

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Cedar Rapids Public Library**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**March 2, 2023**

**Board members in attendance:** [President] Clint Twedt-Ball, Chris Casey, Elisabeth Hepworth, Rafael Jacobo, Susie McDermott (in person); Hassan Selim (via Zoom)

**Unable to attend:** [Vice President] Monica Challenger, Jade Hart

**Staff in attendance:** Dara Schmidt, Erin Horst, Kevin Delecki, Jessica Musil (in person); Jessica Link (via Zoom)

**Others:** Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation (in person)

- A. Call to Order
  - Mr. Twedt-Ball called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
  - Minutes: February 2, 2023
  - Mr. Jacobo moved to accept the consent agenda. Ms. McDermott seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.*
- C. Public Comments and Communications
  - There being none, the meeting continued

Ms. Casey joined the meeting at 4:02 pm.

- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
  - The Foundation has been busy with planning the capital campaign and the Literary Vines fundraiser on Saturday, May 5. The event, with beer and wine paired with heavy appetizers, is from 6-8:30 pm.
  - The Foundation team is making capital campaign visits with potential lead donors. In addition, they are exploring grant opportunities. The Foundation received its first grant during the quiet phase, and are thrilled to have the support. Ms. Schmidt and Ms. Tyler will present to the Hall-Perrine Foundation at the end of April as part of their respective grant process. In the meantime, Ms. Tyler is managing the capital campaign members working on the Foundation's behalf.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
  - Ms. Schmidt presented for Ms. Slappey. The Friends will host their April Fools Book sale, which is comprised of a large inventory from a closed bookstore, at the Cherry Building. They will sell multiple copies of brand-new books for \$1 each.
  - The Friends voted to support the 2023 summer reading program at an increased amount, committing \$25,000 on top of the Foundation's \$20,000.
- F. Library Board Committee Reports
  - Advocacy Committee – Rafael Jacobo, Committee Chair
    - The committee is up to date on the Westside Library Project. They are also reviewing implications of potential state legislative actions. The library emailed talking points to advocate with elected officials. Mr. Elges noted citizens can reach out to officials who may not represent you.
  - Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
    - Ms. Casey reported for Ms. Challenger and reviewed the January Finance memo as presented in the board packet. Seven months into the fiscal year, the library is ahead of revenue. Ms. Casey reminded the board that revenue comes in

throughout the year, and won't necessarily predict how the final revenue budget concludes.

- Due to the state's miscalculation of property taxes, the City has to reduce their overall budget by \$2 million. In response to this, the library will reduce its FY23 budget by \$50,000 in Materials spending, which was an increased ask this fiscal year. The cut will not impact services and programs. After the City budget is approved, the Finance Committee bring the revised budget back to the board for approval. If the overall budget is under by \$50,000, we can roll that amount into FY24. Mr. Twedt-Ball asked if the materials budget of \$500,000 has been static or changed over time. Ms. Schmidt said the budget has been static for six to seven years. The FY24 increase would provide more cushion for materials costs. Print prices are increasing, as well as digital, which have always been higher. The standard is a library's budget allocate 10% of the budget to materials. In time, we will want to close that gap. The City is closely following and planning for impacts due to the miscalculation. The state has given cities an additional month to update and finalize budgets. We anticipate the budget to be approved at the end of April so the board should see the library's budget in May.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
  - The policy review has completed. The committee took a break before their next planned task: the annual library director review process.
- Westside Project Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
  - Ms. Schmidt reported for Ms. Hart. The library had a fantastic meeting with OPN yesterday, with discussions centering on the interior layout for operational functionality. It feels like the layout is getting closer to a complete plan. Soon, OPN will take the layout and ideas back to cost estimation to ensure the design aligns with budget. In the first week of May, we'll host a second open house to show the design to the public.
  - OPN reviewed results from the initial survey, gathering feedback on the Westside Library project. The results did not have any surprises, and highlighted areas of improvement we are currently planning. For example, more books to increase collection sizes for children and teens; increased community spaces; and dedicated spaces for youth for collections and programming. Amber McNamara and our community partners reached many underserved and under-represented populations to receive their feedback. The online survey had over 500 click throughs and we received feedback in all of the languages we targeted.
  - The City Parks Department will release a RFP for the adjacent park property. Ms. Schmidt will be on the RFP committee to continue close collaboration between the library and parks projects.
  - The building design is thoughtful to ensure accessibility and welcoming, and will include exterior spaces and courtyards. Where possible, we also plan to reuse existing fixtures. The Public Works department will join the project meetings to ensure the road and sidewalk improvements align with the build process.

#### G. Library Director's Report.

- The library received two awards for the Jerry Kline Community Impact Prize – one will stay at the library and the other will be given to the City. Immediately following this meeting, we are hosting a thank you celebration for community partners.
- Both libraries will be closed on April 28 for professional development. At that time, OPN will present the Westside Library project plan to staff and receive feedback.
- Library volunteers are returning to the buildings more than ever following the pandemic. Jessica Link, Volunteer Supervisor, has done a great job to keep volunteers engaged while away, and supporting their return.
- A year ago, we started to update our print and copy stations to update technology and improve ADA. This work includes upgrading the fax solutions for staff, which is outdated

and difficult for users. Faxes are still important for medical and financial security. Ms. Casey asked if fax prices will decrease for patrons or the library. Costs to patrons and the library will decrease. We charge enough to cover the cost but not earn money from the service. Ms. Hepworth asked if the library will take the new technology to the new building. Now, as we purchase or upgrade items, we weigh options with expansion to the new location as well. It's important to keep products aligned between buildings.

- The library has completed the initial Mandt de-escalation training. The first part of training included the philosophy and skills. philosophic training. Now staff will learn physical skills to escape contact; for example, staff members will learn how to safely escape after being grabbed. This portion of the training is optional for staff, and a majority opted to participate. It's not a fun training, and while we've had limited incidents with patrons making physical contact, but we feel it's important to remain safe. Mandt offers restraint training but we will not include it in our training.
- The City offers an annual Employment Engagement Survey. The library results indicated overall positive rankings from staff – we did not receive any negative scores. The results really speak to the culture work and training we've implemented to support staff with de-escalation training and trauma-informed care. Ms. Schmidt shared a great story, which was not in the packet about a staff and patron interaction. A patron witnessed a compassionate interaction between a staff member and patron in crisis, and the witnessing patron thanked the staff for their caring assistance. Mr. Jacobo asked about how the library maintains trainings for staff. The Mandt System requires an in-depth training once, followed by a refresher, and then the second year requires the full training again. We decided to try this system, as it is highly regarded for similar settings, such as schools and hospitals. We will continue to evaluate its effectiveness over the next four years.

H. Old Business

- There being no old business, the meeting continued.

I. New Business

- There being no new business, the meeting continued.

J. Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:47 pm.

**The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, April 6, 2023, at 4 pm in the Community Room, Ladd Library**