

Unapproved Board of Trustee Special Board Meeting Minutes
William P. Faust Public Library of Westland
Wednesday, September 23, 2020

A Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees for the William P. Faust Public Library of Westland was held on Wednesday, September 23, 2020, at 7:30 pm by Electronic Zoom.

1. Call to Order and Rollcall

Meeting called to order at 7:30 pm by James Higgins

MEMBERS PRESENT:

James Higgins
Gayle Nicholson
Kathryn Sample
Jen Koralewski
Gary Chappell

ALSO PRESENT:

Ishwar Laxminarayan, Director
Paula Scarlett, Admin Assistant
Dan Wetterstrom, IT Dept. Head
Jennifer Roth, Information Services Dept Head
Katie Dover-Taylor, Librarian II, Reference

2. Action on Agenda

Gary would like to add three separate line items to the 4. Business section for today's meeting. Please add the following items:

- c. Interim Director Discussion
- d. Interim Dept Head for Information Services Discussion
- e. Vacate Librarian II Position Discussion

Motion by Gary Chappell, supported by Jen Koralewski

RESOLVED to approve the adding of three items to the Business section of tonight's Agenda.

James Higgins – Aye
Gayle Nicholson – Aye
Gary Chappell – Aye
Kathryn Sample - Aye
Jen Koralewski – Aye

Motion Carried

3. Citizens Comments on Agenda Items

Katie Dover-Taylor – comments regarding for Ishwar, that she would like to thank him for all of his hard work, coming into the Library and providing strength & stabilizing the organization. I think you have been consistent and articulate in advocacy for the Library. Its vital role in the community has enabled our progress to move forward and restore trust in the Library. Under your leadership, you have accomplished so much to prepare the Library for bigger and better things. Ishwar, you are leaving this Library a much better place than when you started here. I wanted you to know that you have righted the ship. I just wanted to say thank you, and I didn't want this moment to pass without having this on the record.

Jennifer Roth is an excellent choice for Interim Director and the best prospect at this time, she is incredibly prepared and has great knowledge of our Library. I hope that the Board will recognize Jennifer's many strengths as a Librarian, Supervisor, and service in the Westland Community. Please keep this in mind as you make your decision for this transition of the Library.

Richard Graham – Agrees with Katie about righting the ship. The current Board and Director came into the Library on pretty shaky ground and rough conditions. Most in the Westland community and I feel that Ishwar has done an outstanding job in the short time that he has been with the Library. He appreciates that Ishwar has gotten the Library back on track and now feel residents would be more open to coming back to the Library. I like that Ishwar has remained an independent voice for the Library, and that has not changed since you started 18+ months or so ago.

4. Business

a. Library Director transition – Discussion & Action

James wanted to let Ishwar know how much he appreciated and, once again with Katie's comment, that Ishwar has righted the ship since he started in June 2018. Ishwar has gone above and beyond with this Library; he has completed many tasks and is leaving this Library in way better shape than when you started here. My heartfelt thanks, as well as the entire Board at this time, goes out to you. Ishwar will be sorely missed.

b. Other
None

c. Interim Director Discussion

Gary would like to open the Interim Director discussion but asks that Ishwar be available for

any questions that may be requested.

Motion by Gary Chappell, supported by Gayle Nicholson

RESOLVED to approve to open the discussions for selecting the new Interim Director.

James Higgins – Aye
Gayle Nicholson – Aye
Gary Chappell – Aye
Kathryn Sample - Aye
Jen Koralewski – Aye

Motion Carried

James began the discussion by saying: Ishwar has assembled a strong team around him. Conversations have always been about continuity and business for the Library. The leadership team comprises many individuals; Dan Wetterstrom heads up the Department of Information Technology, Susan Hanson being the Head of Technical Services, Cari Fry heading up the Youth/Teen Services department, and Jennifer Roth leading the Information Services department. The Board appreciates your services and supporting Ishwar during his tenure as Director. We, as the Board and Ishwar, have been put together a solid foundation; we feel there is no need to look any further than our staff. We feel that Jennifer Roth would be able to lead the Library and continue to move it forward. James opened up the floor to start the discussion.

Gary first asked if Jennifer would accept the position if the Board decided to give her the Interim Director role. Gayle indicated she wanted to know that also. And if Jennifer could provide a little bit of her background.

Jennifer started her career in Flint, MI, 17 years ago. She was the head of circulation and programming. She then took a position at the Cromaine Library in Hartland, MI, where she was the head of Youth Services, and came to the Westland Library right as everything started to get interesting in June of 2017. I was hired as the Department Head of the Reference. Jennifer has been here the two years that Ishwar has been at the Library; she feels that she has learned a lot from him. The Westland Library has a lot of potential; she knows the staff and Ishwar's vision and feels she can carry on where Ishwar has left off. As we advance, she understands they have a millage coming up, the 25th anniversary of the Library, and would like the opportunity for this position. As mentioned, Ishwar is leaving a solid foundation and would like to build onto that vision. Jennifer feels it would be an easy transition and looks forward to taking the next step.

James asked for any other questions from the Board, then proceeded to motion for Jennifer Roth to become the Interim Director of the Westland Public Library. Effective October 3, 2020, through March 31, 2021. James offered a starting salary that had not been discussed with Jennifer, nor have any of the Interim Director position's responsibility, Union status, and benefits.

This meeting was put on hold until a Letter of Understanding could be created and discussed with all parties. All other items added to the Business portion of this meeting were put on hold as well. This included the Letter of Understanding for the Interim Department head of Information services. A meeting would be set up towards the beginning of next week.

Motion by Gary Chappell, supported by Gayle Nicholson

RESOLVED to create a Letter of Understanding with Jennifer Roth for the Westland Public Library's Interim Director, and a Letter of Understanding would be made for the Dept Head of Information Services, and the Vacancy of the Librarian II position.

James Higgins – Aye
Gayle Nicholson – Aye
Gary Chappell – Aye
Kathryn Sample - Aye
Jen Koralewski – Aye

Motion Carried

5. **Citizens Comments**

Lynne Hagmann commented that she has been the secretary for the Friends of the Library for the past 13 years. She has seen many Directors come and go. Lynne would like to thank Ishwar publicly for all of his hard work for the last two years; he has worked and supported us in every way possible.

We look forward to working with the new Interim Director whenever and with whoever has that position. The Friends had worked with Jennifer for a brief moment when she was the Library Liason for the friends.

Denise Sedman would like first to thank the Board of Trustees. She has, in the past, done some volunteer programs and held writing classes. She has worked with Jennifer in the past and feels that Jennifer is highly capable and professional. If she says she will do something will complete it. Gary mentioned earlier that all salaries are public knowledge; what does Ishwar make, and is Jennifer being offered the same? James indicated that he was not sure

but would be willing to look it up and get back with Denise. It would be an excellent idea that women are getting paid the same amount that men are being offered and not being discriminated against.

Tami Bird, a Youth Librarian at the Westland Library. She was wondering what the morning meeting be about if no decisions were made tonight? Ishwar indicated that he would recommend that the meeting would be canceled until a later date. Tamie wanted to second the feelings and comments that Katie made and is very sorry to see Ishwar leave.

Councilman Mike Londeau, on behalf of the City Council he would like to thank Ishwar for the past three years serving as the Library Director. You have been a constant professional, and I have genuinely enjoyed working with you. As I mentioned Monday night, I don't believe that there was one event for the City that you did not attend, always advocating and supporting both the Library and the City of Westland. I appreciate your service.

Also, congratulations to Jennifer Roth on your new role, and I look forward to meeting and working with you soon.

Katie Dover-Taylor, following up on a couple of questions that came up during this meeting, both Unions are aware of the changes that are happening and are waiting for the transition plan from either Ishwar or the Board. If and when offered the Information Services Department Head's interim position, I would accept the job. I have been in the Library for almost eight years, as most of you may know – I am looking forward to seeing how this progresses in the next few days. Kathryn Sample indicated that the phantom position that Katie Dover-Taylor asked about was, in fact, her Librarian II position, that would be held open until further notice.

6. **Board Members Comments**

Kathryn Sample wanted to let Ishwar know that it has been a pleasure working with you, and you will be greatly missed.

Jen Koralewski was shocked by the turn of events and wishes that she could have worked longer with you. Best wishes on your road that will be next traveled. She would like feedback from the Personnel Committee and hear what is being offered to Jennifer; as Denise pointed out, she hopes the salary offer is fair.

Gayle Nicholson also wanted to mention that Ishwar will be greatly missed and thank him for everything that he has done for the Library in his tenure.

7. **Next Meeting Topics**

Letters of Understanding

8. Adjournment

RESOLVED, to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 pm

Motion by: Gary Chappell, supported by Gayle Nicholson

James Higgins – Aye
Gayle Nicholson – Aye
Gary Chappell – Aye
Kathryn Sample - Aye
Jen Koralewski – Aye

Motion Carried