

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Cedar Rapids Public Library**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**January 6, 2022**

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

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

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

- A. Call to Order
  - Ms. Hart called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
  - Minutes: December 2, 2021
  - The motion to accept the consent agenda 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 has received multiple grants from major corporations to support Dolly Patron's Imagination Library (DPIL).
  - Ms. Tyler received results from the planned giving survey. Of those received, 12 surveys requested more information and another four indicated the Library has been named in the individual's will. Ms. Tyler felt the survey was successful.
  - In February, the Foundation will host their annual Stay Home and Read a Book Ball. The event is Alice and Wonderland themed. Invitations will be mailed at the end of January.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
  - The Friends had a successful sale for the Merry Cherry Open House in December. The sale spaces included the newly revamped basement books and on the first floor.
  - With current COVID conditions, the Friends are still hopeful to host the larger May sale. In the meantime, Friends will continue to host small sales on Saturdays in the downtown library. Ms. Slappey reported that the Friends received a large gift from a lapsed donor.
  - Ms. Sharp asked how much money was earned from the December sale. Ms. Slappey reported Friends earned over \$1600.
- F. Board Education: Library's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Amber McNamara
  - 2022 marks 125 years of library service for the Cedar Rapids community. Starting January 15, both downtown and Ladd libraries will host exhibits themed 'The University of Cedar Rapids,' which is a nod to *The Gazette's* early reference to the new library. The exhibits are different – Downtown's outlines the Library's overall history in a timeline and Ladd's explores service and locations over time. The exhibits will be up through May and will swap buildings in mid-March. The research team combed resources: photos, news reports, old board documents, and annual reports to build out the history on the website, in the special edition of *OPEN+*, and the exhibits. Digging through the research shows that since the Library was established, its primary focus has been on access and inclusion.
  - The Library will host a pandemic friendly celebration on Saturday, January 15 at both locations including exhibits, special take home activities, displays, a video presentation, cookies, and special bookmark giveaway. Throughout the year, we will show a portion of a video series monthly that focusing on a different aspect of library history, as well as a reading challenge throughout the year.

- Community members can share their memories of the library either in-person or on the website. These memories will be posted on the exhibit walls and social media.
- Ms. Sharp encouraged trustees to review the website's history page. She asked what the library plans to do with the community comments. We will post in the exhibits and we've also asked for contact information in case a patron would like us to follow-up.
- Ms. Slappey asked if literacy clubs was meant to be literary clubs. Ms. Schmidt noted that commonly because access to books and libraries were limited, literacy clubs were mostly to access books and information. Many public libraries rose out of these clubs. Ms. McDermott shared that one local club founded in the late 1800s is still active.
- Ms. Hart praised the commemorative edition *OPEN+*, which highlights the Library's history instead of events. *The Gazette* has also provided tremendous coverage.

#### G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger
  - Ms. Schmidt reviewed the November 2021 financials. She shared that some COVID expenses will need to move into operations; these expenses include Zoom subscriptions and some digital access costs. Ms. Schmidt is not concerned about absorbing the costs, which are tracked.
  - **Action:** County Contract for Library Service FY22
    - This annual contract with Linn County, as copied in the packet, provides unincorporated county residents with library services, as they are not paying for library service otherwise. The contract's terms remain the same though the amount changes annually, and is based on previous year's usage. Approximately \$450,000 is split between 11 Linn County libraries. Ms. Schmidt believes this year's increase is due to other libraries service disruptions in response to COVID, the derecho, and construction. Next year's amount may decrease as service stabilizes this fiscal year.  
*The contract with Linn County for Library Services for \$94,075.56 was approved unanimously.*
  - **Action:** FY23 Budget
    - Ms. Schmidt provided an overview of the library's proposed budget for fiscal year 2023. A vast majority of the Library's funding comes from tax payer dollars. The largest account is the general fund; the remaining accounts are made up of capital expenses, grants and trusts, and the now expired library levy, which collects very little in owed back taxes.
    - Every request for budget increases in the General Fund were approved: increase WiFi hotspots; an additional Service Navigator position to expand the downtown program; increase for electricity with Alliant's rate change to cover the expenses; and supply and upkeep expenses for Facilities. Ms. Schmidt reviewed line items, highlighting where increases were modified.
    - Mr. Wilding asked if the personnel increase was driven by the Union contract. The Library has not yet negotiated the contract starting in FY23 so an estimate was calculated though we may need an amendment. He also asked for clarification on the City IT services line item. The money is used to support software and hardware shared across all City departments. Mr. Wilding asked if the Library budgeted for any westside library planning. At this time, money is not allocated because depending on what is needed could be an expense of the Library or the Foundation.
    - Ms. Schmidt then reviewed the Public Library Grants fund, which holds money for projects that unforeseen at budgeting but we need a mechanism to pay for it if the projects occur. While the budget appears out of balance, we have approximately \$300,000 between two funds –

Library Enrichment or Foundation Enrichment – to support unexpected needs.

- The 7020 account holds around \$44,000 from the now expired library levy, and funds can only be used for circulating materials. Ms. Schmidt anticipates the account should close in two years. The money will support hoopla streaming services with additional funding from the Foundation.
- The 310 account holds the funds for materials purchasing. The majority of money for materials is through bonding, as decided by the City. Currently, the Library receives \$500,000; though next year, Dara wishes to increase the materials budget to equal 10% of overall budget, as this is the general standard for libraries. The fund this year has a budgeted \$100,000 to replace downtown furniture – the money is from the Foundation and needs their board’s approval.
- In February, Ms. Schmidt will present the budget to City Council. The budget will be approved in March to start on July 1.
- Ms. Sharp asked if there is discussion to purchase materials with general funds instead of bonding. Ms. Schmidt responded it is ultimately up to the City to determine where the funds come from. The purchase of circulating materials is an appropriate use for bonds. Ms. Schmidt also noted that the City has proven they use bonding responsibly and always in accordance with the law.
- Ms. Challenger shared that the Finance Committee recommends the approval of the budget. They feel confident because the City approved increases and the Foundation is providing additional support as well.

*The FY23 budget, as presented in the packet, was approved unanimously.*

- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
  - State Library of Iowa, Trustees Handbook Discussion: Chapter 16
    - The chapter on Library Buildings is written mostly for smaller libraries. Ms. McDermott specifically discussed the information regarding library meeting rooms. The Library considers meeting rooms an extension of our materials. Rooms are open to all for any reason so long as users follow the Meeting Room and Behavior policies.
  - **Action:** Policy Review. The trustees reviewed the following policies.
    - 1.06 Table of Organization. The committee recommends removing this policy as it is more appropriate as a procedure.
    - 3.00 Library’s Message. The policy does not have any suggested changes.
    - 6.01 Staff Certification. To match the wording from the State Library, the committee recommends replacing the word ‘certification’ with ‘endorsement’ in both the policy text and header.
    - 6.02 Human Resources Authority. The policy has no suggested changes.

*The policy changes, as noted in the packet, were approved unanimously.*

- Advocacy Committee – Mary Sharp, Committee Chair
  - Ms. Sharp reminded trustees to sign-up for and complete executive interviews with community leaders, as this information may inform the next strategic plan. Last month, Ms. McNamara shared the questionnaire form and sign-up sheet. This will be sent again with updated talking points to include the budget for conversations with City Council members.
- Westside Project Committee – Clint Twedt-Ball, Committee Chair
  - Ms. Schmidt shared that she submitted the County’s ARPA grant application to request funding for the project; she anticipates knowing the grant’s status by the end of February. Otherwise, Ms. Schmidt and others have had great conversations to advocate for the project.

#### H. Library Director’s Report

- At next month's meeting, we will talk about the Meeting Room policy. Key staff members are reviewing the policy.
  - Community COVID rates are high right now and the Library is experiencing the highest staff illness/exposure rate. Even with the staff illnesses and exposures, Library service has not been impacted. We continue to work with City Human Resources and follow CDC guidelines. Library leadership continues to monitor conditions and may need to make changes on short notice. Our choices will remain thoughtful to reduce spread so we don't need to pull back much. At this time, the Library feels safety measures are adequate and will continue as is.
  - Communication Workers of America (CWA), the staff union, is set to negotiate its next contract in a week. The contract will go to the full board for approval as well. The current contract expires June 30.
- 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 5:08 pm

**The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, February 3, 2022, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library**