

FREEPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 17, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Freeport Public Library Board of Trustees was held in the Library Boardroom on Friday, October 17, 2025. Board President Mary Kaufman presided and called the meeting to order at 1:01pm.

Notice is hereby given that a majority of a quorum of the members of City Council of the City of Freeport may be present at the above-referenced meeting. No action on the part of the City Council will be taken.

Trustees Present:

Betty Butler, Al Evon, Mary Kaufman, Tasha Mazique, Julie Reynolds, Roger Schulz, Michelle Swalve

Trustees Absent: Alan Greene, Lucas Kramer

Also present, Executive Director Ashley Huffines and Ky Eckert acting as the Recording Secretary.

II. CHANGES/CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

(Reynolds/Mazique) Motion to accept the October 17th, 2025 Special Meeting Agenda.
7 in favor/___ opposed. Motion carries.

III. QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC/MEDIA

None.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Review of Consultant Proposals

Huffines reviewed Director Search proposals from Deiters & Todd and Bradbury Associates. The Board discussed the benefits of using a recruitment firm rather than handling the hiring process on their own. Deciding factors included network, range of services, experience, timeline, locality, and pricing. Both consulting firms are known to specifically work with libraries. Both firms offer a 12-month guarantee, which means they provide one time services to replace the candidate for any reason. Kaufman explained to the Board that the consulting firm service fees should be paid using the Clock Bequest through the Library Foundation.

Deiters & Todd's fees were listed at \$15,000, not including candidates' travel costs.

Bradbury Associates fees were listed at \$31,000, not including candidates' travel costs.

Evon asked about the interviewing timeline. Huffines recommended coordinating with the chosen consultants about meeting with the final two candidates back to back, if that's what the Board prefers.

Butler asked if the director is required to live in Freeport. Huffines replied that it is not a standard upheld by other City Department Heads, but that it is ultimately up to the Board.

Butler inquired about if the Board will continue to meet in the interim. Kaufman assured her Board meetings must be held even in the absence of a Director as the Board still oversees the Library's functions and will meet to discuss the hiring process.

Kaufman explained her reasoning for leaning towards Deiters & Todd. She welcomed the Board to share their thoughts. Schulz sought Huffines opinion on the decision, which Huffines chose not to share. The Board discussed the pros and cons of choosing a firm that would perform a nationwide search versus a more local approach. Huffines confirmed the timeline can be adjusted with Deiters & Todd. Jim Deiters also has worked as a Library Director for a municipality. Several Board members voiced their preference for Deiters & Todd, being more cost effective and local.

Review and Discussion of Succession Plan

Huffines explained the purpose of the procedural document and asked the Board to review it.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Kaufman asked the Trustees to think about being on the Hiring Committee, and discussed options for other individuals to reach out to, such as members of the Foundation, the Mayor, and key community members. Evon recommended the majority of the Board members be included. Huffines reminded the board that if this were the case, they would have to follow OMA for all meetings.

Butler had questions about informing the new hired director about personnel issues. Huffines talked about her experience as a library director and coached the Board on how that may be approached. She also said the Board can discuss things with the new director as matters arise.

(Evon/Reynolds) Motion to accept the Deiters & Todd's proposal for the Executive Director search.
7 in favor/_ opposed. Motion carries.

No changes were made to the Executive Director job description from 2017. Evon suggested a few additional expectations: (1) Interacts with, helps recruit, train and orient Trustees, and (2) with regard to strategic plan, monitors progress. The Board also discussed if the job description should include a preference for municipal library experience, specifically, which Kaufman rejected.

(Schulz/Evon) Motion to approve job description for Library Executive Director with the addition of *'Interacts with, helps recruit, train and orient Trustees,'* and *"with regard to strategic plan, monitors progress"* to the expectations.
7 in favor/_ opposed. Motion carries.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body.

(Reynolds/Evon) Motion to return to open session at 2:21pm.
7 in favor/_ opposed. Motion carries.

VII. ACTION OUTSIDE OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

(Evon/Schulz) Motion to appoint Amanda Meyers as Interim Director and Ky Eckert as Assistant to the Interim Director with an 8% increase each, effective Nov 15 to the Start Date of the Executive Director.
7 in favor/_ opposed. Motion carries.

VIII. DISCUSSION

Huffines answered Butler's questions about hiring logistics, and made note to clarify with Deiters & Todd that termination is included in their 12-month guarantee.

(Schulz/Butler) Motion to accept Ashley Huffines's letter of resignation, with her last day being Friday, November 14th, 2025.

7 in favor/___ opposed. Motion carries.

Huffines confirmed her last day is currently November 14th, but she is open to discussing flexibility if necessary. Kaufman spoke about Huffines growth and ability to facilitate growth in her tenure at FPL and the board gave her a round of applause.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

(Schulz/Reynolds) Motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:27pm.

___ in favor/___ opposed. Motion carries.

Submitted by Ky Eckert