

**Helen Hall Library**  
**Regular Board Meeting Minutes**  
Tuesday, May 18, 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, Kathleen Nenner, Lillian Murphy, Mark Lardas, and Jeanne Avandsalehi were in attendance, along with City Librarian Teresa Potter-Reyes, Assistant City Librarian Darla Rance, Assistant City Librarian Meredith Layton and Administrative Assistant Julie Orff. Also taking part in the meeting were Parks and Cultural Services Director Chien Wei, Mayor Pat Hallisey, City Councilmen Hank Dugie, Larry Millican, and John Bowen.

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

Garet Nenner, member of the Parks and Recreation Board, was in attendance. He was pleased to attend.

**4. Approval of minutes**

The minutes for the Board meeting held on April 20, 2021 were approved as submitted. Board Secretary Jeanne Avandsalehi signed for approval.

**5. City Council comments**

Councilman Hank Dugie thanked the Library Board and Library staff members for all of the work they do for the citizens of League City. He appreciates the dedication and all the successes go back to the work that is done by the Board and staff members. Councilman Bowen agreed with Mr. Dugie. Mayor Pat Hallisey was pleased to attend and was looking forward to hearing the presentation by BSW Architects.

**6. Chairman's comments**

Mr. Frankovich thanked Kathie Nenner for chairing the meeting last month. He welcomed our guest speakers and appreciates everyone's dedication to the Library's future.

**7. Guest Speakers, Stephen Springs, Senior Principal of Brinkley Sargent Wiginton Architects (Dallas) and Jim Browne, Director of Recreation Business Development and Planning for BSW (Houston)**

Stephen Springs of BSW was the lead architect of the East Library and Recreation Center located in Arlington, Texas. He was invited to speak on lessons learned from a co-operating, multi-use facility that opened in November of 2020. Brinkley Sargent Wiginton Architects began 45 years ago and focuses on the public sector. Arlington, Texas is located in between Dallas and Fort Worth. With approximately 400,000 residents, they are roughly 4 times the size of League City. Arlington has one main library and 6 branches. The East Library and Recreation Center replaced the East Library branch and an older indoor pool and YMCA building. East Arlington is a part of Arlington that grew during the 50s with the opening of a General Motors plant.

During a 2014 feasibility study, a redevelopment of neighborhoods was reviewed, and the revitalization of East Arlington was addressed. A current park with the only indoor pool in Arlington was at the center of the discussion, along with an older library branch nearby. From the study, recreation and library space was a top priority of the citizens. Of the recreation spaces, aquatics, senior activities, and shared community spaces were

included. The original projection was \$27.5 million construction cost for a 62,000 square foot project. A bond was passed for the \$27.5 million for the project cost, (est. 2015). Due to the cost estimate and verbiage, the end result was closer to a 47,500 square foot facility. One lesson learned was always project the cost in the future as a total project cost, not the construction costs at the time of a feasibility study. Use multiple indices to estimate inflation. The cost differences can be significant. The design process began in 2016. (For additional reference, 2 additional recreation facilities, a new main library branch and an existing library branch were also opened in 2020 in Arlington. The main library is 3 stories tall and approximately 80,000 square feet.)

Several phases of planning occurred due to the budget and size adjustment and the town needing the pool to be accessed for as long as possible throughout the construction. BSW partnered with Hidell Architects for the library details. East Arlington needed a low circulation library with programming and computers being a priority.

Of the projects 47,512 square feet, there is a shared common entry -

- Library 8,000 square feet
- Recreation center 18,000 square feet
- Gym 7,400 square feet
- Senior Center Activity rooms 900 square feet
- Indoor pool and its amenities 8,500 square feet

The common entrance is the main and only entrance. The library entryway is immediately to the right with an open entry. There is a gate that secures the library entrance when the library is closed. The common area includes common seating and tables. There is a control desk within the common area past the library entrance where Library and Parks and Recreation staff controls entrance to the remainder of the facility. The common entrance has window views of the library interior, the fitness room interior, as well as an outdoor courtyard facing the park and creek.

The library has their own self-contained meeting rooms, large study rooms and bathrooms so that library patrons do not need to enter the Parks and Recreation controlled areas. The Senior Center areas were purposely placed past the control desk. The seniors can enter the Recreation center for free, keeping their activities safe and separate from the public.

The library has lower shelving units and high windows that benefits from the park setting with an existing creek. This provides the project with beauty when compared to the “box” pool and gym sites. The same design concept goes for the outside design of the building. The library flows with curved lines when compared to the “box” recreation center lines.

Lessons learned –

- Who has final control? Parks and Recreation or the Library?
- Staffing at different salary levels for the same customer service.
- Who has control of the circulation of people?
- Parks and Recreation services are charged, Library services are free – revenue vs non-revenue.
- Different operating hours and holiday schedules.
- Programming planning and approaches are different between Parks and the Library.
- Different operating software systems.
- Exposures to new clientele – building is self-marketing.
- Exposures to different noise levels.
- Different operating structures (Parks and Recs are on-site, Library is run through the main branch).

Centralized offices were not necessary for the head Branch Librarian and Parks and Rec manager.

Policies on how monies are kept.

COVID has provided a prolonged soft opening that ended up being helpful. The senior areas have yet to open.

Library is unique to other branch libraries.

Parks and Rec is unique to other parks and rec facilities.

Cross programming is still a work in progress – i.e. summer camps competing for the same.

200-250 parking spots are sufficient to date – outer park is passive.

Need to look again at simple functions – i.e. paying a library fine while paying for a park program.

Specialized staff – difficult for sharing staff with other libraries and/or parks areas.

Distinct staff on both sides.

Regarding cost – there was an “x” amount set aside for the library and “x” amount for the parks and rec. Utilities were combined although the pool was sub-metered. Building and custodial maintenance are the same.

BSW focused the design of the building, especially the library portion, on GM cars lines bringing in the history of the neighborhood, respecting the past.

Mr. Springs and Mr. Browne welcomed questions.

Kathleen Nenninger asked if there is a cost advantage with two separate buildings versus one. They agreed the co-locations and shared spaces made the project more economical.

Councilman Hank Dugie asked about the surrounding parks. The tennis courts remained, the outdoor basketball courts were replaced with green spaces, and the walking trails were re-combined after the project's completion. Councilman Dugie also asked about the cost with the original bonds. Mr. Browne responded that with a co-location project, everyone wins. Seniors, Recreation folks, Library patrons and city citizens all benefit from such a facility which equals all voters for approving funds. Citizens that may have a child using the gym can visit the library while they wait. The space also brings seniors and children together. “Great things happen with a co-location space,” Mr. Browne mentioned.

Mr. Springs mentioned that League City could benefit from a previous plan they utilized with a co-location space in Mustang, Oklahoma. It was a compartmentalized facility with a common hallway that attaches a senior center, 50,000 feet library and a recreation center. The original library size in East Arlington was scheduled for 10,000 square feet but was reduced to 8,000 with the budget constraints.

Mayor Hallisey asked about the cost element without a pool. The East pool is a 25-yard, five lane pool, non-competition, no bleachers. The Mayor commented without a need for a pool, a bigger library and recreation center could benefit the west side of League City. The original feasibility study for League City determined a need for a 40,000 square foot west side branch. City Librarian Teresa Potter confirmed that our current library is 29,000 square feet. The original building, which is now the children's area, is 8,000 square feet.

Director Chien Wei asked about the minimum acreage needed. Mr. Springs and Mr. Browne commented that it depends heavily on drainage. If they had to make an estimate without drainage, they quoted 8-11 acres. They additionally mentioned that they have never built a building that is big enough, there is always a need to go bigger. When the parking was questioned, Mr. Wei commented that Hometown Heroes Park had 900 parking spaces. Mr. Springs suggested with an active sports park, a parking study is beneficial.

Teresa Potter-Reyes asked if the library had a drive through and Mr. Spring responded that they do not but are now wishing they had one.

**At 7:40, there was a 5-minute break before proceeding with the remainder of the meeting.**

## **8. Staff Reports**

### **a. City Librarian Report** given by Teresa Potter-Reyes

#### **i. Library Update**

Girl Scout Troop 139135 visited the library on May 7 and planted a butterfly garden as part of their Take Action Project to complete the Brownie Quest Journey.

The Library kicked off the City's Sundays in the Park series on May 2. Library staff had a great time and connected with at least 200 people. Activities included a StoryWalk, a scavenger hunt, and raffle drawing. There was a lot of activity, it was difficult to get a complete count.

The Library hosted a Meet-And-Greet event for this Board of Trustees to connect with members of the Friends of Helen Hall Library. It was a lovely event and the library hopes to host such events more often. As part of the event, the library had questions posted on the wall and asked attendees to provide candid answers that would help with current improvements and future planning. The results are provided in the back of your notebook.

The Library participated in the Big Sit Tailgate and connected with 89 different visitors with prizes for Plinko and pin the book on Pigeon. Teresa Potter-Reyes has completed the birding Zoom project.

The Library will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday next year and encourages the board to begin thinking of what they would like to see take place.

Beginning Wednesday, May 19, the Harris County Public Library System will open its locations to the public at limited capacity, with limited hours, masks will be required, and social distancing will be enforced. It is a milestone as well for the Helen Hall Library as we re-opened our doors one year ago, May 19, 2020 and Harris County has been closed throughout the past year. Opening in May of 2020 would not have been possible without the hard work of the entire library staff. Councilman Hank Dugie applauded the work of the library and Councilman Bowen and Millican agreed. Comments were made regarding the state and local governments involvement in Harris county.

#### **1. Staffing update**

Three positions are currently open in the library. A Technical Services Clerk, a part-time Circulation Clerk and Page. Interviews are ongoing. Five Summer staff members have been hired.

#### **2. Budget**

The Library had its preliminary budget meeting with the Budget Director. The Library's budget meeting with the City Manager is scheduled for June 7.

As a result of the preliminary budget meeting, the library intends to allocate approximately \$6,000 for a new family literacy and homeschooling collections in FY22. This is a result of combined years interest accrued from the Gift and Memorial Fund where citizens donate funds in honor of others.

#### **ii. Friends of Helen Hall Library**

The Friends of Helen Hall Library hosted their members-only Book Sale on May 15<sup>th</sup>. They made nearly \$1,000 in sales and signed up 32 new Friends members and families. They will have a

book sale open to all visitors this coming Saturday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. There will be food trucks in the front parking lot.

**b. Assistant City Librarian's Staff Reports**

**i. Public Services** given by Darla Rance

Public Services section heads now meet every other week to brainstorm together and discuss programming, etc.

**1. Children's**

The set-up work was completed for our new reading challenge social platform, Beanstack. Beanstack allows patrons to participate in library reading challenges using an app or website to record books that have been read.

Magnetic puzzles were purchased for the Children's Services area. These puzzles are easy to clean and do not contain small pieces.

On April 24th, Children's Services Librarian Kate Guynn and City Librarian Teresa Potter-Reyes attended the YMCA Healthy Kids Program. It was a great opportunity to let people know we are open 7 days a week and provide information about our upcoming summer events. There were approximately 250 attendees.

**2. Teen Services**

There were 11 teen programs with 142 participants for April.

Teen Services attended Virtual TeenBookCon as a library partner. It was a two-day event and we virtually interacted with 317 people.

Teen Services provided a Book Scavenger Hunt at the Sundays in the Park event. This activity was very successful!

Teen Services will be attending an outreach event at McAdams Junior High School on Wednesday, May 26 from 8-3. Their end-of-the-year convention will be hosted by the school's Eastern Cultures Club, and they asked Helen Hall Library to support them by talking about our upcoming summer programs that align with their goals and mission.

We're having a Summer Reading Kick-Off with Angie Thomas! On Friday, May 28 from 4:30-5:30, we will have a virtual Q&A with the author of *The Hate U Give*, *On the Come Up* and *Concrete Rose*. All ages can watch virtually from home or join us in-person to watch together with refreshments! This program was in partnership with the other Galveston County Libraries and the Helen Hall portion was funded by the Friends of Helen Hall Library.

**3. Adult Services**

Adult services had several one-on-one computer sessions with patrons on topics such as Power Point, Libby and more.

Adult Services Page Jose Garcia is working on getting the 3D printer up and running.

Local History Librarian Caris Brown assisted a long-distance researcher with family ties to League City with beginning his genealogical research; provided a researcher with records on The Magnolia Rangers, the only Civil War regiment from Galveston County and one that was formed on the local Perkins Ranch; and worked with the Design Project Manager for a company that is assisting the grocery chain Randalls with the remodel for a store in League City. The company would like to feature historical imagery from the local community in the design.

#### **4. Volunteer Services**

Even with the transitional period between Volunteer Coordinators, volunteering only saw a slight decrease in volunteer hours with a total of 124 hours between teens, adults, and Friends in April.

Under the newly hired coordinator, development of a new volunteer program began and Ashley is currently compiling HHL Volunteer statistics from previous years, researching trends, and exploring volunteer programs throughout the country to break new ground in volunteer advocacy and create an enriching volunteer experience.

The Senior Book Buddies program is slowly getting back on solid ground. A new relationship was established with 2 local assisted living facilities and we have a new volunteer, Karen Einum, who will be assisting in delivering books to them as soon as applications are returned.

#### **ii. Access Services** given by Meredith Layton

Assistant City Librarian for Access Services Meredith Layton attended the Customers of SirsiDynix Users Group, Inc. (COSUGI) virtual conference and is excited about new possibilities for our online catalog as well as strategies to enhance access for our customers and our current practices.

#### **1. Circulation Services**

Part-time Circulation Clerk James Mason's last day was April 10<sup>th</sup>. Full-time Circulation Clerk Miranda Guillory submitted her resignation; her last day was Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>. Interviews were conducted to fill the part-time Circulation clerk and full-time Circulation clerk.

Circulation Clerks Emory Dunn, Miranda Guillory, and Elizabeth Whitworth and Circulation Supervisor Kelsea Meza attended the virtual 2021 TLA conference and learned insightful and valuable information to help our library.

Training for new money-handling practices and procedures was conducted for the Circulation Clerks and all new procedures will be fully implemented before September of 2021. This is in response to the audit to improve cash handling procedures.

#### **2. Technical Services**

Technical Services is continuing to break records for the fiscal year due to the unforeseen circumstances last year. More orders for new materials were submitted in April than any other time during FY2021. Cataloging productivity continues increase over the previous fiscal year at a staggering 157% increase.

With Ashley Leblow's new promotion to Technical Services Librarian, a Technical Services Clerk position is open, and interviews will be forthcoming.

#### **b. Statistical Reports**

Statistics continue to be difficult to read based on being closed last year. The library was closed the entire month of April in 2020. Year to date the numbers are looking good and everyone is looking forward to increased numbers due to summer programming.

#### **c. Calendar of Events**

May historically has been a slower month for the library as programs break between Spring and Summer. Having no programs equate to having fewer patrons come into the library. The librarians are planning for

smaller breaks in the future to eliminate such gaps. June and July are packed with activities. Summer is a great place to be at the library.

Teresa Potter-Reyes mentioned that the Board was given copies of the County's Library Report given quarterly to the County Commissioners. The Spring edition is what has been accomplished in the Winter quarter.

## **9. Board Comments**

Councilman Hank Dugie questioned the revenues section of the Statistics page, especially with the lost and damaged materials. Assistant City Librarian Meredith Layton explained the acquisitions formula for the library. Amounts are given to each item based on the original cost. Some amounts are determined by a "fair" price. An example was given of a DVD Television Series. If one disc is missing, the library cannot replace that individual disc. The library does not charge the patron the price of the complete set for the single missing disc. Meredith mentioned that fees and fines should not be punitive, the library's goal is to get the item and the patron returning!

Teresa Potter-Reyes and Meredith continued by mentioning that the library is researching going fine free. Both Dickinson and Rosenberg libraries never returned to fining patrons once they reopened due to COVID and have no plans to returning to the fining system. It is also rumored that Harris County libraries are considering going fine free. Research is still being collected but it is found that going fine free does not cost the libraries more and in fact have a more positive response to patrons. By going fine free, patrons are not charged for lateness, but after a set time are charged for the item's replacement cost. If the book is returned, the fee is erased. This process also benefits the cash handling procedures with fewer people having access to funds.

Kathie Nennering thanked the councilmen for coming and showing their interest in the library. Working as a team can prove to be beneficial for all. She is also looking forward to the History Club on June 7<sup>th</sup> as they present the Juneteenth program.

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

## **11. Adjournment**

8:12 pm