

**INDIANAPOLIS-MARION COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
MAY 24, 2021**

The Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library Board met electronically via Zoom and/or telephone on Monday, May 24, 2021 at 6:35 p.m., pursuant to notice given in accordance with the rules of the Board.

1. Call To Order

Judge Salinas called the meeting to order. Mr. Biederman acted as Secretary.

2. Roll Call

At this time, Judge Salinas introduced the Board's newest member, Hope C. Tribble. He welcomed her to the Board.

Ms. Tribble commented that she was excited to support the Library and looks forward to serving on the Board.

Members present electronically: Mr. Biederman, Mr. Bigsbee, Dr. Murtadha, Ms. Payne, Rev. Robinson, Judge Salinas and Ms. Tribble.

Members absent: None.

3. Public Comment and Communications

In view of the extreme emergency facing our city, and in keeping with the Executive Order issued by the Governor, the public was not invited to physically attend the meeting but had the ability to view/listen/speak and/or submit a question/comment to the Regular Meeting via a live stream YouTube link.

Judge Salinas then advised that before we start the public comment section of the meeting this evening, he needed to provide some reminders about the process. The Library Board allows for and welcomes public comment at our Board meetings. We want to hear from our patrons and community members on any matters related to the Library and the services we provide.

For those wishing to speak this evening, there is a five-minute limit allowed for each speaker. Each speaker should give their name and their address.

We understand that at least one of the public commentators signed up to speak this evening may wish to speak about issues from when they were an employee of the library related to coworkers who are still employees at the Library. These issues have been taken seriously by the Library. Library leadership, including the CEO, the Chief Public Services Officer, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, the Director of HR, and an outside consultant engaged for these types of issues, met with the past employee to discuss their concerns. Additionally, Library leadership conducted an extensive internal review regarding the past employee's concerns. This internal review has since concluded and any appropriate action was taken.

It is not appropriate for any of us – board members, staff, or members of the public – to use this forum to address specific personnel issues. If someone does not follow this guidance, I will instruct you accordingly. I provide this guidance to adequately respect how personnel matters are treated and to equally respect any personnel against whom concerns may be directed.

At this time, there were some technology difficulties which caused a problem but those were resolved and then former Library staff member, Bree Flannelly, addressed the Board as follows:

It baffles me to know that so many people don't understand that white supremacy isn't just the hatred of non-white people, it's the disrespect and disregard of non-white people. It's the obstruction of efforts to support non-white people. It's the refusal to acknowledge non-white reality. It's the refusal to punish, or even inconvenience, white people who do not...do constant harm to non-white people. I'm gonna say that again, it is the refusal to punish, or even inconvenience, white people who do constant harm to non-white people. Most white people literally cannot perceive racism because it's not directed at them. So what sense does it make to ask an office full of white employees about racism? These are people who talk about broken drag queens, porch monkeys, the hygiene of Muslim people during Ramadan, and how they think African men stink. Do you really think they'll admit that their culture is toxic? Literally every Black person I've spoken to, in and out of IndyPL, believes what I've gone through is horrendous, because they've gone through similar things. Some of the white people that I've tried to speak to about my struggles at IndyPL pushed this false narrative of [air quotes] both sides [end air quotes]. Both sides implied that I'd done something to deserve poor treatment. I have literally never spoken an off-word to any of my co-workers unless I was setting a boundary that was habitually crossed. I don't need a single friend in a work environment.

I've actually come to prefer the distance from co-workers because I've seen how quickly people abandon me if I'm an inconvenience to them or their white friends. What I and every Black person needs is respect and work appropriate support. We just want to do our jobs. As a Library you'd think IndyPL would understand the power of words. Words aren't isolated expressions floating in ether. Words shape and are shaped by action. Do you think a manager who calls a cafe worker a broken drag queen will respect LGBTQ+ employees or patrons? It was no surprise that that manager tried to gaslight me. Do you think a supervisor who joked that a Black high school boy must be "on the spectrum" because he has a unique sense of style, is capable of respecting neurodiverse minds, or even Black people who don't fall under the stereotypes she obviously holds?

It was no surprise that that co-worker tried to bully me. Black employees in the Indianapolis Public Library are often criticized for trifles but rarely celebrated for their brilliant efforts. This criticism isn't just mean, it literally communicates to every fiber of the body. My brain tissues. The muscles that now suffer chronic tension and the legs that worked perfectly well before I worked at IndyPL, are convinced that nothing I ever do will be enough. I'll be fighting that feeling for the rest of my life. I'm not just coming to this board about myself or the Curve or even just Central. There's incompetence on every level. Do you think a CEO who refers to the esteemed visitors from our sister city in China as "those Chinese" is capable of serving the Asian community or anyone without her cultural background? IndyPL managers have continually denied people of color employment in favor of current white IndyPL employees. The current manager went so far as to downplay the talent and assets of Black candidates for jobs so she could hire a friend. A manager talks down so much to a Black woman who was president of an organization, a professional organization...he talked down to her like she was a dog. He would never talk that way to my husband, my brothers, my father, my father-in-law, or stepfather. These actions come naturally to people with even the slightest taste of their power over marginalized groups. They can't see or don't care to see the harm they're doing. At this point I don't think IndyPL suffers from ignorance alone. Leaders and employees know they've done some of the negative things I've talked about today, and they're afraid that if one white employee gets demoted or fired for their racist actions, the majority of white employees would get demoted or fired. This organization needs to be investigated top down by competent external experts. The level of incompetence and negligence that IndyPL leaders continue to show is a robbery of this city. Failure to promote public resources is just as bad as withholding those resources, especially when the money, that could, could promote those resources, lines the pockets of leaders who lack community connection to abandon parts of Indianapolis' vibrant community is tantamount to theft. And that's the end of my comments.

Recent comments received from patrons via the Library's website were then read into the record as follows:

Comment Submitted By:

Nanci Slagle

I am an English teacher in a public high school in Marion County. My students come from diverse backgrounds and I count on the library to provide them with resources, both in the form of staff and of literature, that reflect that diversity. Libraries have always been an extension of the classroom. Teachers encourage students to get a library card early in life and to use it often. Please make sure that you are supporting the entire community that you serve. Hire and encourage your black, brown and Hispanic employees to actively reach out and support our minority communities. It's the best and only way to include and educate ALL of our neighbors. Thank you for your time.

Christopher Dance

In the wake of recent calls for racial justice this last year it is so sad to hear that the library is not doing the work that needs to be done in regards to equity in the workplace.

Independent investigations should be made into hiring procedures and also upward advancement policies if the organization is to represent our community of Indianapolis. IndyPL should not be a place tolerant of racist rhetoric, or workplace discrimination.

Dr. Murtadha noted that we need to think deeply about why we are getting these comments on racial equity at this time.

Ms. Payne felt that a climate study would help the Library investigate racial equity and other internal issues. She asked Dr. Murtadha to share her experiences in this regard with the Library's human resources department.

4. Approval Of Minutes: Executive Session, Regular and Special Meetings

a. Regular Meeting, April 26, 2021

The minutes from the Regular Meeting held April 26, 2021 had been distributed to the Board.

The minutes were approved on the motion of Dr. Murtadha, seconded by Ms. Payne, and the following roll call vote:

Mr. Biederman – Aye	Rev. Robinson – Aye
Mr. Bigsbee – Aye	Judge Salinas – Aye
Dr. Murtadha – Aye	Ms. Tribble – Aye
Ms. Payne – Aye	

COMMITTEE REPORTS

5. Finance Committee (Patricia A. Payne, Chair; Raymond Biederman, Curtis Bigsbee)

a. Report of the Treasurer – April 2021

Jackie Nytes, Chief Executive Officer, reviewed the Report of the Treasurer that had been distributed to the Board.

She commented that the Library has received approximately \$2.7 million in revenue year-to-date and our expenditures are \$13.9 million. Ms. Nytes noted the importance of the Library's Fund Balance which often keeps the Library afloat while we have to wait on our property tax revenue to be received.

Ms. Payne made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Tribble, that the Report of the Treasurer be filed for audit.

The Report of the Treasurer was approved for filing for audit on the following roll call vote:

Mr. Biederman – Aye	Rev. Robinson – Aye
Mr. Bigsbee – Aye	Judge Salinas – Aye
Dr. Murtadha – Aye	Ms. Tribble – Aye
Ms. Payne – Aye	

6. Diversity, Policy and Human Resources Committee (Curtis W. Bigsbee, Chair; Patricia A. Payne, Hope C. Tribble)

a. Resolution 19 – 2021 (IMCPL Board Electronic Communications Meetings Policy)

Robert Scott, Library Board attorney, discussed the legislation recently passed by the Indiana General Assembly. The legislation grants members of governing bodies of political subdivisions, such as the Library Board, the ability to participate in public meetings electronically. This new policy will govern a member's participation in public meetings by electronic means at times in which physical attendance may not be possible, practical or is otherwise overly burdensome. At least four members will need to be physically present and all members should attend in person at least 50% of the time. Starting next month, our Board meetings will be held at the Library Services Center. Meetings will continue to be streamed on YouTube.

After full discussion and careful consideration of Resolution 19 – 2021, the resolution was adopted on the motion of Mr. Bigsbee, seconded by Ms. Payne, to approve Resolution 19 – 2021, the IMCPL Board Electronic Communications Meetings.

Resolution 19 – 2021 was approved on the following roll call vote:

Mr. Biederman – Aye	Rev. Robinson – Aye
Mr. Bigsbee – Aye	Judge Salinas – Aye
Dr. Murtadha – Aye	Ms. Tribble – Aye
Ms. Payne – Aye	

The resolution is appended to, and made a part of, these minutes.

b. Resolution 20 – 2021 (Amendment of By-Laws)

Mr. Scott advised that the Library's By-Laws were being amended to implement the policy that had just been approved concerning electronic participation in meetings. He noted that in absence of the 14 day advance notice, this amendment must be approved unanimously by the Board.

Mr. Scott mentioned the typo that he had discovered in the document. That will be corrected in the final document.

After full discussion and careful consideration of Resolution 20 – 2021, the resolution was adopted on the motion of Mr. Bigsbee, seconded by Dr. Murtadha, to approve Resolution 20 – 2021, the Amendment of By-Laws.

Resolution 20 – 2021 was approved on the following roll call vote:

Mr. Biederman – Aye	Rev. Robinson – Aye
Mr. Bigsbee – Aye	Judge Salinas – Aye
Dr. Murtadha – Aye	Ms. Tribble – Aye
Ms. Payne – Aye	

The resolution is appended to, and made a part of, these minutes.

7. Facilities Committee (Dr. Khaula Murtadha, Chair; Curtis Bigsbee, Rev. T. D. Robinson)

- a. **Resolution 21 – 2021** (Authorization to Prepare Bidding Documents and Solicit Open, Public, and Competitive Sealed Bids for General Construction Services for the Fort Ben Branch Project)

Sharon Smith, Facilities Director, commented that the architect, Ratio Design and the construction manager, the Skillman Corporation and Davis & Associates, will prepare bidding documents to solicit open, public and competitive public bids for the Fort Ben Branch Project. It was noted that they would seek minority-owned, veteran-owned and disability-owned businesses. The work is scheduled to begin in the Fall of 2021 with completion planned for the first quarter of 2023. The budget for the building and site construction work is \$7.3 million excluding fixtures, furniture and equipment.

Mr. Bigsbee asked if the Library had contacted Fort Harrison about help with issues regarding the soil in that area. Ms. Smith advised that the Library would consider reaching out to the Fort Ben Reuse Authority for possible assistance.

After full discussion and careful consideration of Resolution 21– 2021, the resolution was adopted on the motion of Ms. Payne, seconded by Mr. Bigsbee, to approve Resolution 21 – 2021, the Authorization to Prepare Bidding Documents and Solicit Open, Public, and Competitive Sealed Bids for General Construction Services for the Fort Ben Branch Project.

Resolution 21– 2021 was approved on the following roll call vote:

Mr. Biederman – Aye	Rev. Robinson – Aye
Mr. Bigsbee – Aye	Judge Salinas – Aye
Dr. Murtadha – Aye	Ms. Tribble – Aye
Ms. Payne – Aye	

The resolution is appended to, and made a part of, these minutes.

8. **Library Foundation Update**

Rev. Robinson reviewed the information contained in the May 2021 Update.

News

The Foundation is grateful to participate in and proud to support a variety of DEI staff trainings. The Indianapolis Foundation Library Fund awarded a grant to send staff to “Foundations to Historical and Institutional Racism,” presented by the Racial Equity Institute in partnership with the Indianapolis Public Schools, over the next two years. Additionally, Powers & Sons Construction is supporting a three-part series called “Assessing, Identifying and Reducing Unconscious Bias,” which is offered to all Library and Foundation managers starting this month. Many thanks to Jessica Moore and Cheryl Wright for their vision, planning and organization.

Donors

The Foundation thanks 154 donors who made gifts last month. The following are the top corporate and Foundation contributors.

Eli Lilly and Company Foundation, Inc.
 Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP
 Ritz Charles Inc.
 The Indianapolis Foundation Library Fund
 Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust
 Allen Whitehall Clowes Charitable Foundation, Inc.
 The Indianapolis Foundation Library Fund
 Lilly Endowment Inc.
 Woodley Farra Manion Portfolio Management, Inc.

Program Support

This month, the Library Foundation is proud to provide more than \$500,000 for Library programs and initiatives. Examples of major initiatives supported include:

Summer Reading Program & Workshops
 On the Road to Reading
 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten
 McFadden Lecture
 Digitization
 Center for Black Literature & Culture
 DEI Staff Training

9. **Report of the Chief Executive Officer**

a. **Confirming Resolutions:**

1) **Resolution Regarding Finances, Personnel and Travel (22 – 2021)**

Ms. Nytes pointed out a correction to the Resolution that was presented last month. It should be noted that Julie Able left the Library after 33 years and three months of service.

She also advised that Volunteer Services has now been merged with Outreach, so a number of positions were revised to reflect that merger.

Mr. Biederman made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Bigsbee, to approve Resolution 22 – 2021, the Resolution Regarding Finances, Personnel and Travel.

Resolution 22 – 2021 was approved on the following roll call vote:

Mr. Biederman – Aye	Rev. Robinson – Aye
Mr. Bigsbee – Aye	Judge Salinas – Aye
Dr. Murtadha – Aye	Ms. Tribble – Aye
Ms. Payne – Aye	

The resolution is appended to, and made a part of, these minutes.

b. Briefing Report – Update on Security at IndyPL

John Helling, Chief Public Services Officer, provided the Update. He advised that in the Fall of 2020, the Safety and Security functions of the Library moved to the Public Services Department. It is the future plan to use in-house security staff as opposed to contracted staff which have more fine-tuned control over how we interact with patrons. We have created after school positions at the Warren and Pike branches to help engage teens. A social worker has been hired for Central to work with patrons experiencing homelessness.

Garrett Mason, Strategic Planning and Assessment Officer, briefly discussed the incident report data collected by the Library. He mentioned that we are looking into ways to get more data regarding race in our incident reports.

c. Briefing Report – Post-COVID Library Hours and Services

Mr. Helling reported that he was providing updated information on this topic.

In June, the Library plans to restore two days per week of evening hours for patron service – Mondays and Tuesdays. This is based on an evaluation of pre-COVID door count measurements to identify the hours of service our patrons found most valuable. Pre-COVID, the Library offered three days of evening hours per week but these were the lowest usage hours in our weekly schedule.

Also in June, we plan to restore some of our in-person programming related to our Summer Reading Program – all programming will, of course, comply with guidance put forth by the CDC and the city’s health department.

Also, we will no longer restrict the number of patrons allowed in our buildings, and patrons will regain the ability to book meeting rooms and study rooms. In late June, Central will resume holding weddings and other larger events.

As of June 7, the city will no longer be enforcing a mask mandate for vaccinated people. Because the Library will not be able to distinguish between vaccinated and unvaccinated patrons, we will effectively cease enforcing our mask mandate at the same time.

In September, we plan to restore Sunday service to Nora, Glendale, Eagle, Southport, Warren, Central and the InfoZone. This is fewer Sunday branches than were offered to patrons pre-COVID. As with evenings, we have identified branches with Sunday hours that were either not well utilized or were in reasonably close proximity to other branches with Sunday hours.

Mr. Bigsbee asked why the Library was waiting until September to restore Sunday hours.

Mr. Helling advised that this decision wasn't set in stone.

Mr. Bigsbee wanted to know if there could be further discussion about pushing that date up.

Mr. Helling responded that he would be happy to revisit this matter if the Board wished to discuss it.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10. None.

NEW BUSINESS

11. None.

AGENDA BUILDING

12. **Future Agenda Items** – This time was made available for discussion of items not on the Agenda which were of interest to Library Board members and the opportunity was given to suggest items that should be included on future Library Board Meeting Agendas.

Items suggested for upcoming Board Agendas are as follows:

June 2021 - Climate Study. Dr. Murtadha has experience in this regard.

INFORMATION

13. **Materials**

There were no materials available to distribute to the Board.

14. **Board Meeting Schedule for 2021 (Notice and Place of Meeting) and Upcoming Events/Information**

- a. **Board Meetings for 2021**– *Current calendar will be updated, as necessary, and additional information highlighted.*

- b. **Library Programs/Free Upcoming Events** – All Programs and Events are canceled until further notice.

15. Notice of Special Meetings

None.

16. Notice of Next Regular Meeting

Monday, June 28, 2021, at the Library Services Center, 2450 North Meridian Street, at 6:30 p.m.

17. Other Business

18. Adjournment

The Secretary announced that there was no further business to come before the Board.

The Chairman then declared the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Raymond Biederman, Secretary to the Board

