

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the  
JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

March 2, 2017

**CALL TO ORDER – SPECIAL MEETING**

The special meeting of the Jefferson County Public Library Board of Trustees was held in the Library Administration Conference room on March 2, 2017. Library Board of Trustees Chair, Brian DeLaet, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Other Trustees present: Julia Hill-Nichols (Vice-Chair), Deborah Deal, Kim Johnson and Charles Naumer.

**Trustees Not Present:** John Bodnar

**Guests:** None

**Staff present:** Pam Nissler, Executive Director; Donna Walker, Director of Public Services; Richard Sosa, Director of Budget & Finance; Rebecca Winning, Director of Communications; Sandie Coutts, Director of Employee Relations & Development; Julianne Rist, Assistant Director of Public Services; Cindy Matthews, Promotions and Marketing Manager; and Amber Fisher, Executive Assistant, Office of the Executive Director.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**Social Media**

The Chair introduced the topic and asked Rebecca Winning, Director of Communications, to provide an update

Rebecca Winning advised the Board that the Library first became engaged in social media in 2008 and has been working to grow that communication avenue. The Library has had a number of updates to the social media policy over the years. Part of the process around the Library's review and update of its social media policy includes researching policies from different libraries and from the County. The intent of the review is to make sure the Library is following best practices.

The Executive Director advised the Board that Library Administration would like to receive the Trustees feedback on the social media policy and listen to any concerns.

There was wide ranging discussion on the topics of social media, the Library Bill of Rights, 21<sup>st</sup> century communication tools, the Library's role and responsibility to community, neutrality and censorship. Some of the discussion included:

- The Library is not neutral on certain things – nor should it be neutral – for example, it should not be neutral on free speech. The Library is neutral on political parties. The Library does stand for some things and when those things are violated the Library should stand up and be counted. The recent issue is a matter of balance and the Library has addressed that. The Library should not stop tweeting.
- We want to make sure we're clear when it comes to social media. We won't post racial comments, but if someone is looking for information on Nazis and we have those materials, we would not censor the materials.
- How does the Library Bill of Rights fit with social media – 140 characters versus the Library's collection? How does it fit with 21<sup>st</sup> century communications? The Library Bill of Rights has been around for a very long time. The Library has to be very thoughtful but setting the bar too high is a concern. How does the Library control someone's perception? One person's perception of bias may not be the perception of another person. It is not possible to present all sides of an issue in 140 characters.
- The Library Bill of Rights is directed toward materials, this is communication. Libraries have always communicated (newsletters). There is a big difference in censoring materials and communications. The Library needs to be careful not to confuse communications with library materials. We need to expect that some patrons will be offended.
- How does the Library provide a framework by which people can communicate clearly? In the digital world, how does the Library do that while carrying the personality or image it wants, the J CPL image. Communication is different now, it is easier and faster, the volume and quantity is different.
- What is the process of moderating our social media? Just because it's controversial doesn't mean the Library should take it down. We want to make sure the Library does not stop being relevant - don't want to shy away from everything. At the end of the day everyone has their own personal bias. It is the Library's obligation to point people to library resources that can help them make sense of the topical issues of the day.
- What is social media or any other online mechanism that allows dialogue between the library and community? What's different about twitter is the attachment of an image with the message. In some ways it is not anything new, art tends to invoke more controversy because it has a visual impact. If you look at the dialogue in the tweets it points to Library resources, the images were considered to indicate a bias.

The Board was advised that the Library is reviewing its social media policy and guidelines and that any policy or guideline includes a staff training element. Any revisions to the social media policy will be presented to the Board. Additionally, the Library will increase its communication efforts to advise the public that the Library Board of Trustees welcomes public comment and is the appropriate governing body to receive and address any concerns from the public.

The Board and Library Administration expressed appreciation to the public and the Commissioners for bringing this topic forward.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Special Board meeting was adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bodnar', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

John Bodnar, Secretary