

MINUTES

Guthrie Public Library

I. Call To Order

Jamie Newton, President, calls special Guthrie Public Library Board meeting to order at 6:29 p.m. Tuesday, February 7, 2023.

II. Roll call and Establish quorum

Attending:

Jamie Newton, President

Gracelynn Lorenz, Secretary

Kevin Kemper, Library Board Member

Absent:

Neicie Black, Library Board Member

Robert Easterling, Library Board Member

Quorum is established.

III. Board Involvement in Selection of Directory of Library Services

Guthrie Library Board discussed how City Manager Leroy Alsup left the current Guthrie Library Board out of the decision to advise and participate in the selection of a Guthrie Library director. According to Guthrie Public Library General Policies approved by the Guthrie City Council, under Part XI: Powers and Duties of the Library Board, item D. "The Guthrie Public Library Board shall: Assist in the hiring of the Director of Library Services by participating in the recruitment and interview process and making a recommendation to the City Manager." So, there is a discrepancy in what the city council has approved as the responsibility of the library board and what happened.

The library board feels passionately about the library and its patrons. Even though in the charter it says that the city manager has the power and duty to hire. The board was left completely out of the assistance to hire the director. The library board fully supports the selected Guthrie Library Board Director. The Library Board wanted to advise the city council that the city manager bypassed what the city council approved for the Library Board to do.

IV. City Council Meeting Notes

In the City Council Meeting minutes, the city manager noted that we had no business in bringing this issue to the city council because it was an issue that didn't involve the city council. It's an issue with the City Manager.

V. Library Board members speak to council.

Link to youtube video of the February 7, 2023 meeting (23:45 minutes into the meeting):

<https://www.youtube.com/live/5stQsSoWjtY?feature=share>

Jamie Newton, Guthrie Library Board President, spoke before the city council. She said, the board is dedicated to the library and will support any director hired by the City of Guthrie. We disagree with the decision to leave the library board out of the meetings to assist in selecting the new Guthrie Director of Library Services. We are citizens appointed by the mayor and approved by the city council to serve on this board. The duties of the library board are stated on Guthrie's website for the library, it says "The Guthrie Library Board ... shall assist in the hiring of the Director of Library Services by participating in the recruitment and interview process and making a recommendation to the City Manager." (This is from the Guthrie Public Library General Policies in Part XI: Powers and Duties of the Library Board. Policies approved by the city council.) City Charter 26-78 creating the board is the official document in which to determine policies and procedures and responsibilities of the library board. Section 3 states "library board shall make recommendations to the mayor, city council and city manager on the operation, functions and maintenance and policies of and all matters concerning the public library system of the City of Guthrie." We believe that the Library Board's responsibility includes helping to select a Guthrie Director of Library Services. The state statute specifically lists this as a duty of the library board (11 O.S. 31-101 through 31-108). Our desire to participate in the selection process was conveyed but none of the currently serving board members were contacted about participating. The board had questions to ask candidates about policies, procedures, projects, and programming. Since this will be someone who we will be working closely with, we were deeply disappointed to be excluded from our duty. We hope by bringing this to the city council. We will be able to bring attention to the city council that as citizens appointed by this council; we are not being allowed to fulfill our duties that were also approved by you, the city council.

Kevin Kemper, Guthrie Library Board member, the city manager did not follow the ordinances of the city by leaving the board out of the selection process for the Guthrie Director of Library Services. His recommendation is that no one is hired until the board is involved. He is a volunteer. His time is expensive. He had drafted a letter of resignation on principal. If he can't serve on a board and do his duty, why bother? Since a new city manager will be hired soon, he will wait to see if the new city manager will work with the library board. The library board work with the city manager. We wanted to say for the record, that excluding the Library Board from participating in the selection of the Guthrie Director of Library Services violates city ordinances. We don't have an objection that the city manager has the sole power to hire and fire. We just have an objection that we were not included in the process of selection of the Guthrie Director of Library Services. The city manager has not listened to our concerns and has been rude to members of this board. The city manager did have a former library board member on the committee that we respect. But, not a current member which violates the city ordinance. We want the library to be welcoming and a blessing to the community.

VI. Public comments

None

VIII. Meeting adjourned 7:34 pm
