

Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
September 2, 2021

Board members in attendance: [President] Jade Hart (in person); [Vice President] Clint Twedt-Ball, Susie McDermott, Matt Wilding, Rafael Jacobo, and Monica Challenger (all via Zoom)

Unable to attend: Hassan Selim, Mary Sharp

Staff in attendance: [Library Director] Dara Schmidt, Patrick Duggan, Jessica Musil, and Amber McNamara (in person); Todd Simonson, Sarah Voels and Jessica Link (all via Zoom)

Others: Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation and Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library (both via Zoom)

- A. Call to Order
 - Ms. Hart called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm. The consent agenda vote was postponed until quorum was established.
- B. Public Comments and Communications
 - There being none, the meeting continued
- C. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
 - The Foundation received another bequest. Mr. Gerald O’Brien, a Cedar Rapids native, was avid user of the library and left his IRA to the Library Foundation.
 - Ms. Tyler is in the process of thanking donors for their support over the last year and informing donors of successes, Foundation plans, and upcoming library initiatives.
 - The Foundation started an enrollment campaign for Dolly Patron’s Imagination Library (DPIL) that will occur throughout the fiscal year. This campaign, alongside the Library, will initially target Cedar Rapids’ child care providers – in-home and licensed centers. Ms. Tyler encouraged everyone to share program information on social media or with specific business cards. In August, 130 children turned 5 and graduated from DPIL.
 - The Foundation’s annual audit will take place in mid-September.
- D. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
 - The Friends held a special board meeting to discuss the annual Fall Sale and will postpone until May 2022 due to the current COVID conditions and recommendations with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). In time, final details will be announced.

4:08 pm Mr. Twedt-Ball joined the meeting.

- Volunteers continue to decrease inventory because reduced sales has overwhelmed the book stock. Friends are also re-considering book donations left at the Library – increasingly, staff are accepting donations that the Friends are unable to sell based on condition and other factors. Friends will develop an education program for donors, addressing what Friends will accept; and create a schedule of donation hours.
- E. Board Education: Strategic Inclusion Update – Dara Schmidt, Todd Simonson, & Sarah Voels
 - Inclusion is one of the three main pillars to our strategic plan and in the last year, we’ve had a lot of momentum on these initiatives following changes in response to the pandemic and the derecho.
 - Ms. Schmidt highlighted the Library’s desire to conduct a community needs assessment but instead will add library questions to a similar survey through United Way. In addition, questions will be added to City survey. New census data will be released and we will review population changes to influence the upcoming strategic plan refresh.
 - The plan also called for incorporating translation services and expanding the multi-lingual collection. Our ILS system allows for English, French, and Spanish – previously it was just

English. The children's AWE computers have been upgraded with multi-lingual options. Staff have been trained on how to incorporate Google Translate and we can use Hands Up Communication for over the phone translation services as needed. Hoopla has added over ten thousand titles in French and offers over 200 music and movie titles in Swahili. Overdrive now has eBook titles in Swahili and Afrikaans as well as several hundred multi-lingual magazines.

- Mr. Simonson presented on the Library participation in the City's Equity Lens process, and subsequent results, specifically policies and procedures related to behavior. In January-March 2020, we had over 100 police calls which disproportionately impacted Black teen boys and homeless individuals. Public Service implemented an empathy based approach to help all patrons find resolution; this system is called KERA (Kindness, Empathy, Rationale, and Alternative or Boundary). In addition to this, we improved tracking for incidents and required a review process for all police calls. Since June 2020, staff filed 20 incident reports, which includes two calls to police for behavior.

4:30 pm Mr. Jacobo joined the meeting.

- Ms. Voels shared results from a collection diversity audit and targeted purchases to better represent and serve our community. In 2018, Ms. Voels and Molly Garrett wished to assess materials for diverse representation, which was a relatively new concept. They focused on the Young Adult and seeking six areas of representation, such as ethnicity, LGBTQIA+. The sample data showed it was 15.87% diverse in 2018. Through targeted purchasing and promotional efforts, diversity rose to 25.5% in 2019 and 35.5% in 2021.
- Mr. Wilding praised library staff for their efforts. He was struck by initial number of police calls and asked if Mr. Simonson had context behind these numbers. The data came from a *Gazette* and not from us – it's hard to know the calls' origins (staff, patron, medical) – but it was clear we needed to collect data, improve our response, and decrease police involvement.
- Mr. Twedt-Ball asked if hiring an off-duty police helped with any security issues. We stopped having a police officer in the building. The Library has seen more improvement with KERA and a Willis Dady Homeless Services' Service Navigator at the Library. This position has been a major asset in this work – the navigator reaches out to patrons to prevent any issues. Library employees are serve on several committees to access other services as necessary.
- Ms. Challenger thanked the team for this important work to move the library where we need to go. Ms. Hart also shared her thanks.

F. Consent Agenda – **Action**

- Minutes: August 5, 2021

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

G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger
 - Ms. Challenger reviewed the July 2021 financials. We have several line items that appear to be over budget at the beginning of the year, which is based on timing of payment and will even out. These include External Contractor for the Service Navigator position and annual subscriptions. There are no budgetary concerns.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Clint Twedt-Ball, Committee Chair
 - State Library of Iowa, Trustees Handbook Discussion: Chapter 7
 - This chapter highlights the importance of strategic planning for the board and libraries, which is a standard for the state library's accreditation program. The Library is challenged to make decisions based on input from staff, trustees, consultants, and the community, and then develop an actionable plan. The goal is to reach as many voices as

possible in a strategic plan. On a regular basis, Library staff report on the goals so trustees can understand progress and impact of the plan. Mr. Wilding agreed that we do a great job with heavy lifting by Ms. Schmidt and staff. He felt the last plan was great and looks forward to the next process. Ms. McDermott feels we're improving routine progress reporting, which keeps the plan at the active; Ms. Hart agreed.

- **Action:** Policy 2.05 Programming and Partnership
 - This proposed policy is a new addition and comes out of discussion with library staff. The purpose is to define and transparently formalize how decisions are made for programs, and partnerships with outside entities. It specifically includes authority and fit for programming, and a partnership consideration filter.
 - Ms. Schmidt noted that we have a collection development policy that identifies philosophy for staff to follow and this policy does the same for programming, formalizing this integral part of the library and services. The goal is give staff full confidence in the support of their work through the policy.
 - Mr. Wilding shared that he's only struggled with programming if determining if it is a good thing to be doing versus fully aligning with the library's mission. He feels the policy will be helpful for programming and partnership development, and while he has no specific suggestion, he wishes to strengthen the language around mission alignment. Ms. Schmidt will bring the policy back to the board to review in six months in case it needs further modification.

The motion to accept Policy 2.05 Programming and Partnership carried with unanimous approval

- Advocacy Committee – Mary Sharp, Committee Chair
 - There being no report, the meeting continued.

H. Library Director's Report

- In response to continued changing community COVID conditions, the Library has updated its service response plan. Previously, scenarios ended at 'when vaccine is available'; however, even with readily available vaccines, we may need to make changes.
- We are coming to the end of our strategic plan. Ms. Schmidt would like to do a plan – not full process – but a re-examination of our pillars: Literacy, Access, and Inclusion. The pillars, and in light of the pandemic, remain important and we have more work we can do. Ms. Schmidt highlighted the timeline as presented in the packet and encouraged trustees to contact her with any questions or concerns.

I. Old Business

- There being no old business, the meeting continued.

J. New Business

- Creation of Westside Project Committee. The RFP for an architect has closed and we received two very strong vendor proposals. We will create a committee with staff, trustees and other stakeholders. Mr. Twedt-Ball has agreed to chair with Ms. Hart, Ms. Challenger, and Mr. Jacobo. Ms. Schmidt will confirm and share more information on the RFP selection meeting and future committee meetings.

K. Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:24 pm

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, October 7, 2021, at 4 pm, in Beems Auditorium, Downtown Library