Dover Public Library Advisory Commission

November 28, 2023, 11:00AM, 2nd Floor Conference Room

MINUTES

Attending: President, Zach Carter; Admin Assistant, Karen DeMarco; Jaclyn Hale; City Manager, Dave Hugg; Council Liaison, Fred Neil; Jill Street; Library Director, Brian Sylvester

Call to order: Zach Carter called the meeting to order at 11:01AM.

Minutes of September 19, 2023: Fred Neil made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted; Dave Hugg seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed.

Old Business:

A . Statistics – Statistics for August and September 2023. At the request of the City Manager, starting in September a new program spotlight was added to the reports. Some other data, mostly used to track reciprocal borrowing, was trimmed from the report. That information is still available just not recorded on the reports. Circulation was up slightly in September. New library registrations and program statistics were down due mostly to the summer reading program. Registered library users is flat….usually this statistic does not fluctuate too much. Zach mentioned that while Kent County library users continues to go up, the money from the county continues to go down.

B . Staffing Status – Passport Clerk, Michelle Monfort resigned at about the same time that the City hired Passport Clerk's Megan Holt and Denise Burton. Tameka Piper resigned due to medical issues. Cordelia Messick took another position and will be leaving at the end of December. Tameka & Cordelia were both part-time Library Clerks.

C. Security – The library has had five incidents since the last board meeting. A bicycle theft came to a quick resolution when Dover PD responded almost immediately. The police were able to locate the thief who was still on property. A group of young patrons were asked to leave after being rude to staff. A man was banned for having an open container in the restroom. Another man was unresponsive from a potential overdose in the restroom. Fred asked if we keep Narcan on site; Brian said we do but emergency services recommended that we do not use it in this incident. The contract for security is up for renewal and we are recommending that the guards be trained on Narcan procedures. Another man was intoxicated and bothering a patron and was asked to leave. The library is also in the process of updating the security cameras.

D . Council on Libraries Report – COL is currently working with libraries on potential updates to the Delaware State Code. Jaclyn's understanding is that Council wants to introduce legislation that protects the civil rights of patrons to access materials and to not discriminate against what is purchased. This is a way to support

intellectual freedom in libraries and also have something in legislation about it. There has been push back from some of the libraries believing legislation is unnecessary due to those rights already being protected.

Brian mentioned that a FOIA request was submitted to libraries throughout the state requesting all policies having to do with book bans and book challenges in the past two years. Jaclyn believes the man is a former Dover Library employee's son and is a journalist. He did a program for the Delaware Library Association last year on marketing in libraries. Jaclyn believes he is library friendly. It does not seem to be an attempt to attack libraries but more to report on that issue. Brian added that Dover has received zero challenges in the past couple of years. The library Collection Development policy and Request for Consideration of Library Materials form can be found on the library website.

Council is also working on the budget and is trying to mount an argument that the State of Delaware has been responsible about construction monies but have not kept pace with the operation monies. They are putting together a page that graphically shows that. Jaclyn said that Council did have a budget meeting but she does not think the state got the money they wanted. Zach pointed out that although the state is building more libraries, the state aid money is not increasing.

E . The Friends of Dover Library Report – The Friends are in the middle of their annual membership drive. They are also looking at purchasing some additional signage for the library.

F . Dover Library Foundation Report – The board has a new member, Dr. Esosa Iriowen. Dr. Iriowen is an Associate Professor of Chemistry at DSU and a Science Program Coordinator at Wilmington University. The Foundation annual appeal was mailed out last month. The board is also revisiting the idea of selling bottled water at Comic Con next year.

G. Kent County Levy Court Report: Library Tax Districts – Brian has still not received an estimate from the County on revenue or any documentation on the formation of a board to set the tax rate for FY2025. He has reached out to County Librarian Hilary Welliver to see if she can provide more information. Mr. Neil offered to reach out to Levy Court Commissioner Allan Angel with any questions we have. This is the last fiscal year that the library will receive reciprocal borrowing monies from the County.

New Business: None

Other: Jill asked if the board had spoken about the dip in passport services; Brian said the dip was because the library lost one of our passport clerks, Michelle Monfort. Mr. Neil and Zach believe the passport office is one of the best decisions the library has made; Dave commented about how it brings people into the library and to downtown Dover.

Meeting adjourned at 11:23am.

Next meeting: January 16, 2024