

# **CARSON CITY LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

## **Minutes of the May 23, 2019 Special Meeting**

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A special meeting of the Carson City Library Board of Trustees was scheduled for 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 23, 2019 in the Community Center Sierra Room, 851 East William Street, Carson City Nevada.

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Jeremey Hays  
Vice Chair Amanda Long  
Trustee Nicholas Cranston  
Trustee Phyllis Patton  
Trustee Dianne Solinger

**STAFF:** Diane Baker, Interim Library Director  
Todd Reese, Deputy District Attorney  
Tamar Warren, Deputy Clerk

**NOTE:** A recording of these proceedings, the Library Board's agenda materials, and any written comments or documentation provided to the Clerk during the meeting are part of the public record. These materials are available for review, in the Recording Secretaries Division of the Carson City Clerk's Office, during regular business hours. For minutes and audio recordings of this Board's meetings, please visit [www.carson.org/minutes](http://www.carson.org/minutes).

### **I. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL**

(11:00:55) – Chairperson Hays called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Roll was called and a quorum was present.

### **II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

(11:01:25) – Chairperson Hays entertained public comments; however, none were forthcoming.

### **III. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION – Library Board of Trustees Business**

#### **III.a FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE SELECTION OF A NEW LIBRARY DIRECTOR.**

*Staff Summary: At the April 25, 2019 meeting of the Library Board of Trustees, the Board reviewed applications and identified five candidates, and several alternates, to interview for the Library Director position. The Board will conduct interviews and may make a final selection, narrow the pool of applicants, or consideration the applications at a later meeting. The following candidates have been selected to interview for the position: Cynthia O; David Seckman; and Joseph Schweiss.*

(11:01:32) – Chairperson Hays introduced the item. He also noted that all applicants will be asked the same questions by the trustees [one candidate at a time would be present]. The candidates were asked the following questions:

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(12:04:12) – Joe (Joseph) Schweiss introduced himself.

(12:54:25) – David Seckman introduced himself.

**“TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AS IT RELATES TO THIS POSITION AND WHY YOU ARE INTERESTED IN CARSON CITY’S”.**

(11:03:30) – Ms. O explained that her experience as the current Director of the Nevada Library Cooperative prior to which she had served as director of a county library for two years and director of a city library for four years. She wished to work with Staff to empower and reach their fullest potential. Ms. O stated that she had been working with the Carson City Library which “does incredible things” such as being a National Medal finalist.

(12:05:17) – Mr. Schweiss cited his experience as a library director and called it enjoyable. He noted that leading, meeting people, and problem solving had taught him a lot. He believed that Carson City provides a healthier lifestyle and cited family ties to the City. Mr. Schweiss also was impressed by the community’s use of the library and for caring about it.

(12:55:07) – Mr. Seckman stated that he had worked in urban, rural, and suburban libraries and had 10 years of experience as a library manager. He also believed in taking leadership roles in the community such as being a member of the local Kiwanis Club and viewed the library as ‘the heart of the community’. Mr. Seckman observed a strong connected community effort in Carson City, with many activities. He praised the innovative library efforts such as Maker Space and the Digitorium. In response to a question by Trustee Cranston, Mr. Seckman noted that he had been to Lake Tahoe and Reno; however, this was his first trip to Carson City.

**“LEAD US THROUGH YOUR DECISION MAKING PROCESS ON A DIFFICULT PROBLEM THAT YOU HAVE WORKED ON.”**

(11:05:41) – Ms. O explained that prior to becoming a director she had “an aversion to making decisions especially on behalf of other people and other entities”. She also noted that her decisions are based on “what is best for the library and what’s best for the community).

(12:07:47) – Mr. Schweiss stated that he would review the policies and the laws first and ensure that the entire story is revealed. He believed in making fair decisions and applying the same decision making process to all situations. Mr. Schweiss cited his engineering degree and noted that the processes he learned were applicable towards everyday situations.

(12:58:25) – Mr. Seckman gave the example of a remodel during which the movie tower machines would be eliminated with thousands of DVDs left behind. He noted that working with the library staff helped work on a solution not only for the DVDs but by distributing the work evenly among employees for other tasks as well.

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**“TELL US ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU DEVELOPED A VIABLE STRATEGY BUT ENCOUNTERED A ROADBLOCK AND HAD TO ADJUST YOUR PLAN.”**

(11:07:41) – Ms. O stated that her plans and strategies have always taken into consideration what’s best for the library and the community and acknowledged that “any assumptions I’m operating under are not the same assumptions the other the people involved will be operating under”, adding that she would address them in an open and direct manner.

(12:10:54) – Mr. Schweiss described the process of developing a Strategic Plan for his current position and explained the “change management” they had undergone, with internal and external roadblocks. He believed that “telling your story sometimes gets that roadblock moved”.

(1:04:05) – Mr. Seckman explained that as a leader of the business team, he was in charge of creating a business plan to promote to businesses. However, his business plan encompassed all library services and he was redirected to focus on what the businesses would be interested in.

**“DESCRIBE YOUR STRATEGY FOR INFORMING CUSTOMERS, BOSSES, PEERS, AND PEOPLE WHO REPORT DIRECTLY TO YOU.”**

(11:10:43) – Ms. O described herself as “a huge fan of regular and consistent staff meetings with the entire staff and then also one-on-one meeting with each member individually”. She believed in an open door policy and in keeping local municipalities in the loop and understood the value of “having stakeholders understand the value and the intention of what we’re trying to do”. Ms. O liked the idea of having coffee and doughnuts with the library director and having community members ask questions. She also believed that social media and newspaper articles were important.

(12:13:40) – Mr. Schweiss believed in different methods of communication to different audiences. He explained how he communicated with their staff, the public, and the board and the feedback process. He also believed that finding better technology and reporting was important.

(1:07:55) – Mr. Seckman noted that he sent a weekly email to staff to communicate what is going on and inform them of his schedule. Additionally, he spoke of a “stand up” meeting every morning, the outcome of which is communicated to those that are not present. Mr. Seckman noted that in addition to staff meetings, he met one-on-one with his direct reports every month and believed in an open door policy. A monthly calendar was the communication method for them to communicate with customers.

**“TELL US ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU FELT PULLED IN AN OPPOSITE OR A DIFFERENT DIRECTION ON A VALUE OR ETHICS ISSUE.”**

(11:22:58) – Ms. O believed that as a director she felt she would be “pulled to do something other than what’s best for the Library” and believed it would be “difficult for me to reconcile something like that”. She was certain she would have the effort to “make the rounds” with people who might have been affected by that decision.

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(12:26:40) – Mr. Schweiss stated that in his first position, an employee who had a discipline issue had been informed of the entire discussion by a board member. He had addressed the issue with the board and the employee, and explained the violation of state law to both. Mr. Schweiss felt that he “stuck to my values”.

(1:23:50) – Mr. Seckman gave the example of complaints received when the library allows homeless individuals. He noted that the only time people were not allowed to remain there was due to prohibitive behavior.

#### **“HAVE YOU EVER HAD TO BE A CHAMPION FOR PEOPLE NOT LIKE YOU?”**

(11:25:35) – Ms. O was certain she had because she believed it was important to acknowledge that the way she approached things would be different than everyone else. She believed that acknowledging individuality opens up communications and dialogue. She also was in favor of “honoring differences”.

(12:30:12) – Mr. Schweiss believed that a library’s job was to be available for everyone and that he did not view anyone as different. He also understood that not all events will suit every background; however, he thought that it was the library’s job to work with, support, and be available to everyone.

(1:25:38) – Mr. Seckman believed that he championed the cause of all library patrons, similar to the example that he cited earlier regarding the homeless population at the library. He also spoke of food and clothing drives at the library.

#### **“WHAT IS YOUR VISION OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY’S PURPOSE AND ROLE IN SOCIETY?”**

(11:27:45) – Ms. O responded by stating it was “empowering people” which would lead to more civic engagements and increased workforce development. She called libraries critical foundational pieces of a strong vibrant economy and community.

(12:32:18) – Mr. Schweiss believed “it’s nice for the library to be a third space”, adding that providing a comfortable space where people can find entertainment, such as a good book on a shelf, and get lost as a form of stress relief, and providing education were beneficial. He stressed the importance of socialization for children and parents at the library were as important as education. He noted that the library should not be the best kept secret.

(1:29:25) – Mr. Seckman believed that there were many kinds of literacy such as digital literacy and saw the library’s role as helping everyone.

#### **“COMPARE AND CONTRAST EXAMPLES OF TIMES YOU’VE BEEN EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE IN POLITICAL SITUATIONS.”**

(11:13:27) – Ms. O “used to feel that libraries are a-political”; however, she now understands that “politics are at play in our municipalities and in our communities”. She also cited “how deeply engrained” ideas can be, and how she was able to find creative ways to advocate projects on the library’s behalf. Ms. O also gave an example of how she had not navigated a project well noting that she had chosen to have concrete repair work done at the library by a contractor, other than the one who had been doing the work, in order to be “a very diligent steward of taxpayer

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dollars”, without taking into consideration “the personal and political connections of the one person to other key members in the community”. Ms. O called the occurrence “a very valuable learning experience”.

(11:17:50) – In a follow up question, Vice Chair Long wished to understand whether navigating political situations was natural for Ms. O “or is this something that you have to dig for?”. Ms. O noted that it had not been natural; however, she had made a lot of progress in leveraging a situation instead of fighting it.

(12:15:46) – Mr. Schweiss explained that though communications with the Board and the community, they have utilized Library Legislative Day in Kentucky to effectively “kill” the bills that reduce the funding and other responsibilities of the Board. He also gave the example of being unsuccessful in having his suggested board candidates accepted by the county board and the compromise reached between the library and the county. In a follow up question, Trustee Cranston wished to understand whether navigating political situations was natural for Mr. Schweiss “or is this something that you have to dig for?”. Mr. Schweiss thought he was an introvert; however, it seemed natural to him to navigate the political situations by finding a relatable topic to break the ice.

(1:12:16) – Mr. Seckman cited an example of library renovations and his ability to receive a grant as being effective. He also explained that he had been approached by a city official regarding the 24-hour WiFi access which was believed to attract the wrong crowd. As a result, they had limited wireless access to 9 p.m. and notified the public.

#### **“HOW DO YOU GET RESULTS, BUILD TEAM SPIRIT AND NOT BURN OUT PEOPLE AT THE SAME TIME?”**

(11:19:09) – Ms. O believed expectations should be clear and articulated “right up front”. She also stated that she was a big fan of the “why” and using the best way to get results and believed in empowering her team and in team spirit.

(12:22:01) – Mr. Schweiss believed that a well-defined plan brings better results. He also credited his staff for being team players and working well together. As for burnout, Mr. Schweiss explained that he had invited a motivational speaker from whom he had learned many things including celebrating small accomplishments. He also believed that organizational growth and making a job more interesting have been helpful to get motivated and to achieve more.

(1:19:20) – Mr. Seckman noted that he brought fun to the workplace and make people feel that they are part of the team. He believed that burnout comes from not having time to celebrate successes, so he encouraged that.

#### **“DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR US OR DO YOU WANT TO BRING UP ANYTHING THAT DID NOT COME UP IN THE INTERVIEW?”**

(11:29:49) – Ms. O wished to hear why the trustees joined the Board and what they perceived their roles to be. Trustee Solinger noted that she had volunteered for her children’s schools and had been recruited to join by the Carson City Middle School librarian. Vice Chair Long explained that she had always looked for opportunities to be involved in the community and believed that as a trustee she was in favor of empowering people. Chairperson

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Hays stated that he had been involved in helping his high school library in Las Vegas and when he moved to Carson City he friended a librarian who since had moved on; therefore, he wished to advocate what the Library wants to do and facilitate what would benefit the community. Trustee Patton called herself “an avid book lover” and wished to be an advocate for the libraries and educate the community on the benefits the library which she believed is the only place in town that is open to the community at no cost. Trustee Cranston noted he had “a small background in education” and wanted to help and fulfil his civic duty. Ms. O and Trustee Cranston shared their United States Air Force backgrounds as well.

(11:36:08) – Ms. O inquired about the Strategic Planning and the top priorities. Ms. Baker explained that the final draft of the report will be presented to the Board at its next regular meeting. Trustee Long believed that the Strategic Plan will show the big picture and how to get there. Trustee Patton was pleased with the consultant’s work and the input from the community.

(11:38:40) – Ms. O also wished to understand the Board’s impressions of the Adams Hub and their vision and plans. Vice Chair Long believed that the Adams Hub was a missing piece for local businesses which will help them with connections and networking. She also hoped for “bigger collaborations”. Chairperson Hays explained that as an economist “at the State level” he hoped to bring and develop businesses within the community.

(11:40:36) – Ms. O inquired about “the relationship between the Library and the municipality” which Trustee Patton called “a good relationship”; however, she felt that community education was still needed. Trustee Solinger referenced the latest community survey, noting that the results were available to the public” and commented that the responses and suggestions, both positive and negative, had been helpful.

(11:42:10) – Ms. O asked about the Library staff’s willingness to embrace change. Vice Chair Long commented on how well they had adapted to the recent changes, calling it seamless. Trustee Solinger echoed similar sentiments and Chairperson Hays cited the example of the Library remodel which went well because of the open communications. He also believed that the Board of Supervisors had embraced many changes such as the Adams Hub.

(11:45:05) – In response to Ms. O’s question regarding the Board’s expectations of the Library Director for the first six months, Trustee Solinger suggested that the least disruptive thing would be maintaining the status quo for a while, taking time to assess the current situation, and slowly transition. Vice Chair Long and Trustee Patton were in agreement. Ms. O believed that staff’s professional development, personal empowerment, and team building were critical and received confirmation from the Board that they were in favor of surveys and assessments. Chairperson Hays also noted that the Board has approved many staff development days as part of the Library’s closure dates. Ms. O inquired about the Board’s willingness to consider having an Assistant Director. Ms. Baker explained that as a result of a City-wide study around four years ago, it was recommended a “rearrangement of management” which resulted in four managers reporting to the Library Director. Chairperson Hays was in favor of having the new Director propose new ideas. Ms. O also inquired about the “organizational culture” and Trustee Solinger noted that as a Library volunteer she had not heard any “grumbling”. Chairperson Hays explained that the Board may not have the best answers; however, when he has been asked to help with a situation, it’s never been in a “punishing” capacity.

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(11:54:04) – Chairperson Hays recessed the meeting from 11:54 a.m. until 12:03 p.m.

(12:35:37) – Mr. Schweiss inquired the biggest challenges from the community or at the state level. Trustee Solinger cited financial issues and the perception that libraries only provided books. Vice Chair Long believed that getting the word out was a challenge. Chairperson Hays noted that the library can assist with workforce development. Trustee Patton stated that there is “never enough funding”. In response to a question from Mr. Schweiss, Vice Chair Long explained that the new Strategic plan discussion would take place at the next Board meeting. Trustee Solinger noted that the previous Library Director had done an excellent job of interfacing with the Board of Supervisors and the community to educate that “the Library was not just for books anymore”. Chairperson Hays thanked Mr. Schweiss for taking the time to interview.

(12:39:51) – Chairperson Hays recessed the meeting for 10 minutes at 12:39 p.m. “to get our notes together”. The meeting reconvened at 12:54 p.m.

(1:33:09) – Mr. Seckman inquired about the qualities the Board was looking for in the next director. Chairperson Hays wished to see someone bring together the staff and serve the community in the best way possible. Mr. Seckman emphasized his public speaking abilities and Vice Chair Long believed that was important. He also inquired what the Board members liked about Carson City. Trustee Solinger noted wildlife. Vice Chair Long liked the outdoors and the small town feeling, and Chairperson Hays and Trustee Patton agreed. Trustee Cranston also stated that he loved living here, despite leaving for other opportunities at times.

(1:42:21) – Chairperson Hays recessed the meeting for 10 minutes. He also explained that the decision will be made at the next Board meeting.

#### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

(1:49:07) – Chairperson Hays entertained public comments: however, none were forthcoming.

#### **V. FOR POSSIBLE ACTION – ADJOURNMENT**

**(1:49:20) – Vice Chair Long moved to adjourn. Chairperson Hays adjourned the meeting at 1:49 p.m.**

The Minutes of the May 23, 2019 Carson City Library Board of Trustees special meeting are so approved this 27<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2019.

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JEREMEY HAYS, Chair