

STOUGHTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2025, @ 6:30 P.M.
HYBRID MEETING IN CARNEGIE ROOM
& VIA ZOOM



PRESENT: Phil Caravello, City Council Representative; Lora Klitzke, President; Jean Ligocki, Vice President; Brandon Maly; Sharon Meilahn Bartlett (virtual); Christine Melland; Libby Phillips, Student Trustee; Katie Roberts (virtual); Mande Shecterle, Stoughton Area School District Representative (virtual)

ABSENT: Trista Richards

ALSO PRESENT: Jim Ramsey, Library Director; Sarah Monette, Administrative Assistant; Lesley Johnson, President of the Friends of the Stoughton Public Library

- I. CALL TO ORDER. 6:33 P.M. by President Lora Klitzke
- II. REVIEW OF AGENDA & CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN MEETINGS LAW.

[Ligocki arrived at 6:34 P.M.]

- III. CONSENT AGENDA. **Ligocki** moved to approve and was seconded by **Caravello**.
Vote: 8-0.

- IV. FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY REPORT FROM FRIENDS PRESIDENT LESLEY JOHNSON. Johnson reported:

1. for Pie Place at Syttende Mai, they had 105 homemade pies and 15 pies bought from Fosdal's with donations. They sold out of pie at 3 P.M. on Saturday. The net take was approximately \$3,000.
2. The Friends gave money to the Library especially for an inclusion project for children with disabilities. The fidget spinners etc. have arrived. Board member Alley McGuire has found someone to run a monthly support group for parents. This year's staff in-service will focus on autism.
3. The Friends have been attending Stoughton Farmer's Markets (and will attend in September).
4. The drawing for the Fall Raffle will be during ArtWalk on Saturday, September 27.
5. The Friends will share a table with the Library for National Night Out on August 6.
6. Claudette Higgins and Jeanne Burt are retiring from the Friends Board. The Board is looking for 3 new members, and will be having meet and greets in September and October. Meilahn Bartlett suggested that the applicants for the recently filled Library Board positions would be a good place to start.

Ligocki thanked the Friends on behalf of the Stoughton Community Pride Fest

[Johnson left at 6:46 P.M.]

- V. RECOGNITION OPPORTUNITIES. None.
- VI. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD. None.

- VII. CORRESPONDENCE. Ramsey shared a thank you from a patron about Pride Fest, and the Library's support for the LGBTQIA+ community. They specifically mentioned Adult Services Library Assistant Cynthia Schlegel and her work with Stoughton teenagers.
- VIII. EDUCATION UPDATES. Roberts shared that the AI company Anthropic had won its lawsuit. The court decided that using books without permission to train a Large Language Model (LLM) counted as "fair use."
- IX. BOARD IN-SERVICE: Ramsey presented.
- X. DIRECTOR'S REPORT.
 - A. Statistics for June 2025. Ramsey presented.
 - B. Administration report. In addition to his written report, Ramsey shared:
 - 1. The Harm Reduction display on the Mezzanine presented by the Stoughton Wellness Coalition includes Narcan that is free for the public to take.
 - 2. Trustee Training Week (presented by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with the 15 public library systems in Wisconsin) will be August 18-21. There will be 4 seminars, each an hour in length, which will be recorded and added to the DPI's archive <https://www.wistrusteetraining.com/archive> for those who cannot watch them live.
 - 3. Brett Hebert, the Director of Public Works for the City of Stoughton, is willing to put installing solar panels on the Library's roof on the CIP list for 2026 (price somewhere between \$51,000 and \$76,000 depending on whether we can get tax credit and rebates) if the Library is able to pay part of the cost. We can do this either from our fund balance or from donation money. Klitzke asked how this would be coordinated with the need to replace the Library roof; Ramsey said that he and Hebert would discuss that issue carefully.

Ligocki remarked that she is very grateful for the professionalism and enthusiasm of Library staff.
- XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS.
 - A. Finance: did not meet.
 - B. Personnel: Ramsey pointed to the personnel request (item XIII.C. below).
 - C. Planning: did not meet.
 - D. Policies: will meet Monday, July 21.
- XII. OLD BUSINESS. None.
- XIII. NEW BUSINESS.
 - A. Presentation of preliminary 2026 operating budget by Library Director. Ramsey reminded the board that \$7,000 for computers and peripherals and \$3,000 for Furniture and Fixtures were being moved from Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) to the Library's operating budget. He went through the components of both income and expenditures, remarking that the Finance Department recommends the Library use about \$20,000 of its fund balance in 2026. We should see a decrease in our electricity and heating bills due to the new HVAC system.

- B. Review of goals related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. Ligocki said she had reread the Strategic Plan and loved its language around IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility). Melland remarked that the language and goals of our Strategic Plan is consistent with ALA and therefore libraries across the country. She finds the language to be clear and robust; we should stay with it as long as we can. Maly pointed out that there is other language available, like “inclusion and belonging,” so that even if we have to revise the language, that doesn’t mean abandoning our goals. Klitzke asked when the Board would have to start revising the plan for 2027-2029. Ramsey said that’s likely to take up most of 2026. Klitzke also likes the foundation that the Strategic Plan lays. Ramsey said that “libraries are for everybody” has been a library ideal for a long time. The language may change, but not the principles. Caravello added his support; he feels the Strategic Plan is a great document. Ligocki asked where challenges to the Strategic Plan would come from. Ramsey reminded the Board that there is a committee of the State Legislature that has been sending libraries Open Records Requests demanding to know about all of their programs for “DEI.” He also reminded the Board that we are not funded by the state (or the federal government), but by our city and county. Melland observed that organizations that back off from their IDEA plans lose the esteem of the community, so that changes should be made carefully---if at all.
- C. Discussion and possible action regarding 2026 Library personnel request. *Motion to approve personnel request and submit it to HR made by **Ligocki** and seconded by **Maly**. Vote 8-0.* Ligocki, Maly, and Melland all praised the request. Meilahn Bartlett asked for clarification about whether the request had been updated since last year. Ramsey confirmed that it had, and Caravello remarked that the addition about safety from CVMIC (Cities and Villages Mutual Insurance Company) would hopefully be compelling to the City Council. Meilahn Bartlett asked if there was a rubric or any guidance from the City about personnel requests or any reasons given why in 2024 this request was ranked fifth out of seven. Ramsey said no, but also remarked that in 2024 our request was up against requests from Public Safety and from departments that serve multiple City departments. He also said that the request process was a little different each year. Ligocki remarked, as a former Alderperson, that requests for transparency had fallen on deaf ears. Meilahn Bartlett encouraged Ramsey to be assertive about presenting our request to the City Personnel Committee and the Council, especially because of the safety angle.
- XIV. PENDING AGENDA ITEMS.
- A. Reminder for standing committees to review, and possibly report on, their progress toward the annual Board Goals throughout the year.
- B. Discussion of additional funding sources for library programming and operations.
- C. Discussion of General Fund balance.
- XV. ADJOURNMENT. ***Klitzke** made the motion to adjourn at 8:13 P.M. She was seconded by **Caravello**. Vote: 8-0.*

Minutes taken by Sarah Monette.