

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Cedar Rapids Public Library**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**January 7, 2021**

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

**Absent:** Susie McDermott

**Staff in attendance:** [Library Director] Dara Schmidt, Patrick Duggan, Amber McNamara, Meredith Crawford, Jessica Link, Jessica Musil, Trevor Hanel

**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 4:01 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: Dec. 3, 2020

*Mr. Jacobo motioned to accept the consent agenda. 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 had a good month for fundraising in December. Grants were received to help support the new mobile tech van.
- In addition, a new Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) fundraiser called Rooted in Reading will start in the Spring. The fundraiser will support early literacy and replant trees. Donors can purchase a bundle of three tree saplings from the Iowa DNR nursery. Bundles also come with an acrylic garden stake and spade. The Foundation will send direct mail in February or March to promote the opportunity. Ms. Tyler anticipates an April delivery or pickup of the saplings. The Foundation is pursuing media partnerships. The goal is to sell 175 bundles with three trees each. Bundles are \$40 with \$25 to DPIL.

E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey

- Online sales are sustaining the Friends. The organization is encountering challenges with the library closed as donations continue. The Sorting Center's work is a bit delayed but Ms. Slappey is optimistic this will improve.
- The Friends are planning a February book lovers grab bag sale. They are hoping for outside sale. More information will be forthcoming.

F. Board Education: Workforce Development – Meredith Crawford

- Although the Library has reduced services and the strategic plan has changed, the Library is still focused on workforce development during this time. Programming Librarian Meredith Crawford has been connecting with local partners and job seekers.
- To improve formal workforce development offerings, Ms. Crawford has researched library best practices, audited local service gaps, and aligned with the Opportunity Center and Regional Workforce Development.

- In response to the pandemic, what would have typically been offered has shifted. Working with the public service, materials, and programming staff, the Library has developed programming and partnerships.
- Ms. Crawford provided examples of virtual classes and remote one-on-one assistance, such as assistance to write resumes. She shared ways that she is connecting patrons and partner organizations.
- Ms. Hart asked if we had any specific numbers on the response to these resources during pandemic. We have antidotal data for phone calls and we can pull statistics on video views. Ms. Hart asked where we direct someone looking for assistance. The Opportunity Center is providing assistance by appointment; they can also address other barriers. The Library also added to its website: a resources page for adults regarding workforce development.
- Mr. Jacobo asked how we are identifying success of the programs. The Programming team uses program attendance/video views to determine success as well as feedback for improvement.
- Mr. Twedt-Ball noted that tech literacy is crucial and often not talked about. Ms. Schmidt hopes that this can be addressed with the Library's new transit van, offering mobile technology. The van was grant funded, and we are developing and will share metrics with funders and the board.
- Mr. Ramlo noted he shared information about BrainFUSE, the online tutoring resource, in a recent discussion with a city council member. Ms. Schmidt noted we can start pulling specific BrainFUSE data to share in future.

#### G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Randy Ramlo, Committee Chair
  - Mr. Ramlo reviewed Ms. Schmidt's Finance Memo. There are no concerns at this time and expenses are within range for this time of year.
  - **Action:** FY22 Budget Submission to the City of Cedar Rapids
    - The proposed general fund budget totals \$7.2 million, which is an increase of 2% from last year. The increase covers contractually obligated bargaining employees' raises as well as standard step increases for eligible non-bargaining staff. In general the budget is considered flat – we have no new funding requests. Instead money is being reallocated to cover requested changes.
    - Ms. Schmidt has asked for the following changes in this budget:
      - Hiring a library facility maintenance person to maintain the on-going maintenance needs. Funds are reallocated from existing funds in contracted labor.
      - Increasing the Janitorial budget, anticipating higher costs as the pandemic continues.
      - Increasing electricity as Alliant Energy has changed rates, and
      - Increasing circulating material expenses.

Ms. Schmidt believes that the last three expense changes may be declined. She continues to work closely with City Finance to develop this budget. The Finance Committee recommends that Ms. Schmidt present the budget as presented in the packet to City Council. This presentation, which is typically in first week of February, has not yet been scheduled at the time of this meeting.

*The motion to accept the FY22 Budget as presented in the board packet to be submitted to the City of Cedar Rapids carried unanimously.*

- Personnel and Policy Committee – Clint Twedt-Ball, Committee Chair
  - There being no report, the meeting continued.

- Advocacy Committee – Mary Sharp, Committee Chair
  - As a reminder, trustee conversations with city council members need to be done this month. Ms. McNamara emailed talking points to trustees, which will be updated with the student tutoring database statistics. Ms. Sharp noted that the Library has a good graphic on how our work impacts the community during the pandemic. Ms. Schmidt shared for Ms. McNamara that BrainFUSE (online tutoring services) has been used 1200 times through the end of December.

#### H. Library Director's Report

- The Library's new mobile technology van is now in our possession and will start to be outfitted so it's ready to roll-out this spring. We will use Project Outcome, which focuses on outcomes versus outputs, to determine the success of the van.
- In the board packet, Ms. Schmidt included the final contract with Innovative Interfaces, Inc. (III) for new Integrated Library System (ILS). All Metro Library Network partners and their respective boards signed the MLN MOU. The new ILS contract will begin on July 1 but the transition to the new system has started.
- The Library and staff are anxious to re-open, and currently looking at week of Jan. 18. If community infection numbers stay the same, we don't anticipate a delay to resume extended Grab and Go services. Prior to reopening, we will ensure safety restrictions are in place for the opening.
- Staff continue using Bold360 Chat, which was provided using CARE Funds through the State Library. The product can also be used for remote technology assistance within the building. This will allow one-on-one technology help between staff and patrons while remaining socially distant. Through chat and with patron permission, staff take over the computer to assist. Training will start next week to prepare for reopening.
- We have only received positive feedback and support from our community following the return to curbside services.
- Our website now includes a specific page for jobseekers. The link is [CRLibrary.org/skills](http://CRLibrary.org/skills).
- The State Library of Iowa has revised its trustee handbook. While State law and City codes regulate what library boards can do, the handbook provides more context to the role. Ms. Schmidt will work with the Personnel and Policy committee to create board education over the next year. The new handbook will be released to libraries later this month.
- Ms. Sharp highlighted a story from the board packet regarding a family that felt relief at owing no fines during the derecho and its aftermath. Mr. Jacobo shared that he wears his Library fleece and several people stop him to ask about the Library.

#### 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 5:10 pm

**The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, Feb. 4, 2021, at 4 pm, via Zoom.**