

Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
September 3, 2020

Board members in attendance: [President] Jade Hart, [Vice President] Clint Twedt-Ball, Rafael Jacobo, Susie McDermott, Monica Challenger, Hassan Selim, Mary Sharp, Randy Ramlo

Staff in attendance: [Library Director] Dara Schmidt, Todd Simonson, Jessica Musil, Patrick Duggan, Amber McNamara, Aaron Bock, Erin Horst, Jessica Link

Others: Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation; Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library; Lauren Claeys, Community Member

A. Call to Order

- Ms. Hart called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.
- This electronic meeting of the Library Board of Trustees is being held because meeting in person is impossible and impractical due to concerns for the health and safety for Library trustees, staff, and community members presented by COVID-19. An electronic meeting is allowed by Iowa Code Section 21.8 and Governor Reynolds proclamations of emergency disaster. All trustees and staff are joining from home. This meeting is also live on the Library's Facebook page.

B. Consent Agenda – **Action**

- Minutes: Aug 6, 2020

Mr. Ramlo motioned to accept the consent agenda with an update to the attendees. Ms. Challenger seconded. The motion carried with unanimous approval.

C. Public Comments and Communications

- There being none, the meeting continued.

D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler

- The Foundation has received Cedar Rapids Community Foundation grants for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL). Ms. Tyler noted that enrollment in the past month increased even with 95 graduates. The program has had over two thousand total graduates.
- Ms. Tyler has concerns for displaced families and that DPIL books are not being delivered by the postal service. She is communicating with the Dollywood Foundation to develop solutions so kids can still get books. Ms. Tyler will also discuss ideas with community partners.
- The Fill the Bus campaign has ended and achieved its goal, plus more donations continue to come in.
- The Fall newsletter is in development and Ms. Tyler hopes it will be in mailboxes by the end of October.

E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey

- The Friends had a successful grab bag book sale with children's materials. They are planning to host a similar sale in the future. Friends' volunteers are also planning a safe, larger sale at the Cherry Building.
- The Friends delivered books to Neighborhood Resource Centers for those impacted by the derecho. Ms. Schmidt shared her thanks to the Friends and their generosity by donating books.

F. Library Board Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Randy Ramlo, Committee Chair

- At this time, the Library does not have the final FY20 numbers. Ms. Schmidt expects that they will be available for discussion at the October meeting. So far into FY21, there is nothing out of ordinary.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Clint Twedt-Ball, Committee Chair
 - There being no report, the meeting continued.
- Advocacy Committee – Mary Sharp, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Sharp reported that the Advocacy Committee has set a regular monthly meeting time going forward. She shared that Amber McNamara is developing talking points for trustees and stakeholders so they can discuss library service changes during the pandemic.
 - The Library is working on promotions for Library Card Signup Month, which is in September. Yard signs will be skipped this year but the committee will revisit this idea for 2021.

G. Library Director's Report

- The past month has been busy for library even though strategic planning committees paused so staff time could be directed to derecho storm response.
 - The storm pushed the start of the Cedar Rapids Community School District (CRCSD) to Sept. 21. The library is finalizing the data transfer to create library cards for all CRCSD students, which will be a resource starting in this first semester.
 - Library staff assisted with the City's storm response by staffing one of the Neighborhood Resource Centers, answering phones with the Forestry department, and counting trucks for debris sites. Ms. Schmidt noted that staff showed a high commitment to the community and she expressed her pride in the team for assisting. A City produced video was shown, which explained the role of the Neighborhood Resource Centers for storm recovery.
 - Both Library buildings were OK and re-opened within a week after the storm. Downtown had superficial damage but Ladd's roof was damaged though there was no interior damage to computers or materials. The entire complex will need a new roof but contractors feel the temporary patch is sound.
 - The Opportunity Center at Ladd Library opened as a co-working space in four-hour shifts.
 - Downtown's parking lot is no longer being used for relief operations – it was previously used for Operation BBQ and a charging site. Ladd Library's parking lot, which hosted a Neighborhood Resource Center, currently has FEMA and DHS through Sunday, which was staffed by state and federal response.
 - Mr. Twedt-Ball expressed appreciation that Ms. Schmidt and library staff built a foundation that helped the community know that the library can be a place to assist.
 - Ms. Sharp asked if the derecho delayed the Urban Dreams project. Ms. Schmidt shared that the organization was at resource centers and operation BBQ. And while, yes it is delayed, communication continues to start the partnership formally in October.
- The Library will start the next phase of reopening on Tuesday, Sept. 8. Although our community has high COVID numbers, the Library has cautiously started new services with increased safety measures.
 - We will first expand Grab and Go services so patrons can retrieve books from the stacks for up to 30 minutes. Patrons can still make computer reservations, for up to one hour a day, but appointments are no longer required. Each building will have an occupancy limit, which is displayed on a screen prior to entry. Friends' book shelves will also open.

- A major factor to this decision is so we can support local school children. With damage to local schools, especially elementary buildings, it will be difficult for school age children to get reading materials within their own school buildings. The Library can help fill this gap.
- Staff have had questions but are supportive of the plan. City leadership is also supportive. Masks for patrons are now required per the mayoral declaration. Our roving service model will change to reduce risk of exposure. Downtown's access will be limited to the 5th Avenue doors to manage patron entry. Hours will now be: Monday-Thursday, 10 am-7 pm, and Friday and Saturday, 10 am-4 pm.
- Ms. Schmidt has been communicating with other library directors nationwide, who have opened their respective libraries in a similar fashion. Our safety methods and services mirror theirs; based on other libraries' experiences, we know the Library can fill the community need but we will not see the same pre-pandemic traffic and use, such as door counts and circulation. Most of the people we will serve will be the people who need us most.
- Mr. Wilding asked what would trigger a service reduction. At this time, the Library is still in Phase 1. To go to Phase 2, we need multiple weeks in a row of decreasing infection rates. We would only go back to eliminating patron access to the buildings if the Linn County Public Health Department moves back to their Phase 1; they are currently in their respective Phase 2.
- Ms. Sharp asked if we will add tutoring or homework help services. The Library is working to debut a service, which is free to patrons, that allows live homework help. Depending on the vendor, we hope to unveil this around the time school starts at CRCSD. In addition, through the Federal Cares Act, the State Library has purchased a chat service for our Library staff to use with our patrons.
- Greyhound Café plans to re-open their drive through the week of Sept. 8, pending supplies.

H. Old Business

- There being no old business, the meeting continued.

I. New Business

- There being no new business, the meeting continued.

J. Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:56 pm

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020, at 4 pm, via Zoom.