

Minutes of the Board of Trustees
William F. Laman Public Library
Special Meeting - Via Zoom
Monday, November 29, 2021 @ 5:30 PM

The Board met via Zoom at 5:30 p.m. Ms. McLean called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Those present were Ms. Crystal Gates, Executive Director; Ms. Valerie McLean, President; Ms. Esther Crawford; Ms. Kim Drake; Ms. Katie Phippin; and Mr. Sonny Rhodes. Mr. Charley Baxter and Ms. Joyce Brewer were absent. Also present: Ms. Stacy Purdy, Ms. Shannan Hicks, and Mr. Richard Theilig. There were no public comments.

Ms. Gates presented various cost of living adjustment options, from one percent to ten percent. All present discussed the options. Ms. Drake noted that current staffing numbers are for current hours, those being Monday through Friday, 9-5. She would like to see the library increase available hours for public access, especially families who work traditional hours. She noted that approving an increase in wages might paint the library in a corner when it is time to add hours and therefore more staff to handle the increased public service hours. Mr. Rhodes noted that was a good point and asked Ms. Gates to address it. Ms. Gates advised that an increase in hours had not been made yet due to several reasons, including the current visitation rate being less than fifty percent compared to pre-pandemic figures, new ways to meet the needs of the community including outreach services and the planned kiosk and mobile branch, and the ongoing pandemic affecting how the public utilizes technology for access rather than visiting brick and mortar facilities. It was also noted that young children have access through the outreach services to daycares and schools, little free libraries around the city, and school library services. All present discussed. Mr. Rhodes noted that it is important to look to the library staff to review data and let them do their jobs. He noted that he has some ideas about how to increase facility usage and would like to share in a future discussion. Ms. Crawford stated that it is clear that Ms. Gates conducts research and reaches out to peer libraries and brings items to the Board that have been thoroughly considered and that the Board trusts that she is coming with best practices and ideas in mind. Mr. Rhodes agreed that the Board should trust those in the trenches. Ms. Drake asked if there is a plan to increase usage and visitors and noted that the current library hours limit the library acting as a third place for community engagement. Ms. Gates stated that no specific number has been established as a goal or timeline, but that staff are seeking to increase usage on a daily basis, including media reach, additional programs, in-person programs starting in January, and other ideas to draw community members back to the library. She also shared that trends are no longer reliable due to the shift in how society as a whole interacts both during and possibly after the pandemic. The pandemic created an environment that taught new users how to utilize technology for

services, including those at the library such as browsing the collection, placing holds, curbside pickup, and more. Ms. McLean noted that an increase of six percent for a cost of living adjustment would keep the library within a reasonable range for percentage of total budget spent on personnel. Ms. Gates advised that it would place Laman in the 60s percentage range, which is in keeping with peer institutions. Ms. McLean noted that when the library is ready to add additional public service hours and needs additional staff the Board and Ms. Gates could review the budget for potential amendments to provide funding for those positions. After much discussion, motion Mr. Rhodes, second Ms. Crawford to approve a six percent cost of living increase for all library employees, effective the next pay period, which will be paid on December 10, 2021. Motion carried with the following vote: Ayes: Ms. Crawford, Ms. McLean, Ms. Phippin, and Mr. Rhodes; Nays: Ms. Drake; Absent: Mr. Baxter and Ms. Brewer. Motion carried. Ms. Drake apologized for her dissenting vote and expressed that her opinion is that the increase will paint the library into a corner that would limit an increase in hours later.

The next regular meeting will be Monday, December 20, 2021, at 5:30 p.m. on Zoom.

There were no board member comments. With no further business to discuss, motion Mr. Rhodes, second Ms. Crawford to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

Crystal Gates, Secretary