

johnkeister & associates LLC

EXECUTIVE SEARCH FOR LIBRARY DIRECTORS

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March 30, 2017

Waukesha Public Library
Human Resources Committee
321 Wisconsin Avenue
Waukesha, WI 53186

Dear Board of Trustees:

We love libraries. We love how they act as equal opportunity providers, offering services, materials, and inspiration to their customers without regard to an individual's personal, economic, or educational status. Libraries are the community centers of the 21st century. Your library is a fine example of what libraries can do and should be, adapting and growing to keep up with the needs and desires of the people you serve. With your library's dedication to public art, its creative approach to Children's Services, and its attractive and accessible physical spaces, the Waukesha Public Library clearly demonstrates an ability to uphold the traditional mission of libraries while also embracing the future.

Our firm has completed over 300 executive level searches, including approximately 60 director searches for libraries and library systems of all sizes throughout the United States. While we work nationwide, we intentionally limit the amount of work we do outside of the Midwest so that we can focus our efforts on this part of the country. The library communities in the Midwest are extraordinarily vibrant and engaged. Professional associations in Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio and nearby states are particularly strong and supportive of the needs and goals of libraries. Librarians, as well as library organizations, are well respected by the public and vital to the success of our communities. We are proud to live and work in a region of the country that is home to some of the best libraries in the world.

Library leadership is always important, and especially so when libraries must keep evolving — not just to keep up with technological change and user tastes, but to *anticipate* those events and plan proactively. We appreciate the opportunity to submit this proposal for executive search services to evaluate candidates for the position of Executive Library Director. We're very familiar with the library environment in Wisconsin, having completed several searches in your state in recent years. We are long-time members of the Wisconsin Library Association and, in late April, we will be presenting at the 2017 Wisconsin Association of Public Libraries Conference in Stevens Point. Libraries are the cornerstones of a well-functioning and engaged citizenry, and there is ample evidence of their importance throughout the state of Wisconsin.

One of our strengths as a search firm is that we customize our approach to fit the wishes of our customers. The attached document is a blueprint of how we approach a search; please feel free to call us with specific questions or changes.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,



John Keister

**Executive Search Proposal
for
Executive Library Director
Waukesha Public Library**

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present this proposal for the search and recruitment of the next Executive Library Director of the Waukesha Public Library.

Hiring a new director is one of the most important decisions a library board will make and we would be pleased to provide advice and assistance. In addition to evaluating and screening candidates, we can facilitate the interview process and help the Board of Trustees reach consensus on the final candidates.

EXPERIENCE

John Keister & Associates is a full-service, nationwide executive search firm founded by John and Beth Keister in 1987. One of the ways in which we're different from other search firms is that we engage in *two* areas of practice: library directors and private sector technology leaders. Our extensive and diverse experience enables us to identify and evaluate management and leadership traits in candidates, assets that are critical to the successful administration and guidance of today's libraries. We get to know our candidates so that we can effectively evaluate the "soft" characteristics that indicate which individuals will be an ideal fit for a certain organization or position. By asking the right questions and examining characteristics beyond what's on a resume, we are able to find the best match between an organization and the leader they seek.

We enjoy working with libraries because they are the heart and soul of their communities. Whether serving a small town, a densely populated region, or an academic or special interest institution, a library represents the interests, passions and goals of a special group of people — its users. Every library is unique. Should you decide to work with us, we'll help you hire a director who is right for *your* library and *your* community.

We are proactive in searching for and recruiting top candidates, rather than relying solely on passive approaches, such as job postings, to locate talented leaders. Our success is the result of networking and actively building long-term relationships with the best and brightest library leaders.

PROJECT TEAM

John Keister has more than 30 years of executive search experience, working with respected global corporations and libraries of all sizes. When working with libraries, John draws upon his extensive experience as an elected public library Trustee and library Board President. He also served multiple terms on the Board of Directors of the North Suburban Library System, a library consortium of academic, public, school, and special libraries in suburban Chicago. John has advocated on behalf of libraries at the local, state, and federal levels, been an invited speaker at numerous library conferences, and has raised community awareness of library issues through town meetings, focus groups, print and broadcast media. John also provides customized coaching and training to help library boards become more efficient and effective. He currently serves on the Illinois Library Association Advocacy Committee.

John holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering with post-graduate coursework in business management and administration.

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Beth Keister handles many of the “behind the scenes” functions of our firm, designing and maintaining our databases and websites, conducting research for the search process, and using social media to create awareness. Previously, Beth trained the staffs of several libraries and library organizations on a variety of software packages and consulted with libraries on creating programs and reports that support daily operations. Beth holds a Master of Science degree in Statistics and a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics.

Sarah Keister Armstrong specializes in providing community needs assessments and strategic planning services to libraries and other organizations through her own firm, Sarah Keister Armstrong & Associates. Her awareness of library trends and issues, coupled with a keen understanding of each library’s unique circumstances and demographics, helps us focus our efforts on the type of leader who will be most effective for every library search we undertake. Sarah is a Public Library Trustee and served on the Board of RAILS (Reaching Across Illinois Library System). She is currently serving as a Director-at-Large of the Illinois Library Association and is an active member of the American Evaluation Association and the American Library Association. Sarah holds a Master of Public Policy and Administration degree and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Sociology.

SEARCH PROCESS

We have the resources in place and are prepared to initiate the search upon selection by the library board. John Keister will be the primary contact representing our firm, while Beth Keister and Sarah Keister Armstrong will provide project support.

Though each search is unique and presents its own characteristics, we find that the search process from our initial client meeting to candidate offer and acceptance is generally 3½ to 4 months. Since we would tailor the search to meet your needs and deadlines, we’d be happy to revise the schedule, as needed, after our initial meeting with your search committee.

INITIAL MEETING

Our first step is to thoroughly understand your needs. John will visit the library to gain an understanding of your environment and to find out what is expected of the new Library Director. This will help us learn about your distinctive organizational culture, mission, and current concerns. Such knowledge will be useful when forming interview questions and evaluating candidates within the framework of your organization and setting.

WEBSITE FOR THE DIRECTOR SEARCH

For each of our library searches, we design, develop and host a website that includes information on the position, the library, and the local community. The website is a helpful tool for sharing information with potential candidates and it allows for easy updates as the search progresses. Examples include www.johnkeister.com/weyenberg/ and www.johnkeister.com/joliet/.

STRATEGY

Our strength as a search firm lies in our personal contacts with individuals in the library field. In addition to attracting candidates through traditional advertising and use of the custom website, we will carry out an extensive networking and social media effort to identify outstanding candidates who do not normally respond to ads or announcements. We have discovered that many excellent people are interested when approached by a respected recruitment firm. With this multi-pronged approach, we will ensure that we locate the best candidate(s) for your position.

CANDIDATE QUALIFYING

Once we have identified candidates, we will conduct in-depth interviews. When possible, these conversations will be in person. If that is not practical, we will conduct detailed video and telephone interviews. Our conversations with candidates allow us to thoroughly evaluate their personality, work ethic, and how they may fit into your particular library.

CANDIDATE PRESENTATION

After the interviewing/qualifying work has been completed, we will present you with resumes and additional information for the most viable candidates. We'll also be ready to discuss each individual in some detail, and to answer any questions from the search committee. This approach allows for valuable give-and-take of information with you and/or other decision makers, and allows you to further reduce the list, if desired, to a feasible number of semi-finalists or finalists.

FINALIST INTERVIEWS

We have found it is very beneficial for John to be on-site at the library during the finalist interviews to answer questions, make suggestions, and generally facilitate the process. We strongly recommend that candidates meet with staff, the board, and other key stakeholders as part of the process. During this crucial time, as important decisions are made, we can provide whatever support you need, including ideas about interview questions, advice on questions to avoid for legal reasons, and tips on interview approaches and potential pitfalls. We can also make suggestions on how to handle salary negotiations and benefits questions, deal with relocation issues, and "close" the most desired candidate. Staff input is particularly important and we can help the board use that information wisely. Many boards have never gone through the final steps of hiring a director and find that this is where our experience can be particularly helpful.

VERIFYING EMPLOYMENT DUTIES AND PERFORMANCE LEVELS

We will interview references for the final candidate, and will present summaries of the reference investigation. Our reference questions help flesh out the character of the candidate. We look for first-hand accounts on how the candidate works with staff and patrons, what they do to stay on top of library trends, and information illuminating how they've dealt with challenges. We are seeking leaders and a candidate's references help us better understand how he/she will perform in that role.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

If the library does not have a pre-employment background investigation process in place, we can assist with

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those arrangements for the final candidate. This investigation should include verification of credentials and an examination of professional, personal, financial, and criminal records. We can set up such an investigation with a professional firm should you need assistance with this piece.

FEE

Our fee for search services is \$18,100. Part of this fee (\$6,000) will be payable upfront, to help us defray our search expenses and to initiate the search. A second payment of \$6,000 will be due upon your acceptance of a slate of candidates. The balance of the fee will be billable upon selection of the new Library Director, and payable within 30 days after acceptance of the offer by the new Library Director.

Our professional fee includes:

- Design, development and hosting of a website for the director search
- All consultant expenses, including travel, for three meetings at the library: our initial information-gathering session, a meeting to present candidate profiles, and facilitation during the final interviews
- Unlimited "virtual" access via Skype or audio calls at other meetings, as needed

Not included in our fee are advertising costs and costs incurred by candidates who are asked to interview in-person with the library.

GUARANTEE:

If the new Executive Library Director leaves the position within the first year after acceptance, we will, on a one-time basis, reactivate the search upon your request. Such a reactivation must assume that we will be allowed to pursue our own approach to achieve the reasonable results you anticipate. The library will assume all expenses directly related to a reactivated search, but we will expect no additional search fee.

We thank you for your interest in John Keister & Associates. Please contact us if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you.

John Keister & Associates



John W. Keister
President

If these terms are acceptable, please sign this letter and return one copy to us. Thank you.

Waukesha Public Library

By: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

Our firm is committed to Equal Employment Opportunities, and will not discriminate against any candidate because of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

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References

Geauga County Public Library

Chardon, Ohio
<http://geaugalibrary.net/newsite/>
Mr. Raymond Rundelli
President, Board of Trustees
Phone: 216-622-8854
rrundelli@gmail.com

Geauga County Public Library serves 90,000 residents through four full-service locations, two satellite locations, a bookmobile, and administrative center, totaling more than 74,000 square feet. The library has an operating budget of \$8.3 million. The search was conducted due to the retirement of the former Director.

When our system's director announced her intention to retire after 25 years as director, the Board quickly decided that the best course was to engage a professional search firm to assist us in finding a new director. Our multiple facility system was on sound financial footing, it was well regarded both statewide and nationally, its facilities were in good condition, and staff morale was high.

We knew we had an outstanding directorship opportunity to offer to someone but we wanted not only someone well qualified, but someone that would "fit" with the personality of our system and community and the vision our Board had for the system's future. We also believed that finding the right person would be much more likely if we had the right search firm to assist us. There were lots of choices, from big national firms specializing in library director searches to small but locally well-connected firms.

After carefully considering proposals from a number of candidates, the Board chose to work with John Keister & Associates. It was clear from its proposal that John and his associates had the necessary experience and that they had given our particular situation considerable thought.

I can wholeheartedly recommend John Keister & Associates to any library board in need of assistance in the selection of a director or other upper-level management. He took the time to understand our particular needs, he listened carefully to what we had to say about how the search process should work and what we wanted in a director candidate, his thoroughness allowed him to quickly gain our trust and in the end his efforts put us exactly where we wanted to be -- in a room with multiple, well-qualified candidates from which we could choose the one that best "fit" the directorship opportunity we had to offer.

Raymond Rundelli, President, Board of Trustees

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Beloit Public Library

Beloit, Wisconsin
www.beloitlibrary.org
Mr. John Watrous
President, Board of Trustees
Phone: 608-363-9179
watrousj@gmail.com

Beloit Public Library serves 48,000 residents with a 55,000 sq. ft. building and an operating budget of \$2.2 million. We were asked to conduct the search for a Director after failed attempts by another library executive search firm.

Our first contacts with you were extremely positive and confirmed for the board that you were a good fit for us. You showed enthusiasm for our library and our community, and you made it clear to us that you were eager to work with us on this search.

We were looking for a bold and creative leader more than a competent manager. You understood this and designed a search process that identified leadership and networking skills. There were doubtless a lot of things that you did on the back end that we never saw, but what we did see pleased us. For example, the website that you created to advertise the Director position was very professional. There were important instances when you gave us excellent advice.

Everyone I've spoken to (including board members, library staff, members of the Friends and Foundation, and people in city government) agrees that the three finalists we did bring to the library were by far the most impressive group we could remember from a Director search. The candidate we hired has been wonderful, and we are extremely pleased to have him at our library. Nick is providing us with the kind of creative leadership and community outreach that we wanted all along in our new Director.

John Watrous, President, Board of Trustees

Warren-Newport Public Library District

Gurnee, Illinois
www.wnpl.info
Ms. Jo Beckwith
Board of Trustees
Phone: 847-814-1346
jobeckwith@sbcglobal.net

Warren-Newport Public Library District serves more than 66,000 residents with a 58,000 sq. ft. building, a bookmobile, and an operating budget of about \$7 million. The search was conducted due to the retirement of the former Director.

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In our unique situation, I would not have wanted to select anyone that did not acknowledge *full-on* that we would have a problem attracting candidates. You said that and also insisted that any candidate be told the full story so that we would not be ambushing anyone by keeping our situation a secret. This was not only practical, but also an issue of integrity, in my view.

Your style is informal and laid back. You use humor to make a point. The processes you use, though, are not laid back. They are organized, well-thought out, and professional. You tried to get us to articulate the characteristics that we wanted rather than telling us the typical list.

You back up your process with a lot of experience both as a trustee and a search consultant. Your knowledge of Illinois libraries and directors is quite impressive. And so is your love of libraries. What a great bonus! Thanks for helping WNPL find the next great Illinois library director.

With gratitude,
Jo Beckwith, Trustee

Hussey-Mayfield Memorial Public Library

Zionsville, Indiana (Indianapolis area)

www.zionsvillelibrary.org

Ms. LeeAnn Biggs

President, Board of Trustees

Phone: 317-873-4241

biggsdiggs@att.net

Hussey-Mayfield Memorial Public Library is located in Zionsville, an upscale and well-educated community northwest of Indianapolis. It has a 54,000 sq. ft. library serving 26,000 residents with an operating budget of about \$2.1 million.

I believe we connected from the start. Your genuine passion and love for finding the right fit for each individual library/client was apparent.

Our board reviewed proposals by you and a competing firm. Both firms were well qualified and had similar fees. It was your unique boutique approach that appealed to our board as well as your enthusiasm. We also appreciated that you had actually served on a library board. We were not just another cog in the system to your firm. It was apparent that we both truly wanted to find the ideal fit for our library's continued success and were committed to the process of finding our true north.

We are most impressed with our new Executive Director. The HMMPL board is very satisfied, our administrative staff and other staff members are much happier and our future looks bright. The atmosphere and morale in our library has made a much-needed turn around. We thank you for your tenacity and stick-to-itiveness in completing the job you started until it was not just done, but done well. It was a process that we hope we will not have to repeat for some time. But, if we ever needed to search again, we would not hesitate to call you and your firm.

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The Hussey-Mayfield board of Trustees extends our deepest gratitude to you and your firm for above and beyond service to our library and community. We believe you got the sense of who we truly are and what we needed from the start. There was much to process and sift along the way and you were committed to us. We thank you for believing in our board and our staff and for championing us when needed. We have an amazing library for a community of our size but our great potential had stagnated. With your guidance, we now have an outstanding Executive Director to take us in the direction we want and need to go. Our future has been rejuvenated.
