



**BALDWIN PUBLIC LIBRARY  
MINUTES, SPECIAL MEETING  
February 15, 2021**

Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting, held via Zoom, was called to order by President Melissa Mark at 6:30 p.m.

Library Board present: Ashley Aidenbaum (Birmingham, MI), Melissa Mark (Birmingham, MI), Frank Pisano (Birmingham, MI), James W. Suhay (Birmingham, MI), Bob Tera (Birmingham, MI), Jennifer Wheeler (Birmingham, MI).

Absent and excused: None.

Library Staff present: Rebekah Craft, Library Director

Members of the public present: 4 candidates for the Library Board position were present, as well as one member of the public.

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance following establishment of quorum.

Pisano read aloud the Library's Mission Statement.

1. Review of process and procedures for filling the vacant position on the Baldwin Public Library Board of Directors

President Mark thanked applicants and the public for attending the publicly noticed meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to fill a vacancy on the Library Board of Directors. The applicant selected will be required to fulfill a partial term of a four-year, non-partisan term. The partial term will begin in March 2021 and end November 1, 2021. The position was listed on the Library's website, posted at the Library, at City Hall, on the City of Birmingham's website, and in a press release. A formal announcement of the opening was made at a regular meeting of the Library Board on January 20.

On November 3, 2019, Library Board Trustee Robert Tera was re-elected to the Birmingham City Commission. On January 20, 2021, he announced his formal resignation from the Library Board.

The Birmingham City Charter, Chapter 16, Section 3 gives the Library Board of Directors the authority to fill the term of office. The Charter states: "The Library Board is empowered to fill any vacancy occurring on said board by the appointment of a person to hold such office until the next regular city election."

Interested candidates were required to submit a Birmingham City Board application and a resume, as well as answer the essay question, "How would my involvement on the Library Board of Directors benefit the Baldwin Public Library?" The application and answer to this essay question was due on February 12, 2021.

Eight questions were emailed to the candidates on February 12 in advance of the meeting:

Mark outlined the Board's equitable process for open interviews and thanked the candidates, Board Members, staff, and members of the public for attending the meeting. She noted that due to the rules of the Open Meeting Act, no phone interviews were permissible. Mark stated that, according to Baldwin Library's bylaws, four votes were required to approve a selection. Following the interview of all candidates, public comment may be received.

2. Interviews for appointment to the Baldwin Public Library Board of Directors, to be conducted in the order in which applications were received. (Note: The answers below are loose transcriptions of what the candidates said.)

Danielle Rumble. Rumble introduced herself

**The Library Board meets once a month at 7:30 p.m., generally the third Monday of the month, except in January when the Board meets on the Wednesday after the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday. Board members are expected to serve on 2 committees that meet monthly, generally late afternoon or early evening. Would you be able to make those commitments?**

Yes, I would. I can foresee being an asset on the communications, personnel or policy committees.

**What role do you take on or skill sets do you typically use when working in a group? The Board is fortunate to have a diverse mix of personalities, strengths, and interests. Which of the following roles on the Board would be a best fit for you: ambassador/advocate, steward to ensure adequate funding, reviewer of policies, evaluator of director, or another role?**

I am happy to take on any position in a group, and consider myself a group leader that helps to organize people to finish a task on time and on budget. I would be happy to see where I best fits and can be of most assistance. I see myself best suited as an ambassador/advocate. I work with a diverse population at the YMCA and share the YMCA mission with new and potential members. I try to serve the community and welcome everyone. I would bring the perspective of people I meet at the YMCA and could bring that feedback to the Library.

**Tell us about your relationship with the library over the last two years, including how often you have used library services, such as checking out materials, attending programs, or using the online catalog or website.**

My entire family has been using the Library for quite some time. In recent years, I have attended Books & Bites, and have used the Idea Lab to make personalized gifts for my family, including using the laser engraver and embroidery machine. I used lots of online resources during Covid, such as taking a computer programming course through Gale and using Hoopla. I attended Marie Kondo's organizing program, attended the meet the author event with Angela Kidd (author of the Healing Star), participated in the summer reading program, competed on a Harry Potter trivia team (as a couples' date night), signed up for the Books Unshelved program, have walked Storybook trail, and have attended story times since the birth of my children. My daughter loves Baffling Bill. We have picked up the Little Explorers bag. We signed up for letters with a librarian (loves Ms. Rosemary's letter!). And we just participated in the winter scavenger hunt. I love the Library and use it a lot.

**Do you have new ideas to improve Baldwin's programs and services to enrich our offerings and better connect to our service area?**

The staff and Board have done a fantastic job responding to COVID-19. The Friends have done a great job with the mystery bags and keeping the community connected. For people who have lost their jobs and had their income limited, it might be a good idea to make the resources the Library offers more prominent on the home page (resume building, Gale Courses, Lynda.com, programming around cover letters and interview tips). I like the idea of CreativeBug for hobbyists and loaning out supplies for beginning crafting if you don't want to invest in tools (baking supplies, scrapbooking scissors, sewing supplies). I realize this would involve budgeting and storage.

**What is a public library's role in promoting racial equity and inclusion in the community?**

It is important for every organization, and especially for the Library, to promote racial equity. The Library is a space that welcomes everyone regardless of race, religion, nationality, sexuality – all are welcome. I appreciated the Library celebrated the National Day of Racial Healing on January 19. I saw that the Library recently did a Friday 5 at 5 with picture book bios for Black History month.

Racial equity goes much beyond Black History Month and is something that we should be focusing on all the time. The Library should look at starting a racial equity team, similar to what has been established at the YMCA, for both employees and patrons and adding training for staff.

The community that we serve is not overly diverse and there may be unconscious bias that we should address in our community.

**How do you engage with social media and how would you use social media to communicate with the public on important library matters?**

I participate on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. I use it but I would not consider myself an over-sharer. I would be willing to share items from the Library. I would also suggest that the Library add a Pinterest account.

**Would you be willing to collect the required signatures and campaign in 2021 to run for the remaining two years of a four-year term that would conclude in November 2023?**

Yes, I would be happy to run for election in November and would be honored to fill the remaining term. I would be honored and pleased to work with the Board and be a more involved party, especially as the Library moves into the phase three renovations.

**Is there anything else you want us to know about you?**

I was scheduled to be in the Citizens Academy in April 2020, but it was cancelled due to Covid. I hope to attend that when it returns. I love reading and visiting libraries on vacation. I also love TV game shows and was a contestant on Wheel of Fortune in 2016. My husband and I are U of M Men's basketball season ticket holders.

**Alexandra Harris**

I am a Birmingham resident of 24 years. I work as a crossing guard at Pembroke school. I'm an artist and avid reader.

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Yes.

**What role do you take on or skill sets do you typically use when working in a group? The Board is fortunate to have a diverse mix of personalities, strengths, and interests. Which of the following roles on the Board would be a best fit for you: ambassador/advocate, steward to ensure adequate funding, reviewer of policies, evaluator of director, or another role?**

I am generally a follower more than a leader, but I have taken on leadership roles when necessary. I have a lot of ideas, I like to present ideas, and I am good at gathering people. I could see myself as an ambassador advocate. I have never dealt with finances outside of family budget.

**Tell us about your relationship with the library over the last two years, including how often you have used library services, such as checking out materials, attending programs, or using the online catalog or website.**

Before COVID, I was haunting the Library quite a bit. I like to read French magazines and read newspapers. The Library is a good place to gather and start conversations with people. I have attended lectures and participated in the summer reading program. I appreciate what the Library has to offer.

**Do you have new ideas to improve Baldwin's programs and services to enrich our offerings and better connect to our service area?**

Every picture tells a story. Every story tells a picture. I propose hosting a program or challenge where

patrons read a book and make a piece of art inspired by the book and then host an exhibition of the artwork. I prefer texts to emails and hope the Library would look into this for communication.

**What is a public library's role in promoting racial equity and inclusion in the community?**

Baldwin is successful in this area. People tend to have their nose in a phone more than in a book. CS Lewis coined 'chronological snobbery' -- when we are only involved in our own culture, we tend to get arrogant about it and turn our noses on other things.

I think that reading challenges and thematic approaches to get us out of our bubble (reading books from the north, south, east and west, and comparing). It would also be interesting to read older works of literature (Book of Job, Epic of Gilgamesh).

**How do you engage with social media and how would you use social media to communicate with the public on important library matters?**

I have distanced myself from Facebook. Social media should be short and sweet, brief and engaging. I only use Facebook and Instagram to promote my art. I like old fashioned word of mouth communication.

**Would you be willing to collect the required signatures and campaign in 2021 to run for the remaining two years of a four-year term that would conclude in November 2023?**

Yes, I would.

**Is there anything else you want us to know about you?**

I love Jesus and have been a serious Christian for 40 years. I walk 15-20 miles a day, cook and bake, and love speaking French. I am a crossing guard with 4 shifts each school day. I have noticed what a beautiful job the Library has done. Any time I've requested a book, the Library has purchased it or gotten it through MeL for me. I would be honored to help. I have enthusiasm and passion.

Suhay would like Board members to have time to ask additional questions of each candidate. Mark agreed but insisted that the framework established should be kept the same for each candidate. Pisano stated that both candidates did a great job and would be an asset to the Library. For future special Board meetings, Pisano would like to add a half hour to the beginning of each meeting to discuss each topic.

Aidenbaum suggested looking back at the length of time for the first interviewee and constrain the remaining candidates to that same time. She said that Rumble packed a lot of information into her interview in a short period of time. Wheeler and Craft agreed with Aidenbaum's suggestion of keeping the interview time the same length as the first interviewee's time. Mark noted the first interviewee had between 20 to 25 minutes.

Tera commented that both candidates were terrific and either would make a great addition to the Library Board. Tera stated that the answers to the questions are very interesting because they give a lot of information about the candidate's style, approaches to questions, how they consider their answer, and then their report back to us. This tells us a lot about the candidate. A 30-minute maximum interview is appropriate.

- 3. General Public Comment Period: None

- 4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

1<sup>st</sup> Pisano  
2<sup>nd</sup> Aidenbaum

Yeas: Aidenbaum, Mark, Pisano, Suhay, Tera, Wheeler

Nays: None.

Absent and excused: None.

The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

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Jennifer Wheeler

Date

APPROVED