

UNICOI COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
March 10, 2023

The Board of Trustees of the Unicoi County Public Library met in a special called meeting March 10, 2023, at the Town Hall meeting room in Erwin, TN. Members present were President, Cathy Griffith, Vice President, Jan Bowden, Treasurer, Travis Bishop, Secretary, Andy Frazier, Jenna Lafever, Chris Privette and Gail Snodgrass. Also present were, UCPL Director Suzy Bomgardner and County Commissioner and UCPL Foundation President John Mosley. No members were absent.

- I. Call of meeting to order. Ms. Griffith called the meeting to order at 4:04pm. Ms. Griffith summarized that the purpose and scope of this special called meeting is simply to discuss and possibly approve two proposals related to Health Insurance and Salaries for staff members.

- II. Employee Health Insurance proposal. Ms. Griffith shared a document with some health plan quotes prepared by Keystone Insurance. They were all BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee plans with the top plan being a “gold” plan. Other providers considered were not comprehensive enough or affordable. The BCBST Gold level plans seemed to offer the best value for medical coverage.

Should they choose to accept library offered medical insurance, monthly premiums for the recommended plan would be \$1630.24 for 2 full-time employees and family members. Annual deductible would be \$2,500 individual and \$5,000 family. Out of pocket maximum would be \$7,000 individual and \$14,000 family. UCPL would cover 80% of the premium and employees would be expected to cover 20% of the premium cost.

- a. Approval of the Employee Health Insurance proposal. For the purpose of discussion, Mr. Bishop moved acceptance and Ms. Lafever seconded the motion. All agreed it looked like a reasonable plan in both coverage and cost. Some discussion was held regarding how we anticipate covering this increased cost. Ideally, if our budget requests are approved by municipalities, this cost is already factored in. If they come back with lower amounts, some other options may exist for increased funding from UCPL Foundation, though that would not be a long-term solution.

Mr. Privette shared that he wants to make sure that these plans are adequate for the specific needs of the staff members we offer them to. Mr. Frazier commented that he thinks it is important that we commit to prioritizing this as a long-term benefit for full time staff and not something we take away if funding is low. Several members also wanted to discuss this in connection with the upcoming salary proposal.

Ms. Griffith clarified that the vote primarily enables us to offer this benefit as part of a salary package. If employees choose not to take the offered plans, we could consider a salary adjustment. The vote was called for and the motion passed unanimously.

- III. Employee Salary Proposal. Mr. Bishop presented a document and information about some possible approaches to salary increases for all employees. The document contained all current salaries and hourly pay rates followed by potential raises based on either percentage increases of 5% or 10% or pay rate increases of \$0.50/hour or \$1.00/hour for all employees. The Board expressed a desire to see all salaries increased, but decided to first focus on the salaries of the two current full time employees, Ms. Bomgardner and Ms. Garst.

For Ms. Bomgardner, who currently earns a salary of \$42,000/year, an initial suggestion was made to increase the salary to \$46,000/year, which roughly represented the 10% increase option proposed. An initial motion was made for this amount, but then the motion was amended to raise the salary to \$48,000/year plus previously approved benefits.

- a. Approval of Employee Salary proposal for the Director of UCPL. Mr. Bishop moved acceptance and Ms. Lafever seconded the motion. Along with the discussion that led to the motion amendment, various Board members discussed the importance of offering our Director a salary that is fair and competitive with others working in the same field with similar experience and qualifications.

In addition to wanting to reward the great work of Ms. Bomgardner, we want to do what is necessary to retain her in that role for years to come. Not raising this salary from the current amount would also make it difficult to find qualified candidates in the future if we needed to find a new Director.

The Board also intends to continue improving both the salary and benefits offered in the future as the funding situation hopefully continues to improve. The vote was called for and the motion passed unanimously.

For Ms. Garst, who currently earns a salary of \$11.25/hour, the Board asked Ms. Bomgardner for her recommendation that position and others. Ms. Bomgardner shared that Ms. Garst does an excellent job essentially running two departments and is particularly skilled at programming. As the only other full-time employee, her role is vital and she is deserving of a significant raise.

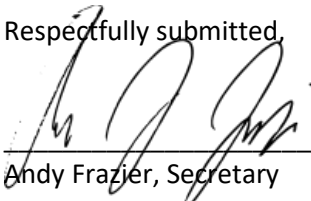
- b. Approval of Employee Salary proposal for the Circulation and Children's Coordinator of UCPL. Upon the motion of Mr. Bishop, seconded by Mr. Privette, the motion to increase Ms. Garst's pay by \$2/hour was approved unanimously.

- IV. Board comments. The Board briefly discussed the possibility of a raise for all other employees, but tabled discussion for the upcoming or the next Board meeting later in the month.

Ms. Griffith confirmed that these newly approved salaries and benefits would go into effect April 1st. If other changes are approved for other staff members at the next Board meeting, they could also go into effect as of April 1st.

- V. Adjournment. Upon the motion of Ms. Griffith, seconded by Mr. Bishop, all agree to adjourn the meeting at 5:13pm. Next meeting will be the workshop on Monday, March 27th, 2023 at 9am-1pm in the Town Hall meeting room in Erwin. The next Board meeting will be on Thursday, March 30th, 2023 at 6:00pm at UCPL.

Respectfully submitted,



Andy Frazier, Secretary