

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Cedar Rapids Public Library**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**July 6, 2023**

**Board members in attendance:** [Vice President] Monica Challenger, Elisabeth Hepworth, Susie McDermott, Jeremy Elges (in person); Chris Casey, Hassan Selim (via Zoom)

**Board members unable to attend:** [President] Clint Twedt-Ball, Jade Hart, Rafael Jacobo

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

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

- A. Call to Order
  - Ms. Challenger called the meeting to order at 4 pm.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
  - Minutes: June 1, 2023
  - Mr. Elges 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
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
  - Ms. Schmidt reported for Ms. Tyler. The Foundation staff is working hard to meet donor commitment goals and schedule conversations with potential donors for the Westside Library project.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
  - The Friends have been busy with summer Farmer’s Market sales, which have been successful. The Friends are hopeful the remaining sales will also be a success. In addition, online sales are going well, and they have found a lucrative market for old textbooks.
  - At the next Friends board meeting, the organization will welcome new board members.
- F. Board Education: Strategic Plan Year Two Update – Dara Schmidt
  - In July, library staff will start working on year two of the current strategic plan. The first year went well, and the respective committee chairs reported to the board throughout the past year on the progress. Ms. Schmidt read through the year two goals and initiatives for the three main pillars of the plan: Literacy, Access, and Inclusion. She also reviewed a calendar indicating when the teams will work on the initiatives over the next 12 months. As with last year, the committee chairs will report to the board as appropriate.
- G. Library Board Committee Reports
  - Nominating Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
    - **Action:** Slate of Officers FY24. The committee recommended another year with the current leadership slate: Clint Twedt-Ball as President and Monica Challenger as Vice President. The committee believes they will continue to lead the board well in the next year, and both nominees agreed to continue service if approved.  
*The committee recommendation to re-appoint Mr. Twedt-Ball as President and Ms. Challenger as Vice President for FY24 carried with unanimous approval.*
  - Advocacy Committee – Rafael Jacobo, Committee Chair
    - Ms. Schmidt reported for Mr. Jacobo. At the June Advocacy meeting, the discussion centered on current legislation efforts impacting libraries. The library shared talking points with trustees, Foundation, Friends, staff, and other advocates.

- Unfortunately, the library had to sever the relationship with the Cedar Rapids Community School District to create library cards for students because of concerns with State Law 496. The law limits what can be available in school libraries, and the school district chose to stop issuing library cards based on school IDs in response to the law in order to protect students and educators. Library leadership will review with the program with the district again in a year as well as discuss other opportunities. Ms. Schmidt noted that ten percent of the cards were used regularly, and those cards will remain active for the students. The library removes any inactive library cards after three years. In an upcoming purge of inactive accounts, we expect library cardholder numbers to drop significantly, as this program started about three years ago. Ms. Schmidt also believes that this legislation may put additional pressure on public libraries to maintain collections as school libraries are limited.
- Ms. McNamara noted that the committee also discussed implications on city budgets because of legislative changes capping taxes. It's possible these caps could impact the FY25 budget, requiring modifications. The law also reduces a senior tax base, which could impact the budget as well.
- Ms. Casey asked if the library has heard from school librarians about books that they can no longer shelve. We've heard that some are boxing and storing books for now. Schools are waiting to receive final direction from the state level and school administration before doing any more. The Friends have not received any discarded books for donation yet.
- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
  - Ms. Challenger reviewed the May Finance memo as presented in the board packet. Eleven months into the fiscal year, the library has received 91% of revenues and has paid out 89% of the anticipated expenses. The final fiscal year accounting will not be available until September or October, at which point they will have been certified by the City. Once received, the board will receive an update. Ms. Schmidt also noted that Finance committee will not meet in August due to lack of June financial information.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
  - **Action:** Policy 3.08 Right to Protest, Petition, and Assemble.
    - The committee is recommending a new policy. Ms. Schmidt reported that other libraries similar in size and larger have this type of policy, so it's not uncommon. The committee has had multiple conversations to hone the policy prior to having it vetted by the City Attorney.

*The committee recommendation to adopt the new policy as presented in the packet carried with unanimous approval.*

- Westside Project Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
  - Ms. Schmidt reported for Ms. Hart. The committee will meet again at the end of July. OPN has adjusted the building design, and that design's cost will be estimated to ensure the project remains on target for the budget. The cost estimation will be ready for the next meeting to review. At this point in the project, we will likely take a pause for fundraising. In June 2024, the library trustees will ask the Foundation for possession of the land with groundbreaking to occur not long after. The goal is to open in September 2026. A more detailed report should go to the board in August after the committee meeting.
  - Ms. McDermott asked Ms. Schmidt if she learned anything interesting at American Library Association (ALA) conference regarding building projects? Ms. Schmidt went to a session on net zero architecture, and shared about a library on the east coast that used geothermal and solar to be net zero for energy use. Ms. Schmidt will ask OPN if this could be possible for the Westside Library.

#### H. Library Director's Report

- Ms. Schmidt attended the ALA conference at the end of June. During the conference, she attended her final meeting as a Public Library Association (PLA) board member. Though her three-year term is over, she may join a committee in future. In general, Ms. Schmidt attended on building projects. Otherwise, she focused on intellectual freedom and developing strong board policies. Ms. Schmidt feels very confident that our library is preparing well for future issues.
  - The summer reading program continues to go strong with sign-ups, programming attendance, and community engagement. The end of summer party is on July 29. Though the program is halfway done, Ms. Schmidt encouraged people to join.
  - The library was accredited through the State Library of Iowa for another three years at the top tier. Ms. Schmidt expressed thanks to the trustees for reviewing the policies and staff for their work as well. It is a time-consuming process but it's really important to complete to benefit our community.
- 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 4:50 pm.

**The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, August 3, 2023, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library**