Dover Public Library Advisory Commission

March 19, 2024, 11:00AM, 2nd Floor Conference Room

MINUTES

Attending: President, Zach Carter; Admin Assistant, Karen DeMarco; Jaclyn Hale; Council Liaison, Fred Neil; Library Director, Brian Sylvester

Absent: City Manager, Dave Hugg; Jill Street

Call to order: Zach Carter called the meeting to order at 11:05AM.

Minutes of November 28, 2023: Councilman Fred Neil made a (pending) motion to accept the minutes as submitted; Jaclyn Hale seconded the motion. All were in favor; motion is pending based on a quorum at the meeting on May 21, 2024.

Old Business:

A . Statistics – Brian Sylvester reviewed the December & January statistics. New library registrations for City of Dover residents did spike up quite a bit, which was nice to see. Many of the other statistics held about steady. Passport revenue made a big jump, more than double from December to January. Numbers are very good for this time of year. The non-county residents continue to increase a bit. Zach Carter commented that Kent County went up too.

B . Staffing Status – Brian reported that the library had a bit more turnover in staff. We are currently recruiting for a part-time passport clerk, a part-time library assistant, and a part-time library page. We have two part-time library clerks that are in the process of onboarding. Ann Wilson started as a PT Library Clerk 1 yesterday. She was at a library in New Castle County prior to joining Dover. We've made an offer to Susan Lanyan who was a former Dover employee. Susan left here for a full-time position at the Kent County Library and is now looking to come back to Dover as a PT Library Clerk 1. Elise Baird, Theresa Post, Denise Burton and Tina Powell have all left. Three of those were recent hires. In a couple of cases the schedule didn't work and a couple they just weren't the right fit for the position. Elise is leaving due to a relocation to Maryland.

Brian also reported that we have two employees out on sick/medical leave. Kathy Joseph has been in the hospital for a week and Alan Stokes had a medical issue that led to a surgery that he's now recovering from. Alan is scheduled back April 1st.

Councilman Neil mentioned that the Human Resources department is sending out a list of job openings on a regular basis.

C. Security – The library banned nine people for the day since the last meeting. One person would have been issued a 30 day ban for vandalizing the restroom had he ever came back in library. One security guard had a major medical episode relating to medication while on duty. He has since returned to work.

There was a minor traffic collision in the parking lot. A police report was filed, but the driver was never tracked down. There was an issue of an indecent exposure that happened last fall. It was a child that saw something but didn't tell their parents until quite a long after the fact. There's not a whole lot we can do since we don't keep camera footage that long. A police report was filed and we'll cooperate as much as we can.

D . Council on Libraries Report - The Council had a meeting in February but canceled the meeting scheduled for March. They voted to encourage all library consortiums to dedicate at least 10% of their collection budget to eBook holdings. Dover contributes 20% based on our eMedia circulation. Zach asked if the funding from the state will stay consistent; Brian thinks it will go up some.

E . The Friends of Dover Library Report – The friends are planning their annual meeting in April. Their annual staff/volunteer appreciation event is on April 9th, which is during National Library Week. Everyone will be getting gift cards for Wawa and a spread of coffee, donuts and bagels in the meeting room throughout the day. The bookshop is still doing really well.

F . Dover Library Foundation Report – Brian reported that at the annual board meeting in February, Tony DePrima was voted in as Foundation President and Margie Cyr is staying on as Vice-President for another year. Tony will be giving a report on the Foundation to City Council on April 22. Tom Leary from Janney Montgomery Scott will be invited to attend the June board meeting to give an update on the status of the endowment funds.

G. Kent County Levy Court Report – Brian shared a chart he put together of what the revenue from Kent County reciprocal borrowing has looked like since 2017. It was steady in 2017, 2018 and 2019, then started to go down in 2020 and was very low in 2021 due to the pandemic. In 2022, the revenue started to come back up. The amounts in 2023 and 2024 included the residual library tax that was split evenly amongst the five county libraries. Dover will probably get less revenue than under the old reciprocal borrowing agreement. Brian will be sending a copy of the chart to Dave Hugg. Based on these figures, Brian would like to work on getting us back up to 2018 numbers. To do that, we will most likely have to make a recommendation to increase the tax rate. He will work with Sue Durham to figure out what that number would be. Zach said it'll be almost double what it is now. Brian sees the tax rate being raised in phases. Tax rate should be ready by next January.

New Business: No new business.

Other:

Zach thinks the push now is to get new board members. It's especially important due to the new Library Tax districts. Councilman Neil will speak with the Mayor about recommendations and about the Kathy Doyle recommendation. Jaclyn Hale asked if anyone from the Friends of Dover Library would be interested.

Zach asked how the Do More 24 campaign went. Brian said the Foundation raised $325. From the donor list one person is interested in serving on the Foundation board. Tony will be reaching out to her.

Jaclyn passed out copies of HB 299, which is the Delaware Libraries for All Bill. Legislation voted it out of committee and it is now placed on the ready list. There was a meeting about it last week. Delaware Library Association's Legislative Action Day is on March 28.

Meeting adjourned at 11:36AM.

Next Meeting: May 21, 2024