

Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
May 4, 2023

Board members in attendance: [President] Clint Twedt-Ball, Jade Hart, Chris Casey, Elisabeth Hepworth, Susie McDermott (in person); [Vice President] Monica Challenger, Rafael Jacobo (via Zoom)

Board members unable to attend: Hassan Selim

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

Others: Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation

- A. Call to Order
 - Mr. Twedt-Ball called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
 - B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes: April 6, 2023

Ms. Hart moved to accept the consent agenda. Ms. Casey seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.
 - C. Public Comments and Communications
 - There being none, the meeting continued
 - D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
 - The Foundation is preparing for Literary Vines, which has sold out. This annual event is the Foundation’s biggest fundraiser. They are partnering with Feedwell for catering and Benz for beverages. During the event, guests can also view images from the Westside Library project in Whipple Auditorium.
 - The capital campaign has received a generous \$1.5 million challenge grant from the Hall-Perrine Foundation. Ms. Tyler continues to meet with potential campaign donors weekly. Last week alone, the Foundation raised \$750,000 toward the project. Ms. Hart praise Ms. Schmidt and Ms. Tyler for their presentation to the Hall-Perrine Foundation.
- Mr. Elges joined the meeting at 4:06 pm.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
 - Ms. Tyler reported for Ms. Slappey. The Friends are busy preparing for their large book sale, which will be held at the downtown library on May 19-21.
 - F. Board Education: Strategic Updates & Summer Dare – Kevin Delecki
 - Mr. Delecki led two strategic planning initiatives in recent months. The first multi-department team focused on elementary age learning loss in the Support Elementary Age Learning and Literacy initiative. One goal is to embed literacy with summer and out of school time partners. Summer park visits will include literacy-based activities and expand Summer Dare partners. This allows kids to participate in summer reading and literacy activities if they can visit their respective park or are in daycare settings, making library visits difficult. The initiative will also develop and promote supports of parents/caregivers as educators in the home with specific child literacy education sessions and distributing early literacy programs to go in the library. These are especially important for children and/or families whose first or native language is not English. In addition, the library distributed over 400 books to elementary school students to build home libraries, and increased literacy-based Spark Kits. The Children’s Library will undergo changes to ensure spaces have literacy rich environments to encourage engagement. Mr. Delecki showed examples of furniture and play additions expected in June.

- The second strategic planning initiative found ways to Expand Access to Technology Upholding our Guiding Principle of Equity. The first goal was to partner with Cedar Rapids Community School District educators to infuse technology outside of existing STEM curriculum, showing teachers how to work technology into their regular lessons. The library has also increased access to circulating technology, such as more Spark Kits and expanding circulation of materials at summer park visits. The initiative also called for honing the Maker Room's procedures and technology. The space allows patrons to learn about new and emerging technologies, free of pressure or financial constraints. Based on usage and patron demand, the programming department will take-over the existing Technology Classroom to expand offerings for certified learner times and weekly programs. The classroom's popularity has waned. The library can continue to offer a pop-up technology classroom using the library's Workforce Development laptops.
- Ms. Hart asked where can the laptops be used for a technology classroom? Any library meeting room can be converted into a computer lab, and that is how we operate at Ladd Library. Ms. Hepworth asked if there was a timeline to convert the space. Mr. Delecki said that barring objections, it starts tomorrow with a soft open on June 1 through the summer, with appointments in the fall. The programming team will host a maker fest in the spring. Mr. Elges noted that the expanded location is a much more visible space. Mr. Twedt-Ball asked if there is planned maker room space in the Westside library project plans? We don't have dedicated space but the new building can accommodate enough flexible space for one-off or shorter-term access. The mobile technology lab van will be stored there so the equipment will be accessible.
- Mr. Delecki gave trustees of the library's summer reading program, Summer Dare, which is intended for readers and learners of all ages. The program runs June 3-July 31, starting with a kick-off event at Ladd Library and downtown will host an end of summer celebration. This year, in order to simplify the program, readers will receive a card to complete reading and activity challenges. The new format was designed for equity – allowing participants to complete the program with no or low cost or access to technology, and if you can't leave your location, such as for day care participants. The programs will include park outreach, large performances, weekly programs, camp and daycare outreach, maker room appointments, and middle school summer camps.
- Ms. Hart asked how the library gets participants for the middle school summer camps. Without intentional promotion, the camps and their waitlists fill up quickly. Ms. Hepworth asked if the library has thought about ways to encourage adult reading. Yes, this has been discussed though at the time half of those registered and record reading minutes are over 18. Ms. Schmidt noted that there is significant evidence in our community that grandparents or older relatives are caregivers over the summer who are reading to children. This is why we chose not to have specific age groups within the program. Mr. Twedt-Ball asked how staff feel about reaching populations with the summer reading program? The library doesn't collect demographics. However, we use available data to purposefully target populations.

G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Advocacy Committee – Rafael Jacobo, Committee Chair
 - Mr. Jacobo reported. In the past week, it was Take Action for Libraries Day. Trustees should have received information from the library's Community Relations Manager Amber McNamara. The insights and guidance can help trustees and other stakeholders to become advocates for our library and other libraries.
- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Challenger reviewed the March Finance memo as presented in the board packet. The report is for 75% of the fiscal year. At this point, we have received 81% of revenues and have spent 73% of the budgeted expenses. There are no concerns for revenues and expenses. Ms. Challenger noted that we are over on

discretionary spending, which is a yearly trend and we are 2% underspent 2% on personal services.

- **Action:** FY24 Budget Amendment. The Finance Committee is recommending approval of amending the FY24 316 or CIP budget to reduce the library's allocation for books and materials up to but no lower than \$500,000. This will continue City funding of books at the FY23 rate of \$500,000. Any further requests for reduction require full board approval. If the library's FY23 operations ends with unspent budget, after adjusting for any revenue shortfall if they occur, a combination of rollover funds or transfers could still increase the FY24 Books and Materials CIP budget. Any increases do not require board approval.

The committee recommendation to amend the FY24 budget, as presented in the packet, carried with unanimous approval.

- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - There are no action items. Ms. McDermott thanked trustees for submitting their feedback for the library direction evaluation process. The formal evaluation will come at the June board meeting.
- Westside Project Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - With OPN, the library hosted another community open house to showcase preliminary designs and gather feedback. The event was well attended with positive comments. Ms. Schmidt presented the OPN boards, which were at the open house event. The boards gave information on the timeline, site plans, floor plan diagram, and architectural renderings as well as information on design features and comparisons between Ladd and the new facility. The architect has completed the first pricing exercise, and we are close to maintaining the cost following some adjustments without significant alterations.
 - In response to a question from Ms. Casey, Ms. Schmidt confirmed that the new westside library's operating budget will be the same with the current building's operating budget.
 - Ms. Hepworth asked how the square footage will change. The current building's square footage of library space, not including the Opportunity Center, is 22,000. The new building will be approximately 42,000 square feet, which does not include the geothermal space as it's underground. The new building is the same length and doubles the width. The new design is more walkable as you can park and enter at either end of the building.
 - A discussion was held on a sense of urgency for fundraising to start construction in mid to late 2024. The Foundation hopes to close the capital campaign in July 2024. Ms. Tyler plans to have a closing celebration and groundbreaking in summer or fall 2024, allowing for 24 months for construction. OPN will have construction documents ready in the next few months but will pause on going for bid so the Foundation can fundraise and allows contractors to bid with better, real-time pricing. Timelines will continue to be updated as the overall project and fundraising continue while meeting ARPA fund requirements.
 - Ms. McDermott asked about the timeline for selling the other parcel. Ms. Tyler noted it is a complicated process that involves many moving parts. An ad hoc committee will develop recommendations with the Foundation board to develop covenants and determine next steps. The Foundation wants to ensure the land is sold to an appropriate neighbor and recoup money to put back into the project. The library will also need to request the parcel for the library, which also impacts the parcel to sell.
 - Ms. Hart asked when the public phase of the campaign will start. Ms. Tyler's goal is to have a 10-12 month for public fundraising.

H. Library Director's Report

- Ms. Schmidt highlighted two great stories that she received for the same program on the new director's report documentation.
- The packet also included the American Library Association's 2023 State of American Libraries report. Ms. Schmidt highlighted the top most challenged books of 2022, and censorship by the numbers. This year, public libraries have encountered more challenges at 48%, increasing from 37% last year. The Personnel and Policy committee has worked to ensure a clear Reconsideration Policy for any future challenges to our materials. Parents account for 30% of challenges, which has gone down from 39%. However, political and religious groups have increased by 10%.
- Ms. Schmidt shared gifts with the trustees that staff received for National Library Week at the end of the professional development day. Ms. McDermott attended the morning sessions; she felt the information was well done and engagement was palpable.

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 5:39 pm.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, June 1, 2023, at 4 pm in the Community Room, Ladd Library