

**Middleton Public
Library board Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2021, 5:30 pm @ Middleton City Hall-Council Chambers**

I. 5:30 p.m.-Called to order by Jim Taylor

Attendance: Kassie Knapp, Jim Taylor, Don Watt, Marie Knapp, Mark Christiansen, Jennifer Barr (Director), Carrie Huggins (City Council Liaison)

II. Motion: To approve agenda

Motioned by Marie Knapp, **Seconded by** Don Watt

Motion passed unanimously

III. Motion: Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meetings (May 11, May 21, and June 1, 2021)

Motioned by Marie Knapp, **Seconded by** Kassie Knapp

Motion passed unanimously

IV Motion: Ratification of hire of Aaralyn Lasley, ICFL funded summer intern

Motioned by Don Watt, **Seconded by** Mark Christiansen

Motion passed unanimously

V. Motion: To receive the Treasurer's Report as presented.

Motioned by Don Watt, **Seconded by** Mark Christiansen

Motion passed unanimously

VI. Motion: To receive the Director's Report (**see attached**)

Motioned by Marie Knapp, **Seconded by** Kassie Knapp

Motion passed unanimously

VII. Motion: To accept the recommendation of the city attorney; Reaffirming the board's caution when using email to communicate with other board members, and reaffirming the policy of communicating directly with the library director if a board member wants information placed on an upcoming agenda.

Motioned by Jim Taylor, **Seconded by** Marie Knapp

Motion passed unanimously

VIII. Motion: To amend Borrowing Periods, Late Fines, Fees document as distributed in the packet with the change that Senior Cards will be \$15.00.

Motioned by Don Watt, **Seconded by** Kassie Knapp

Motion passed unanimously

IX. Motion: To approve the FY2022 Preliminary Budget set at June 1, 2021 workshop meeting.

Motioned by Marie Knapp, **Seconded by** Don Watt

Kassie Knapp-Yes, Jim Taylor-Yes, Don Watt-Yes, Marie Knapp-Yes, Mark Christiansen-Yes

Motion passed

X. Motion: To publish and record amendments to the Middleton Public Library Manual from the May 21, 2021 meeting **Motioned by** Don Watt, **Seconded by** Mark Christiansen

Motion passed unanimously

XI. Motion: To approve previously requested raises by the Director for 3 employees dates May 7, 2021

Motioned by Don Watt, **Seconded by** Mark Christiansen

Kassie Knapp-Yes, Jim Taylor-Yes, Don Watt-Yes, Marie Knapp-Yes, Mark Christiansen-Yes

Motion passed

XII. Motion: To amend the Middleton Public Library Policy Manual Article III, Section 1 so that it reads as follows: "Board officers shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, and Public Relations Representative, who shall be elected each year at the regular meeting in January. They shall take office upon adjournment of the meeting in which they are elected. All officers shall be elected upon receiving a majority of the votes cast by the board members participating in the election.

Motioned by Don Watt, Seconded by Mark Christiansen

Motion passed unanimously

XIII. Motion:- To amend the Middleton Public Library Policy Manual

-Section III(4) shall be repealed and replaced with the following:

The Board selects and appoints a librarian. The board prescribes rules for the conduct of the librarian and all library employees and fixes their salaries, duties, and job descriptions with the approval of the City Council. The wage for all new hires shall be set at the lowest amount stated in the wage scale for that position. All wage increases shall be approved by the board. The board shall continue regular, annual wage increases at the regular board meeting in May of each year. No employee shall have their wage rate, as it exists as of May 28, 2021, reduced as a result of this amendment.

Motioned by Jim Taylor, Seconded by Marie Knapp

Don Watt-No, Kassie Knapp-No, Jim Taylor-Yes, Marie Knapp-Yes, Mark Christiansen-Yes

Motion passed

XIV. Public Comments- Begin at mark on the recording

Heather Ellis: Read letter of resignation and asked that it be included in the minutes (Please see at the end of the minutes).

Edie Langely-Is new to the area. Thrilled, as a retired teacher, to see a strong library. Was impressed with the library programs and computer lab. Was amazed that the budget was reduced 38%. Disappointed in reduced hours. Hopes that the board realizes the "gem" the library is. Read the meeting minutes for the last year and is disappointed that there is little support for the library and director from the board. The board should support and nurture the library.

Christin Green-Represents the Support our Library group. Left a "Practical Guide for Library Self Evaluation" from United for Libraries Foundation from and read from the document. Support Our Library has a petition on change.org for the removal of Jim Taylor, Marie Knapp and Mark Christiansen with over 100 signatures for "because they do not allow for productive or efficient use of library board meeting time, they choose to remain uninformed and uneducated on basic library functions, programs, policies and the importance of the library's role in our community. Negligent in their duties as advocates for the library, disrespectful and often hostile towards library staff, especially the current director. Unethical attempted micromanaging and interference with day to day operations of the library staff and rogue actions of board members that go against ICFL (Idaho Commission for Libraries) policy." Will remove the reference to violation of open meeting laws as no fault has been found by the city attorney.

Sarah Post-Is broken hearted for Heather and community for what this board has become and has been deficient in their duties as a board. Please read ICFL manual for Trustee. Board please work on education and training yourselves. Asked if the board could give an example of what the board has done in the last year to support the library. Jim Taylor indicated that this was strictly public comment time and her turn to speak. She took that as a no. The board is on a power trip and they should help the library do its mission and meet the needs of the library. You are tearing it down not bring it up. Please reflect on your position on the board and help the community by resigning so other members can be appointed.

Patty Cluff-Is sad that Heather is leaving. Asked about whether the library is having to pay to have the city attorney at the board meetings out of its budget. Who has requested that he be at the meetings. The director was "reamed pretty hard" for giving out student reading cards because it could be seen as costing about \$600 but the attorney probably costs more than that.

Linda Gummersall-Has been in Middleton for 49 years. The library was very small when she first got here but it was still the highlight of her kids summer. Since then we have expanded and there are many more programs available. The library should be the center of the community, it is not about books or computers, it is about learning. Her children have learned much because of the library. She is a widow and the library has been her saving grace and source of social interaction during covid. Middleton does not have a lot of activities for children and teens and the library is a source for that. The staff is the greatest she has ever seen. A library staff member, took her own time, to deliver books to her home after she had surgery. We need a library more than a round about. If you don't have a vision for the library why are you serving on the board.

Sydney Douthit-Is a library employee. Wanted to address losing Heather as she is very skilled in IT and programs. The board led her to quit because of their actions. She will follow if things don't change. Staff is not paid enough to "break the budget". She does what she does because of her love of the children. It wasn't addressed, but will board members be evaluating the employees. Would like board members to start coming into the library. Jennifer knows what she is doing, the board appointed her and is a breathe of fresh air. She leads well and suggesting that she didn't think through giving raises was uncalled for. Asked for update on the formal complaint she brought to the board which was taken to the mayor. Referenced employee manual where it states that city employees shouldn't engage in malicious gossip. Jim Taylor- we did take the statement to the mayor and now that is a personnel issue and is dealt with internally.

Rhonda Quinn-Has lived here for 17 years and 15 years ago headed a committee to get a bigger building, and met Jennifer then. Did get \$100,000 from city council at the time to help with the building. Although, she moves in different circles from Jennifer, she know who she is and that she has given a lot of time to the city of Middleton. There is no reason to treat her disrespectfully and that is what she has seen at the meetings. There should not so much disrespect given to someone who has given so much of their life to the city." More than 40% of our population is under 18, we have an 11% poverty rate". The library provides resources and a safe place for children. It's not a daycare but it is a safe place and has been in every town she has lived in. Feels the director has done her best to accommodate for all of the challenges put in front of her in the last year. Hopes the board would support the director and library. She is embarrassed by the actions of the board.

Alicia Mondor-Wants to thank the library employees. Members of the board may think that community members don't see the big picture but we do and this "isn't working." Listen to the library employees who know what is going on the community. The library is a "lovely sanctuary" in Middleton. The library employees are helpful. If the board is going to use policies and procedures to rule over the library please learn and revisit them to see if they are working.

Elaine Mathiason-Exhort the board to listen to Don as he seems to be familiar with library law. Feels the board may be doing something that verges on illegal in regards to hiring employees. Having a set starting wage amount doesn't take into account a candidates education and experience and is not a wise use of board and director time and is not fair to the employees. She hopes the board will further examine that amendment and make some changes. She has talked to city council twice about using the Trolley Station, to no avail. It's the duty of the trustees to find adequate facilities for the library. The current library has no good space for story hour. Staff is having to move furniture to make space. Finds it ridiculous that there is a city owned building across the street that would be perfect for story hour but the city council had deemed it unacceptable to allow the library to use it. Has asked for the policy to be changed twice and to have it on the agenda and that is not happening. She is coming to the board to ask them to go to city council and request that policy be changed. It's citizen tax dollars that pay for that building. Maybe they would listen to the board.

Don Watt requested that we put use of the Trolley Station on the next agenda.

XV. 7:10 pm Motion: To go into Executive Session--(Marie Knapp) [Idaho Code 74-206 (1) b].

(b) To consider the evaluation, dismissal or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent, or public school student;

Motioned by Marie Knapp, Seconded by Don Watt

Kassie Knapp-Yes, Jim Taylor-Yes, Don Watt-Yes, Marie Knapp-Yes, Mark Christiansen-Yes
Motion passed

8:29 Left Executive Session

XVI. 8:30 p.m. Motion and Action: To adjourn the meeting.

Motioned by Kassie Knapp, **Seconded by** Marie Knapp

All in favor.

Director's Report May 2021

Middleton Public Library Stats

May

	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>
Physical Checkouts	4890	4784	4265
*see past years comparison at end of report			
Overdrive	621	607	
Axis 360			7
New Items Added	289	126	581
Computer Sessions	59	73	62
Boots Thru Door	1815.5*	1699*	1781.5*
Individual Library Cards Used (does not include computer or online users)		470	474
Non-Resident Cards Issued	19	13	6
Revenue From Non-Resident Cards	\$515	\$425	\$165
New Resident Cards Issued	31	22	25

*based on digital door scan reading

May Programs & Outreach

Storytime- Every Tuesday @10:30am and Wednesdays @ 2:00 pm, behind the library. Attended: Children-79, Adults-43

Kit-Tivities -(Monthly themed make and take kits) – 75 distributed

Partnership Programs

"Fruit Selection Recommendations for Southwest Idaho" with University of Idaho, May 17, 2021, Virtual, Attended: 4 adults

Library Palooza

This was a very successful event with 172 patrons and 28 volunteers in attendance. There were many grateful and positive comments. We saw many people who were not previously library users. The following activities occurred:

- Read to a Therapy Dog
- Children's Books Giveaway (provided by the ICFL Books for Underserved Children Program)
- Lunch-Donated by Grubbin' BBQ, Papa Bear Landscaping, Uptight Fencing Co, and Paramount Metal Products
- Library Foundation Bake Sale-Donated by Sweet Chaos
- Partnership with Middleton Historical Society to promote the Museum
- 3 Storytimes
- Games showcasing our kit collection
- Button Makerspace
- Friends of the Library used book sale
- Promotion of library collections and services.

Upcoming Programs

Storytime-Every Tuesday @10:30am and Wednesdays @ 2:00 pm
 Bookmobile & STEM Kits @ Lunch in the Park -11:30am to 1:00pm on Tues and Thurs thru the Summer
 STEM Kits and Free Books @ The Farmer's Market- 4:00pm to 7:00pm, Thursdays thru the Summer
 Corbin Maxey, Animal Expert.-June 10th @11:00 am @ The Community Center
 Chess Club-Tuesday @ 3:00 pm

Partnership Programs w/ U of I (Virtual)

U and I Together: An activity series where all ages can learn! 6/1/21
 Nutrition for Healthy Aging-6/10/21

Grants

Awarded

ICFL Mobile Hotspot Grant-Reimbursement for Hotspots purchased between 7/1/2020 and 4/27/21-**\$1032**
ICFL Books for Underserved Communities-**500** free children and teen **books**
ARPA Overdrive Digital Grant-Overdrive credit to purchase digital content-**\$2000**

Grants Considering or in Application Process

Forever Idaho, Idaho Community Foundation -Hoping to use for capital improvements-up to **\$25,000**
 Idaho Libraries Keep Students Learning and Adults Earning/ARPA Grant-for services and programs support-**\$10,000**

Other Items

Library Total Physical Item Checkouts by Month-Multiple Year Comparison

18-Oct	18-Nov	18-Dec	19-Jan	19-Feb	19-Mar	19-Apr	19-May	19-Jun	19-Jul	19-Aug	19-Sep
5384	4827	4545	5133	5062	5369	5543	5877	8954	8821	5573	4300
19-Oct	19-Nov	19-Dec	20-Jan	20-Feb	20-Mar	20-Apr	20-May	20-Jun	20-Jul	20-Aug	20-Sep
4122	3879	3976	4539	4689	2776	177	626	5136	6658	5402	5085
20-Oct	20-Nov	20-Dec	21-Jan	21-Feb	21-Mar	21-Apr	21-May	21-Jun	21-Jul	21-Aug	21-Sep
4609	4557	4117	3298	4160	4890	4784	4265				

DRAFT

From: Heather Ellis [REDACTED], Middleton, ID 83644
June 8, 2021

To: Jennifer Barr 307 Cornell St. Middleton, ID 83644
Dear Mrs. Barr,

Please accept this letter of resignation from the Middleton Public Library as the IT and Services Manager. My last day of employment will be June 18, 2021.

I regret that I feel the need to leave the Middleton Public Library. However, due to the recent changes in the library board I feel that my time here was already limited. When the raise that was negotiated between the director and myself was dismissed by one board member, who went to a city employee and directed that city employee to put a hold on the raise this was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. It has created personal financial concerns and I think I will be better suited to a position where my skills are better aligned with the compensation scheme.

I want it clear the reasons for my resignation are because of the current library board and the city of Middleton administration, and not at all because of my co-workers or supervisor.

1. Board President, Jim Taylor, when introduced to me I remarked that I thought I remembered him from our common background in corrections, he asked me if I left corrections because I did what a lot of female officers did and had sex with an inmate. I have two co-workers that were present when this comment was made. Another time he made an inappropriate comment was during a staff meeting between the directors and the managers he commented to the director that he would see her again "the next time she walked on water." This is only a couple examples of the library board creating a hostile work environment for me.
2. Numerous counts of instability brought upon by the boards lack of knowledge and lack of support for all the things we do in the library. (i.e. wanting to get rid of Christian fiction, questioning why we even have programs, questioning student cards/summer reading cards, questioning grants, calling library staff day care providers, making comments to the effect of not all staff deserve raises, requesting that all employees document what they do, the library is not for lifelong learners, that is what schools are for, etc etc).
3. Confusion about who is my actual boss. I have received instructions from library board members (even though it is a violation of them to do so) to do certain things and alternate set of instructions from the director.
4. The president of the board violated the ICFL Idaho Trustee Manual Page 68, "The board only has authority when it makes a group decision in a legally constituted meeting." When he instructed a city employee to withhold my raise he acted outside of his authority and not a single other board member called him out on the wrongdoing or corrected it by going into the city and instructing the city employee on the error of their ways. I would also like it noted that Don Watts also made it clear in the January Library Board meeting that the director could make these wage increases if she wanted too if it did not overextend the budget.
5. The Mayor of Middleton directing the city library to attempt to district. That feels very much like an attempt to be rid of us, not a show of support of the library by the leader of the city.
6. The Mayor of Middleton refusing to let the library use the trolley station for programs and story time.

7. The Mayor refusing to let the library receive the free pod to use for our program space.
8. The President of the Library board telling me that the reason the Mayor cut the library's budget was a direct reaction to the disagreement he had with the previous library director.
9. In January's library board meeting Jim Taylor said, "you will need to plan on that [the library budget being cut or not given any increase in the budget] cause quite frankly we [the city of Middleton] is broke." "As it comes to your staffing, it might be easier to cause a little bit of pain now than a whole lot of pain in the beginning of next year."
10. The director, foreseeing that staffing might take a budget cut, negotiated a part-time status with a raise for me, which saves the budget \$11,000. I took this benefit and pay cut with the assurance that I would receive the raise starting May 15th. I have been without the increase in my pay for almost a full month but working a part time status.
11. When I addressed my complaints via email to the board, who was directly involved in the blocking of the raise, the city and my direct supervisor, emails where exchanged, but nothing was done to effectively reverse the decision.
12. During the workshop last week, a board member than justified their alleged violation of open meeting law by insinuating that I was "screaming" about my raise, even though I addressed the email thusly, "To the board and Wendy: Please note the tone of this email is sincere and entreating. I hope that is read with that in mind." I was respectfully requesting, and I was not screaming.
13. When I read item #14 on tonight's agenda by Library Board President for tonight's meeting, I felt confident that even if I my raise was reinstated, as suggested by Treasurer Marie Knapp, it would be almost 2 years before I saw another raise. The Middleton city clerk position, which just requires a high school degree, the beginning wage for that position is more than what my wage would be with the raise, and I am an honorably discharged veteran, I have a college degree and speak another language.

It is obvious that a lot of the things I have mentioned come from ill intended motivations and misguided thinking. As a positive and forward-thinking person, I can no longer be silent and continue to let these actions happen without remark. I would urge no one to linger in such a situation.

I have greatly enjoyed my time with the Middleton Public library's patrons, staff, and community. It is with a heavy heart that I leave. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to assist with the hiring or training of a replacement. I will make myself available in this endeavor even after June 18, 2021, if the need arises. I wish the Middleton Public Library all the best and I will continue to be a dedicated supporter and patron of the Library in the future.

Sincerely,
Heather Ellis
