

**Waukegan Public Library Governance Committee Meeting
MINUTES**

Thursday, December 4, 2014
5:30 p.m. Board Room
128 N. County Street
Waukegan, IL 60085

Call to Order

Chair called meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Roll Call to Constitute a Quorum

Committee members present were Pete Zaragoza and Megan Spaur.

Quorum present.

Also in attendance were Richard Lee, Executive Director, Cindy Joy, Human Resource Manager, and Linda Gfesser, Recording Secretary.

Agenda

Requested to adjust agenda to move #3 of Discussion and Action Agenda items up to #1. Motion to approve the agenda of the WPL Governance Committee December 4, 2014 meeting, with modification, made by Ms. Spaur, seconded by Mr. Zaragoza, and passed by the Committee.

Chair Report

No report.

Discussion and Action Agenda

1. Trustee correspondence

Chair reported that a document was brought to his attention. The document was a referral email to Mr. Lee about a potential candidate referred by a trustee for an open job position. The correspondence and the follow-up replies to the correspondence are brought to the committee for its interpretation.

The email was read to the committee. The email was determined by the committee to be a letter of a vote of confidence for the potential applicant. The response to the email was briefly addressed and discussed.

Concern is raised about the fact that after the decision was made on the hiring for the position, the decision was questioned by the trustee. Committee proceeded to inquire from Ms. Joy the sequence of events that occurred.

Ms. Joy reminded the Committee that the meeting is in open session and that no names of public are to be referred to. Committee acknowledged.

Ms. Joy stated that the position was posted and she was in the process of wrapping up the interview process when she received a “direct and aggressive in tone” voicemail from the trustee. The voicemail was received prior to above mentioned referral letter via email.

The voicemail’s message to Ms. Joy was for her to “extend at all costs any consideration” to the referred potential applicant. Ms. Joy stated that she was very uncomfortable with the voicemail. Ms. Joy also stated that the voicemail was not saved any longer because the mail system only saves voicemails for a limited amount of time and then proceeds to automatically delete them.

Ms. Joy stated that she asked several other members of administration to listen to the voicemail to confirm or deny the tone extended.

Ms. Joy stated that Mr. Lee instructed her to not respond to the voicemail, which she agreed to.

Ms. Joy stated that she believes that the announcement of the position might have already been taken down at this point; she is not sure of the timing. She did state that she does remember that the interview process was already being wrapped up at this point.

Ms. Joy stated that the person was not set up for an interview but after listening to the trustee’s message, extended an interview to the candidate, per Mr. Lee’s request.

The Committee asked and Ms. Joy responded that the trustee’s message did influence her decision to conduct an interview.

Ms. Joy to contact IT Department to see if a search can be conducted to locate the deleted voicemail message.

The position in question was a 24 hour/part time position. During the interview, the candidate revealed he would only be available to work a portion of the time required for the position. The candidate stated that he was not interested in working weekends or the amount of the hours required by the position. The interview process determined that the candidate was not a good fit for the position.

Ms. Joy stated that the interview took place prior to the 4th, the date the email was received.

Ms. Joy believes that at the time of the interview, the interviewee understood that he would not be a good fit for the position.

As standard procedure, Ms. Joy followed up with the interviewee after the interview.

Ms. Joy then explained the general schedule of an interview process.

Ms. Joy explained that the candidate was very gracious.

Mr. Lee then sent a response to the email from the trustee.

At this point, the Committee realized that this sequence of events occurred in November of 2013 and not November 2014.

Ms. Joy then went on to explain that since this occurrence, there has been much more scrutiny and requests directed at Human Resources regarding their hiring and employment practices.

Ms. Joy explained that prior to this sequence of events, all Human Resource information was included in the board packet and was presented in a brief manner. After the sequence of events, the Board began to ask to be supplied with more detailed information in the Board Reports and in the CEO Reports.

Committee reported that the Board should only become involved with Human Resource issues when a disgruntled ex-staff member asks to speak with the board.

Ms. Joy stated that in her employment during the past four years, she does not recall any other board members referring candidates for employment.

Committee explained that full disclosure by the board be exercised in suggesting candidates. All hiring practices need to be above board in a public institution.

Committee's desire it to be able to provide HR and the staff an avenue to follow in similar situations.

Whistleblower policy briefly discussed. Committee discussed that the situation that occurred does not fall under the whistleblower policy because it was not illegal.

Ms. Joy stated that since this occurrence, things seemed to have escalated with the staff being blamed with "fraudulent" and "inaccurate" practices.

Committee stated that it is the job of Governance Committee to take the first steps on how to avoid this; stated that something has to be done and the board's motives need to be examined. Committee asked how to address this with the board going forward.

Recommendation made that the Governance Committee meet with the trustee and Mr. Lee in closed session next week to address.

Chair to reach out to the trustee to see what date works for her.

Committee stated that addressing this situation may open up a problem area and is concerned about retribution with the board members.

Committee stated that Board members should not receive special treatment; they are responsible to the tax payers.

2. Review of the trustee candidates in hand

Committee currently in possession of three trustee candidates' information.

Shaemia Newsome

David Balthazor

Mandy Dye

Ms. Spaur noted that she did not seek out any of the candidates; one was recommended to her. Nothing was discussed about the candidates at the meeting with the mayor.

Previous candidate, Jane Waller, is no longer interested in the trustee position.

Last year's trustee posting on the website was discussed.

Suggestion made to post notice about open trustee positions in the library somewhere, in both English and Spanish.

Ms. Gfesser to check if OMA would be violated if both committee members were to conference call the candidates to interview.

The goal of the Committee is to have a trustee candidate recommendation for presentation at the next board meeting. Possibly have the candidate come early to board meeting for a meet and greet.

3. Discussion about the need to identify additional candidates

This procedure is ongoing. Governance Committee intends to develop a candidate "pool" of names.

4. Formalize any Committee recommendations to WPL Board based on above discussion

Committee recommends that it meet the three candidates, possibly through phone conference, prior to next board meeting.

Public Comments

No public in attendance.

Future Agenda Topics

None.

Mr. Lee commended Ms. Spaur on her speaking up at a previous board meeting regarding the mayor's request that he wants the Governance Committee to do the footwork on the selection process for trustee candidates and then to present one candidate's name to the Mayor.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 6:35pm.