

Meeting Minutes

Cedar Rapids Public Library

Board of Trustees

February 5, 2026

Board members in attendance: President Monica Challenger, Vice President Jeremy Elges, Chris Casey, Ana McClain, Susie McDermott, Elisabeth Hepworth (in person); Jade Hart, Rafael Jacobo (via Zoom)

Board members unable to attend: Hassan Selim

Staff in attendance: Dara Schmidt, Amber McNamara, Kevin Delecki, Erin Horst, Jessica Musil, Todd Simonson (in person); Patrick Duggan (via Zoom)

Others: Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library (in person)

Minutes

- Call to Order
 - Ms. Challenger called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm
- **Action:** Consent Agenda
 - Minutes: January 8, 2026
 - Mr. Elges moved to accept the consent agenda. Ms. McClain seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.*
- Public Comments and Communications
 - There being none, the meeting continued
- Foundation Report. Presented by Charity Tyler
 - Ms. Schmidt reported for Ms. Tyler. The Foundation has scheduled a Big Dreams Donor Reception for March 12. Invitations will be sent soon. The Stay Home and Read appeal will likely go out by the end of February and will be focused on raising money for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL).
 - Ms. Tyler and Ms. Slappey are working on the joint Friends and Foundation Spring newsletter, which will be sent in April.
 - Foundation staff are working through recognition details for the Busse Branch donor wall.
 - At the board level, Ms. Tyler is continuing to focus on new board member recruitment.
- Friends of the Library Report. Presented by Libby Slappey
 - Ms. Slappey reported. The Friends are planning their semi-annual large sale at the downtown library over the weekend of April 10-12. Volunteers are in the process of shifting old book carts to the Cherry Building and books from that building to the downtown library.
 - Internet book sales continue to go well. Ms. Slappey noted that Friends will accept text book donations, which they can sell online. Recently, they sold a 2023 statistics book for \$73, which would have cost the student double. She appreciates it when people think of the Friends with donations of textbooks, and encouraged people to pass the word.
 - Ms. Slappey thanked Ms. McClain for recommending a friend to purchase books purely for decorating. She's eager to see how they've been re-purposed.

- Board Education: Accreditation and ADA Review. Presented by Dara Schmidt and Jessica Musil
 - Ms. Schmidt reported on the State Library's Accreditation process. The overall goal is to encourage the ongoing development of high-quality public library services in Iowa. Libraries are accredited every three years and must meet one of three tiers: Tier 1, which includes 29 standards; Tier 2, which includes Tier 1 and an additional 12 standards; and Tier 3, which includes Tier 1 and 2 standards, 6 Tier 3 standards as well as 20 of 38 optional standards. In addition to the standards, libraries must provide documentation and an ADA review as well as review all policies at least once in that three-year cycle. Accreditation standards are tied to funding. Ms. Schmidt reviewed the various sections of accreditation, which includes Library management, personnel, collections, access to virtual and physical spaces, programming, community relations, and the facility. Our library is submitting our accreditation again to maintain our Tier 3 status. Ms. Challenger asked about a proposed bill that intends to impact accreditation standards. Ms. Schmidt reads the current language as proposed stating that libraries can't be part of an organization, such as the American Library Association (ALA), that requires you to have particular policies. Currently, ALA does not require libraries to have specific policies as that is the trustees' role. Accreditation standards require certain policies and the standards are set by the State of Iowa independent of ALA or other outside organizations.
 - Ms. Musil presented next. The Accreditation process requires an ADA review for one of four priorities: Approach and Entrance; Access to Goods and Services; Toilet Rooms; and Additional Access. Libraries are encouraged to use this information to remove barriers in their buildings. For this cycle, Ms. Musil completed the Toilet Rooms review – all spaces are accessible according to the guidelines. However, for the purposes of this report, she will instead on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) instead. WCAG was first introduced in 1999 to ensure web content is accessible. A recent update to the guidelines now includes websites and PDF content, requiring accessibility for screen readers. For library staff, this means updating documents on the website for compatibility. Ms. Musil showed examples of how the documents look on the back end to ensure they are tagged appropriately for the user and screen reader to navigate the document. Staff are working on the updates for PDFs going back through FY24 and then documenting the process. WCAG compatibility is another commitment the library makes in ensuring access to our materials, online content, programs, and spaces.
- Library Board Committee Reports
 - Advocacy Committee. Presented by Elisabeth Hepworth, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Hepworth reported. She noted there is no action but there has been a lot of legislative activity that impacts libraries. HS636, which limits school's partnerships with public libraries and book mobiles, passed in the House's Education Committee and will move on to the full House for debate. HF2270 was just introduced and would not allow libraries to adopt policies based on requirements from outside organizations. Ms. Hepworth reminded everyone of the Advocacy Toolkit on the library's website with tips and information on how to engage with elected officials as well as the Advocacy Alerts email. Ms. McNamara noted there are two other bills that the library is monitoring: SF2119 which would appeal the obscenity exemption that protects public libraries, accredited schools, and universities from prosecution from using certain materials; HF 2136 on library record confidentiality which would allow a parent or guardian to access a minor's

record upon request. Iowa Code currently prevents that. SF2177 is the newest and would require libraries and third-party vendors from accessing pornographic material. This is interesting because it assumes libraries and their vendors provide illegal materials.

- Ms. Schmidt noted that we've noticed that subcommittee assignments come late in the day, the day before. We're working closely with area libraries to get personal representation at these meetings. Ms. Hepworth noted that another benefit of the Advocacy Alerts is provided links for public comment to voice concerns on the bills. Looking at the digital comments, there is overwhelming support for libraries, access, and reading.
- Ms. Casey noted that HS636 would also impact students who use their school IDs as library cards and while we don't have it here, it will harm students in the state. In addition, the bill would impact some rural areas, as the school library is also the public library. Ms. Hart asked about the school IDs and library cards we previously had with the Cedar Rapids Community School District. We paused this partnership when school library collections were under attack by the legislation. That bill passed and is currently under litigation. At the time though, a conservative approach was to wait and see. However, Ms. Schmidt has been in conversations with the school district prior to HS636's introduction and there is interest now with an established leadership. Though we'll need to watch the outcome of this proposed bill before moving forward. The relationship with the schools have always been positive and collaborative.
- Building Committee. Presented by Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Hart provided an update on the Busse Branch. Interior finishes are really bringing the space to life. Drywall and painting are complete in all major areas, a majority of the drop ceiling has been installed, and the raised access floor will be done by mid-month. Most of the interior glass for spaces such as the office, meeting room entries, and study rooms are now in place.
 - The bathrooms will be completed this month as contractors install the final fixtures, such as toilets and sinks. Contractors plan to start placing carpet and finish concrete sealing for areas without tile and carpet.
 - Overhead garage doors – for both the garage and trash room – are now installed. Interior doors and hardware will arrive on-site this month and installation will begin.
 - The bid for furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FFE) has closed and the library is working with City Purchasing and the architect to ensure the bid submissions meet our needs. Contracts should be in place this month so furniture and shelving can be installed throughout March, April, and May as lead times allow.
 - Behind the scenes, library staff are working with the City to ensure we have utilities and services, such as fire and sprinkler contracts, insurance, and Solid Waste, setup for when we have occupancy. In addition, the IT team is developing their bid for new network equipment and computers for the branch.
- Finance Committee. Presented by Chris Casey, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Casey reported. We are six months into the fiscal year. At this time, expenditures are slightly over and revenues are slightly under due to some

expenses being posted in advance and revenues are bill a month behind. It is expected to even out as the year moves forward.

- **Action:** FY27 Budget
 - Ms. Casey moved into reviewing the proposed FY27 budget. For Library Operations 151, Personal Services considers raises and steps as well as the annual refresh savings, which totals \$192,000 this year. The City takes a percentage off Personal Services to recoup money in transitions and open positions.
 - Ladd Library's rent remains in the budget. However, after the lease is terminated, we will amend the budget to move the remaining dollars into Personal Services for increased staffing needs to support the new branch.
 - After the Busse Branch opens, we won't need project management support anymore so the \$20,000 we previously paid to FMS will be removed.
 - The library's request for \$100,000 in additional materials funding was approved. This will ensure permanent funding to support digital materials from operations (151) versus CIP 316. Materials funding will be split: \$100,000 will be in operations for digital materials and \$250,000 in CIP for physical materials only. This first year, we may spend more on the physical collection to expand our opening day collection at the Busse Branch.
 - Our request for 1 FTE for a Patron Services Specialist was denied. However, with the library's previous restructuring plan, will ensure that the library opens with appropriate staffing.
 - City Council has not yet approved this budget but it is being recommended from the City Manager and Finance Director for approval. The budget hearing is not yet scheduled.
 - There are no significant changes to Library Grants 7010 and CIP 316, which shows the branch's construction and materials.

The motion to approve the FY27 budget passed with unanimous approval.

- Personnel and Policy Committee. Presented by Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - Director's Evaluation Quarterly Check-In.
 - Ms. McDermott reported. We had a quarterly check-in this past month for Ms. Schmidt's evaluation process. The results were similar with positive things to say during a challenging time for the library with the new library, budget constraints, and legislative impacts.
 - Ms. McDermott reminded everyone that they need to respond to the check-ins as it's one of the primary roles of a trustee to evaluate the director. We receive responses from most and she'd like responses from all.
- Library Director's Report
 - Ms. Schmidt reported. The project team – library, OPN, and City – are reviewing the Busse Branch's Discovery Garden quotes, as they came in higher than expected. We've been discussing, not only the logistics of that, (we are under in other places) but the timing aligned with continued conversations with the Parks department. We're looking very heavily into opportunities for more collaborative work for their phase 1 and our garden.

Can we save money? More details are in progress, should be able to report back in a month what the result looks like.

- Old Business
 - There being no old business, the meeting continued.
- New Business
 - There being no new business, the meeting continued.
- Adjournment
 - There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:23 pm.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 4 pm in the Community Room, Ladd Library