

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Cedar Rapids Public Library**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**October 1, 2020**

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

**Absent:** Hassan Selim, Susie McDermott

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

**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: Sept. 3, 2020

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

C. Public Comments and Communications

- There being none, the meeting continued.

D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler

- The past month had the second or third Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) enrollments since March, trending toward pre-COVID numbers. Penguin Random House extended their read aloud rights for DPIL books through the end of the year.
- The month has including many grant writing opportunities including for DPIL and the mobile technology lab, which was approved through the Giacometto Foundation. A transit van has been ordered and the Library hopes it will be operational in early 2021.
- The Foundation is working on its joint newsletter with the Friends, and Ms. Tyler hopes it will hit mailboxes at the end of October.
- Ms. Sharp asked about specific DPIL enrollment numbers. Ms. Tyler responded that as of Sept. 30, we have had approximately 5,400 children enrolled with another 2,082 graduates. Over 144,000 books have been mailed.

E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey

- The Friends are planning three more grab bag sales: October with general fiction, November with (cookbooks, and February's theme is book lovers. A Square site has been setup to pre-pay and books will be received via a drive-thru system. The Friends are also hosting a closeout sale on t-shirts through the Square site.
- Book buyers may make appointments to shop at the Cherry Building. Online sales continue.

F. Board Education: Educational Supports – Kevin Delecki

- Since the pandemic, the Library started looking at educational supports for local schools. These services are even more vital since derecho with the challenges of damaged buildings, unreliable Internet, and virtual learning.

- In September, the Library launched a specific student support page on our website. The page has resources for extension activities, additional learning opportunities, and research help for students in Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- All 15,600 Cedar Rapids Community School District (CRCSD) students now have active library cards using their student ID. Students can access all online and physical services. Some students were using the new cards before it was officially announced.
- In addition, we will add a school and teacher resource playlist on our YouTube channel. More content will be added but we plan to include virtual tours for field trips, and videos on using library cards, databases, and more.
- HelpNow by Brainfuse is a K-college, learning software, and it is now live and available on our website. Students will find live tutoring from 2-11 pm CDT daily. HelpNow has stringent tutor requirements to ensure best success for the students. Writing Lab can help students with their written work – they simply submit work for feedback. Students can collaborate on projects virtually in secure online meeting rooms. A Learning Library provides different review topics and materials based on type, such as college, English Language Learner (ELL) as well as by grade and age including for adults.
- Mr. Ramlo asked about the cost of the resource. The annual subscription, approximately \$11,000 a year, has been paid for by the Friends in the first year. This cost is about 30% less than the next competitive library product.
- Ms. Sharp asked how many other libraries use this. Mr. Delecki shared that many large cities use this product. HelpNow has changed their staffing model to address student peak times and a tutor can work with up to three students individually at a time.
- Mr. Wilding asked if students in other districts will get library cards as well. At this time, any student enrolled within the CRCSD, regardless of address, received a card. In the future, we may promote this to other districts but those students may be covered by a different local library.
- Ms. Hart asked how the new resource will be promoted to schools and students. Mr. Delecki is working with a school administrator to best distribute the information within the schools. The Library promoted the service via email and social media. We're planning how we can share the information with other community partners.
- Mr. Jacabo praised Library staff for offering this service to students. He has personally seen the communication to own children. He asked how this program can support our local students' language needs. The software has Spanish, which is fairly new, and hopes to do more. At this time, the Library does not have a baseline or past comparisons to use in determining success. Instead, we will determine success in stories from students, teachers, and families. We will track usage carefully and which parts, such as features and grade levels that our community is using. This will help push our promotions and develop baseline.

#### G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Randy Ramlo, Committee Chair
  - Mr. Wilding reported for Mr. Ramlo. As written in the Finance Memo, the initial FY21 finances are on track/as expected. Final FY20 numbers are now available. Some line items were higher than budgeted and others were lower; overall, the entire budget is approximately \$80,000 under.
  - As this time, the upcoming FY22's budget does not yet direction from City leadership to make major changes. Currently, the library is one of the City's departments that will expand services within the current budget. Ms. Schmidt believes we are prepared for budgetary changes that may arise. A FY22 budget will be held in the December meeting.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Clint Twedt-Ball, Committee Chair
  - There being no report, the meeting continued.

- Advocacy Committee – Mary Sharp, Committee Chair
  - The Advocacy committee met in September and discussed how the Library is supporting local students through library cards and HelpNow and the CRCSD Internet Hub in Beems Auditorium. Ms. McNamara has developed a social media dashboard of the Library’s promotions and virtual content. Ms. Sharp encouraged trustees and stakeholders to share our student and school support efforts.

H. Library Director’s Report

- With an agreement with the CRCSD, the downtown library is one community Internet Hub sites for students. Beems Auditorium is specifically for student use from 8 am-3 pm during the week. We host no more than 25 kids, all socially distanced and monitored by school staff. Breakfast and lunch is provided at all Internet Hubs. The agreement is the best use of our underutilized spaces. The service is in its second week; the district will continue to monitor usage and changes as home internet improves.
- Annual Report. Ms. Schmidt reviewed the FY20 Annual Report as presented in the packet. Specific discussion was held on the following.
  - Our finances evened out regardless of the pandemic. We saved money by re-allocated funds to cover unexpected expenses caused by the pandemic.
  - New resources and services were added to meet patron needs and were well-received. Patrons were able to access increased materials online and through curbside holds services. Database uses increased from about this time last fiscal year. Our in-house services, such as physical circulation, visits, etc., are down but overall circulation and usage numbers are even. Our story is not unusual – other libraries are trending similarly. For example, physical circulation is down but digital circulation jumped to make up a significant portion of that loss.
  - Ms. Schmidt played an Annual Report video. Final printed copies will be produced but we felt the video communicated the past fiscal year better.
- The board packet includes a new statistic dashboard to better depict our usage during the pandemic.
- Mr. Wilding asked about the Ladd roof damage. City Facilities is working with the landlord for timeline. It is expected Ladd will need to close for the roof repairs.
- Ms. Schmidt noted that people are taking advantage of expanding services while also avoiding gatherings and spending lots of time in the buildings. We have remained under our posted occupancies.

Ms. Sharp excused herself from the meeting at 4:58 pm

- Mr. Twedt-Ball asked about which populations we are typically serving in the buildings. Ms. Schmidt shared that anecdotally, we see all ages and a majority would be considered an older population. She believes phone service is helping older populations as well. There are many options to receive assistance and materials without physically entering the buildings. In addition, book clubs and trivia are popular in virtual settings.

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 5:06 pm

**The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, Nov. 5, 2020, at 4 pm, via Zoom.**