



TRAVERSE AREA DISTRICT
LIBRARY

Board of Trustees Special Meeting
MINUTES (approved)
Wednesday, June 5, 2019 at 5:00pm
McGuire Community Room
610 Woodmere Ave., Traverse City, MI 49686

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by President Gersch at 5:00pm. Present were: Gersch (President); Vickery (Vice-President); Gillman (Treasurer); Jones (Secretary); Odgers, Mathewson, and Sullivan (Trustees). Also present were Adams (Counsel) and Carpenter (Staff).

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

All members in attendance stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

3. **Approval of agenda**

It was MOVED by Gillman, SUPPORTED by Jones, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion CARRIED.

Jones explained that Ryan Deery, Leah Dodd, and Michele Howard's director interview results would be discussed in an open dialog format among the trustees and that the board may make a motion to offer a job to one of the candidates at the conclusion of the meeting. He then asked Adams (Counsel) to provide some guidance for the discussion.

Adams noted that she had reviewed all 16 interview questions asked of the candidates and that the board should discuss the results within the confines of the information that was brought out in the interviews and responses to those questions asked at the May 31 special board meeting. The board was also advised to refrain from any discussion that would approach a protected class. With respect to choosing a candidate, Adams noted that if a candidate was chosen the offer would be subject to the successful resolution of applicable background and reference checks. Jones emphasized that if a candidate was selected at the conclusion of the meeting that it would only be to offer the position to the candidate and that the board would then work with legal counsel for negotiation of any contract terms.

4. **Public Comment**

President Gersch opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

5. **Discussion of Director Interview Results and Possible Selection of a Candidate**

Jones called on each trustee individually, with Sullivan being first, to make a contribution to the discussion. Sullivan noted that as the newest trustee she was privileged to be a part of the interview process, however was not privy to any of the applicants prior to the final selection of interviewees. With two of the three candidates standing out with enthusiasm for TADL, and each being strong candidates, Sullivan recommended Howard.

Jones then called upon Odgers. Odgers thanked all the applicants, in particular the three interviewees, noting her appreciation for the questions the candidates asked of the board. She thanked the Personnel Committee, the Kent District Library Consulting team, the TADL employees, and the community for their input and interest in the Director search. Odgers said she was impressed with particular answers from each of the candidates, and in helping her make a decision, she looked at published qualities of

winning libraries and librarians of the past years as examples. Overall Odgers felt that Howard was the strongest candidate.

Mathewson noted that all three candidates were impressive, that it was a tough choice, and that there was no bad choice among the three. She echoed sentiments of Sullivan and Odgers and felt that Howard's vibrant energy was a game changer thus would support a decision for Howard.

Vickery thanked all those involved in making the process work well and gave special thanks to all the candidates who put in considerable time and effort, and who were well prepared which spoke highly of them. Vickery was looking for the candidate most up to the challenge of looking at what TADL has been doing, how they would maintain TADL's high level of service and cultural services, their plan to build and cultivate collaborations and their commitment to moving forward, among several other attributes. After the final analysis Vickery expressed support for Howard first, but would also support Deery, as both were immensely qualified.

President Gersch echoed the previous sentiments and noted that her decision was not taken lightly. After careful thought, Howard and Deery rose to the top, and of the two, she chose to support Howard as the candidate to move TADL into the future. Gersch thanked the Personnel Committee for their role in the process of hiring a new Director.

Jones then highlighted the difficulty in making a choice as eleven outstanding candidates were reviewed with three being chosen for interviews. He felt that the final interview underlined his first choice to support Deery because of the passion Deery had communicated among other factors, but he was happy to support Howard as well.

Lastly Jones called upon Gillman. Gillman noted several thoughts: he felt that Dodd was his first choice on paper as she clearly has experience directing a Class 6 library like TADL; he felt that Deery pulled ahead in the live interview; and he sensed the board's lean toward Howard throughout the discussion. He then drew cautionary attention to some of the pros and cons of hiring from inside and hiring from outside. Gillman raised internal candidate considerations such as knowledge of the system, lower cost potential, subordinate level conflicts, co-worker bias, and opportunity for employees to move up within the library, etc. He noted outside candidate considerations such as adding diversity, fresh ideas under new eyes, experienced directorship/leadership, no friendship bias, ability to discover institutional blind spots, potential mistrust by employees, and longer learning curve at a higher cost, etc. Despite the range of considerations, Gillman recognized all three candidates were qualified for the position.

Vickery responded with appreciation for Gillman's descriptiveness and highlight of such important considerations. He added that there is also a social side and a technical side to consider as well. Discussion with respect to the considerations ensued.

It was **MOVED** by Odgers, **SUPPORTED** by Mathewson, to offer the position of Director of the Traverse Area District Library to Michele Howard subject to the conditions outlined by Counsel. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Odgers – aye	Mathewson – aye
Sullivan – aye	Vickery – aye
Gersch – aye	Jones – aye
Gillman – aye	

Motion **CARRIED**.

Jones noted that contract terms of employment would be discussed in an open meeting format on Tuesday, June 11, 2019. A background check will also follow. With the help of Counsel, an offer letter will be drafted contingent upon board approval at the next regular meeting on June 20, 2019.

President Gersch will follow through with letters to the candidates not receiving the offer for the position.

6. **Public Comment**

President Gersch opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

7. **Adjournment**

With the interviews completed and a motion by Gillman, President Gersch adjourned the meeting at 5:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,



V. Carpenter, Recording Secretary

Approved by board vote on June 20, 2019,



J. Jones, Board Secretary