

**SCOTT COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM MINUTES**  
**MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2023 6:00 P.M.**  
**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING WITH ELDRIDGE CITY COUNCIL**

Scott County Library Board President Kristal Koberg-Schaefer called the special meeting with the Eldridge city council to order on August 28, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the Eldridge branch.

Board of Trustees present: Kristal Koberg Schaefer, Chuck Brockmann, Linda Tuftee, Kevin Cahill, Shelli Engelbrecht, Dan True, Niki Wuestenberg, Angie Ehlers, and Director Tricia Kane. Eldridge City Council members in attendance: Brian Dockery, Adrian Blackwell, Bernie Peeters, Bruce Cheek, Dan Collins, City Administrator Nevada Lemke, and Mayor Frank King.

The purpose of the meeting was to begin talks/negotiations with the Eldridge city council on the Eldridge branch lease which expires in 2025.

Kristal Koberg Schaefer began by explaining how the library receives funds, based on a per capita value. The state of Iowa has a library law – all residents must have library access. She then read a letter written by Bill and Linda Tubbs to the city of Eldridge in support of the library system.

**The meeting was then opened up to council member comments:**

Brian Dockery – library is a valuable asset to the community, not quite sold on deeding it to the library. May propose a quarter of an acre on the corner lot – idea of city hall and maybe cost share the parking lot.

Mayor Frank King – believe there may have been a misunderstanding at the last city council meeting. Ideas of a new city hall were the last administration’s idea. Maybe an expansion of this existing building, maybe a shared parking lot – but never meant for the library to go out of this building. This meeting is to try and make both sides happy.

Bernie Peeters – We talk about this each year, take overview of city and anticipate 10 years down the road. Every year this is mentioned, and we move on. Would love to hear what people have to say.

Adrian Blackwell – thanked audience for attending. Goal is to keep the library here in the current location. Believe public library is a service for public to utilize.

Kristal Koberg-Schaefer then asked for a discussion about keeping the rent low or what are the intentions. Also mentioned that the YMCA pays \$1/year to the city of Eldridge.

Brian Dockery – need to renew the lease with a modest increase. There is benefit to the city. Consider deeding the building over to the library but not the entire property. Cost share with parking lot and move on with this together in the future.

Kevin Cahill (library board member) – The library is a tax-funded institution. If rent increases, take it from services (hours of operation, less books purchased, etc...). Asking the council to look into their hearts – this is a community resource in the heart of Eldridge. We don't have an option to raise prices, we would have to cut services, or raise taxes.

Sarah Tatum (audience member) – asked if she heard correctly that the Y only pays \$1/year.

Brian Dockery – Said comparing the YMCA to the library is like comparing apples to oranges. Back to taxes – comes out of the general revenue funds. We have more people in Eldridge, we pay more. I did say I would be willing to donate the building. I never once said I'm opposed to donating the building.

Kristal Koberg-Schaefer – It's not Eldridge's money, it is citizens paying into the tax bill. This is sent to the county and billed to city and paid to the library.

Bernie Peeters – I'm with you 100%. There is a long history with the library. Always been a supporter of library. Only thing is there are other things...do Eldridge citizens want to bear the increased burden than others in the county? As long as the citizens of Eldridge are aware of the extra burden, then I'm good with it. I want the library to stay here. Just realize we're giving more away. The 25-year lease we've had has been fine. If everyone is ok with it, I just want a consensus.

**Public Comment – limited to 2 min.**

Maggie Collagan – Representing the Friends of Eldridge Library – Supportive of library and would like council members to turn over the library or keep rent the same. Libraries are a hub in towns.

Scott Case – realtor – when families look for a community to move into, one of the top three questions is does the town have a library.

Joan Hennigan – treasurer of library foundation – I support leaving the library where it is. People donated \$1.4 million for this library. There was a great need for this building. City bought this building for a library. I propose the city give the property to the library and be done with it.

Eleanor Thuenen & Elena Jones (students) – Keep the library here. It is a fun place and we make new friends and learn here.

Terry Jerisic – maybe the city doesn't have the money to build now – may want to talk to whoever owns the acre to build on.

Brian Dockery – informal discussion about what was just mentioned. We need to deal with the library first to give people relief. Right now, the city does not have the money. Issue #1 – we need to address this with the library first.

Beth Campbell – without this library I could not have done my job. Remember this place is the hub – heartbeat of Eldridge. So much more than checking out books. The library is the right of every American citizen – free information to all citizens – access to information. Deed this building over to the library for our citizens.

Anna Jones (student) – grandmother would take her to library – was not doing good in school. Read every day and got so much better. This library helps you learn more and so good for this community.

Deb Jerisic – I am all for deeding this building to the library. I think most citizens would like that.

Morgan Vannorsdel (student) – I made it to state for National History Day with the help of library resources. When I was younger, if I could have, I would have lived here. Now on teen advisory group – been amazing to give back.

?? – As far as the cost...it is fair we pay more, we have it here. That is one of the reasons Eldridge is flourishing.

Steve Mohr – library is an institution in Eldridge. How would the thought of not renewing the lease cross one's mind? I want the library to be here. (Ended with a "BING!")

Nancy Herrin – Long Grove city council – Sent a letter of support that the library stays in this place. Brings the community together – hub for North Scott – would appreciate keeping rent the same or giving the building to the library.

Sara Tatum – maybe even lower the rent? Library should not have to deal with raising rent.

Josh Haycraft – there is a general need for the library. There are popular reading gardens outside – there is a general need for this library.

Cora Vannorsdel (student) – bikes to Eldridge from Long Grove and am grateful I grew up with this resource. Helped overcome dyslexia – now reading at and above peers. Because of the library, overcame learning disability.

Bernie Peeters – This is the first time we've gotten together with library board. I haven't proposed any ideas at all. Council's agenda is to start talking about things. Lease expires in two years – we need to begin talks, and that's what we're doing. Not to raise rent, is not real good fiscal management, but if citizens are good with it, then that's ok. I assume most citizens want to keep the library here.

Linda Tuftee – the idea of giving us the library has never come from the library board.

Bill Tubbs – any increase in the library, realize the harm it will do it throughout the county.

Amber Carlson – I live in Long Grove and spend a lot of money in Eldridge. I hope the library will stay here.

Alex Cahill – I support the library in Eldridge. I value the workers, who have helped so many across the county. Please consider asking why don't we get same benefits from the city as other businesses coming in? What more can we do to help you (the library)?

Dan Collins – library is near and dear to our community – we have to get together and discuss this. I can guarantee the library is staying. We plan on not letting you down.

Bruce Cheek – I'm for the library. I never said I wanted to close it. But I wasn't going to vote for a lease I hadn't seen. Three years ago, I told the mayor I don't want the library to leave. What it said in the newspaper was not true. I never said I wanted the library closed.

Brian Dockery – There has been no formal discussion. As far as I'm concerned, library is not leaving. I'm opposed to kicking the library out. I think there are some other options, and I think those of us around the table can come to an agreement.

Dan True – Drew attention to the facts on the bookmark which were given to all attendees.

Frank King – no one has ever said we want to kick the library out of the building. Not that it's not important, we've just had a lot of upper management situations right now – lots of other problems to deal with and since the library has two years left on the lease, we've been waiting on it.

Scott Case – haven't heard from all elected officials – election coming up – I'd like to know how each one feels on this situation.

Kristal Koberg-Schaefer – we realize our lease is up in two years – we would like this resolved in 6 months so we have time to meet and move forward.

Frank King – moving forward, good idea to have a couple meetings.

Kristal Koberg-Schaefer – ended the meeting telling those present that we are one member short on the library board and if approved, we would like to open that position up to an Eldridge resident.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Angie Ehlers