like retaliation.
- She is asking the board how many days will pass until the board keeps its word.

Andrew Mutch, Taft Rd., Novi, MI

- In support of the Novi Public Library going fine free.
- In the past served on Novi City Council and worked at the Novi Public Library. Currently he continues to work with Waterford Township Public Library.
- He has first-hand experience working with community members and collecting overdue fines.
- Although Novi is affluent; it is diverse economically. He witnessed patrons in certain financial circumstances who had overdue fines and these fines were a hindrance to their ability to use the library.
- Waterford library has been fine free since 2019. Starting as a pilot and being extended due to COVID and was recently finalized to eliminate fines altogether.
- Fine free status for Waterford has had negligible impact on revenue, but a huge positive impact on Waterford Community.
- Andrew encourages the Novi Library to adopt a fine free policy for the benefit of the Novi Community.

Brenda Anderson, Vine Court, Novi MI

- When looking at fines look at the business model of block buster videos – fines don't help your business.

Reports

1. Student Representatives Report
Presented by student representatives Abhay Kakarla and Rida Salim. Staff Liaison Lindsay Gojcaj.

2. President's Report (Kathy Crawford)

- A. Contact has been made with Dr. Meadows regarding Board training to start in January, 2022. Director Farkas has a zoom meeting scheduled for 12/15/21.

Director Farkas shared some goals from the scope which includes building trust, governance and working together. Information will be provided at the February Board Meeting for all Board Members.

Trustee Michener requested an agenda of Dr. Meadow's actual focus and said it is not clear.

President Crawford congratulated the library staff and Director for winning the Builders Award from the Novi Chamber. Director Farkas explained that the award is for Community Builder. Director Farkas submitted information about the Lakeshore Lending Library and connecting with the North End and making new community relations.

3. Treasurer's Report (Trustee Wood – absent/excused)pages 20-30

- A. 2021-2022 Library Budget Fund 268

The 2021-2022 Library Fund 268 budget calls for revenue of \$3,244,172 with expenditures of \$3,409,700 consuming \$165,528 of the fund balance.

- B. 2021-2022 Contributed Fund Budget 269

The 2021-2022 Library Contributed Fund 269 budget calls for revenue of \$47,500 and expenditures of \$58,400 consuming \$10,900 of the fund balance.

- C. Financial Report – November 2021
On page 24 of the December Board packet.
- D. Library Fund 268 Expenditure and Revenue Report ending November 30, 2021
Revenue ending November 30, 2021 was \$3,310,520.
Expenditures ending November 30, 2021 was \$1,252,698.
- E. Library Fund 269 Contributed Fund ending November 30, 2021
Revenue ending November 30, 2021 was \$7,545.
Expenditures ending November 30, 2021 was \$13,521.
- F. Balance Sheets for Funds 268 and 269 as of November 30, 2021
Ending Fund Balance for Fund 268 as of November 30, 2021 was \$4,553,134.69
Ending Fund Balance for Fund 269 as of November 30, 2021 was \$1,689,678.29

Trustee Michener:

Trustee Michener mentioned she would be reviewing financials. Below are some questions she is requesting answers to:

Revenue:

- Line 268-000.00-403.000 Property Tax Current Levy collected \$80,302.50 more than budgeted. If correct, explain difference?
- Lines 268-000.00-403.003 thru .008 Property Tax Revenue-Brownfield Cap 2008, Property Tax Revenue-Brownfield Cap 2015 and Property Tax Revenue-CIA Cap 2018 – what are these revenue streams and why are they always negative year over year? Also, it looks like all three of these lines came in under what is planned for in the budget; is this a savings of \$13,288.33?
- Line 268-000.00-418.000 PPT Reimbursement – looks like unbudgeted revenue of \$2,055.93. Explain where this came from and if it is something that would be reoccurring?
- Trustee Michener asked about grants and Director Farkas answered as grants become available that the Novi library qualifies for - those opportunities will be pursued.
- Line 268-000.00-658.000 State Penal Fines - collected \$2,775.97 more than budgeted. (Director Farkas said that is all that will be received this fiscal year)

Fines and forfeitures revenue:

- 268-000.00-657.000 Library book fines – Does this line item traditionally reflect BOTH the fines for overdue materials and fees for damaged/destroyed/lost materials OR just fees?
 - During the January 9th 2020 budget session it was determined that “20/21 budget account 268-657.000 Library Book Fines only includes revenue from lost books and not revenue from fines” (see Novi Library Board minutes, budget study session, January 9, 2020, pages 4-5).
If, however, it is both fines AND fees, what is the break down between the two categories? Lastly, does this line item reflect the actual monies collected or just the amount owed?

Interest income:

- 268-000.00-664.500 unrealized gain (loss) on investments – a loss at -\$2,934.29 and was a loss of -\$7,827.98 for the 20/21 budget. She would like a better understanding of this account to understand if anything can be done to minimize or turn the losses around?

Point of clarification regarding the damaged computer equipment from the electrical storms this past summer:

- 268-000.00-633.100 Insurance Reimbursement - the Insurance reimbursed \$89,230.69 for the losses incurred in this summer's electrical storms
- 268-000.00-734.500 Computer supplies/equipment – loses on the computer equipment damaged in the electrical storms totaled \$101,061.42 resulting in the expense line item being \$76,761.42 over budget for the 21/22 fiscal year due to this unplanned expense (storm damage). If you take the insurance

reimbursement from 268-000.00-633.100 and added it to 268-000.00-734.500, then technically you could say that Computer supplies/equipment line item would go from being significantly over budget to carrying a remain positive balance of \$3541.08, could still be used for planned or unplanned computer equipment and associated supplies for the remainder of the 21/22 budget year without going over budget?

Balance Sheet for the City of Novi, page 29:

- Line 268-000.00-003.000 Cash-Pooled Cash (Fifth Third and Comerica Banks) – the account is negative, - \$189,067.58. Can we get some details on this account to better understand this?

4. Director's Report (Julie Farkas)

On pages 31-42 of the December Board packet.

Staff members celebrating anniversaries for January, 2022 are:

- Kelly Kolchuk– Information Services - 20 years

DEI staff meeting minutes from November 30, 2021 are on page 31.

The eNewsletter is emailed via Patron Point to over 20,000 card users.

- A. Information Technology Report (pages 43-45)
- B. Facilities Report (page 46)
- C. Information Services Report (pages 47-49)
- D. Support Services Report (pages 50-51)
- E. Library Usage Statistics Report (pages 52-60)
- F. Friends of Novi Library – (page 61)
- G. City of Novi Historical Commission- Dec. 8, 2021 Meeting Agenda – (page 62)

Trustee Michener asked if there will be a presentation of the annual report. Director Farkas mentioned the annual report was presented to City Council and will look into a library board presentation.

Trustee Yu thanked Shannon O'Leary and Dominick Doot for help with sublimation bags crafted in the iCube (page 44).

Public Comment

Jason Michener, Harrier Place, Novi.

- Voiced concern about pausing of the DEI Committee.
- Jason said the staff DEI Committee continues to do the work and would probably appreciate board oversight.
- If everyone on the board DEI committee is passionate about doing the work they would figure out a way to meet and continue the work.
- Voiced concern that the board DEI committee could potentially be paused for as long as 6 months.
- Suspicious about the entire approach to the DEI committee and how it has been handled. Additionally, Jason does not see how bringing in an expert can magically heal everything.
- Jason is once again asking the board members to express their opinion on DEI- what they think it stands for and if they support it or not. He is especially interested in this from the chair of the DEI committee and the President of the library board.

Sharon Trumpy, Harvest Drive, Novi.

- Sharon expressed that the Novi Library is a class 6 library and read an extensive list of similar libraries that are fine free.
- She read various statements from library directors stressing the importance of being a fine free establishment and removing these barriers to allow more open access.
- Sharon read an extensive list of libraries from Oakland County that are fine free.
- Sharon read an extensive list of libraries in Michigan that have embraced fine free.

Betsey Beaudoin, Cranbrooke Novi, MI.

- Betsey continued reading the extensive list of Michigan libraries that are fine free as the previous speaker, Sharon's time was up.
- Betsey read several statements from Michigan libraries on the reasons why they welcomed fine free status.
- Betsey mentioned that she utilized the library much more because her children were virtual students. She shared her experience on fine free and said fines add a frustration due to continually checking the app and monitoring when the books are due. Over time the books accumulate a high late fee and she could have just purchased the book outright.
- The libraries temporary elimination charging fines helps remove the frustrations of continuously tracking due dates. Also, fine free has allowed her children to embrace the library more and they are open to reading more. This is an example of how fine free can increase access to the library.

Committee Reports

1. **Policy Committee:** Review current public policies for the Library
(Chair-Wood, Bartlett, and Michener, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
 - Staff Committee: Julie Farkas, Barb Rutkowski, Kim Swejkoski, Betty Lang, Keith Perfect, Dana Brataniec and Hillary Hentschel.
 - Committee met on: 12/16/21; had discussions regarding Juneteenth closure and policy: Charges for Damaged, Destroyed or Lost Materials.
 - Update: Trustee Michener: Robust discussion around fine free and the possible impact to employee jobs took place in the meeting, which is why Trustee Michener dug into financials.
 - Update: Trustee Bartlett: Discussions of shortfalls this FY, financial challenges in regards to budgeting over the next year, inflation discussions and keeping the library viable in future years. Accessibility was discussed in terms of the Novi library being open 7 days a week compared to other libraries that are not.
2. **HR Committee:** Review HR Policies for the Library, Director Review & Goals
(Chair -Crawford, Dooley, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas & Nicole Williams)
 - Staff Committee: Julie Farkas, Nicole Williams, Lindsay Gojcaj, Kristin Abate and Kirsten Malzahn.
 - HR Committee met 12/1/21. See notes (pages 63-65)
 - Next meeting scheduled for:12/14/21
 - Directors Mid-year review January 27, 2021 in Closed SessionGoals:
 1. Seek to assure employees have a safe and stable work environment with equal opportunity for learning and personal growth.
 2. Implement Human Resource best practices and innovative human resource solutions that support improved employee welfare, empowerment, growth and retention.

3. Maintain a dedicated focus on customer service and continuous improvement that support the goals and mission of the Novi Public Library.
- Update: Trustee Crawford: The HR Committee reviewed all of the findings related to making Juneteenth an additional paid Holiday along with the closure. The data reviewed is on page 64 in the packet. The HR Committee is recommending the board to add Juneteenth as a paid Holiday in addition to the approved closure.
3. **Finance Committee:** Financial plan based on building assessment review, Library endowment investigation.
(Chair- Bartlett, Cherukuri, Wood, Staff Liaisons – Julie Farkas & Barbara Cook)
 - Meeting held 12/6/2021
 - Update: Trustee Bartlett. Initial preparation of July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023 budget, first estimate is a shortfall of approximately \$200,000. Director Farkas is asked to put together a plan with tax dollar revenues only for comparison purposes.
4. **Events/Marketing/Fundraising Committee:** Outreach opportunities
(Chair -Dooley, Bartlett, Yu, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas & Dana Brataniec)
 - Meeting held 11/15/21; see page 65
 - GOALS:
 1. Read box fundraiser during National Library Week (April 2022)
 2. Bigger ongoing support to Friends of Novi Library
 3. Marketing plan update (Dana Brataniec)
 - Trustee Dooley update: Committee is thinking outside the box on ways to supplement library revenue.
 - Trustee Dooley's written update is on page 65 and events attended is on pages 66.
5. **Strategic Planning Committee:**
(Chair - Bartlett, Dooley, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
 - No meeting; No report
 - Based on the Board Retreat on Saturday, June 26, 2021, committees are being asked to identify 2-3 goals to be identified and addressed for 21/22.
6. **Building/Landscape Committee:**
(Chair-Yu, Cherukuri, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
 - No meeting; no report
 - GOALS:
 1. Apply for the Build America's Great Libraries Grant, if approved, to fund library improvement projects, such as the main entryway. Explore other grant opportunities we can apply for.
 2. Explore ways to make our infrastructure (i.e. phone, security system) to be more resilient to weather, external factors (i.e. market shifts); Opportunities to complete the LED lighting project with the meeting spaces.
 3. Review NPL's current Technology Plan.
7. **Bylaw Committee: Review of Library Board Bylaws**
(Chair – Wood, Bartlett, Michener, Staff Liaison – Julie Farkas)
 - No meeting; no report
 - GOAL: Review current Library Board Bylaws (last updated March 28, 2019)

8. **DEI: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee**

(Chair – Cherukuri, Dooley, Michener, Staff Liaisons – Julie Farkas & Nicole Williams)

- No meeting held; no report.
- Goals:
- Update: Trustee Michener: Asked about DEI committee and wants the committee to convene. She said they are falling behind as a committee.

Matters for Library Board Action

1. Approve Juneteenth (June 19th) as an 11th paid holiday for employees at Novi Public Library. June 19th is already a recognized closure.

President Crawford: (Board members will note that the previous recommendation from Finance committee proposed an optional PTO day converted to an 11th paid holiday (an employee can request to use this as a floating holiday anytime throughout the year) and Veterans Day would become a floating holiday, used anytime throughout the year.) The HR Committee recommends that Juneteenth become an 11th paid holiday (it is already recognized as a closure).

A motion was made to approve Juneteenth as a paid holiday along with the closure of the Novi Public Library.

1st- Trustee Crawford

2nd- Trustee Dooley

Discussion:

Trustee Cherukuri: This is a topic that people are passionate about. But that passion has gotten to a level where there is not room for disagreement without vilification. Nor the possibility that offers of compromise will even be taken seriously, which reflects poorly on the state of discussion in this community. Trustee Michener stated consideration of the Juneteenth Holiday that is anything less than equal of Independence Day is a sign of disrespect. He will leave it to the board to determine what that means when the board is saying the library does not close on Veterans Day, Good Friday, Presidents Day or even MLK Day. The library has been asked to consider this (Juneteenth Paid Holiday) again repeatedly. He believes it is a poor premise to say the library can afford it so why not and he believes part of the argument is being based on poor math. Evaluating costs should include taking into account the cost of closure. The lost utility the library provides to citizens, based on \$3.2 million spending, the library is open roughly about 345 days a year this is about \$9,500 per day. Lost productivity should also be considered since fewer hours will be available to do the work the citizens have asked them to do. This leads to lost productivity or a reduced level and implies the library has to pay additional for that. Finally, some hourly employees will receive a reduction of income, based on the policy (Director has said she takes measure to try avoid this). Trustee Cherukuri then discussed the employee survey given to employees. The survey presented 5 options and only 2 of the 5 came from the board. Given the plurality of choices, no clear majority is evident from the data presented. In a library of about 70 employees only 17 selected the option under which Juneteenth became a paid holiday. Identical to the number which either prefer to keep the current system or a system in which more of the holidays are floating. Another 11 voted to match the City's holiday schedule of 13 holidays (which does not include Juneteenth). Another 13 employees chose not to respond to the survey, which is the second largest category. Based on this he does not see a lot of support for the Juneteenth proposal among staff survey results, but he does believe employees would like more flexibility in the holiday schedule. With an increasingly diverse population in Novi a holiday schedule that meets the community needs should command the board's attention. The finance committee tried to reflect this with the recommendation of an additional floating holiday. Part of diversity is recognizing that different people have different value systems and cherish various days, i.e. Orthodox Christmas, Good Friday, Ash Wednesday, Holocaust Remembrance Day, Purim, Yom Hashoah, Passover, Yom Kippur, Hanukkah, Pongal, MahaSivarati, Ramadan, Islamic New Year, Diwali, Summer Solstice, Iriquois Midwinter Ceremony, Native American Day, Indigenous Peoples

Day, MLK Day, Lincolns Birthday, Presidents Day, Casimir Pulaski Day, Peace Officers Memorial Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Chinese New Year, Korean New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, Harvest Moon, Mid-Autumn Festival, Cinco de May, etc...

Trustee Cherukuri proposes that in addition to the motion put forth by Trustee Crawford, the Finance committee motion is to convert a PTO day to a 12th floating holiday to give flexibility to the diverse community.

Trustee Michener: There is no time to review this and it is not in the board packet. Also, she said she was misquoted by Trustee Cherukuri about Veterans Day not being important. She has veterans in her family and finds it highly offensive. A lot of people asking for Juneteenth to be a holiday are not just Black people. People recognize Black people in America were enslaved, brutalized, raped and forced to create America and make it great. Black people are Americans that were in America and not recognized. She supports the first motion.

Trustee Dooley: Has a different interpretation of the survey, then Trustee Cherukuri. When you review the data the staff is overwhelmingly in support of Juneteenth as an 11th paid holiday. Some of the staff were even willing to sacrifice their PTO day in order to make Juneteenth happen (which is the recommendation the finance committee put forth). One of the options included 13 paid holidays and you would have thought the majority of staff would have chosen that option. Additionally, Trustee Dooley has witnessed staff commitment to DEI during the staff training session with Dr. Marks. Finally, the cost is a little over \$2,000 as calculated by staff and the money is there to pay for it. Trustee Dooley supports this holiday and it is warranted.

Trustee Bartlett: The library falls a traditional retail model and needs to be financially reviewed as such. If the library is facing inflation and there is a lack of understanding the financial model, there is much concern.

Trustee Yu: This (Juneteenth) has been to the board several times and the board knows how passionate the community and staff are on this matter. The survey results are in and so are the cost of the holiday and it is time to listen to the community. He reviewed the survey results and the highest option chosen is to add Juneteenth as a paid holiday. This option was even more popular then option 5 which offered 13 paid holidays. Trustee Yu wants the board to act on this tonight.

President Crawford took a break to confer with legal (attorney).

President Crawford asked if Trustee Cherukuri would like to make a formal amendment.

Trustee Cherukuri said to be clear this is in addition to the motion on the floor (to create the Juneteenth paid holiday) as presented by President Crawford's motion. He is referring to the original recommendation from the finance committee:

- a. A PTO day will be converted to a 12th paid library holiday for all Library Employees, Salaried and Hourly personnel. Part Time employees will accrue Holiday time per current employment policies as with other holidays.
- b. The Veterans Holiday, which is currently designated as November 11th or a floating holiday in the month of November will be modified. Veterans Day will become a floating holiday capable of being used any time through-out the calendar year.

Trustees spoke that this was not clear and attorney Tom clarified that Trustee Cherukuri's motion is in addition to the motion on the floor to create Juneteenth as a paid holiday. Additionally, Trustee Cherukuri said the intent is both floating holidays (PTO conversion to holiday and Veterans Holiday) will float all year long to be sensitive to the needs of a diverse community.

1st- Trustee Cherukuri

2nd- Trustee Bartlett

Discussion: Director Farkas asked if one PTO is being taken away. Trustee Cherukuri said yes one PTO is taken away and converted to a floating holiday to be used throughout the year. Trustee Bartlett asked for clarification that there is a Juneteenth Holiday which is stationary and a second floating holiday (Veterans Day) can be used throughout the year and Trustee Cherukuri said yes. Trustee Dooley asked attorney Tom for clarification. Attorney Tom said the original motion is on the table and this is proposed language to add in addition to that. Trustee Dooley asked Trustee Bartlett for clarification from a financial perspective. Trustee Bartlett said Juneteenth portion adds a liability but Trustee Cherukuri's motion is a wash and does not add liability.

Trustee Michener asked for clarification on the document from finance. Only items 1 and 2 are included in Trustee Cherukuri's statement as stated under a and b above in the motion. Trustee Michener asked if Juneteenth is still a paid holiday and closure and Trustee Cherukuri said he is only adding to President Crawford's motion (he is not changing anything about the original motion). Attorney Tom said to be clear the original motion made is on the table this is about the language in the amendment to that. Through the chair attorney Tom said the discussion should be about the amendment. Trustee Michener said she wants to make sure she understands and she is shocked to be interrupted. Trustee Cherukuri answered Trustee Michener's question that he is not changing any language in the main motion.

Trustee Dooley is concern about taking away the PTO day without engaging the staff. Therefore, she is not in favor of the amendment.

Roll Call Vote was taken. Trustees Bartlett, Cherukuri and Yu voted yes and Trustees Crawford, Dooley, and Michener voted no. Trustee Wood is absent/excused. Motion failed.

President Crawford reread the original motion to approve Juneteenth as a paid holiday along with the closure of the Novi Public Library.

1st- Trustee Crawford

2nd- Trustee Dooley

Roll Call Vote was taken. Trustees Crawford, Bartlett, Dooley, Michener and Yu voted yes. Trustee Cherukuri voted no. Motion passes.

President Crawford appreciates the finance committees diligence and work to bring the information forward.

2. Charges for Damaged, Destroyed or Lost materials

Director Farkas- This policy is in place until December 31, 2021 as indicated on page 72 and if nothing is done, the library would go back to charging fines. There are two policies in the packet depending on what the board decides to do this evening.

President Crawford: Would like the following questions answered:

How does this 6 months compare to the previous 6 months as far as materials being taken out?

Has there been an increase in number of materials returned over the previous 6 month period?

(COVID would likely affect data.)

Has there been an increase in damaged materials returning late during the trial period?

Is there a particular zip code that has more late fees and blocked cards?

What is the percentage of late fees coming from non-residents?

If someone's access to materials is blocked can they still have access at another library?

What is the percentage of the libraries operating budget that comes from fines (separated from damaged or lost materials)?

How many library patrons have their cards blocked?

Has the money that Novi has taken in from fines decreased over the last 5 years?

Has there been any gathering of stories from the patrons and non-patrons re: how fines affect them?

Trustee Dooley: In the policy it is says that the library Director has the authority to change the borrowing period and fees. Director Farkas said there is a borrowing period and fees information sheet. This is typically based on cost. Trustee Dooley would like the following questions answered:

What is the percentage of Novi residents that are currently blocked from access due to late fees?

What is the resource and opportunity cost that the staff has to take to process fines and fees?

What is the actual process when it comes to going fine free? Logistically how does this work?

Is there an auto renewal process? How many times does that happen?

Logistically how does the library execute the fine free? There has to be models other libraries operate with. How does fine free impact libraries in Novi's class and population size? What is the impact and how do libraries make up for the lost revenue?

Trustee Bartlett: Has researched and compared libraries and has yet to find a library that is open as much as the Novi Library- 7 days a week, with extended hours. It seems Novi library has defined accessibility not as fine free, but as the number of hours open. Even other libraries he has researched that are open 7 days are still open 8 hours less (a week) then the Novi library. Is it right to use punitive fines for funding no, but the library has and it is in the budget currently and the question is how is this revenue replaced? A review of the annual report indicates for every \$3 the library takes in \$2 goes to employees and benefits. At a time of increased inflation, he does not feel it is fair to hit the current employees now.

Trustee Michener: This is why she asked the questions earlier this evening during the Treasurer's report. (She brought the library information sheet re: borrowing and fees.) She is against the accruals. If the book is lost or it takes too long you have to pay for the book. However, with increasing accruals one could pay more than the actual cost of the book. Trustee Michener shared an extensive list of libraries in Michigan that are fine free. This trend is happening in Michigan.

Trustee Cherukuri: Library access is something he is passionate about. He seconded what Trustee Bartlett has said. He said that two class VI libraries most comparable to Novi are Waterford and Royal Oak These libraries closely resemble Novi and are closed 71 days and 74 days a year, respectively. Lost revenue can go to building, people or collections. When a source of money is taken away it has to come from somewhere. This is not an insignificant amount of money. How many people are benefitting. The average fine per person is quite low. A snapshot in time of how many cards are suspended does not tell you how many people have lost access because someone can pay a small amount to be unsuspended. He would like to know how many are suspended over a specified period of time. Also, a parent's card is not shut down because of a child's card. Therefore, a child can have access to a parent's card. The cards are flushed after two years and in special cases the Director and her team are empowered to make adjustments. The goal is to not to isolate people. A physical capital asset is shared across the community and the amount of time shared is limited. When a patron keeps a book long it stops the next patron from getting that book. These fines are a minor inconvenience for the vast majority of people and for those impacted there are other methods to help them out. He is looking for a reliable number of patrons that have lost library access before making a decision. He is not supporting

fine free from a moral standpoint unless there is consideration to take penal fines from the budget as those fines represent people in a much worse situation.

Trustee Dooley: Understands the board needs more time. She is suggesting to extend fine free to allow more time to get Trustee's questions answered. Trustee Dooley inquired about when the millage was initially passed for the library and was it for this building or the prior building? Director Farkas said there was a bond that was passed for the new building. The operational millage is based on the 24,000 sq. ft. building not the current 60,000 sq. ft. building. The millage was 1.0 and is down to .72 currently.

Trustee Cherukuri: While the operational millage rate is not based on the new building the population and tax base has grown and the tax revenue coming in is significantly larger. He encourages more research about fine free. Although he is against going fine free as a blanket approach he is 100 percent in favor of measures to target those people that are affected by it negatively.

Trustee Yu: Agrees there is more research to do before finalizing a decision to go fine free. He is in favor of extending the fine free period while more research continues. He does not recommend going back and forth as it is confusing to residents and more work for the staff. He is curious to see the fine free impact (in terms of fees collected) and if there is a big service disruption? In terms of fine free model, how accessible is the library and if the library is ending or suspending privileges for guests then the library is not accessible to them. The fine free movement is an increasing trend, the list of libraries is growing and it is happening among neighboring libraries. Additionally, there are areas of Novi that are not affluent and any of these barriers would block their access from using the library. He suggests more access points for residents to return materials to other key locations.

Trustee Michener: Provided a timeline in regards to fine free discussions. Jan 7, 2017 budget session Trustee Michener asked Director Farkas to look into money owed and what if it never gets paid. Feb 4, 2017 budget session Director Farkas provided a breakdown of outstanding fines and fees - \$16,676.93 in outstanding fines and \$10,612.69 in outstanding fees totaling 27,289.62. How do fines help the bottom line if they go uncollected? March 29, 2018 board meeting - Julie attended PLA conference and introduced fine free concept to the board. March 28, 2019 board meeting, food for fines program discussed as introduction towards fine free. Jan 9, 2020 budget session continued discussion of fine free. These discussion all began Pre-Covid. Jan 21, 2020 Director Farkas shared 21 percent of active cards had fines - 5,298 out of 25,244. Traverse City went fine free at this time. March 17, 2020 special emergency closure due to Covid. Jan 7, 2021 fine free discussed again. June 24, 2021 -Voted 7 to 0 to go fine free from July to December 2021. She is in favor of extending fine free while more data is collected.

Trustee Dooley: Asked finance committee Trustees to please include initial research done on fine free in a future board packet. Trustee Dooley asked Director Farkas how long she needs to answer all the questions asked at the meeting this evening. Reports will need to be run in the new Carl system so the end of June as suggested by Trustee Dooley sound feasible to Director Farkas.

Trustee Dooley made a motion to extend fine free until the end of this fiscal year (June 30, 2022).

1st- Trustee Dooley

2nd- Trustee Yu

Discussion: Trustee Bartlett asked to amend the motion: He recommends the Human Resource committee meet and get a comprehensive list of questions to Director Farkas. Also, there is some data that may not be available to gather answers. Trustees discussed that there is no amendment needed to the motion just a procedural request that Human resource committee (essentially Trustee Dooley and Crawford) combine their list of questions and submit them in writing to Director Farkas.

Trustee Cherukuri shared that the finance committee began to research on fine free and one thing they have been informed is they cannot get granular data. It becomes very hard to get that precise data and they cannot verify there is a significant population nor quantify the population that is affected by this.

Director Farkas will bring a fine free budget to the budget meeting to analyze.

Roll Call Vote was taken. Trustees Bartlett, Crawford, Dooley, Michener and Yu voted yes. Trustee Cherukuri voted no. Trustee Wood is absent/excused. Motion carries.

Communications

1. 11/24/21: Thank you letter from Novi Oaks Chapter ABWA
2. 12/01/21: Email from Emily Pohlonski, Principal at NCSD Virtual School Re: Tour

Closed Session

1. None

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn at 9:29 p.m.

1st— Trustee Michener

2nd— Trustee Yu

Roll Call vote to adjourn was unanimous. 6 yes votes. 0 no votes. Trustees Wood is absent/excused



Brian Bartlett, Secretary

1-27-2022

Date