

**Coralville Public Library Board of Trustees**  
**June 6th 2018**

**Present:** Amanda Elkins, Keith Jones, Julie Pulkrabek, Jim Smith, Alison Ames Galstad (Library Director), Ellen Hampe Alexander (Assistant Library Director), Laura Crossett (Adult Services Coordinator).

**Absent:** Deborah Hatz, Shaner Magalhaes, Lisa Martin, Mitch Gross (City Council Representative).

Vice President Jones called the meeting to order at 6:00

The Board considered approval of the agenda. Pulkrabek moved that the agenda be approved, Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board considered approval of the minutes of the May 2nd, 2018 meeting. Pulkrabek moved that the minutes be approved as presented, Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board considered approval of the bills for May. Galstad pointed out that it's a long list, since it is the end of the fiscal year. She will email one more final list for approval next Friday. She pointed out the CSS bill on the last page, this is for two new servers for the public network. The servers we currently have are 5 years old, no longer under warranty. Smith asked about the COMINFRA Group bill. This was for rewiring of the server room. Liberty Doors bill was for 3 backup units for the handicapped doors, which we ordered so we won't have to wait for one to come in when they fail. Pulkrabek motioned that the bills be approved as presented, Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Laura Crossett gave the staff report. She read the following essay she wrote:

"The years I spent getting high and reading library books I do not regret" is a line from *The Mars Room* by Rachel Kushner, a novel about a woman in California serving two consecutive life sentences and her reflections on her life both before and after she went to prison.

I posted this line on Facebook the other day and people got concerned that I was endorsing drug use, which I'm not. But I am saying that so much of the influence the library has on people we'll never know. Part of my job is to help make it possible for us to have that influence, by doing mundane things such as keeping the desks staffed and ordering books to fill the shelves and weeding books to make room for the new ones. So here, for instance, is the summer desk schedule. At any time, we need five people staffing the desks at the library, and because it's summer, we often need extra coverage on some of the public service desks. In addition to our thirteen permanent, mostly full time staff, we have eighteen part-time staff working here this summer (and we may be hiring another person). Those eighteen or nineteen people often have other jobs or classes or childcare obligations, and some days they get sick or take well-deserved vacations, so I spend a lot of time figuring out how we'll cover the desks for both short and long term contingencies. This morning one of our part time staff texted Ellen and me to say his daughter was sick and he could work his morning shift but would need the afternoon off so his wife could go to work, so I spent some time coming up with various solutions to that.

Of course, sometimes we do get to know something about the effect we have on our patrons' lives. In addition to the work I do inside the library, I do some outreach. Today I went out with the Antelope Lending Library bookmobile for a stop at Western Hills. We'll be there every Wednesday this summer. I told a woman who can't drive anymore that we could deliver books to her on the bookmobile, and I signed up three kids for the summer reading program. "You get a tshirt at the end," I said, trying to sound enthusiastic about something I can't imagine being that exciting. "Oh!" said one girl. "My friend got one of those once!" They were thrilled at the prospect.

Every other week I also go out to the IMCC. We provide library books for the inmates there who've achieved the highest privilege level at the prison. I always wish we could serve all the patrons there, and I always wish I could carry more books. As with the regular library, most people there come, get their books, and go on their

way. But one day there a patron said to me, “I heard that George Orwell wrote some other books besides *Animal Farm* and *1984*.”

“He sure did!” I said, “and I can bring you some.” It turned out we didn’t have any editions of his essays, so I had Kate order one, and I took it out to him. I gave him a list of the ones you absolutely have to read—“Such, Such Were the Joys” and “Shooting an Elephant” and “Politics and the English Language”—and the next time I was out there he asked if he could keep the book for longer because he wanted to read some more.

Of course, sometimes the patrons we get to know aren’t so delightful. I spend a certain amount of time listening to a woman who calls the library frequently very worried about something she’s searched for and whether it will lead her to child pornography and whether that will get her in trouble. “Can you just look that up for me and see what it says?” she’ll say. As you can imagine, these aren’t fun conversations to have on the public service desk. “No, searching for kiddie po doesn’t bring up anything bad. I don’t really want to Google kiddie xxx for you.” I started having staff transfer all her calls to me to spare them from having to try to handle her questions gracefully and discreetly while working at a public desk. Now she calls the library and asks for me. Today she called three times, and the third time I asked her how recently she’d seen her doctor or her therapist (a few years ago she called and asked if I’d talk to her doctor on the phone—she was at her office). “I just got out of the hospital,” she said. I asked if that had helped, and she said a bit, and I asked about whether they’d scheduled a follow-up appointment and encouraged her to tell the doctor there all the things she’d told me today.

I started by quoting a new book and I’m going to end by quoting a much older one. Denis Johnson’s *Jesus’ Son* is a classic book about heroin addiction (or about the effects of urban renewal on Iowa City), but it ends with the narrator sober and working at a residential home for people with disabilities. He says, “All these weirdos, and me getting a little better every day right in the midst of them. I had never known, never even imagined for a heartbeat, that there might be a place for people like us.”

If the public library is anything, I hope it is a home for those people—and my job, as I see it, is to do what I can to keep the place running.

Pulkrabek asked about her wanting to take more books to IMCC – anything that would help with that? Crossett said she’s just limited because there is only so much she can haul. IMCC has added some juvenile inmates recently. Galstad mentioned that it was Laura who also established the relationship with Goodwill.

Smith gave a report from the Friends. Friends were contacted by the Graduate Hotel, who wanted to buy a bunch of used books just to fill shelves. They asked for 361 linear feet - the Friends sold them 4,000 books for \$2000, so the Friends now have more room to sort. The next book sale is Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. They’ve been attending the Farmer’s Market.

The Foundation met on May 16<sup>th</sup>. They moved forward with opening an investment account with Hills Bank. Can only use 5% of what’s in the J.C. Foundation, so wanted to have another account that’s not strictly endowment. Invited 2 institutions to present, only Hills presented. Will take the 5% every year from the Johnson County Foundation, and if there is no purpose for it, will invest it in the Hills account. Lead trust manager on account is Chris Moen (Lindsay’s husband).

Annual fundraiser – thought this would be the last year for Putt Fore the Library, but it raised over \$8000, all holes sponsored, etc. Exploring alternative event, but haven’t ruled out P4L and working with event planning class. Pulkrabek suggested looking for a University class to help with designing a new course.

### **Galstad gave the Director's Report:**

Stats –Gift of \$2000 – Galstad noted this is from the hotel to the Friends, and will be given to the Friends (we ran it through our register so they could use a credit card).

Circulation was up about 9% over last year. Visits were steady. Laptop checkouts continues to really increase. We will be buying a couple of macs and more laptops. Remote use continues to increase.

Programming statistics – at the Summer Reading Program kickoff, we had 711 people in the hour and a half. Felt steady, though signup numbers are down a little this year. We think this might be because it was on a Thursday and before school got out for the year. 293 kids signed up. 85 teens, 114 adults.

As of yesterday up to 818 kids signed up, 205 teens.

Children's Librarians gave a Summer Reading Program introduction to Wickham Elementary students. Wickham bussed each grade here several days in a row for a tour and to learn about summer programs. Last Friday was our Community Meal, which was very successful. 580 people were served! We will have music in the rotunda this Friday and every Friday in June. Kevin BF Burt is also doing 2 teen programs in addition to playing (those in his workshop can play with him this Friday evening in the rotunda). We were a site of official precinct voting, plus hosted early voting for the week before the election. Passed around statistics of voting turnout, which was good.

Jones asked about the construction that was going on in the parking lot. Galstad said it was repairs, having to do with drainage issues.

July & August meetings – Keith and Amanda cannot make July 11<sup>th</sup>. Maybe the 18<sup>th</sup>? August 1<sup>st</sup> – seems to work.

The Library will have a float in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade, giving out toy flutes.

Jones mentioned that he's seen several of the painted rocks out while walking lately.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 18<sup>th</sup> – Galstad will send out email to confirm.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Alexander  
Assistant Library Director  
(Subject to approval at the July 2018 meeting.)