

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Cedar Rapids Public Library**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**November 5, 2020**

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

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

**Others:** Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation; Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library

A. Call to Order

- Ms. Hart called the meeting to order at 4:00 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: Oct. 1, 2020

*Ms. Challenger motioned to accept the consent agenda. Ms. Sharp seconded. The motion carried with unanimous approval.*

C. Public Comments and Communications

- There being none, the meeting continued.

D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler

- Ms. Tyler has applied for several grants for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) this month. The program had a high amount of enrollments with about 91 graduates. However, the system did have a glitch for duplicates; it has been fixed but caused a slight drop in enrollment.
- Fall newsletter was mailed and the Foundation has been receiving donations in response.
- The Fundraising Committee is identifying new and innovative opportunities for giving without the use of in-person events. Ms. Tyler will report more as decisions are made.

E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey

- The Friends are receiving steady book donations. Board members are picking up items from donor's home, and then quarantining materials for 72 hours before delivering to the sorting center. Volunteers are back and have a good system to maintain sorting. This allows volunteers the time to prep for grab bag or online sales.
- Ms. Slappey is working on an inventory reduction plan for the items at the Cherry Building, utilizing the Sustainable Shelves program with Baker & Taylor. Friends will scan ISBNs and email the list of numbers to the company. From there, the company will respond with the books' value and the proceeds the Friends would receive. Baker & Taylor will take any book to sell or recycle as well as supply the shipping boxes and labels and postage.

F. Board Education: Welcoming & Inclusion– Amber McNamara

- Ms. McNamara provided an update to the strategic plan initiative: Develop library marketing campaigns, programs, and services to promote understanding, acceptance, inclusion, and diversity.

- The Library buildings will have the word 'welcome' in different languages placed at the entrances to show all are welcome. We can't change all of our signage to include all the languages represented by our non-native English speaking community members. Instead, the Welcome sign will have a QR code to Google Translate app. This app uses augmented reality to translate signs, documents, etc., in over 100 languages. In the next month, the new welcome sign and QR code will be installed.
- This initiative will become a citywide initiative for other city buildings and services, such as Transit. In future, we will share with community on how it works, including videos, to highlight the message 'You Belong Here.' Ms. Challenger praised the effort and asked if the library would offer a device to someone who doesn't have one to use Google Translate. Ms. McNamara noted that this is a great suggestion and will look into this opportunity.
- In order to help facilitate interactions in the library and online across language barriers, the library is looking at different solutions. Hands Up Communications will allow for translation services for on demand communication with patrons, such as over the phone or video at our staff stations. In addition, we started using Amara, an online service, to facilitate closed captioning of our videos as we are increasing virtual services. YouTube used to provide this but no longer offers it. Ms. Sharp asked about the service fees. It is about \$1 per minute for Hands Up; and Amara is \$35 a month with Library volunteers typing the closed captioning.
- The Library also celebrates local culture with events such as March's Cultural Expo and Community Celebration, and Welcoming Week, a citywide initiative.
- On the Library's website, we have added an online database for resources – banking, faith services, legal assistance, mental health, social organizations, transportation, and more. In partnership with the Economic Alliance, this information, while specifically for new immigrants to our area, can be used by anyone in our community. The materials team is also developing a multilingual collection. This can be difficult as foreign language materials are limited and expensive.
- To ensure success of this strategic plan initiative, we will use Welcoming America and Equity Lens as benchmarks and align with the City, which is doing the same thing. Ms. Hart asked if the library was involved in meetings focused on immigrant concerns. The library and Opportunity Center are connected with several groups, including the Catherine McAuley Center.
- Mr. Selim thanked library staff and shared appreciation for creating a welcoming experience and being inclusive of our whole community.

#### G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Randy Ramlo, Committee Chair
  - Mr. Ramlo reported. September budget has received one-third of its expected revenue and is keeping with expenses around one-third as well. We are ahead in book and IT purchases because subscription fees are due at the beginning of the fiscal year. Mr. Ramlo expects increased electricity costs due to Alliant's overall increases.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Clint Twedt-Ball, Committee Chair
  - There being no report, the meeting continued.
- Advocacy Committee – Mary Sharp, Committee Chair
  - Ms. Sharp highlighted that the library has circulated over one million items in the last fiscal year regardless of the closings and reduced services. Ms. Sharp praised the library and staff for their work in meeting needs and gaps during the pandemic.
  - In December and January, before the annual City budget hearings, trustees will be asked to meet with City Council members about the library and services. The

Library will prepare talking points. The conversations are a chance to thank local leaders for their continued support. We are not asking for a budget increase.

H. Library Director's Report

- The Library's expanded grab and go services is being used steadily. Ms. Schmidt shared an hourly door counts chart, showing the number of people entering the buildings each hour. Both buildings are open from 9 am-8 pm Mondays-Thursdays, and 9 am-5 pm on Fridays and Saturdays. We've seen about 500 people a day or 6,122 in two weeks across the buildings. Pre-COVID, we welcomed about 1400 people a day in both buildings. The 2 pm hour is highest but this is when we switch shifts. Evenings are slow but this is similar to regular business during the winter. Ms. Hart asked if the usage felt safe for staff. Ms. Schmidt noted that yes, and staff are using all the safety measures in place. Anxiety is heightened if the library is busy but we don't hit posted capacity. Ms. Schmidt feels we are OK for now to continue our current services but Library leadership is watching numbers very carefully. Other libraries in Iowa are starting to reduce services. At this time, Linn County Public Health is in Phase 2 and we are operating as if they are in Phase 1. If public health moves back to Phase 1, we will discuss and make changes, most likely to curbside services. Mr. Wilding asked if people are respecting the in-person restrictions. Most patrons come in and go after completing their task. We rarely have issues though we have to remind on occasion to wear masks. People initially wanted more computer time but have adjusted.
- The Cedar rapids Community School District (CRCSD) has closed all of their community Internet Hubs except the Downtown Library location. Beems Auditorium has seen more students but they remain safely distanced and in the auditorium.
- Ms. Schmidt highlighted a page from the annual report, which was debuted at last month's meeting. Numbers are the same but fall in logical pattern to better under our total circulation, which is at over one million.
- The monthly statistics page was reviewed. This document was developed to build a better picture of how the library operated pre-COVID and how patrons are adapting to continue using our services. Ms. Schmidt encouraged trustees to share feedback if they want more or different information.
- The Library's Senior Management team is working on strategic plan's year three operational plan. Some areas of the strategic plan were re-defined to meet demands changed by the pandemic. Ms. Schmidt feels good that the Library can still use the plan and provide the best outcomes for the community.
- Starting Oct. 31, the Cedar Rapids residents can have their holds delivered through a partnership with CHOMP. There is no cost to the Library but it is another option for people. We'll try it for six months and re-evaluate. Mr. Wilding asked who can participate. It is really up to the patron – the cost is based on the distance between the library and delivery location.

I. Old Business

- There being no old business, the meeting continued.

J. New Business

- There being no new business, the meeting continued.

K. Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm

**The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, Dec. 3, 2020, at 4 pm, via Zoom.**