

Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
December 1, 2022

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

Unable to attend: Hassan Selim

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

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

- A. Call to Order
 - Mr. Twedt-Ball called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes: November 3, 2022
 - Special Event Application

Ms. Hart 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
 - The Foundation was busy last month, processing gifts from the newsletter, sending out the year-end appeal, and preparing for a capital campaign. They are still selling gift box sets for \$40. People can support the Foundation by purchasing one of five library focused shirts through an online store supported by Raygun. GivingTuesday exceeded the fundraising goal.
 - Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) continues to grow, and now has 60% of eligible children enrolled. The Foundation and Library are looking at ways to increase sign-ups, and plan to meet with the Cedar Rapids Community School District.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
 - The Fall book sale was very successful at the downtown library. Ms. Slappey thanked the library staff for providing directional assistance and being welcoming to shoppers. She appreciated the location with the spacing and lighting. Friends members received positive feedback, and they look forward to hosting the sale at the library in future. Ms. Slappey also expressed thanks to the Library’s Content Writer, Alison Gowans, as she helped garner media attention.
 - This Saturday, the Friends will participate in the Very Cherry Holiday Event with a book sale. It will include giftables for shoppers.

Ms. Casey joined the meeting at 4:10 pm.

- Trustees shared their thanks for Ms. Slappey and the Friends They appreciate the sale efforts and providing a positive shopping experience, and bringing people to the library.
- F. Board Education: Urban Libraries Council Annual Forum Recap – Amber McNamara
 - In November, Ms. Schmidt and Ms. McNamara attended the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) Annual Forum. ULC is a member organization for larger urban libraries across the

country. We are members to gain peer support and insight for challenges the libraries face. Each year, the annual forum is an aspect of support.

- This forum, the first since 2019, focused on creating a place for democracy, which is a big component of our strategic plan and the Westside project. Conference sessions explored challenging library materials and programs, how racism in democracies impacts libraries, and how removing barriers affects marginalized populations, such as going fine free.
- The biggest aha moment was a presentation from Tommi Laitio, an inaugural Bloomberg Public Innovation Fellow, about libraries as civic spaces and practices for partnerships between libraries and government agencies, specifically parks. He worked on the Helsinki Finland library project, which opened on the country's 100th anniversary following 25 years gathering community input for this library. Laitio shared how they reached diverse community members and the importance of validating each person and their opinion. He noted that libraries are moving away from books to be 'a place for everyone to be a somebody' regardless of what that is. He discussed his idea that libraries and parks are the last places of democracy. True diversity of people is bound to bring friction, and communities must remove the idea with 'everything is perfect' and shift to an idea of conviviality: having the tools to live as we are and being comfortable with that difference. Libraries are committed to being shared spaces and resources regardless of discomfort in order to improve lives. Libraries should move beyond being a neutral space to principled.
- The conference ended with a review of the the ULC Declaration of Democracy. In January, we will bring the document to the board to decide if this library will join the commitment.
- Ms. Casey feels that the information and discussion is good to have as we progress in the next decade. Ms. McNamara noted that a lot of the democracy and challenge issues are in rural communities, and ULC is working to support small/rural libraries.
- Mr. Twedt-Ball likes the idea of principles that we can stand on, and sharing experiences with smaller libraries that may not have the same policies and resources. Mr. Twedt-Ball also asked if Mr. Laitio has practical ways for libraries and parks to work together. At this time, he is still in the study phase but he's available for consultation. He's trying to understand how the partnerships work, specifically the process and not the outcome. Ms. Schmidt is hoping we can talk to him as our Westside Library project progresses.
- Ms. Hart asked if there were some specific examples of how to engage the underserved in community input sessions. Ms. McNamara is reviewing content available online and will bring it to future discussions and planning with OPN.
- Ms. Hepworth noted it is clear that the conference was impactful and timely. She feels confident we can take the insights and apply it to the Westside Project.

G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Advocacy Committee – Rafael Jacobo, Committee Chair
 - The committee met and a bulk of the meeting was spent discussing Ms. McNamara's Board Education report. He believes we can use the information to our advantage.
- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Challenger reviewed the October Finance memo. Expenses and revenues remain on track. Discretionary is overbudget, though this is normal as many contracts are due at the beginning of the year but will even out as the year concludes. She anticipates we will overspend our Alliant budget but it will be covered from other budget lines. Other Special Pays is up (86%) because several long-term employees retired.
 - Ms. Challenger anticipates the FY24 budget will be presented in January.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - **Action:** Policy Review. Ms. McDermott reviewed the following policies.
 - 4.06 The Use of Security Cameras. This policy has no recommended changes. Ms. McDermott noted that the policy is more stringent for

interior camera footage as it could show what people are accessing in the library.

- 4.07 Philanthropic and Recognition Naming. As the campaign is coming, the policy was clarified to note the difference between naming and recognition opportunities. Mr. Twedt-Ball noted that the policy added a line about allowing the City and Library to work together in naming. Mr. Elges made a word change suggestion. The trustees agreed to change 'companionable' to 'compatible'.

The committee recommendation to approve the above as presented in the board packet, with the word change in policy 4.07, carried with unanimous approval.

- Westside Project Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - **Action:** Inspiring Big Dreams Campaign Naming and Recognition Opportunities
 - The Foundation has created campaign naming and recognition opportunities as we anticipate the upcoming capital campaign. Although we don't have a firm design yet, this policy will help inform early campaign asks. It can be modified as the design becomes clear.
 - Mr. Elges feels that this document aligns with the updated policy. Ms. Hart shared that giving levels will be updated as the project unfolds. Ms. Tyler highlighted that using philanthropic names in general reference to the space will be left to the discretion of the Library staff, as noted in the policy. It gives the library staff guide rails. Mr. Twedt-Ball asked if it should be library staff or trustees. Ms. Tyler noted that donors and amounts are not discussed at a public meeting and that's probably why it is library staff versus trustees though trustees can be consulted. The library's policy notes the board is responsible by approving the Foundation policy, which is the mechanism for the board. Mr. Twedt-Ball asked about how naming will be handled if a donor wants to name a room that has a negative connotation. The policy allows the trustees to refuse or even pull a naming after the fact. Ms. Hart asked if this policy will be brought back to the trustees. Ms. Tyler shared it won't. Ms. Slappey asked how this aligns with the downtown's Library 3.0 Campaign. It is not a fair or easy comparison as there are major differences between the projects, such as building size and philanthropic opportunities.

The committee recommendation to approve the Inspiring Big Dreams Campaign Naming and Recognition Opportunities from the Library Foundation carried with unanimous approval.

H. Library Director's Report.

- Ms. McNamara is reporting for Ms. Schmidt, as she is traveling in Baltimore. Ms. Schmidt and Library Union Steward Mary Beth McGuire were invited to present on library and union relations at the Library Journal Director's Summit. The invitation followed the Jerry Kline Community Impact Award.
- The Library is participating in a gingerbread contest in conjunction with AARP and the City. The contest focuses on Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) – another house or smaller unit on your property for cohabitation – to draw awareness to this concept. The library is distributing 250 kits for participants to build a main house and adjacent ADU. There are several prizes opportunities. Library and City employees are not eligible to participate. Photo submissions will be posted online for public voting.
- The library is bustling again with events and increased meeting room use. On Saturday, we will host family activities prior to the tree lighting in Greene Square. On December 10 we will welcome back MerryTuba Christmas.

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 5:00 pm.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, January 5, 2023, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library