

**Helen Hall Library**  
**Regular Board Meeting Minutes**  
Tuesday, March 16, 2021  
Library Board Room

**1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

**2. Roll Call of Members**

Board members Tommy Frankovich, Kathie Nenninger, Mark Lardas, Lillian Murphy and Jeanne Avandsalehi were in attendance, along with City Librarian Teresa Potter-Reyes, Assistant City-Librarian Darla Rance and Administrative Assistant Julie Orff. Parks and Cultural Services Director Chien Wei, City Councilmen Larry Millican and John Bowen, and Mayor Pat Hallisey also attended.

**3. Opportunity for Citizens to address the Board**

No one present wished to address the Board.

**4. Approval of minutes**

The minutes for the Board meeting held on January 19, 2021 were approved as submitted.

**5. Council Liaison comments**

Mayor Pat Hallisey addressed the Board and library staff in attendance. Mayor Hallisey was honored to be at the Board meeting as he personally appointed the members of the board and is confident that they can they do the job of representing the library.

Two years ago, when the major bond issue was addressed to the city, the Library was not ready to be added to the agenda. They were beginning the process of the Facility Needs Assessment. In 1984, the Library was attached to the major bond issue and the Library was expanded. The timing was right, it was attached to a major bond, and there were people supporting it. The Mayor and his family are library supporters, users of the library and feels that it is by far the most used building of the city.

The Library Board was challenged by the Mayor to be the leaders, the communicators, and the initiators to plan what the future of the library holds and how to get there. The Library Board needs to convince the City Council Members of what the community wants, why the community wants it and what it involves presenting them the plan with all of the details. We are the experts for libraries we are in the position to educate others. If the Library Board and library staff are unwilling to do the work, we are destined to fail. Collectively, it is our responsibility to be the advocates and get the numbers together.

What should a library look like in 5 years? High Tech? Senior Center? Brick and Mortar?  
Can the city afford a new Library?  
Who will support it? Who uses the Library?  
How much will it cost? How does that translate to value?  
Where is the need? Location?  
What is the number? Patrons served? Parking needs?

League City is a conservative community. People move here based on the amenities that the city gives them. The Library is one such amenity. We are a community with families with children

and active senior citizens with a history of lowering the tax rate, not increasing it. City land is not the problem, competing for the space is.

This city has a rich history with support for the Library. Susan Mathews was not a Librarian to be pushed aside. She refused to take no for an answer and got the Library built. She was a Politician and used her board members as key, powerful promoters. Mayor Hallisey challenges the current board to be the same. "Be ready to hit the trail and make your case." "The Library is the best asset of the city." He would like to return to the Library Board in a month or two to see how they would like to begin his challenge. "Don't quit on the city – it is a great place!"

Board Member Lillian Murphy asked if there was a future bond proposed, and the mayor responded that it is unknown.

Councilman Bowen added that he is still new at his position and learning but he had the opportunity to walk through a reopening of the Dublin, Ohio library. He suggested everyone to take field trips, go online for virtual tours, do the homework to discover what we need and how much we need to get there. \$50 million is too much, \$25 million might be too much but we need to figure it out.

Mayor Hallisey also suggested a store front option on the West and/or East side. He suggested to be creative to get to where we need to be.

Lillian Murphy asked about a new survey or where the previous Facilities Needs Assessment is? Both Tommy and Teresa mentioned that it has been on the back burner with what we have experienced the last year. Lillian suggested the board creating a blueprint or outline of where to go and what to do next. Kathie Nenner suggested gathering personal stories of what the Library meant to others.

Councilman Millican commented that the Mayor was correct about the senior citizens of the city. They want community rooms, places for reading, fellowship and asked if our staff could start taking data on how many senior citizens use computers and/or smartphones. What are their preferences between actual books and reading online.

Tommy Frankovich asked the mayor if he had appointed a new Library Council Liaison. The Mayor is uncertain that he will continue with the Council Liaisons. Tommy thanked the councilmen and the Mayor for attending and their comments. As past Mayor, Mr. Frankovich worked with Susan Mathews and she was a force to be reckoned with. His family has benefited from the Helen Hall Library.

The Mayor excused himself from the meeting.

## **6. Chairman's comments**

Mr. Frankovich was excited to announce Teresa Potter-Reyes was promoted to City Librarian in February. Through a lengthy statewide search, it was unanimous that Teresa deserved the position. Kathleen Nenner congratulated Teresa and added that through all of the adversity in the last year, Teresa has been a leader regardless of the title, rose to the occasion and brought the Library successfully through many challenges. Director, Chien Wei added that Teresa has been Acting City Librarian since July. She is a team player that has led her staff and stepped in to

support the city including providing research with the Big League Dreams project as well as volunteering during the winter storm at the warming center.

## **7. Staff Reports/City Librarian Updates given by Teresa Potter-Reyes**

### **Unfilled Position update**

An Adult Services Page was filled this afternoon. Interviews for a Volunteer Coordinator will be conducted next week, we are excited to have 3 internal candidates. Assistant City Librarian for Access Services interviews will be held the following week. In April we will interview for the remaining Circulation Services Page, Circulation Services part-time Clerk, and summer positions.

### **Strategic Plan**

Library supervisors went through each individual action item in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and discussed how they will accomplish each item. They are confident that they will be able to achieve the plan even with the events of the past year.

### **Friends of Helen Hall Library**

The Friends of Helen Hall Library are looking into creative ways to increase their membership. New members will receive a small swag bag to help spread the excitement of being a Friends member including a pen, lanyard with a volunteer ID card and a car decal. The Friends will also be given a pocket highlight with monthly library updates to help spread the Library's excitement among the community. There will be a members' only book sale on May 15<sup>th</sup> and a public book sale on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Jeanne Avandsalehi will be contacting Raynette Tingle to volunteer at the Friends Bookstore.

### **Library Update**

Library administration created the Pocket Highlights to be what the Board can immediately take from our meetings to share with your fellow citizens. Kathleen Nenninger loved the idea and the size and the information and felt that it would be helpful to have a pocket size calendar. Teresa agreed but felt that the depth of programs and times would be a challenge to print so small.

The library was closed Monday, February 15 and reopened on Thursday, February 18 because of Winter Storm Uri. Systems were immediately updated so that patrons were not accruing fines. The Library was honored to help the rest of the Parks staff at the Hometown Heroes Park Warming Center. Administrative Assistant Julie Orff, Technical Services Librarian Meredith Layton, and Library Clerk Paula Betancourt worked at the warming center! Tommy Frankovich commented that it would be helpful to have a generator for the Library. Teresa Potter-Reyes added while helping at the warming center, it was discussed how we could offer story times and computer assistance with FEMA filing if the center was at the library. Chien Wei mentioned that Teresa was very passionate during the storm about helping the citizens and getting the library reopened. Once the city confirmed that the power would remain on early Thursday morning, February 18<sup>th</sup>, Teresa had a full staff two hours later ready to open the library to the public at 10:00 AM with over 400 people coming in by 6:00 PM that evening.

City Librarians have just completed the state report for fiscal year. Based on state regulations we were closed for 102 days due to COVID, hurricanes, and building flooding. We were open for 39 weeks with limited occupancy, fully closed for 6 weeks and offered curbside service only for 2 weeks.

Teresa briefly recapped a pandemic year-in-review: since March 2020, the staff has disinfected over 191,000 individual items. Staff has delivered holds to over 850 patrons through curbside services. Since September 2020, the library has had at least 8,000 visitors each month. Of the 25 open days in February (the library was closed for 3 due to the weather), there were 12 days with over 400 visitors and one day with nearly 600 visitors. Overall, visitor traffic is about 54% of where it was before the pandemic and circulation is about 79% of where it was before the pandemic. To date in March we have had 11 days with over 400 visitors each day.

Masks and temperature checks are no longer required when visiting the library. Library staff continue to offer curbside service and disinfect returned materials and common surfaces.

The library professional staff and some of the full-time clerks are participating in a great Mental Health First Aid training opportunity as a part of a collective library effort to be more informed and able to offer mental health first aid to patrons if needed. The same group of staff also completed CPR training provided by League City's EMS department which is valid for 2 years.

The library will be investing in a service that offers a digital summer reading program offering reading challenges and summer reading logs. This will appeal to young families, teens and adults who prefer e-books but will also work in partnership with the paper logs that the library has used in the past. The program can be used throughout the year for different reading challenges. The library has received a 33% discount for investing in the program.

The Library and the rest of the Parks & Cultural Services directorate are responsible for Sunday, May 2 which is the first of the Sundays in the Park civic engagement events. Library staff are planning fun activities such as a story walk, story times, Children's book drive, and take-and-make crafts. The Library staff encourages the Board will join them for the event and will have some library swag to hand out including pencils and bookmarks. Teresa mentioned that this helps with one of her goals, bridging the gap between the library and other city departments.

The city's Communications department created a series of birding classes and events that the library will be participating in. The library will host the zoom sessions, and library staff have coordinated Libguides, programs and displays to be centered on birds. Several local artists will also have bird photos and bird portraits that will be on display at the library for April and May.

Circulation Clerk Miranda Guillory gathered information and put together a stellar tax guide for patrons. The online version includes direct links to the helpful resources!

Julie Orff put together a display for Women's History Month. It highlights two of the most important women in the history of Helen Hall Library: Helen Hall and Susan Mathews.

Children's Services Librarian Kate Guynn was introduced to the Board. She started on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. She comes from Brazoria and Fort Bend library systems. Kate is excited to join the Helen Hall team and is excited to bring her passion for early childhood reading into the programming. She is especially thrilled to get started with the exciting summer season!

## **Staff Reports/Assistant City Librarian Updates/Public Services given by Darla Rance**

### **Children's Services**

Summer assistant positions have been posted. To increase circulation of overlooked materials, the children's librarians have begun to display books on the tops of the shelves. Kate is eager to get involved in library programs and will begin leading the Tuesday Storytime. Summer programming begins in June adding a fun and exciting new program for babies: Babies and Books (ages birth to 12 months). The large-scale events for summer programs will be hosted in the Civic Center. Circulation Services will be available at the Civic Center for library card signups and checkouts. Summer story time audiences will be split having Monday and Tuesday story times that would separate ages so stories and activities could be catered to the attending kids. Monday Story Time will become Toddler Time (ages 1-3) and Tuesday will be the Pre-K Story Time (ages 3-5).

### **Teen Services**

Teen LibGuides were updated and continue to be a great resource for patrons. There were 10 teen programs with 115 participants for February both in-person and on-line. The Anti-Valentine's Bash was a success with 15 participants attending. There were more on the wait list since space is

currently limited due to COVID restriction at the time of the event. Teens stayed after library hours to escape the pressures of romance by enjoying candy, coloring, and watching *Lights Out*. Teen Advisory Board helped plan and finalize 26 programs for Summer 2021. They are also planning to host Free Comic Book Day: 20th Anniversary Celebration in August.

### **Adult Services**

Staff is busy planning Summer programs! Adult Services organized twelve programs that were a mixture of in-person and virtual offerings. The Local History Librarian assisted four researchers. She also took part in a fun project by selecting several items representing League City history to include in photographs with a paper doll, Flat Stanley, taken by a local grandmother for a unique family history project. In addition, she continued re-housing the very large 1970's editions of *The Dickinson Light* newspapers in archival quality flat boxes and interspersed the pages with acid-free tissue paper. Children's Librarian Ziba Cyrus has taken over the Antiques Roundtable program.

### **Volunteer Services**

Darla has taken over for coordinating volunteers during this interim time and has already registered three adult and six teens new volunteers. April 18 to April 24 is volunteer Appreciation Week. Library staff purchased custom lanyards and mini bottles of hand sanitizer to thank the volunteers. Library supervisors are going to personally call over 120 individual volunteers to thank them for spending their time with the library and supporting the library through volunteerism. Teresa Potter-Reyes added that Darla has done a great job filling in with this open position.

### **Staff Reports/Assistant City Librarian Updates/Access Services given by Teresa Potter-Reyes**

#### **Circulation**

Circulation Page Elizabeth Whitworth was promoted to Full-time Circulation Clerk. Circulation Clerk Anari Oliver submitted her resignation, and her last day was Monday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. The Circulation Summer Assistant position had over 30 applicants. Circulation Supervisor Kelsea Meza and Technical Services Clerk Kathryn Rose are collaborating on a DVD replacement project to improve the quality of the DVD collection for our patrons. The library has a disc polisher, but some discs are beyond polishing, and it is time to replace these highly checked out items. Technical Services Librarian Meredith Layton and Circulation Supervisor Kelsea Meza continues to update the library's "Your Library During COVID-19" LibGuide with up-to-date relevant information for our patrons.

#### **Technical Services**

Although the impacts of winter weather impacted cataloging productivity for the month of February, overall productivity is up 83% from the previous fiscal year. The Access Services team met with our new Children's Librarian Kate Gynn for a meet and greet and an orientation to technical services and circulation. Technical Services Librarian Meredith Layton presented a new collection of data to Library leadership that analyzes missed opportunities in materials expenditures with the hope to continually improve the responsiveness of our collections to customer needs and interests. Technical Services Clerk Kathryn Rose began cataloging training so that she can provide back up and support to our cataloging staff.

#### **Statistical Reports given by Teresa Potter-Reyes**

The Statistics continue to be a challenge to compare due to last years closures due to the flood, hurricane, COVID and this year's weather event. Councilman Millican asked how the computer user was determined. Teresa explained that our system tracks how many times a patron logs into our computers. Up until now, the library has still been limiting the number of computers being used due to social distancing.

Councilman Millican asked for confirmation that we are still a site for voter registration as well as supplying tax forms.

### **Calendar of Events given by Teresa Potter-Reyes**

The Spring programs continue with patrons becoming more comfortable attending group events. A pocket highlight was given to each Board member with current updates. It was discussed that the size and the details of the calendar are not a good fit. Summer planning is well underway, the Library is excited to be offering a full summer of programming.

## **8. Board Comments**

Kathie Nenninger continued to praise the option to attend the history club virtually. She enjoyed the discussion of the railroad museum. She has also been approached by someone that would like to volunteer to read to children. This has been addressed before at the library. The issue is with gaining background checks for volunteers that work with children. Teresa and Darla will investigate the issue further with the new Volunteer Coordinator. Options include if other agency's complete a background check, can this be used at the library? Can we add to the budget to include volunteer background checks? Can this be an Outreach activity?

Jeanne Avandsalehi mentioned that MD Anderson is in desperate need of blood and encouraged attendees to donate blood. Mark Lardas announced that he would be at Ellington Day at the Lone Star Flight Museum to discuss his book on the history of Ellington field this Saturday.

## **9. Review of follow-up items generated during meeting**

- Background check for volunteers who want to read to children - Teresa
- Spreading the word of the library's future, building a blueprint and gaining momentum in the future growth plan – Board Members
- Gather ideas and data to help support the Boards growth plan – Library Staff
- Schedule a future meeting for the mayor to attend. – Tommy Frankovich

## **10. Adjournment**

8:12 pm