

Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
December 2, 2021

Board members in attendance: [President] Jade Hart (in person); [Vice President] Clint Twedt-Ball, Susie McDermott, Matt Wilding, Monica Challenger, Hassan Selim, Jeremy Elges (all via Zoom)

Unable to attend: Mary Sharp and Rafael Jacobo

Staff in attendance: [Library Director] Dara Schmidt and Jessica Musil (in person); Patrick Duggan, Amber McNamara, Todd Simonson, and Jessica Link (all via Zoom)

Others: Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation (in person); and Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library (via Zoom); guests: Matthew Kruntorád, Kate Michaud, and Sean Higgins from MSR Design (all via Zoom)

- A. Call to Order
 - Ms. Hart called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes: November 4, 2021

Ms. McDermott 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. Board Education: Report on Initial Design Concepts for Multi-use Library Facility – MSR Design
 - In 2027, the Ladd Library lease will expire. Ms. Schmidt and Ms. Tyler have been discussing long-term solutions for Ladd, while the Foundation coincidentally received a generous gift from Ms. Nadine Sandberg’s estate. Following this, in discussion with the Foundation and trustees, the Foundation committed \$1 million to a new west side facility. From there, they started conversations with Jennifer Pratt, director of the City’s Community Development department, to align and collaborate on this shared project. The timeline accelerated due to City and County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for this facility. The Library needed to put concept behind the idea and released an RFP for initial design concepts, scope, and costs. MSR Design was awarded the proposal after being selected by a committee with representatives from the Library, Foundation, City, and County. Ms. Schmidt prefaced that this report does not require action and is educational. It will help us to move forward in our long-term plans for Ladd Library. Ms. Schmidt introduced the MSR Design team: Matthew Kruntorád, Kate Michaud, and Sean Higgins.
 - Mr. Kruntorád reviewed the project objectives, which were derived with conversations with the Library and project stakeholders. Ultimately, the concept has high aspirations – the facility will further promote library service and build dignified space for essential community partnerships as well as provide community resilience.
 - MSR Design highlighted parts of their process to build this concept. They wanted to find ways to share space, and create opportunities for community members to come together but allow privacy and dignity, specifically with partners. A diagram demonstrated a size and approach that could be deployed; Mr. Kruntorád cautioned it is not a design but gives the team an idea of what’s possible.
 - The architects feel the Library has two sites options: one, a smaller site with combined housing, and two, a larger site with separate housing, which also allows for a large open park space and outdoor programming opportunities. Each site offers similar assumptions, such as glazing, environmental sustainability, and operational sustainability.

- Mr. Kruntorád stressed that the priorities, such as overall finish and size, will adjust price so this initial estimate is flexible. Pricing is conservative with built-in escalation. Pre-pandemic cost increases were about 2-4% per year but the numbers reflect our current reality of 4-5% with the high cost of materials.
- Ms. Michaud reviewed the cost estimations for three different options based on the site plans as estimated by Knutson Construction.

Mr. Elges joined the board meeting via Zoom at 4:20 pm.

- Mr. Wilding asked if there was a ballpark price to purchase new library materials. For this estimate, nothing is budgeted for materials. Ms. Schmidt shared we will consider the library collection when we define the scope as it is standard to review the opening day collection in planning. She believes we will carry over a majority of the Ladd collection but there is room to add this as we consider collection scope and size for the new space.
 - A design process is much longer than most people anticipate. We're at the very beginning with concept design, which helps us figure out what's needed and cost. It is typical to have not much pinned down.
 - Ms. McDermott commented that she wants the quality and attractiveness of the building itself to mirror that of the downtown library. Ms. Schmidt agreed – the conversations have defined big dreams to then prioritize and find cost. She does not want to compromise our commitment to providing incredible service to the west side. Ladd Library can be more and it's time to explore what that looks like.
 - Mr. Twedt-Ball noted it is important to remember that the downtown library started with a dream and followed into funding. It feels like we're in a similar situation knowing there are funding possibilities out there but we need the dream first. Mr. Twedt-Ball expressed appreciation of MSR's work so far.
 - Mr. Wilding shared that he believes the costs, per square foot, are similar to the downtown library with inflation.
- E. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
- The month of November has been busy. Ms. Tyler is working on advocacy for the westside project. She has appreciated the transparency and communication as the project continues to develop.
 - In her role as President for United for Libraries, Ms. Tyler has been supporting education around censorship, intellectual freedom, and related policies. These have been priority topics for libraries in the past several months.
 - The Foundation anticipates their year-end letter to be mailed next week. In addition, they are honing focuses and communication for donors following responses from their survey.
- F. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
- The Basement Books location has been cleaned up – inventory has either been selected for sale or appropriately recycled including being recycled into Quaker Oat canisters.
 - The Friends are ready for Saturday's Merry Cherry Holiday Open House. They will sell books and gifts on two levels of the Cherry Building.
- G. Library Board Committee Reports
- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger
 - Ms. Challenger reviewed the finance memo presented in the packet. At this point in the fiscal year, the Library is in good standing. Ms. Challenger reminded trustees that if anything appears off, it is due to a large proportion of expenses due at the beginning of the year, which will even out toward the end.
 - Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - State Library of Iowa, Trustees Handbook Discussion: Chapter 5
 - This chapter is mostly written for rural or smaller libraries, whose respective director and board president with checking writing abilities and highly involved fiscal scrutiny. As part of a larger City, we have a

robust approval process. Ms. Schmidt discussed the budget process, which starts annually in September with the Finance Committee for the following fiscal year, with budget adoption through the board and ultimately the City. In addition, the Library has a purchasing policy that notes spending rules and limitations. The Library's financials are strictly monitored through the City Finance department as well.

- Ms. McDermott briefly highlighted a chart from the chapter, which outlines the primary budgetary responsibilities.
- **Action:** Policy Review. The trustees reviewed the following policies.
 - 1.01 ByLaws. The committee reviewed this policy again and made further amendments as noted in the packet.
 - 1.02 Bill of Rights. The content did not change, instead changes were minor and based on amendments by the ALA Council.
 - 1.03 Freedom to Read. There are no proposed changes.
 - 1.04 Freedom to View. There are no proposed changes.
 - 2.00 Collection Development. The Materials department reviewed and recommended adding gender identity and sexual orientation as two specific categories that we would not discriminate against. Recently, these two author identities are becoming frequent requests for material reconsideration. Language was also changed to purchase materials based on community need as inclusive materials is no longer a strategic task but continued work by the Library and Materials department.
 - 2.01 Reconsideration Policy. Minor changes were made to reflect current job titles and more concise wording on the Reconsideration Form.

The policy changes, as noted in the packet, were approved unanimously.

- Advocacy Committee – Mary Sharp, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Schmidt reported for Ms. Sharp. Soon, the Library will need support in the strategic planning process' next step. Trustees and other advocates will sign up for individual meetings with local stakeholders between now through the end of February. Ms. McNamara will email the sign-up with instructions and a questionnaire. City Council members are on list but we will wait until January to discuss the budget and strategic advocacy in one meeting.
- Westside Project Committee – Clint Twedt-Ball, Committee Chair
 - The committee has no new report. However, Mr. Twedt-Ball asked for any further thoughts or questions following the MSR Design's presentation.
 - Ms. McDermott asked when do we start discussing the housing component. Ms. Schmidt believes it is too early. As we move forward, we will need to find a developer to partner with us. The timeline will have more urgency if the project is a combined building and it will require a combined goal and work.
 - The project's next step is to understand funding sources and complete a financial feasibility study.

H. Library Director's Report

- The board packet includes a newly released statement from the America Library Association (ALA) on intellectual freedom. This is directly tied to two policies that were just reviewed: Collection Development and Reconsideration. Nationwide and in Iowa material challenges, censorship, and restriction have been big topics within school districts and government. Last year, libraries had a 60% increase of challenges. Our Library is aligned the ALA statement, which was signed by the Public Library Association (PLA) that Ms. Schmidt is a board member and United for Libraries (UFL) that Ms. Tyler is the president. Our Library, with good policies and board trustees' understanding, is prepared to address any challenges. In concept, it is scary to address challenges but in general, Ms. Schmidt feels prepared to handle concerns.

- Ms. Schmidt highlighted the last great story in the Director's Report of the packet. It highlights the importance of seeing yourself in what you read, which aligns with *The Gazette's* article this week on the collection's diversity. Mr. Elges noted that the books in the article has long holds list, showing their importance to readers.
- 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, January 6, 2022, at 4 pm, in the Conference Room, Downtown Library