

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH  
LIBRARY BOARD**

Chairperson – Georgia Knazovich - Wasilla  
Vice Chair - Kathy Kysar - Sutton  
Secretary – Chad Scott - At Large 1

Big Lake – Karen Crandall  
Trapper Creek – Virginia Robson  
Willow – Vacant

Palmer - Susan Pougher  
Mary Fischer – Talkeetna  
At Large 2 – Martha Kincaid

**Meeting Minutes**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Sutton Public Library and Zoom**

**October 8th, 2024  
1:00 PM**

- I. CALL TO ORDER
  - A. The Meeting on October 8th, 2024, was called to order at 1:02 PM by Chairperson Georgia Knazovich, at the Sutton Library.
  
- II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
  - A. Present were Georgia Knazovich, Kathy Kysar, Chad Scott, Karen Crandall, Susan Pougher, and Virginia Robson. A quorum was present.
  
- III. AGENDA APPROVAL
  - A. Kathy Kysar made the motion to approve the agenda seconded by Virginia Robson. The agenda was approved without objection.
  
- IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
  - A. The Pledge of Allegiance was made.
  
- V. MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING
  - A. Kathy Kysar moved to accept the minutes. Susan Pougher asked to correct the minutes under advocacy A, where she was attributed as Karen instead of Susan (unintentionally). There was no seconding of the motion, and Chairperson Georgia Knazovich accepted the minutes without objection.
  
- VI. BOROUGH STAFF REPORTS
  - A. Hugh Leslie – Recreation & Library Services Manager:
  - B. Mr. Leslie Reported that the Jay Nolfi fishcreek park ribbon cutting would be held Tuesday, October 15th at 4:00 pm. He mentioned that the strategic plan for bids on the Mat-Su Borough web page under projects and development and bid proposals was out on the street and open for bids. And explained how to track the bidding process as it proceeds. He was asked about the Jolly Creek project and gave a brief update.  
  
Sarah Thomas asked for input for next year's scheduling and mentioned that after the new calendar year, we will no longer be utilizing librarians' Zoom in favor of a borough staff-controlled Microsoft Teams platform.
  - B. Juli Buzby - Sutton: Shared about their youth-led trunk-or-treat community event. Youth are involved in setting up, decorating, and cleanup. As well as the annual fall basket

auction, and silent auction the first few weeks of November. Good numbers for home school programs, Sewing Saturdays, and a well-attended yoga group.

- C. Geri Denkewalter - Talkeetna: Have had some quiet time to finish winterizing in preparation for cold weather. They started a music-in-motion program with 18 kids on Tuesdays and continued breakfast book club and story time with leaves, pumpkins and spiders. Fall book bingo is going well doing a thousand books before Thanksgiving. They are trying to make preparations for a sewing program. A local chef is leading a stone soup program to teach cooking skills. Starting reading mentors. They are short-staffed but many picking up slack to make things work.
- D. Zane Treesh - Wasilla: circulated over 20,000 items again. Currently hiring for two part-time positions, they have hired an adult programming position starting with an intro to email for adults. Had a book sale and fundraiser. Did an annual bookmark contest k-12 with 760 entries.
- E. Marita Crosby - Trapper Creek: Starting an adult craft program for winter painting 36 bowls for the upper Susitna Food Pantry project empty bowls fundraiser. Lots of activity with homeschoolers and toddler programs. Friends of the Library meeting to go over planning for Christmas and cookie decorating day.
- F. Big Lake Library: Starting afterschool programs with a morning program for pre-K and babies. Had a community meeting about the Jordan Lake Park upgrade and rerouting of Jolly Creek. The media room has been very busy. Crochet class and an escape room for teens. Still short-staffed and looking forward to being fully staffed soon.
- H. Susan Pougher - Palmer: There is an article in the Matsu Centennial about the new Library building. They are moving forward with the demolition of the old building by the end of the month. The new building will have a 15 million dollar budget and a 18,000 sqft two-story design. Current programs are being run at the train station on Tuesdays for baby lap sit and toddler time and midweek meet-ups for teens and movie night. Crafting Saturdays at the temporary Library.

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

- A. Jackie Goforth: Stated her involvement in the book reconciliation process has not been as a book-banning Nazi as some have claimed but to have books reshelved to more proper adult shelves if they are indeed inappropriate. She mentioned that eight books have recently been reshelved by both librarians and publishers into appropriate shelves. She further stated that reshelving is not banning and should not be considered book banning when librarians and publishers of herself request books be moved. She said many of the problems arise with the changing standards of

publishers and libraries for what constitutes “young adult” ranging from what used to be 14-17 by publishers then changed to 12-17 and now 16+ for our libraries, thus enabling grossly inappropriate material to find its way into the shelves. She cited a Palmer City lawyer's statement that the sole measure of inappropriateness is determined by the prevailing values of the community as a whole in which the library operates and is, not bound by any other legal requirement.

- B. Karen Lewis: Was glad indecent books are being moved to adult sections. I expressed hope that with the opening of the new Palmer Library, some of these books could be considered and removed or reshelved properly because once they are improperly placed, it is much harder to correct them. Stated, that the School Board completely removed seven books with a judge's approval and expressed gratitude that the process was working.
- C. Jeannie Troshynsk: Thanked those on the Board who understand the importance of supporting the Library's work in serving the community, not the people who go to church with and think like them. Mentioned how pleased she was to hear from Lawyers from out of state that book bans were failing. Spoke in support of author Sarah Moss and the Friends of the Library activities. Mentioned Alaskan Author Trisha Brown being at the Library to promote her book, “Queen of Fairbanks”.

#### IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Board Vacancy: The vacancy was filled by the Mayor's appointment of Mark Sphon, but his oath of office was not yet signed, making him ineligible to be officially seated for the meeting. The Chairperson recognized him and had him introduce himself to the Board.
- B. Strategic Plan Update: Covered in Staff Report
- C. LCAC: Hugh mentioned an upcoming meeting the next Monday to review the book, “Forever” by Judy Blume. Stated that other potential books to be reviewed may include the titles: “Damsel” “The Haters”, and “Anne Frank’s Diary: A Graphic Adaptation”. The LCAC will not have a November meeting for the recognition of Veterans Day. The next meeting will be the second Monday of December.

#### X. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Promotion of Libraries: Kathy Kysar moved to table the discussion due to the absence of Marty Kincaid, who requested the discussion. There was no opposition.

#### XI. ADVOCACY

- A. None

#### XII. CORRESPONDENCE



- A. None.

### XIII. MEMBER COMMENTS

- A. Virginia Robson: Commented that people ask her why there is a Library board and that they think they don't do anything. She can list all the activities reported in the meetings and then asks them, "When was the last time you were there? And that shuts them up pretty good". Chairperson Knazovich added, "Or they say they don't have a library card".
- B. Susan Pougher: Commented that in her work, she travels to small villages, and they usually don't have libraries except maybe in their school, and adults do not have a place they can go to get books. Local stores do not carry books, and while in the village last, she ran out of things to read and found one book among all the adults that she knew there. Not surprisingly, the reading level of the children is impacted, leading to some of the lowest reading levels in the nation. And expressed gratitude for our community being able to have our libraries.
- C. Chad Scott: Mentioned a study found online by elite universities claiming a drastic decline in the reading habits of incoming students and that only 1 out of 10 had read more than half a dozen books, and most are struggling with attention span issues and the ability to finish a book to completion; leading to the loss of reading comprehension and the ability to retain broad themes as well as finite details. Emphasizing the need for further support for reading advocacy and libraries.
- D. Karen Crandall: Spoke on the importance of the reading mentors program and the importance of utilizing the local seniors groups to help aid young persons reading. Suggested working closer with schools to emphasize and encourage more reading programs to combat the challenges of a loss of reading comprehension brought on, she believes, as a result of constant computer use in the classrooms.
- E. Susan Pougher: At the close of Member Comments, Susan asked for the Board to recognize a group of women who had just walked in.
- F. Georgia Knazovich: The Chairperson recognized the group and instructed them they would have three minutes. Melinda Dale of the Willow Library Association, speaking on behalf of herself, was concerned about the borough LCAC not having a representative from within the district boundaries. Carol Ohls a former Library Board member, expressed disappointment in the Member from Willow (Mark Sphon) being appointed by the Mayor and approved by the assembly because she did not agree with his public comments about the Libraries and took them as a lack of support for Libraries. She stated that she understood the members of the Library board were not responsible for the appointment never the less she wanted to express her concern...the Chairperson went on to have a discussion with Carol about how board members are appointed and went back and forth about how she should express her concerns to the borough Mayors office. As Carol went on to describe how Mark Sphon did not in

her mind support the Libraries, Karen Lewis sitting in the audience chimed in that “He does support the Libraries” “He is a good man and he does support the Libraries”.

At which point she was shouted down by Susan Pougher and told, “This is not what this time is for,” “We are out of order, sit down.” Jackie Goforth interrupted and reminded the Board that the public comment time was earlier in the meeting and that if they were going to have back-and-forth commentaries with the crowd, then it should be open to everyone. At which point Susan added, “We shouldn’t be doing back and forth, so we are out of order.” At this point, Hugh Leslie tried repeatedly to get the attention of the Chairperson instructing her to adjourn the meeting.

XIV. NEXT MEETING

- A. November 12th, 2024 – Wasilla Library

XV. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Meeting adjourned at 1:56 pm

X   
Georgia Knazovich, Chair

X 12 NOV 2024  
Date

ATTEST:

X   
Sarah Thomas - Staff Support

X 11/12/24  
Date