

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Cedar Rapids Public Library**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**December 7, 2023**

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

**Board members unable to attend:** Hassan Selim

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

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

A. Call to Order

- Mr. Twedt-Ball called the meeting to order at 4 pm. Prior to starting the meeting's business, Ms. McDermott asked if the board would consider a motion to change the order of the meeting as Mr. Jacobo needs to leave early. She suggested that the Advocacy Committee report would take place after the Friend's report, followed by Board Education and then the remaining Board Committee reports.

*Ms. McDermott moved to accept the proposed agenda change. Mr. Elges seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.*

B. Consent Agenda – **Action**

- Minutes: November 2, 2023

*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 continues to share the news about the Westside Library Project with potential donors and prospects. The images now include the adjacent park concept images. Ms. Tyler has submitted one letter of intent for a large 6-figure gift as well as two others letters and plans to submit one application by the end of the year. The Foundation team has also prepared new parcel descriptions so the land will be ready for the Library to purchase sometime in January.
- DPIL enrollment/Yusko Literary Coord. Working hard to share with community partners/re-engaging enrollment. Outpaced enrollment and graduates for the first time in a long time.

Ms. Casey arrived at 4:05 pm

E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey

- The Friends held a successful book sale during the Very Cherry Holiday open house. They are planning a Romance Sale in conjunction with a visiting author on Saturday, February 17. Romance sales are becoming increasingly popular, with customers asking for more at the Friends' sales.

F. Library Board Committee Reports

- Advocacy Committee – Rafael Jacobo, Committee Chair
  - Advocacy Toolkit. Mr. Jacobo reported that the committee, with help from library staff, developed an advocacy toolkit – a booklet with information for community

member to provide guidance when asking for library support at any point in time. The toolkit will be available in January, starting with a public launch event on Thursday, January 4. The document was created with information from multiple sources, including but not limited to the Iowa Library Association, Public Library Association, America Library Association and United for Libraries.

- Ms. McNamara previewed an advocacy website ([www.crlibrary.org/advocacy](http://www.crlibrary.org/advocacy)), where users can find the digital toolkit as well as access to important documents, such as strategic plan, annual report, and other advocacy resources.
- She also discussed the toolkit's contents. The document introduces the library, why advocacy is important, and the library's accomplishments. It also lists out local, county, state, and federal representatives with contact information so supporters know who is representing our area. The document also has helpful tips on communicating with those who may disagree with you, the process to create laws, and tips for effective advocacy. The final page is a calendar, which is a general guide for ways to engage with stakeholders through the year.
- Ms. Casey asked about expectations for the public launch. Ms. McNamara plans to publicly invite key stakeholders – such as local elected officials, school board members, and partner organizations – to attend a brief presentation explaining the toolkit and library resources as well as answer any questions. The hope is to also draw those who are interested in supporting the library but haven't found their niche yet, such as library volunteers, Friends members, Foundation board members and donors, non-profit community partners, and community leaders. Ms. Schmidt noted that many libraries have talked about creating a similar document but of peer libraries, we're the first to produce this so we'll invite local library leaders as well.

G. Board Education: Maker Space Update – Kevin Delecki

- About six months ago, Mr. Delecki presented on strategic initiatives that included expanding the maker spaces by converting the less used technology classroom. After that presentation, the programming team started work to re-vamp the spaces.
- The former twelve student computer lab was redesigned with project and open lab table space, exploring different tech such as 3D printer, button makers, and Cricut. Patrons can make appointments, attend drop-in open hours, or participate in programs. The room is in use almost daily for person, business, and educational purposes.
- In 2022, the technology classroom had 367 reservations, of which only 65 used the room's computers. The Maker Room, located in the young adult area, served 212 patrons with 130 appointments and three programs from February 2022-April 2023. With the additional maker space in the former technology classroom, 627 patrons were served from June-November 2023 with 124 appointments, 53 public programs, and one week-long camp. Nine patrons are certified learners. The room hosts about 20 hours of appointments per week and 2-4 programs a week. The expansion did not cost additional funds, require more staff, nor did it reduce core services. Mr. Delecki showed the library's website which details information on the spaces, hours, projects, and a listing of events.
- Mr. Twedt-Ball asked about the popularity of the spaces' offerings. Mr. Delecki noted that it has shifted – the laser cutter was by far the most popular but there's been a shift to the 3D printer and Cricut. Use varies though about half of the appointments are for the laser cutter. In time, Mr. Delecki would like to add to the offerings; however, wants to balance comfortability as it is a learning lab – not a production space – with materials provided at our cost to encourage learning and any device should align with learning, not production. Ms. Casey asked how staff encourage learners to a production venue? By the time a patron is at that stage, there is a relationship with the staff to have a conversation like this. Some patrons will also bring in their own materials, which are vetted by the library to protect the equipment for larger projects. Ms. McDermott is happy to see a revival in the space – the technology classroom was great at opening but this new use is exciting.

## H. Library Board Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
  - Ms. Schmidt reported for Ms. Challenger on October 2023 financials. Revenues are on track for this point of the fiscal year. We're a little over on expenses because we pay for several large expenses at the beginning of the year and it will even out.
  - The FY25 budget approval cycle dates may delay the library board's approval of the budget. Typically, this is done in January but February is more likely to align with the City's deadlines.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair. The committee reviewed three policies, which are the bedrock of the library's basic philosophy. There are no changes to the Library Bill of Rights or Freedom to Read. However, the committee is recommending updates to language in Freedom to View to be more current and concise.
  - **Action:** 1.02 Library Bill of Rights
  - **Action:** 1.03 Freedom to Read
  - **Action:** 1.04 Freedom to View

*The committee recommendation to approve the reviewed policies as presented in the packet carried with unanimous approval.*
- Westside Project Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
  - Earlier today, OPN presented options to the committee to align the design with the budget. They gave several examples of how the building could be modified to stay within cost. The trustees will review information and present their selection at a later date. The decisions will not impact usability and the overall concept.
  - Ms. Schmidt, Mr. Twedt-Ball, and Ms. Hart attended a public session to see the park concepts, which is beginning to feel like a more comprehensive project between the building and the park. Images from the presentation were shown to trustees. Ms. Casey feels the park brings a lot of value. Ms. Hepworth shared that she went to the first open house and very impressed with turnout to provide input. The park offers collaboration – programming outside the building, offering nature and natural programming, and a community garden – in ways we can't duplicate downtown. With the current park design, we can offer programming for up to 1,000, whereas downtown can host 500-750 people in large scale events.

Mr. Jacobo exited the meeting at 4:56 pm.

- The park project does not have timeline yet and its final completion most likely won't align with the library project though some components will be prioritized to open alongside the library. Mr. Elges loves how the projects show an investment of the SW side and the residents.

## I. Library Director's Report

- The past month has been very busy for the library. Of a library our size, we have a very robust programming department. In the past nine years, the department has been built up – staffing, offerings, and more – garner the data we see today. Almost 17,000 people have attended programs from July-October.
- Patrons are still consuming materials differently since the pandemic and it hasn't normalized yet. Digital use is stabilizing but would increase if we had more money for it. We want to balance physical and digital collections for more equitable access. The materials team also looks forward to how the materials shifting project in November at the downtown library may impact circulation.
- The light installation project has ended and the Commons is more open and welcoming. We anticipate physical visits coming up. We may not have a baseline year for a while yet as we move past COVID, and Marion and Hiawatha library projects opened.

- The current strategic plan will start its third and final year this July. Around that same time, Ms. Schmidt will start planning the process for the next plan, specifically looking at hiring a consultant or developing a plan internally. Trustees discussed viable options to move forward.
- J. Old Business
- There being no old business, the meeting continued.
- K. New Business
- There being no new business, the meeting continued.
- L. Adjournment
- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:08 pm.

**The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, January 4, 2024, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library**