

NORTH LAKE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT  
Board of Trustees Special Meeting  
Thursday, October 26, 2017 ~ 5:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Allen Bone, Bruce Harrop, Maggie Newman, Brooke Wegner, Holly Wurl

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Abbi Dooley, Heather Miles, Kendra Mullison, Mary O'Brien, Marilyn Trosper, Mallory Witham

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by board chair Allen Bone.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION COMMENTS:** Comments were requested later in the meeting.

**LIBRARY DIRECTOR POSITION:** The purpose of today's special meeting is to settle the course of action for the Library Director Position.

Allen Bone opened the meeting by stating that, as agreed at the regular October Board of Trustees meeting, he had contacted outside sources to clarify the legality of hiring and promoting within as opposed to advertising the position. He contacted Tracy Cook, Director of Library Development for the Montana State Library and former Lake County District Attorney Mitch Young, an attorney for the Montana Association of Counties (MACO), the library's insurance carrier.

Tracy Cook answered the board's question by explaining that the procedure of hiring within is within legal standard and that several Montana libraries had used this practice in the past. Allen was given the examples of Butte, Billings and Bozeman. Allen subsequently contacted several of these libraries.

Mitch Young was unable to give his opinion on the topic as the question was not within the scope of his work with MACO. He referred Allen to another staff person, McKenzie McCarthy, who also confirmed that promotion was acceptable without advertising the position further. He read from an email supplied by McKenzie confirming her answer. The succession process that has been ongoing is being done properly.

Furthermore, Allen also contacted former board chair Clint Hoxie to obtain his perspective and recollection regarding the succession plan. Mr. Hoxie concurred that if Abbi meets all the qualifications of the job description, she can be promoted to the position of Director.

All those contacted agreed that the board has the ability to promote Abbi if they wish.

Holly Wurl asked the Chairman if she could read aloud a letter she has written regarding tonight's agenda. Permission was granted, Holly read her letter, and it will be included as an attachment to the meeting minutes.

In conclusion of his remarks, Allen stated the board should honor Marilyn because she gave the board over a year of warning regarding her retirement and had put forth great effort to ensure a smooth transition in leadership for the North Lake County Public Library District. He noted that the Board had failed to act

otherwise in a timely manner and reminded everyone that there was no budget for advertising the position. Therefore, the Board either needs to hire from within or do a full out search.

Holly Wurl and Maggie Newman responded that they want to ensure the Board is acting correctly, following proper procedures, and that they want to cover all contingencies. They felt that advertising the position would be best. Holly said it was never her understanding as a board member that we were not going to the public to open up this position. She added that it was "too bad we didn't have Marilyn's retirement date sooner." Allen responded that the Director position is the board's biggest responsibility. He reminded everyone that he sat on the Interview/Selection Committee for the Assistant Director position as the board's representative throughout the hiring process along with two staff and one community member. Holly stated that she did not feel the board was involved enough in that process. Allen disagreed.

At 5:22 Allen Bone asked for public comment.

All those present were unanimous in their support of Abbi Dooley being promoted to the Director position. Kendra Mullison pointed out the fiscal responsibility of the board and that the library is in a hard year in which they had not budgeted for another hiring process. She is concerned that Abbi may feel pushed out as the intention was never to keep an Assistant Director on staff after a new Director was hired. Mary O'Brien stated that Abbi has not only met but has exceeded all of her job requirements and responsibilities by going the extra mile. Heather Miles concurs with both Kendra and Mary and added that Abbi sees the vision of the library.

Holly Wurl said she was unaware we would need to do a "multi-million dollar" search but the position should be open for 1-2 months. She has very strong feelings that we need to advertise. Maggie Newman restated that she wants an ad out for two weeks, do interviews, get going and added that serving on an elected board is a risk for all of us.

Brooke Wegner doesn't understand why the board is investing so much time into this discussion. It is her understanding that the job of Assistant Director was created specifically with the plan for succession upon Marilyn Trosper's retirement. She also stated that the Board's minutes should suffice as advertising the position as that was opened to the public more than a year and a half earlier. She added that the job description was written with in-depth language to include cross training and therefore all the work of hiring the new Director was done prior to these last meetings.

Marilyn Trosper referred Allen to her memo to him (*memo forwarded to the entire Board on 10-16-17*) that outlined succession planning was put into action in 2014.

Allen Bone asked Bruce Harrop to share his thoughts. Bruce replied that he is satisfied with what he has heard in feedback tonight and he believes the Board had done the succession process properly. He is reassured to know that this has been a common practice in other libraries across the state.

Holly Wurl said she feels misled as a board member. Marilyn Trosper pointed out to her that she was not on the board at the time succession planning was started.

Allen Bone asked Marilyn for her opinion. Marilyn replied that she has repeatedly stated to the board at different times that she has done everything in her power to ensure a smooth transition for the leadership of the library. She is confident in Abbi's abilities and in her training for the Board to move forward.

Allen Bone asked Abbi Dooley her thoughts on the discussion. Abbi replied that the Board's question of whether or not promoting her from within is legal has been answered. She has worked very hard the past year and a half to fully learn Marilyn's position and the other positions, knows and understands the accounting and payroll systems and Library finances, and has done even more by receiving her State Library certification in just over a year. Abbi would like the opportunity to show the Board and the community what she can do and added that she would be happy to sit down with the board to talk.

Holly Wurl moved and Maggie Newman seconded to move that the Board advertise for the position of Library Director. Allen Bone conducted a roll call vote: FOR/Maggie Newman, Holly Wurl; AGAINST/Brooke Wegner, Bruce Harrop, Allen Bone. **Motioned failed.**

Allen Bone asked all of the staff present at the meeting if anyone was aware of any staff member who was planning to apply for the position of Director. All stated they were not.

Maggie Newman moved and Brooke Wegner seconded to Hire Abbi Dooley as library director effective January 6, 2018 with an interview November 9, 2017 @ 5:00 p.m. Allen Bone conducted a roll call vote: FOR/Bruce Harrop, Brooke Wegner, Maggie Newman, Allen Bone; AGAINST/Holly Wurl. **Motion passed.**

Holly Wurl asked for the record to reflect that her dissenting vote was not a personal comment on Abbi, but that she believes the proper process has not been completed by the Board.

**NEXT MEETING:** A special meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held at 5:00 p.m., Thursday, November 9, 2017, for the purpose of an interview with Abbi Dooley.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be at 5:00 p.m., Thursday, November 16, 2017.

The meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Marilyn Trosper  
Library Director

Special Board Meeting

10/26/17

Fellow North Lake County Public Library Board Members,

These comments are being provided, in writing, to provide a record of my concerns about the Library Director's position and the Boards' responsibility to advertise for that position.

I am concerned that the Board is even debating this issue, as the selection of a Library Director is clearly addressed as the Board's responsibility throughout library directives including:

- A9/13/15 Board of Trustees Training session that outlined the primary responsibilities of Trustees, which included the hiring and evaluation of a Director.
- Succession information from the Montana State Library specifically addresses a Boards' responsibility to hire a Director and a general format for doing so.
- The State Libraries Public Library Statistics Trustee Manual – Chapter 4 (pgs. 28 – 33) clearly outlines the required process for hiring a Director
- The MSL New Library Directors Handbook states the Board has a responsibility to “employ library director and confirm staff appointments”. Essential Standards of the Library Director I. Standard A states “the board hires the director according to local, state and federal regulations .....”.
- Bylaws of our North Lake County Public Library District Board of Trustees states under Article VIII Library Director Section 1. Appointment A. “The Board shall appoint, set compensation for, and provide annual written evaluations (Public Library Standard V. Library Director 1b.) of the Library Director, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Board”.

Although meaningful efforts to address some of our Library succession needs were acted on by establishing the position of an Assistant Director position, it was never my understanding that this was to be a substitution for the responsibility of the Board to pursue advertising for, and hiring a Director upon the resignation of the current Director.

It should be clearly understood that this process of does not preclude the Assistant Director, or any other individual, to apply for this position.

In representing the best interests of the Library, its patrons, the taxpayers, and the law, it seems clear that our Board has a clear responsibility to advertise for the position of a Library Director as soon as possible.

North Lake County Trustee

Holly Wurl

DATE: September 21, 2017  
TO: Allen Bone, Chairman  
NLCPLD Board of Trustees  
FROM: Marilyn Trosper, Library Director  
SUBJECT: Succession Planning Timeline



The following excerpts (*bolded dates*) are taken from NLCPLD board minutes to show the long-term plan for the Assistant Director position in terms of succession planning.

**04-24-14** – Spring Trustee Clinic: Marilyn Trosper announced a “Succession Planning” workshop that is being offered in Kalispell on May 31<sup>st</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. It will address what to do when key people leave the library staff. Carole Olson and Marilyn will attend.

**08-12-14** – Youth Services Librarian, Martel Memmer, has submitted her letter of resignation effective August 31, 2014. She informed Marilyn that she is pregnant and the baby is due in early March. Martel is also getting married in October and will be joining the family business at a higher rate of pay. She decided to resign now rather than wait until the baby comes so that library programming would have a smoother transition in terms of summer reading. The rate of pay to include with the position announcement needs to be determined. Carole Olson felt that the new candidate should work into succession planning. Marilyn responded that the duties of the youth services position are too big to add other things to it. Marilyn would rather see another employee hired as an assistant director so that job shadowing for all of the positions could occur. This would allow for grooming a successor. Everyone agreed that this was a prudent course to take and justified increasing the mill levy to the maximum. (*Full board was in attendance at this meeting.*) It was decided that the starting wage for the youth services position should remain at \$12.00/hour with a fifty cent increase after a successful probation period of six months.

**08-28-14** – Reasons for Planning (*Taken from Strategic Planning Proposal approved on 09-24-14*)

- Give guidance and direction for present and future staff
- Determine if the current building should be renovated or a new facility constructed
- Determine service priorities
- Build on the findings of the Heart & Soul grant to help strengthen the community
- Begin succession planning (*director, administrative assistant, IT consultant all retire within the next 4+ years*)

**08-28-14** – New Position: Clint Hoxie asked for clarification about when the new position for Assistant Library Director will be created. He feels that the library needs to have this employee in place in time for strategic planning. Marilyn will gather samples of job descriptions immediately, talk with the State Library about creating such a position, and create a custom job description for the board to peruse, either in person or by email. The trustees agreed that it is important to get this person on board before strategic planning takes place.



**09-24-14** – Position Description: Marilyn has gathered samples of job descriptions for an assistant library director position and would like to set up a committee to work on drafting a document for our library. Bruce Harrop volunteered to serve on the committee with Marilyn Trosper and Mary O'Brien.

**10-16-14** – Position Description: Marilyn has gathered several samples of position descriptions for Assistant Library Director. A committee has been set up to work on drafting a document for our library (Bruce Harrop, Marilyn Trosper, and Mary O'Brien). However, time has not allowed work on this project yet.

**11-20-14** – Position Description: Marilyn Trosper and Mary O'Brien worked on a draft copy of the position description for Assistant Library Director. Marilyn then sent it to Sarah McHugh and Tracy Cook for comment. Their feedback was good with a few minor additions. Maggie Newman feels it should be spelled out that the new employee will receive cross-training for each position in the library, since this is so important for succession. Marilyn will add this to the position description and, pending tonight's approval of the document, will advertise the position. The scope of advertising was discussed; the position will be publicized in the Pacific Northwest and Mountain Plains areas, and Marilyn will explore the national arena. After more discussion, Bruce Harrop moved and Allen Bone seconded to *accept the draft for Assistant Director, with a(n) addition to add more information on cross training and more shadowing of Director.*

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

**02-19-15** - Assistant Library Director: The new position for assistant library director was posted on February 4, 2015. It will be widely advertised, with March 20<sup>th</sup> as the closing date. A computer desk for the new employee has been set up and the necessary electrical outlet has been installed.

**03-19-15** – Library Positions: The two open positions (Assistant Director and the evening position) close on March 20.

**04-16-15** – Library Positions: The two open positions (Assistant Library Director and the part-time evening/on-call position) closed March 20, 2015. There were five applicants for each. The application period for Assistant Director was extended until April 24<sup>th</sup> in order to obtain a larger pool of applicants. ....

- Note: In May 2015, staff issues resulted in the postponement of the assistant director search. A strong viable candidate also took another position before being interviewed.
- Note: On January 15, 2016, Carole Olson worked with Marilyn to draft wording for the position announcement. In part, the widely distributed announcement read, ...."Our successful candidate will be motivated, capable, energetic and committed. Potential for advancement is conceivable." (See attached printed email.)

**01-21-16** – Assistant Director Position: The new position for assistant director has been advertised nationally, using venues such as the library listserv, the Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA), the Mountain Plains Library Association (MPLA), the American Library Association (ALA), and local newspapers.

**02-18-16** – Assistant Director: The new Assistant Director position closed February 12, 2016. Marilyn has been perusing applications; interviews will be scheduled soon. There have been 18

inquiries and 6 applications have been received (3 were incomplete). Holly Wurl suggested that a committee be used to interview the candidates. Clint Hoxie agreed. Marilyn will follow up on selection of committee members.

**03-17-16 – Assistant Director Position:** Marilyn announced that interviews for the Assistant Director position were conducted on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Three candidates were interviewed by a committee comprised of trustee Allen Bone, Polson business owner Jackie Cripe, library staff member Jerry Walker, and library director Marilyn Trosper. Selection committee members agreed unanimously in the decision. The position was offered to Abigail (“Abbi”) Dooley at \$19.50/hour with a \$.50/hour increase after her probation. Abbi holds a B.A. in Business Management with an emphasis in accounting/auditing. A background check is underway. Abbi will start her employment March 21, 2016.

**In preparation for advancement, Abbi has accomplished the following:**

- Learned and is using software for accounting, budget, payroll and PayPal
  - Processed W2s, 1099s, monthly payroll and claims, FY2018 Budget, FY2016 Audit, and upcoming FY2017 AFR
- Attended meetings and trainings to be introduced and learn:
  - ABC Employer trainings, Polson Business Association, MLA, MSC, PNLA, Tamarack Federation, 2017 Summer Leadership Institute, etc.
- Chaired a subcommittee for the MSC Partners group and participated in a fact finding subcommittee for the Tamarack Federation
- Attended varied workshops and online trainings with increased emphasis on:
  - WebDewey Classification, cataloging, “Super Cataloger”, one-on-one sessions for original cataloging and a two-day internal session (*Please Note: Cataloging is a long-term learning process that takes a unique skill set to master*)
- Presented program for 2016 Money Smart Week and spearheaded the successful 2017 Eclipse Block Party
- Researched and drafted multiple documents, policies and marketing materials
- Learned and implemented the purchasing of supplies and ordering for the collection
- Assumed leadership role in recruiting and hiring staff replacements
- Cross-trained in all library positions
- Obtained State Library Certification in July 2017
- Abbi has been appointed to succeed me on the prestigious MSC Content Management Committee

**Final Thoughts:**

The sole purpose of succession planning was to train someone for promotion upon the director’s retirement so that continuity and a smooth transition would take place. NLCPLD has received many positive comments from the Montana library community at large for the forethought and diligence put into our succession plan.

From her first working day at the library, Abbi has stepped into the role given her and has learned and applied a vast amount of adeptness and knowledge. She is ready and willing to be promoted upon my retirement.