

Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
April 1, 2021

Board members in attendance: [President] Jade Hart, [Vice President] Clint Twedt-Ball, Monica Challenger, Mary Sharp, Susie McDermott, Rafael Jacobo, Matt Wilding

Absent: Hassan Selim, Randy Ramlo

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

Others: Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library

A. Call to Order

- Ms. Hart called the meeting to order at 4 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: March 4, 2021

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

C. Public Comments and Communications

- There being none, the meeting continued.

D. Foundation Report – Dara Schmidt for Charity Tyler

- Ms. Tyler has received several gifts in March outside the planned campaigns and is thrilled at the additional support through donors.
- As a reminder, Rooted in Reading bundles are still available, though down to last 50. The program supports Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) and will help improve the tree canopy in our area. Details are posted on the Library's website.

E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey

- The joint Friends and Foundation newsletter is in its final phases before mailing. The newsletter will highlight the life and gift of Nadine Sandberg as well as list book sales at the Farmers Markets and Cherry Building's November sale. In the meantime, Friends continue to pick-up donated books from individuals.
- Ms. Sharp asked for an update on the Sustainable Shelves program. Ms. Slappey reported that it is up and running with volunteers who scan books and a list is submitted to Baker and Taylor. From there, Friends get a determination on the books' worth: money for the Friends or recycling. Books are then packaged and mailed. So far, Friends have mailed about 50-60 cases; one case holds about 30 books.
- Ms. Hart asked if the Cherry Building is open for browsing. Currently, Friends will allow private appointments for browsing but they anticipate Basement Books will open in November. They hope to improve inventory through a collection refresh.

F. Board Education: Foundation, Friends, & Library Collaboration – Dara Schmidt and Libby Slappey

- The Foundation, Friends, and Library worked with consultant Toni Garvey to best determine and define an appropriate and mutually beneficial collaboration between the three entities. Ms. Garvey was impressed with the existing positive working relationships and felt strongly that this was a great starting place to work together in the future.

- Ms. Schmidt highlighted the main recommendations from Ms. Garvey, as presented in the packet. This included:
 - Shared on-boarding of all three boards to better understand the organizations and its respective work;
 - Annual strategic collaboration session to understand goals;
 - Advocacy training for all boards; and
 - Maintaining an updated Friends' membership list.
- All entities look forward to bolstering each other. Typically, a library is reinforced by the two support organizations, instead this plan allows all of the organizations to be supported.
- Ms. Hart asked what the final consulting fee was. Ms. Schmidt shared it was \$1700.
- Ms. Sharp asked about how the three entities could best support advocacy efforts and also major asks, such as a levy or capital project. Organizations classified as a 501c3, such as Friends and Foundation, cannot endorse candidates for elections or campaigns but they are permitted to lobby. The Library, as a government entity, has different rules: we can provide impartial information but cannot endorse a person or particular vote, or lobby. Nationally, Friends group are very much advocates for libraries in many ways – we have opportunities to call on Friends members but haven't done so in the past. Now that the collaboration is defined, we have more potential.

G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Matthew Wilding for Randy Ramlo, Committee Chair
 - Mr. Wilding reviewed Ms. Schmidt's Finance Memo and February 2021's financial statement. At this time, the Library is in a good position for expenditures and is enough under budget that we're looking at some fiscal year 2022 planned purchases to complete in fiscal year 2021.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Clint Twedt-Ball, Committee Chair
 - The committee is starting the annual library director's evaluation. More information will be emailed to trustees but expect the full board review in June.
 - In addition, the committee discussed the newly revised State Library of Iowa's handbook for trustees. Next month, the committee will start sharing discussion items and topics regularly with the board.
- Advocacy Committee – Mary Sharp, Committee Chair
 - National Library Week is next week, and Ms. Sharp encouraged trustees to post some of the social media graphics that Ms. McNamara emailed. In addition, April 8 is Library Giving Day, a special opportunity highlight a library's worth and fundraise for libraries.
 - The Build America's Library Act designated \$5 billion for libraries' infrastructure upgrades. Ms. Sharp will email phone numbers of senators and state representatives and an online petition to advocate for local needs.

H. Library Director's Report

- Ms. Schmidt noted that the strategic planning calendar has been updated to reflect a change in one of the Inclusion initiatives. We planned to gather community feedback in May. However, we will work with our partner United Way to participate in their large community survey in the Fall.
- The recent federal stimulus money designated over \$100 million to libraries through the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The allocation, which will go through State Libraries, will be available for public library projects. Libraries were surveyed on project interest and Ms. Schmidt anticipates that we'll know soon how to access the funds working with the State Library. There is money specifically available for WiFi hotspot lending and rural Internet service.
- Last month, the Library and Foundation formally announced the Nadine Sandberg gift. In the next 4-6 weeks, along with City partners, we will define a feasibility study RFP.

Together, all entities wish to take the time to appropriately use the gift; Ms. Schmidt anticipates a year long process before coming back to the board with a recommendation.

- The Library is excited for service increases in May. This will include reopening on Sundays at the downtown library as well as expanding computer time, increasing access, and stopping materials quarantine as recommended by federal guidelines. Meeting rooms, in-person programming, and seating are anticipated to return six weeks after vaccines are readily available to all library staff. Theoretically, all adults are eligible to receive a vaccine starting Monday, April 5 but this does not equate readily available. Ms. Schmidt would like all staff to have a chance to be fully vaccinated before reinstating high risk services. We cannot ask staff members if they are vaccinated so we have use community conditions and vaccine availability, while also granting staff time for the vaccine to be fully effective. We do anticipate in-person outdoor programming this summer even if in-person in-building programming is not a possibility. Ms. Hart asked if the library has received any public pushback to its mitigation efforts. Ms. Schmidt reported that instances are low and mostly pertain to individuals who need more time on the computer. She also noted that locally, we're the only open library – Hiawatha is finishing their construction project; and Marion Uptown will open again soon but by appointment only. Mr. Twedt-Ball asked how the Library plans to be accessible to kids this summer. We will do a full Summer Reading Program, and offer programming out in the community, partnering with Parks and Rec to add the literacy component, in addition to our own virtual programming.
 - Ms. Hart asked if the Library is hosting tax assistance this year in light of the pandemic. AARP is offering services at downtown though they are using Beems Auditorium for better distancing. VITA has also returned to Ladd.
- 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 4:58 pm

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, May 6, 2021, at 4 pm, via Zoom.