

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the  
MidPointe Library System Board of Trustees  
Middletown Library, Community Room  
Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 1:00 p.m.**

**I Call to Order by President**

Mrs. Stewart, President, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**II Opening Exercise**

**III Roll Call**

The roll was called, and the following members were present:

Mrs. Deborah Houser, Mr. Michael Huff, Mr. John James, Mr. Jay Marlow and Mrs. Eleanor Stewart.

Those absent were: Mr. Tim Essex

Also present were: Mr. Travis Bautz, Executive Director; Ms. Rebeka Brate, Monroe Branch Manager; Mr. Chris Corbitt, Development Director; Mrs. Emily Foote, Fiscal Officer; Ms. Kara Harbeson, LOW Manager; Ms. Cari Hillman, Community Engagement Director; Mr. Steve Mayhugh, Facilities Director; Mrs. Brielle Maynor, Public Services Director; Mr. Adam Snoddy, Guest; Ms. Elizabeth Slamka, City of Middletown Mayor; and Ms. Kathy Stengel, Human Resources Director.

**IV Adoption of Agenda**

Mr. James motioned, seconded by Mr. Huff, to approve the agenda as presented.

Mr. Andrew Dunn arrived at 1:01 p.m.

"Aye" Dunn, Houser, Huff, James, Marlow, Stewart

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 25-33

**V Public Comment**

Mr. Snoddy, Butler Tech teacher, spoke to the board about Butler Tech having a new aviation campus at the Middletown Airport and he will be the principal of that campus. When the campus opens he would like to develop a partnership with the library, due to the library having community connections, is well established, and he would like to find ways to have a connection between the library and the aviation campus to promote awareness of the new program; possible opportunities for the students; that the permanent building will open early 2026 with an anticipate date of early February 2026; that with November 2025 being aviation heritage month, to see if a partnership can be developed so people are aware of the program; and February is Career Technical Awareness Month and he would like to work with the library to make the community aware. He added that he is familiar with MidPointe as he was a part time weekend shelver at the West Chester branch before 2020, so he is familiar with

MidPointe and that Butler Tech has never had a stand-alone presence in Middletown and this program will be unique since it is totally aviation based. Mr. Snoddy was excused at 1:07 p.m.

Ms. Slamka spoke to the board about attending more Middletown board meetings; that she is a big fan of the Library and was an employee at the Middletown branch; that she loves to talk about the Library and share the services that the Library provides with the community; is excited about a potential partnership with Butler Tech and the Library; and to contact her with any needs so she can help or meet at any time.

## **VI Approval of Minutes**

Mrs. Stewart motioned, seconded by Mr. Huff, to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting held on April 16, 2025, as presented.

"Aye" Dunn, Huff, James, Stewart

"Nay" None

"Abstain" Houser, Marlow

Motion Approved 25-34

## **VII Fiscal Officer's Report**

Financial Report, Investments, and Donations

Mrs. Foote reviewed the April 2025 financial report and commented that the report has been reformatted because the account reclassification project has been completed, so the fund codes are longer, and it is separated by departments. The board discussed the Star Ohio In-Transit line item in the Composition Fund Balances page, which was a cash transfer, and the funds were in float, similar to the Payroll In-Transit line item. Mr. Dunn motioned, seconded by Mr. Marlow, to approve the April 2025 financial report as presented.

"Aye" Dunn, Houser, Huff, James, Marlow, Stewart

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 25-35

(Report on file in Fiscal Officer's office)

2026 Budget Request:

Mrs. Foote reported that she was able to include the levy revenue in the budget figures since that passed last month. She reviewed the document which included anticipated revenue and expenditures. The board discussed the budgetary schedule that has an estimated revenue of \$12.4 million, and estimated expenditures of \$12 million; that after the board passes a motion to accept the budget it is then presented to Middletown City Council, and then it goes to Butler County; and that this is a formal legislative process that is done every year. Mr. Huff motioned, seconded by Mr. Dunn, to approve the 2026 Budget that will be presented to the City of Middletown to show operational need and will then be passed through to the Butler County Auditor's office for the creation of the Certificate of Estimated Resources.

"Aye" Dunn, Houser, Huff, James, Marlow, Stewart

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 25-36

#### Investment Manager RFP:

Mrs. Foote reported that, as she mentioned at previous meetings, and the board indicated their approval for her to get quotes for investment services to do investments on behalf of the library and since it would be for a multi-year period, she put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) that included government experience, the fee schedule, and then would make a determination as to what would be best for the library. That there has been a lot of interest from investment companies and when the RFP closing date has passed that a Budget and Audit Subcommittee should meet to review the proposals and make a recommendation to the full board. She feels that this fall would be a good time to implement this as a lot of the old investments fall off to finish the Liberty project.

### **VIII Director's Report**

Mr. Bautz reviewed the April statistics. Overall, circulation overall was up by 1% compared to the same time last year; Liberty closed at the end of March, so their circulation was from the hold lockers; LOW was up by 202%; Middletown was down by 7%; Monroe was down by 11%; Trenton was down by 5%; and West Chester was down by 4%. Print was down by 5%; AV was down by 3%; digital items were up by 15%; patron visits were up by 13% even with Liberty being closed which again indicates our services are being used even though circulation is down overall; there were 238 programs offered, with 7,485 in attendance; PC usage was up by 5%; Wi-Fi usage was up by 45%; meeting room usage was up by 27% with 1,197 rooms booked; there were 109 passports processed for the month; there were 633 new patron registrations for the month, and the call center had 1,684 calls, totaling 4,226 minutes with the average call duration lasting 2.50 minutes.

#### State Budget Update:

Mr. Bautz reported that the state every two years has biennial budget which starts with the Governor, goes to the House and they have their version, then goes to the Senate for a final version due by July 1st. There have been some senate hearings; the house version has libraries receiving \$100 million less than what the governor recommended; there is discussion that funding may change with either a stand-alone fund or a line item in the budget for libraries; includes a component about certain types of books; that terms for library trustees be for 4 years; and some other pieces. Nothing is concrete but the Senate may be finishing up soon.

#### Public Service Hours:

Looking ahead, with the levy settled, and that on July 1<sup>st</sup> we should know what the state funding will be, we will be pulling statistics to review the Library operational hours since they have not been reviewed since Covid, and see what current demands are by the day of the week and what hours during the day.

Public Policy Handbook:

Mr. Bautz stated that with the new Liberty hours and a few new updates, the public policy needs to be changed. The changes include; Liberty will have the same hours of operation as Monroe and Trenton as of June 1st; that the meeting rooms may not be reserved by individuals under the age of 18; and that the threshold of fees owed before a patron can borrow or renew materials will be lowered to \$5.00 including homebound deliveries. The board discussed the frequency of patrons not being able to check out materials due to fees owed; collection agency fees; and replacements for lost items. Mr. James motioned, seconded by Mr. Huff, to accept the changes to the public policy as presented:

"Aye" Dunn, Houser, Huff, James, Marlow, Stewart

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 25-37

**IX Development Director**

Mr. Corbitt commented on his development efforts during the past year. He reviewed the board handout of the Middletown Community Foundation fund statement for the MidPointe Dolly Parton Imagination Library which has a 2025 year to date balance of \$141,401.57 and used for the monthly invoices which fund the purchase of books for the children enrolled in the program. Since he started in June 2024, he has worked with Mr. Bautz to implement a giving program; assembled a foundation advisory board; done outreach to solicit funding; has been applying for and has received money from grant applications; and has developed relationships with corporations and businesses in the community. He also reviewed The Foundation of the MidPointe Library System Unrestricted Fund handout which has a 2025 year to date balance of \$12,141.31 and is comprised of individual and corporate donations, and the report includes the donations and expenses. The board discussed the phased in funding of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and naming rights restrictions which are included in the Naming Rights Policy.

**X Facilities Director**

Mr. Mayhugh distributed and reviewed the monthly contingency report which shows no changes from last month although a credit and an expense are still anticipated; the grand opening is a week away; the parking lot has been completed except for a few stripes in the front of the building; the parking bumpers are being added; a crosswalk across Yankee Road to the YMCA is planned by the county; some interior patching is needed; artwork is being hung on the walls; window washing is scheduled for next week; the final punch list is being worked on; the mall location has been mostly cleared out; and some items from the mall location were sold on GovDeals.

## **XI Public Services Report**

Mrs. Maynor reported that the case manager from Sunrise Treatment Center assisted 58 patrons during April, and the New Collections and Services Committee has convened for the year. At Liberty, staff are splitting their time helping out at other branch locations and are preparing the building for opening; Ms. Harbeson reported that at LOW, they have partnered with the Community Engagement department and will be having some back-to-school events when school resumes in the fall. She distributed a bookmark that details the public stops that the bookmobile will be at this summer and a handout that detailed the bookmobile services throughout the community, the lobby stops, delivery services, and the Books by Mail program. At Middletown, 121 students and caregivers visited during the Middletown City Schools' Personalized Learning Day; and AARP finished their Tax Aide programming helping 560 patrons and have already booked for 2026. At Monroe, the branch manager will be joining the Lions Club, and the flagpole, which was damaged during a recent storm, will be replaced. At Trenton, the branch manager is serving on the planning committee for an Ohio Library Council conference, and some community room carpet tiles are being repaired. At West Chester, the staff trainer is conducting the annual staff emergency procedures training, and the Cincinnati Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution has planted a Liberty Tree celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the revolution.

## **XII Community Engagement Report**

Ms. Hillman reported that a thank you to the voters was emailed to our patrons; a new record of 27,660 minutes of virtual programming was watched in April, which is a 180% increase from last month; the most popular virtual storytime now has 13,361 views; a video featuring Mr. Mayhugh has been very popular with over 18,000 social media views; and we had over 26,000 social media engagements in April which is a 170% increase from last April. Ms. Hillman invited all board members to the Liberty branch ribbon cutting and grand opening on June 1<sup>st</sup> and distributed The Summer 2025 Program Guide which includes details about the summer reading program, she mentioned that the guide is now available in print format and online and 10,000 copies are expected to be distributed. The outreach team visited 1,936 students in April; the Library was featured in a number of newspaper articles up to and after the levy on May 6th; May's eNewsletter was opened by 27,374 patrons with the most popular content being the new Liberty location; and our most popular program, the Summer Reading Program kicks off on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Upcoming events include summer lunch program at Middletown and Monroe for children aged birth to 18; various carnivals and fairs, the Middle Olympics, health fairs, and a memorial day parade.

## **XIII Human Resources Report:**

Staffing and HR Updates:

Mr. Marlow motioned, seconded by Mrs. Houser, to approve the following human resources report as presented by Ms. Stengel:

Approve the employment of Kymberlie Benford, effective 4/28/2025, non-exempt; part-time; West Chester; library associate; public services; at pay level one;  
Approve the employment of Danielle Tomich, effective 5/12/2025; non-exempt; full-time; West Chester; graphic designer; community engagement; at pay level four;  
Approve the hours change of Carolyn O'Meara; effective 5/11/2025 non-exempt; from part-time to full-time; Middletown; library associate; public services; at pay level one; and  
Accept the resignation of Sea Watson; effective 4/24/2025; non-exempt; full-time; Middletown; library associate; public services.

"Aye" Dunn, Houser, Huff, James, Marlow, Stewart

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 25-38

Ms. Stengel reported that turnover for April was .9259% and year to date is 4.8475%; that we have 109 employees and are actively recruiting and interviewing for one open position.

#### Succession Planning:

Ms. Stengel stated that currently there are four employees in leadership positions that are estimated to be eligible to retire within 5 years and another two within 10 years and due to needing potential replacements, so we have developed a plan for filling these roles and transition the responsibilities and leadership for continuity. She identified the planning steps of identifying potential current employees, creating position profiles, identifying job competencies, and then developing and training potential replacements that could interview for these openings. The board discussed position overlap due to a transition phase and board HR subcommittee involvement.

#### Employee Handbook Updates:

Ms. Stengel reviewed the handout with the proposed changes to the employee handbook which added the sections: person in charge; library photocopiers; professional development and computer printers; remote work day; authorized clocking in and out; and professional development as well as changes to the sections: circulation and MidPointe records; lactation accommodation; workplace injury/illness reporting; employment of relatives; personal appearance; rest breaks; reimbursement for business expenses; weather/power outages; other policies; leaves of absence; hours of work and compensation; holidays; holiday leave bank; insurance and deferred compensation plans; paid sick days; discipline; attendance and call-in policies; retirement benefits-OPERS; and punctuation changes. The board discussed the policy differences with other public and private entities locally specific to PTO/calamity time and sick leave payouts at retirement. Ms. Stengel will bring additional information about these two differences to the next board meeting. Mrs. Houser motioned, seconded by Mr. Dunn, to approve the changes to the employee handbook, including the formatting changes as presenting, excluding the weather/power outages section, effective May 21, 2025.

"Aye" Dunn, Houser, Huff, James, Marlow, Stewart

"Nay" None

Motion Approved 25-39

**XIV Board Comments**

Mrs. Houser thanked the library for participating in Canal Days for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at the Middletown schools, where they had hands on experience, they visited the canal lock, and the participants dressed in era costumes.

**XV Adjournment**

Mrs. Stewart adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

25-40

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President

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Secretary