

Unapproved

**Grace A. Dow Memorial Library  
Library Board  
Minutes  
Wednesday, September 17, 2008, 7 p.m.  
City Hall Council Chambers**

I. Roll Call

Soules called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Melissa Barnard, Maxine Brink, Sarah Galt, Tami Johnson, Kathleen Kinnish, Norm Neher, William Snover, Marilyn Soules

ALSO PRESENT: Virginia McKane, Assistant Director; Wendy Shields, Technical Secretary; John Palen, *Midland Issues*

II. Acceptance of August 20, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Minutes approved with changes.

III. Additions or Changes to the Agenda

None

IV. Public Comments

None

V. Director's Report

Barnard reported that Nancy Shaw, the 2008 Michigan Reads author, presented two programs at the library on Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. Eighty-five people attended the events.

Barnard encouraged Midland residents to attend the City of Midland's Budget Roundtables that are scheduled in October. More information and online registration are available on the City's website, [www.midland-mi.org](http://www.midland-mi.org). Board members received letters inviting them to participate.

Johnson mentioned that she visited the website, Everything Tri-Cities.com. Johnson noted that there is not a library category to click on. McKane has contacted the website administrator and suggested that a library category be added.

Galt commented on the outreach locations for the Summer Reading Program. Barnard noted that the number of outreach participants is down from previous years. McKane explained that it might be due to the inconsistency of staff at the outreach sites. A reason for the decrease has not been determined but staff will follow up with the appropriate staff at the locations before next year's program.

Kinnish was pleased to see a jump in the number of VolunTEEN participants. The library works with the United Way Volunteer Center to recruit volunteers. The staff also contacts the Key Clubs at the schools for volunteers.

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Soules commented that partnering with UNICEF for an upcoming Crafty Readers program demonstrates community collaborations, a board goal from last year.

### VI. Patron Compliments and Concerns

#### SIGNED COMMENTS:

1. I am very happy with the library and the ladies who are so nice when checking books out both day and night, also the ladies who help you find an author or a book. I've had a broken hand and surgery and have enjoyed reading and all the help from the ladies.

#### UNSIGNED COMMENTS:

1. Please enforce cell phone rules in Reading Room.

**A sign is posted at the entrance to the Quiet Room restricting phone use in that area. Please notify staff if cell phones are being used in this area since the doors prevent sound from being heard outside of the room.**

2. More privacy at the computers. People seem to read what I'm doing, very uncomfortable feeling.

**If more privacy is desired, laptops are available to check out and rent for use in the library. The computer area was designed to be open and visible to staff.**

3. The folks at the reference desk are always so helpful with the people using the computers. Sometimes it's very hectic and people are very impatient (me included). They're always just great at helping and dealing with any and all problems. It's not easy dealing with the public and the computers can be temperamental (so can the public). Thanks from a frequent computer user.

### VII. Old Business

#### a. Board/Community Communications

Soules reported that the September/October issue of the Library Connection is available online and at the Library.

In following up on a patron comment last month about the plastic bags used at the library, Galt reported on research done on plastic vs. paper bags. The production processes do not favor one over the other as more environmentally friendly. The report emphasizes "reduce, reuse, recycle".

Discussion followed about whether the plastic bags should be offered and if there should be any restrictions on when they would be offered to patrons. Since the bags are vital in protecting materials in inclement weather and patrons use them when they have multiple items to check out, the bags will continue to be available. Staff will also continue to explore other options.

The Friends of the Library are in the process of purchasing re-usable bags similar to the ones at Wal-mart and Meijer to be sold for \$1.00 each. These bags should be available before the end of the year and may have an impact on the use of the plastic bags.

Snover requested clarification of the role of Board members particularly in reference to his goal in representing the community by helping to determine community needs

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and seeking community input. Snover explained that he had contacted an organization to explore library needs and had apparently overstepped his bounds as a board member.

Soules commented that a Board member should seek feedback from the community by working in conjunction with the staff, and working in concert with the other Board members. Galt mentioned that there is a process to be followed in seeking feedback. Board members need to use a systematic approach in gathering information from the community. Barnard added that knowing the services that the Library offers and the relationships that the Library has developed with various organizations is important. Kinnish noted that as she has served on the board she has learned more about the Board process and library services. It was agreed that informal conversations with friends and neighbors about the Library are appropriate.

Johnson asked about how the Board could help with the "Tourist in Your Town" program. Barnard invited Board members to volunteer and team up with a staff member for a 1 to 2 hour block on October 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Soules has signed up for Saturday morning. Kinnish volunteered to help on Saturday afternoon.

Soules expressed appreciation for the newspaper coverage that the Library receives.

### b. Mideastern Michigan Library Cooperative Board Meeting Report

Soules reported that the MMLC has approved the request for membership from Chippewa River District Library, the Pere Marquette District Library and the Coleman Library. Residents from these other districts do have to apply for a library card from the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library.

In other business, the Genesee District Library will continue to provide the Talking Book Center to their patrons.

Soules reviewed the 2008 Summer Reading statistics chart provided by MMLC, noting the level of participation of the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library. The Cooperative does not pay for the summer performers but Cooperative staff does schedule the dates and times for member libraries.

With the current director retiring in June of 2009, MMLC has begun the search for a replacement.

Soules reviewed the MMLC Plan of Service. The Board can vote to approve it now or delay action until the next meeting. Two-thirds Board approval is needed. Neher asked if Soules approved of the plan. Soules answered affirmatively.

Brink moved approval, Galt seconded. Motion passed.

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### c. Library Board Annual Report Committee

The draft of the report provided in each Board packet was reviewed. The Board members agreed to drop the listing of the 2008-09 goals and revise the last sentence to indicate that they are looking forward to acting upon new goals. Galt moved approval, Kinnish seconded. Motion passed. The 2007-08 Annual Report will be sent to City Council.

Soules thanked Galt, Kinnish and Neher for their work on the Annual Report.

### d. Library Board Goals

Soules began the discussion about the goals by suggesting that the Board review each one individually.

Goal 1: Advise library staff and evaluate processes and procedures related to technology use and instruction at the library.

Barnard asked for clarification on "evaluating processes and procedures."

Neher interpreted the goal as a way to address the public comments received about computer services with suggestions from the Board. It was decided to change the word "advise" to "suggest". The revised goal reads: Make suggestions to library staff on processes and procedures related to technology use and instruction at the library.

Goal 2: Participate in the review of the Library's Mission Statement and development of a strategic plan.

No change was suggested for this goal.

Goal 3: Participate in the City of Midland Community Roundtable discussions regarding city services, including the services of the library, to provide input in identifying city budget priorities for the fiscal year 2009-2010.

No change in this goal. Several Board members will be participating in the October roundtable discussions.

Goal 4: Suggest innovative marketing strategies to communicate library services and programs to the community.

No change in this goal.

Goal 5: Seek dialog/feedback from the community to determine needs through solicited comments.

Since this goal is an ongoing responsibility of the Board, it was suggested that it be dropped.

Galt, in referring to the City Council Goal of economic sustainability, suggested a Board goal of fostering business success and skill development. Barnard interjected that the Library does hold small business seminars in conjunction with Delta College and provides a variety of resources for business owners including business plans in eBook format. Soules expressed her concern about keeping the number of goals manageable. The goal addressing marketing may include services to specific audiences. Barnard suggested that the City Council's goals could be tied into the strategic plan.

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Brink moved to accept the Board's 2008-2009 Goals as revised, Kinnish seconded. Motion passed.

Barnard mentioned that the Annual Report is posted on the Library's website and the Board goals could be as well. It was agreed to post the goals on the website.

### VIII. New Business

#### a. Library 2007-2008 Statistical Report

Barnard distributed and reviewed the statistical report. Total circulation is the highest it has been in four years. Other areas with increases included: reference questions, program attendance and database usage. The decrease in the gate count does not correlate with the increases in usage. The equipment used to count at the door is not precise but does give an estimate of the traffic.

Library expenditures increased in 2007-08 due to building and staff costs. With the budget reductions made in this year's budget, expenditures for 2008-2009 should be flat.

Soules asked if this report goes to City Council. Barnard responded that some of this information will be included in the Library section of the City's Annual Budget document.

### IX. Board Announcements

Kinnish announced that the Books 'n Bites Book Discussion Program would be meeting Thursday, September 18 at 7 p.m. at the Library. She encouraged all to attend.

### X. Adjournment

Brink moved to adjourn. Johnson seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.