

**Middleton Public
Library board Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2021, 5:30 pm @ Middleton City Hall-Council Chambers**

I. 5:33 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 Mark Christiansen, **Seconded by** Marie Knapp

Motion passed unanimously

III. Motion: Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meetings (June 8, 2021)

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

Motion passed unanimously

IV Motion: Approval of promotion of Jenny Cahoon

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

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

Motion passed unanimously

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

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

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 modify the Salary Schedule Report to add a separate Page position and adjust the salary range for the Library Assistant Position. Changes are in red in the document attached.

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

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

Motion passed through majority.

VIII. Motion: To allow Don Watt to pursue private funding for rental of the Trolley Station for programs.

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

Motion passed unanimously

IX. Motion: Publish and record amendments to the Middleton Public Library Manual from the June 8, 2021 meeting.

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

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

Motion passed

X. Motion: 5:57 pm-To go into Executive Session-(Mark Christiansen) [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

Motion: 6:09 pm-To leave Executive Session

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

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

Motion: To accept the resignation of Jennifer Barr as Library Director, that we set a special meeting for Tuesday, July 20th at 5:30; and we authorize Don Watt to create an ad for the position, confer with Becky Croft and report to the special session on July 20th. **Motioned by** Don Watt, **Seconded by** Marie Knapp
Motion passed unanimously

XI. Public Comments- Begin Part II on the recording

Kassie Knapp-read prepared statement (see attached) resigning from the board effective July 31, 2021.

Jennifer Barr-read prepared statement (see attached) concerning her resignation as Director.

Ellen Ott-Loves the library, attends frequently. Asked question about use of the Trolley Station. Doesn't understand why the city won't allow the library to use a city building. Has there been any follow up reasons why staff has and board member has resigned. Is the board concerned about complaints?

Jenny Cahoon-We will soon be down to 3 staff members at the library. In her experience, if one or two people fail in a system it's the people but if everyone is failing then it's the system. She believes in the library, it's more than books, it's about the people too. She hopes that doesn't go away.

Christin Green-She's read from the manuals and has given the board information. Thanked Don for his willingness to go above and behind to help find an appropriate place for story time. There are lists of what Jennifer and her staff have done. What has the three board members done to help the library. We would all like to know.

Sarah Post-Asked the same question last board meeting but the board declined to answer. She assumes the answer is still the same and that they haven't done anything but administrative tasks. Upset about the harm that has happened to the library. The board has been in place for a year and all they have done is tear down not build up. She was the one that presented the idea to Don to rent the Trolley Station and thanked him for addressing it in the board meeting. It is absurd that we have to resort to paying to use the Trolley Station to get the programs that our children need. It's not about the money its about the commitment to this town and our children. Why is the library board tearing apart what they should be supporting. Offered to have mediation between the public and the board but did not receive any response.

Becky Swain-The library is the heart of the community, it is for everyone. That is where kids that don't make sports teams get to come and belong, among others. Thought that mediation would be a good choice if people were thinking reasonably. The point of a library board is to support a library.

Heather Ellis: Addressed Becky Swain's comment with information on brain shift. Thinks that is what is happening here, that board members don't perceive their actions as foolish because they have justified their actions. She resigned, not because she was exhausted, but because she felt she could be a better advocate for the library, not as an employee. She loves the community and wants to see the library succeed so kids and adults have a place to go and learn. Feels that there are at least two board members, that she has talked to city council about, that need to be removed. Being a volunteer is hard.

Andie Alverson: Previously worked at the library and is still an avid user of the library. Now works at the Meridian Public Library. Libraries are incredible and powerful. Working at the Meridian library has shown her how a board and library should work together. She doesn't see the current board putting Middleton first, just themselves. The library staff is an amazing group of people. Please listen to comments as they are trying to make things better. She is here to support the library and the staff. She makes \$13.46 as a library assistant at Meridian and briefly talked about her role as an information advisor. If the coordinators at Middleton only make

\$12.00 an hour, and they do so much more than she does as an assistant, that needs to be evaluated. That is how you get good people to work in your community.

XII. 6:47 p.m. Motion and Action: To adjourn the meeting.
Motioned by Don Watt, **Seconded by** Marie Knapp
 All in favor.

Director's Report June 2021

Middleton Public Library Stats

| | <u>April</u> | <u>May</u> | <u>June</u> |
|--|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Physical Checkouts | | | June |
| *see past years comparison at end of report | 4784 | 4265 | 7882 |
| Overdrive | 607 | 581 | 476 |
| Axis 360 | | 7 | 15 |
| New Items Added | 126 | 170 | 214 |
| Computer Sessions | 73 | 62 | 92 |
| Boots Thru Door | 1699* | 1781.5* | 2871* |
| Individual Library Cards Used (does not include computer or online users) | 470 | 474 | 764 |
| Non-Resident Cards Issued | 13 | 6 | 11 |
| Revenue From Non-Resident Cards | \$425 | \$165 | \$300 |
| New Resident Cards Issued | 22 | 25 | 34 |

*based on digital door scan reading

June Programs & Outreach

Storytime- Every Tuesday @10:30am and Wednesdays @ 2:00 pm, behind the library.

Attended: Children-288, Adults-127

Corbin Maxey, Animal Expert.-June 10th @11:00 am @ The Community Center. **Attended: Children-103, Adults-54**

Chess Club-Tuesday @ 3:00 pm. **Attended: Children-10, Adults-1**

Bookmobile & STEM Kits @ Lunch in the Park -11:30am to 1:00pm on Tues and Thurs thru the Summer.

Attended: Children-403, Adults-278. 365 books from the Underserved Children's program given away.

STEM Kits and Free Books @ The Farmer's Market- 4:00pm to 7:00pm, June 3 and 10

Attended: Children-49, Adults-45. 54 STEM kits, distributed, 55 books from the Underserved Children's program given away.

Book Crazy-44 total participants and 307 submissions.

Family History Workshop, June 22nd-**2 attendees**

STEM and Snack Friday-Every Friday during the summer from 1:30 to 2:30 pm. Partnership w/ Middleton Food Pantry

Attended: Children-48

U and I Together: An activity series where all ages can learn! 6/1/21-Online w/ U of I

Nutrition for Healthy Aging-6/10/21- Online w/ U of I

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

Chess Club-Tuesday @ 3:00 pm

Online w/ U of I -July 23 @ 10:30 in the library parking lot.

Other Items

Donation-\$600-This was from an anonymous donor who had been viewing the past board meeting recordings and wanted to donate toward the perceived cost mentioned for the 29 non-resident student cards that were distributed.

Grants

Awarded

Grants Considering or in Application Process

Idaho Libraries Keep Students Learning and Adults Earning/ARPA Grant-for services and programs support-**\$13,500**

Not Awarded

Forever Idaho, Idaho Community Foundation -Hoping to use for capital improvements-up to **\$25,000**

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 | 7882 | | | |

Remarks from Kassie Knapp

To Whom it may concern:

July 13, 2021

This letter is to serve as my official resignation from the Middleton Public Library Board. It was not my intent, however due to the actions of the voting majority of this board I feel I have no other choice.

I feel that losing both a highly qualified library employee and director is a direct consequence of board overstepping, bullying and creating a hostile work environment for the library employees. As a board member I tried to do my part in supporting the director and her employees, but as one person I could only do so much.

In my opinion to be on a library board you must have an interest in the library, support the library and have an understanding of how the library runs. I don't feel that most of the board members are any of these things. There has been no real effort to work with the director, only against. From day one it appeared certain board members were out for the director's job.

It is clear that the Mayor and City Council has no love for the library. From day one Mayor Rule was very anti-library, cutting the library budget by 38%. I find it amusing he is now asking for a massive raise more than doubling his salary. All of this after we have been told time and time again the city needs to tighten their belts.

At the last board meeting, when an employee gave her resignation, she spoke of inappropriate behavior from one board member, I would like to back up that claim as I have also experienced the same behavior.

As an individual board member, it has become clear I cannot stop this train wreck. As of July 31st I am leaving this train. I feel I can better advocate for the library in a personal capacity.

*Kassie Knapp
Vice Chair*

Remarks from Jennifer Barr

As some of you are aware, yesterday I presented my notice of resignation to the library board and city administration. As this is my final board meeting as director, I wanted to take a moment to publicly thank my co-workers, library volunteers and patrons for their support of myself and the library over the almost four years I have worked here.

Although, I graduated from Middleton High and have lived here several years my family moved frequently while I was growing up. Every time we left a home, my mother (who is very wise) always made sure that it was thoroughly cleaned and in good shape. Most of these homes were rentals but she always left them in better condition than when we had arrived. As an adult, I try to continue her legacy and do the same. My goal as director has always been to give the residents of Middleton the best library possible while being a good steward of tax payer dollars. I am sad to be leaving the library but I am grateful to be leaving knowing I have continued the vision and efforts of previous directors in improving our library.

Here are just a few examples of improvements under my direction:

Fiscally

- Under budget last year by \$45,796.00*
- Currently under budget for this fiscal year and, due to grants, increased income and frugal spending, on track to have several thousand dollars in carry over for next year*
- Renegotiated or eliminated contracts to reduce spending*
- More than doubled the anticipated library revenue from \$3700 to over \$7700.00 for this fiscal year, which does not include the additional income we will receive in July, August and September or grants*
- Received \$15,370 in grants that myself and my team applied for. A 64% increase from the previous year.*
- Awarded an additional Grant to extend free public wi-fi outside library and to upgrade library computer network system, valued at over \$20,000 dollars*
- Multiple grants for hundreds of donated books to distribute to children at programs*

Facilities

- New DVD and audio shelving section*
- Organization of upstairs and downstairs storage areas*
- Creation of the computer LAB*

- Dismantling of the computer LAB and reincorporation of as much as possible back into the library when the space was reallocated to the police department.*
- Improvement of landscaping and the addition of back fence and grassy area*
- Improved aesthetics of the library with additional displays, art work and organization*

Other

- Improved processes for new materials processing, patron requests, item repairs and kit development.*
- Created partnership with IDOL to have a satellite office in the library*
- Improved relationship with the Friends of the Library*
- Increased awareness of the library and the services it offers the community through additional outreach, for example The Farmers Market and biweekly at Riddleys, online marketing and successful events such as Library Palooza*
- Reduced employee turnover*
- Successfully kept the library open and serving our community during the bulk of pandemic when most libraries were shut down, in spite of a 38% budget cut.*
- Continued and added partnerships with community groups such as University of Idaho, Middleton Historical Society, Greater Middleton Parks and Rec, Middleton Food Pantry, the United Way, Fraternal Woodmen and local businesses.*

Of course, none of the items listed above would be possible without the amazing team of staff and volunteers we have had at the library.

Over the past several months, many people have asked me why I have chosen to stay in my position as Director under the current conditions. My response has often been that I believe in the importance of the work we are doing and of a library to a community. I would like to expand on that answer. Here are just a few reasons why I have stayed:

I stayed for the widower who comes in weekly for a movie, conversation, human contact and a smile. Who brightens all of our days with his crazy beard and willingness to always pick up a drill and help us with maintenance projects.

I stayed for the woman trying to navigate doctors, insurance and bills because of her husband's devastating medical diagnosis. Who needed help printing off a brain scan image so she could try and makes sense of the incomprehensible. And just wanted a little help and a listening ear.

I stayed for the mom who tearfully told us that her child couldn't volunteer at the library for a while because of poor choices they'd made. For the staff member who put her arms around that mom and said "come talk to me for a bit, maybe I can help." And for that child to help make sure that they have a place to return to where they can take a few minutes out of their day to serve others, find a purpose and maybe get away from their own struggles, even if it's just for a moment.

I stayed for the curly, blond haired toddler who looks forward to his weekly (sometimes more) visits to the library with his mom or grandma. Who always notices and delights in how the display dinosaurs are decorated and reminds me that libraries, and the world, can be magical places.

I stayed for the husband who rushed to the library for a specific movie because his wife, who was losing her battle with brain cancer, remembered that she hadn't got to see the end. And for the staff who turned the library upside down, and even volunteered to bring a copy from home, when that movie was found to be missing from the shelf.

I stayed for all the children whose day is brightened by the reading of a story. And for the moms who watch those children discover and grow through word and song. Who sit with other moms and realize that they aren't alone in the chaotic, and sometimes thankless, task of molding and caring for another human being.

I stayed for an amazing group of skilled and educated women who show up every day, dig in and get stuff done. Who in spite of immense personal challenges, trials and heartache, smile to others and say "How can I help" and then find a way do it. Who believe that small and simple acts of service can improve lives and strengthen our community. Who show up in spite of the embarrassingly little pay they receive and whose work is discounted and trivialized by those who should be supporting them.

I stayed for the patrons, volunteers and city residents who give up valuable time with family, work and their own busy lives to help build a better community. Who come into the library weekly to help with necessary tasks. Who stand up, with shaking knees and racing hearts, in meetings like this to say, "The library is important. Please listen." With the hope that someday, someone with the authority to make a difference will hear and have the integrity, vision and courage to act.

I stayed for all the times, in my life, that I've been sad, lonely or overwhelmed and have escaped into a story. And for the chance I have had to help provide that same refuge, in the pages of a book, for many others.

And finally, I stayed for the multitude of people, young and old, who come in each week looking for knowledge and entertainment, human contact and community, respite and rejuvenation. For those who need a place to feel welcome regardless of their appearance, income, age, beliefs or differences.

And for the hundreds of others who currently don't come in but might be looking for, and need to, someday.

Because life can be really difficult and I believe that libraries can help.

Jennifer Barr
Director
Middleton Public Library