

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH LIBRARY BOARD

Chairperson – Georga Knazovich - Wasilla
Vice Chair – Susan Pougher - Palmer
Secretary – Mary Fischer – Talkeetna

Big Lake – Karen Crandall
At Large 1 – Chad Scott
Willow – Adam Jenkins

Sutton – Kathy Kyser
Trapper Creek – Virginia Robson
At Large 2 – Martha Kincaid

AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING
Big Lake Library and Zoom

January 9, 2024
1:00PM

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
- III. AGENDA APPROVAL
- IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING
 - A. November 14, 2023
- VI. BOROUGH STAFF REPORTS
 - A. Hugh Leslie
 - B. Librarians
- VIII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD/AUDIENCE PARTICIATION – 3 minutes per person
- IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - A. Challenged Books Report
- X. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. MSB 4.40.030 Updates
 - B. Discussion of Board report to Borough
 - C. Introduction of new Board members
- XI. ADVOCACY
- XII. CORRESPONDENCE
- XIII. MEMBER COMMENTS
- XIV. NEXT MEETING
 - A. February 12, 2024 - Talkeetna
- XV. ADJOURNMENT

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
LIBRARY BOARD**

Draft Minutes

REGULAR MEETING

November 14, 2023

Big Lake Library and Zoom

1:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Georgia Knazovich at 1:00 PM

II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM The quorum was established with members Chair Georgia Knazovich, Vice Chair Susan Poughe, Mary Fischer, Virginia Robson, Martha Kincaid present.

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda was amended to elect a new secretary. The approval of the agenda was moved by _____ and seconded by Susan Pougher. The motion passed.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. ELECTION OF SECRETARY

Kathy Kysar had to resign. Mary Fischer agreed to take the secretary position. She was voted in.

VI. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING

There were no additions or corrections. Accepted as distributed and corrected.

VII. BOROUGH STAFF REPORTS

A. Mr. Hugh Leslie reported that the Borough worksheets will be coming out later this month for next year. The libraries will do their first draft budgets. These drafts are reviewed line by line by Mr Leslie with the individual librarians for changes, after which the libraries do a final draft. The final drafts then go into the Borough process. When complete go to the Library Board for approval, usually in January.

W

B. Librarians' reports

Cassidy Drake, Big Lake: Weekly tech classes were held in October and will continue in January. The Library showed the PBS series "Iconic America". The Big Lake bathrooms are being upgraded and the heated walk extended through the accessibility grant. It was too

cloudy for a planned eclipse program. Have added a new on-call person to the staff. The after school program is well attended. Beginning crochet and knitting classes in November. A father and daughter who each wrote a book are doing an author visit in December. Big Lake will need a new representative as Kathy Cross has stepped down.

Beth Skow, Palmer: On Wednesday the community can come to talk to architects at the Palmer depot. Three ideas will go to the city council. Have an opening for the Library Services Coordinator. When the new coordinator is hired all programs should get up and running. The first insurance check was received covering childrens' books and leases of the two temporary building.

Zane Treesh, Wasilla: Have added an older kids programs such as chess. Budget process and strategic planning with council next month. Added one on call position. December 7, there will be a silent auction for Alaskana books. Aaron Lugget, president of the Eklutna Corporation and the Alaska and history curator of the Alaska museum will be the speaker. The WIFI has been upgraded.

Juli Busby, Sutton: Truck or treat drew 140 people. There is currently a basket auction put on by the Friends ending before Thanksgiving. The Friends will also will be a holiday bazaar the first Sat in December with Santa and local vendors. Kids programs are going well. Home schoolers meet once a month. Attendance is growing. Teens have 12 - 15 kids. Their monthly event is a hit. The ladies pot luck and movie night was a hit. Chess club will be starting after the holidays.

Marita Crosby, Trapper Creek: Absentee voting drew 14 people. Adult craft week was enjoyable. Movie night for Halloween. On Halloween had pumpkin shaped pizzas. Learned about Isaac Newton and Newton's cradle.

Julie Mitchell, Willow: The 11th annual truck or treat featured 25 trucks, 3 firetruck2 and a warm-up tent. Over 200 kids attended. The second "get to know your community seminar" will feature Sunshine Health Center, CERT, the fire department and the Historical and Wildlife Museum. Tech classes have changed from bi-monthly to 1 on 1 training. Storytime and mentoring are doing well. Christmas Forest of Trees: Community members and businesses set up trees throughout the library. Two open house events. One on a Saturday afternoon and one on an evening with Christmas caroling and refreshments.

Geri Denkewalter, Talkeetna: October attendance was a little low. There was no eclipse, but did have a activities for the kids. There was display at the elementary school. There were eclipse glasses for all. Storytime is going well. Once a month the Day Care brings pre-schools for story time and sometimes grab and go. Six people for strong women. The first Stone soup had no one. Heather Linday gave a writers' workshop. Eight people signed up and 28 people attended. She then went to the Denali Art Center for a reading and book signing. Book to movie had a good turnout. We had our first game day and played clue and cribbage. Last spring music for little kids led by the A to Z group consisting of Danielle

Aslanian and Larry Zarella. Had about 25 kids walking around singing and dancing. They are planning on coming back. Starting the holiday season with "what we are thankful for". Have been weeding the collection often using donated books. Absentee voting had about 50 people. We are looking at a shed. We had a monstrous shrew invasion in the craft closet. We painted, changed the carpet etc. but the smell is terrible. O&M is coming up to investigate.

VIII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD/AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – 3 minutes per person

- A. Jeanie T. _____ Friends of the Wasilla Library president: Trick or treat around the Story Walk drew 126 people and 15 volunteers. First adult story time held at _____ Brewery. You could have an adult beverage while we read stories. There were 45 people and standing room only. The next meeting November 29th featuring the Cremation of Sam McGee. Had 50 copies of Perks of being a Wall Flower donated, which the school district library committee is considering. Have a place is Palmer, Wasilla and Talkeetna. People are free to come and listen to the conversation. Had 11 people. Books are free to pick up. The Matsu Freedom Readers is part of the group. Cassidy Drake announced that there may be a big Friends of the Library meeting in March. Everyone is invited.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Hugh Leslie gave an update on challenged books. The second challenge committee meeting agreed with the librarian that Sold was within the collection development guidelines. The Patron challenged the decision. The director agreed with the committee. There are two more books up for reconsideration: Mr. Leslie will send out invitation for the committee. - Red Hood and one other. There is a new page on the Borough web page allowing people to electronically challenge books. They must first meet with the librarian, then the patron can electronically ask for the committee. When the application is filled out, only the affected library and Hugh are notified. Added language that we could only consider a finite number of books at a time. Susan Pougher, Palmer, asked for clarification.

Zane Treesh, Wasilla, reported that their challenge committee met last Wednesday to discuss Red Hood. The committee has time to respond in writing. Zane will meet with the city council on the 27th to address their concerns. The Wasilla Attorney stated by email that case law show that the materials are constitutionally protected. No going to jail. A new case said it is also unconstitutional to move a book from youth to adult based on a petition.

Marty Kinkaid, At Large Member: Reported that she had a template that breaks down the Miller Test that she would like committee members to use when reviewing challenged books. There was extensive discussion as to whether this was necessary. Mary Fischer, Talkeetna, moved that the template be provided to the members to review for a vote at the next meeting. Virginia Robson, Trapper Creek, seconded. The motion passed.

- B. The 2024 schedule

January – Big Lake
February – Talkeetna
March – Big Lake
April – Wasilla
May – Trapper Creek
August – Willow
September – Talkeetna
October – Sutton
November – Wasilla

Mary Fischer, Talkeetna, moved to accept the schedule. Susan Pougher, Palmer, seconded.
The motion passed.

- C. The draft of the Strategic Plan is due to be updated. Mary Fischer is to read the draft RFP to suggest any changes. It will be sent out for changes before the January meeting.

X. NEW BUSINESS

If you want something on the agenda get to Georgia by Jan 1st.

XI. ADVOCACY

No Advocacy

XII. CORRESPONDENCE

No Correspondence

XIII. MEMBER COMMENTS

No Member Comments

XIV. NEXT MEETING

January 9, 2024 at Big Lake

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 2:18 pm

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

LIBRARY BOARD

Chairperson – Georgia Knazovich - Wasilla
Vice Chair – Susan Pougher - Palmer
Secretary – Kathy Kysar - Sutton

Big Lake – Katherine Cross
At Large 1 – Naomi Sweetman
Willow – Mary Sanford

At Large 2 – Martha Kincaid
Talkeetna – Mary Fischer
Trapper Creek – Virginia Robson

Minutes

REGULAR MEETING Wasilla Library and Zoom

October 10, 2023
1:00PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Call to order by Vice Chair Pougher at 1 PM.

II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

The Quorum was established with members Vice Chair Pougher, Member Robson, Secretary Kysar, Member Kincaid, and Member Fischer.

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

The approval of the agenda was moved by Member Robson and seconded by Secretary Kysar.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING

A. September 12, 2023

Changes needed: Add Member Fischer to roll call. On line 121, add Member Fischer to the No vote. Member Kincaid wanted to clarify, on line 111, that she meant that a representation of the community should be brought in, not the community as a whole.

Approved with changes as noted, Member Fischer moved and Member Kincaid seconded.

VI. BOROUGH STAFF REPORTS

A. Mr. Hugh Leslie stated that budget process has begun and replacement library cards will be added to the fee schedule. The budget that the librarians create will be provided to the board for recommendations and/or approval in a few months.

B. Librarians

Beth Skow from Palmer. The 10-million-dollar bond passed, but that does not mean that the library will use it. They are hoping for other donations and other monies. The 3 designs from the architects are being put before the Counsel Building Committee this week.

Zane Treesh from Wasilla. The IT department has determined that the library has enough bandwidth that they no longer will require patrons to use passwords to log in; however, it will only be available during regular library hours. September circulation was 20,000. Children's program started up. There were 729 participants in the bookmark contest, which was over 100 more than last year. They are now starting the Spooky Creative Writing for school-age children. The mayor was re-elected and there is one new council member. December 7, there will be an auction of Alaskan books as a fundraiser.

Geri Denkwalter from Talkeetna. In September, they started Mentors, Storytime, Breakfast Book Club, and Teens and Tweens. One staff member went to the Association of Small and Rural Libraries in Kansas and brought back great information. Another staff member is taking a library skills course from the New York Library Association. Herb garden is being dispersed. There have been 700 books read so far in the Thousand Books Before Thanksgiving family program. They are collaborating with the elementary school for a Thursday Family Reading Night for which the library will provide materials, information on library programming, and a brochure that includes the library hours and phone numbers. They will be having several different reader's theatres. Absentee voting will begin at the library starting in October, with elections held there in November.

Juli Buzby from Sutton. School year programming is going well. Friends of the Library board elections are this month and they are looking for 2 new recruits. The Moose Range Plan is having public comment meeting at library on October 17, at Palmer High on October 19, and at the Chickaloon Community Center on October 20. The 2nd Annual Trunk or Treat will happen on October 31 along with the annual hayride, which has been going on for 30 years. In November, there will be a Fall Basket Silent Auction and Holiday Decorating Party with the Friends of the Library board.

Marita Crosby from Trapper Creek. The Volunteer Fire Department is coming tomorrow for the homeschool children for Fire Safety Month. Saturday begins the Adult Craft program. Last month was the first movie night for teens and it was well attended, so there will be another one at the end of October with a Halloween movie. Absentee voting begins, at the library, October 23 and will continue for two weeks up until the election.

Cassidy Drake from Big Lake. Adult Tech Class began last week with learning digital content by making posters and flyers, and it was well attended. This week, the class will focus on Google, Google Drive, and Gmail. Next week, they will learn how to make digital storybooks and do storytelling. They are offering a screening of the PBS show, *Iconic America*, made up of 5 different episode clips for a total of 20 minutes that they will run throughout the week. There will be an Eclipse Viewing Party October 14 at 8 a.m. They are hiring for a new position. After school programs are so well attended that they had to add an extra class for after school Storytime, which has over 40 students. Storytime's are now on Tuesdays and Wednesdays after school. STEAM classes are on Thursdays at 2 p.m. for the homeschool class and 4 p.m. for the after school class.

Julie Mitchell from Willow. Last month was the first Get to Know Your Community seminar series with speakers from the Library, the Lion's Club, WACO, and the PTA. In November, they will host the Sunshine Community Health Center, CERT, Willow Fire Department, and the Willow Historical and Wildlife Museum with a tour of the museum afterward. The 2nd animated movie night is October 20 with free movie and popcorn. There were 15 attendees at last month's movie night. The 12th annual Trunk or Treat is on October 31. The mentoring program began this month with 12 students, and a waiting list, who ride a bus from the elementary school to the library where they spend an hour with an adult mentor. They are hosting Susitna River Coalition and their film screenings of a couple of movies on October 24.

VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD/AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – 3 minutes per person.

Jeanie from the Friends of the Wasilla Library reported that 41 people attended the Heather Lende program, including patrons of other libraries and members of the Alaska 49 Writer's Club. They just finished one year of the Story Walk; it has been positively received in the community, so they are going to host a Trick or Treat Story Walk on October 20. She asked Hugh to update website on the borough web page because the library board meetings are listed incorrectly, the minutes haven't been posted since March, and she can't find where to look for the status of challenged books.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. **Challenged Books Reports.** Hugh explained that the first book challenged, *Let's Talk About It*, was determined by the librarian it was within the guidelines of the Collection Development Policy. The patron objected to that decision, so a 4-person (2 librarians, not affiliated with the reconsideration request, and 2 board members) committee read the book, reviewed the book, and recommended that it remain in the Young Adult section. The patron disagreed with the decision and took it to the Community Development Director who read the book, read the reviews, and looked at the legal input. He determined that it didn't meet the definition of obscenity by the Miller Ginsberg Test and sent a letter to the patron. That book is back on the shelves.

A second challenge by the same patron, *Sold*, was taken through the process and the committee, made up of 2 different board members and 2 different librarians from the first committee, and the decision was that, although the subject matter was sad and disturbing, it was appropriate to remain in the Young Adult section of the libraries. The patron objected to that decision, so it is currently under review by the Community Development Director.

There are 6-9 other books being challenged at a different library; the librarian has reviewed most of those and set up a meeting with the patron to discuss which books the patron has the strongest objection to. That same patron has questioned procedure for objecting, so Hugh is going to review that with the GIS Department tomorrow. The borough is going to add a fillable form to the borough web page so that all patrons have one place to go to challenge books. From there, those objections will be sent to the librarian whose library is affected, and to Hugh, so that they can start chronologically documenting the challenges as they come in. Vice Chair Pougher said that she would forward an email to the board so that they can see what the initial challenge looks like and the librarian's response. She also asked Hugh to have that forwarded to the librarians.

Beth, Palmer Library, said they have had one book challenged, *Let's Talk About It*, which the patron wished to have destroyed. The Palmer Library policy is that the patron must talk to the Director first, then fill out the form to which Beth responds. She asked Cassie to forward a copy of that to both the board and the librarians. Beth then passed out copies to the board members present of her response to the patron, which was sent via certified mail, explaining that the library was keeping the book because it did not violate any of the standards or laws set forth. The patron objected to her decision, so a Hearing Committee was formed with 30 days to respond to the patron via certified mail, and that letter was put in the mail today. Palmer Library's policy is that only one book can be challenged at a time. In an attempt to control the volume of requests for forms to challenge books, the form has a pressed seal with the date and name of the library so that it cannot be photocopied and passed around. Vice Chair Pougher pointed out that being on the Hearing Committee is a time-consuming process, because this last challenge had 200 pages of reading material with it.

Zane, Wasilla Library, has had one book challenged, *Red Hood*. The process for the Wasilla Library is that the patron has to first talk to the Director before they are given a reconsideration package which has the appropriate form for the patron to fill out and the Collection Development Policy. Zane replied with a written response to the patron, who then appealed it to the Wasilla Mayor. A Reconsideration Committee of three people is being formed and is expected to meet next month.

Juli, Sutton Library, has had 2 meetings with patron who challenged a book, *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins, and stated that she was going to go straight to Hugh. Nothing more has happened. Julie, Willow Library, has 9 book challenges on her desk and has her first meeting with a patron tomorrow.

Hugh responded to a question by Vice Chair Pougher and explained that there is currently no limit on how many books that a patron can challenge. However, that policy is being changed to a maximum of 5 books, adding that the most the committee can review at a meeting is 5. He also stated that policy is that the librarian is required to read the challenged books as time and other duties allow. Their first priority is being the librarian, making sure the library is operating efficiently and that the patrons' needs are being met. Librarian's are not allowed to read the books at home on their time off; they are required to read the books along with their other duties, and those other duties should not suffer because of the request.

B. Meeting Locations 2024. Email was sent out this morning with last year's schedule of locations. Vice Chair Pougher states that the rules are that we meet at each library once per year and 2 meetings are on Zoom. She will send out an email to organize meeting dates for approval at next month's board meeting.

Palmer does not currently have a location to host a meeting and Beth requested that Board Minutes and Agenda also be sent to her and Zane, in addition to the other librarians.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Book Challenges. Already discussed.

B. Frontiersman Article. Member Kincaid and Secretary Kysar both wrote letters for the Frontiersman in support of libraries. More information will be forthcoming after the Palmer Friends of the Library on October 18.

Member Fischer shared that the Talkeetna Library has a group that meets once each month and writes letters in support of libraries. Even though they are currently focused on the MatSu Borough School Board, they are willing to also write letters in support of borough libraries. She would like to have information on what books are being challenged so that she can pass along that information to the group.

C. Strategic Planning. Hugh stated that Strategic Plan has expired, and the board needs to move forward. Vice Chair Pougher added that the board was waiting for the librarians to submit their recommendations. Hugh responded that he would ask the borough librarians to review the plan, make their edits or requests, and then he will send that to the board via email.

X. ADVOCACY

The City of Palmer passed the library bond by 80%.

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence.

XII. MEMBER COMMENTS

Member Fischer is concerned that the meeting dates and places are not put forth for public knowledge on the borough calendar, and that puts the board in violation of the Open Meetings Act.

Member Kincaid is concerned that it is very convoluted to find things on the borough website and the minutes have not shown since March. She explained that she has been calling the board office for over a month, sent a letter, and finally talked to someone who said that he would take care of it, but the website still hasn't been updated. She then shared a quote from Cory Ten Boom, "And so, seated next to Father in the train compartment, I suddenly asked, 'Father, what is sex sin?' He turned to look at me, as he always did when answering a question, but, to my surprise, he said nothing. At last he stood up, lifted his traveling case from the rack over our heads, and set it on the floor. 'Will you carry it off the train, Corrie?' he asked. I stood up and tugged at it. It was crammed with watches and spare parts he had purchased that morning. 'It's too heavy,' I said. 'Yes,' he said. 'And it would be a pretty poor father who would ask his little girl to carry such a load. It's the same way, Corrie, with knowledge. Some knowledge is too heavy for children. When you are older and stronger, you can bear it. For now you must trust me to carry it for you.'" She then shared that the book, *The Naked Communist* (published in 1958), puts forth an agenda to take over America that includes a plan to "infiltrate the press, give control of book review assignments, editorial writing, [and] policymaking decisions. Then it goes on to say they present homosexuality, degeneracy, [and] promiscuity as normal, natural, and healthy." She is concerned that we are "pawns on a chess board" and are being manipulated. She explained the process that the MatSu School Districts Library Citizens Advisory Committee is using to review the list of 56 challenged books. She expressed a desire to have community members attend our board meetings so that the librarians can get feedback from the community, such as the involvement of the community at the borough's committee meeting on the challenged book, *Let's Talk About It*.

Secretary Kysar pointed out that we are a public library board, not a school library board, and that she feels that the 30 community members who attended the borough's committee meeting make up a small percentage of the borough's population and cannot be seen as a valid representation of all borough library patrons. Member Kincaid responded that it's important to value community members who take time out of their work day to attend a meeting.

Vice Chair Pougher shared that the Palmer Library is having Baby Lap Sit and Storytime at the Palmer Depot on Tuesdays. They had a Velociraptor Naming Contest for the dinosaur book display, and Sparkle was the name chosen. They have free solar eclipse kits that include treats such as Milk Way bars and Starburst candies along with solar viewing glasses and educational bookmarks. Later this week, there will be a Snap-a-Photo with Your Phone at the book and selfie stations around the library, with props and backdrops for fun photos with friends and family. Friends of the Palmer Library are collecting books for their Trick or Treat Night which will be set up in front of the train station on the Friday before Halloween, October 27. Last year, they gave away over 1,500 books. They are accepting book donations at the Palmer Library. If someone has a large number of books, they can contact Friends of the Library, and they will send someone to pick them up. The library staff is going to dress in costume on Halloween.

XIII. NEXT MEETING

March 14, 2023

A. November 14, 2023, in Big Lake and via Zoom.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Pougher adjourned the meeting at 2:23 PM.

Georgia Knazovich, Chairperson

Attest:

Kathy Kysar, Secretary