

Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
February 1, 2024

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

Board members unable to attend: [Vice President] Monica Challenger

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

Others: Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Foundation of the Cedar Rapids Public Library (in person); 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.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes: January 4, 2024

Ms. Hart moved to accept the consent agenda. Ms. Casey 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 hosted a public launch for the Westside Library Big Dreams capital campaign. Ms. Tyler feels the event went very well. Many supporters attended and asked great questions. The event has inspired gifts and attention to the project. Even though the campaign is in the public phase, behind the scenes work continues with donor conversations and six grant applications totaling more than \$2 million. Approximately 65% of the project funding total has been secured.
 - Mr. Elges asked if there is an estimate of what a community small donation pool would look like. The feasibility study consultant did not provide estimates of that detail, though in general felt the Foundation could safely raise \$8-10 million for the project. Typically, a public phase raises about 40% of the goal. Ms. McDermott asked what counts as a small donation. Ms. Tyler noted that recognition on the donor wall will be \$1,000 at a minimum. The downtown project's minimum was \$500.
 - Ms. Hart encouraged trustees to mention the project in conversation, which could inspire gifts. Ms. Tyler noted that the Foundation board members set a goal of talking about the project with at least five people.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
 - At the public launch, the Friends also announced their \$250,000 commitment to the Westside Library project. They look forward to supporting the new building.
 - Ms. Slappey reported that Dolly's birthday party sale was successful, and they are looking forward to their Valentine's sale. She shared stories about how people use the Friends to support their library including a patron who shopped the stacks in the Friends storage room; a rotary club member donating 50 children's books from the Friends to local schools; and that TrueNorth held a book drive and donated a wide variety of books to the Friends, some of which will be sold on Amazon.
- F. Board Education: Service Navigator Partnership Update – Todd Simonson
 - Public Service Manager Todd Simonson reported on the service navigator program, in partnership with Willis Dady Emergency Service. The program, which has evolved over the last four years, is to support our most vulnerable patrons, typically individuals

experiencing homelessness. Two navigators from Willis Dady spent on average about 30 hours a week at the library. Their regular duties include building relationships, proactive behavior intervention support, helping patrons find resources or services, and overseeing the Summer Ambassador Program. The current contract ends this fiscal year.

- Mr. Simonson provided data and noted that data is dependent on seasonal needs. For example, there are higher needs in the winter. Navigators assist in three to 10 intakes for housing assistance a week. In general, they have about five to 10 daily interactions with patrons supporting the Housing First model. The team also builds relationships with patrons and provides active service support to the public service team.
- Mr. Twedt-Ball asked about the navigator personnel and how interactions work. Currently, we have one navigator who has been here about a year after the previous navigator joined the library team. Average turnover is about once a year for a variety of reasons – people tend to move up within the Willis Dady organization. Ms. Schmidt shared that this is something we consider as we examine the overall program. Non-profits tend to have a lot of turnover but that can be difficult when navigators have to re-establish relationships. Interactions can vary based on the patron and their respective wants and needs. We respect the individuals and may just say hello instead of actively promoting services and resources.
- Ms. Casey asked if the navigators have helped reduce behaviors. The navigators can help be a proactive preventative resource outside of library staff. We know anecdotally that navigators perform actions to reduce library staff intervention, which starts a progressive discipline process. Although this is not measurable, we know it helps patrons remain in the building successfully.
- This program started as we had more homeless individuals in crisis in the building. The partnership helped fill a gap where we did not have adequate staff training. Ms. Schmidt did not want to remove people from the library if we could do something else. The Public Service team tries hard to give people every opportunity for success. Navigators can support patrons who need more extensive needs so Public Service leadership can help address smaller issues.

G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Advocacy Committee – Rafael Jacobo, Committee Chair
 - Mr. Jacobo reported that while there is no action, the library team is watching the legislative session for bills that directly impact public libraries.
 - Ms. Schmidt reported that a new bill was proposed hours before this meeting and we will put out an advocacy call to action. SSB 3131 was introduced today with a public hearing on Monday, and calls to remove governance from library boards and giving that to City Councils. The library team will send an eblast tomorrow and update the website with pertinent bills and their respective information. In addition, Ms. Schmidt and Ms. McNamara will develop talking points for people to use in communicating with their legislative leaders.
 - The library is also watching another proposed bill, which does not have a hearing yet, to remove protections of public libraries under obscenity laws. This could impact where and how library materials are displayed to prevent access to children. If that bill progresses, an email alert will be sent out.

H. Library Board Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Casey reported for Ms. Challenger on December 2023 financials. We're halfway through the fiscal year. There are no concerns for revenues and expenditures at this time.
 - **Action:** FY25 Budget. Ms. Schmidt explained the FY25 budget changes. Highlights are below.
 - In the Operations, or 151 budget, we predict an increase of \$25,000 in local government grants and reimbursements. We are reimbursed

annually for library service to unincorporated Linn County residents based on the previous year's usage data. Our data supports an increase. In turn, that revenue will be increased for \$20,000 in contract labor expenses and \$5,000 in external banking/financial fees. We anticipate hiring a consultant for the next strategic plan development and also to budget appropriately for consistent increased credit card fees. Any other changes are movements from a line item to another to reflect actual expenses. Anything under Other Expenses are set by the City and automatically offset. In addition, the City always budgets high for benefits to ensure we have enough money.

- For Special Revenue, under 7010, we budget for grants and donations. It looks a little strange because by law, we have to budget for expenses in order to spend the money. If we don't receive the grant funding, we can't spend it and it does not harm our operations. Anticipated revenues are based on information we have at the time of budgeting.
- Capital projects in 316 always show the current fiscal year and projections for a five-year plan. Ms. Schmidt talked through multiple projects, such as the Westside Library Project, Downtown Library plaza repair, Downtown Library roof repair, and materials. Ms. Schmidt shared that the library intends to ask the Foundation board to support the plaza repair with capital funds they hold. The Downtown Library roof repair is a placeholder in the budget. We cannot wait until July to start and the City FMS department has reallocated funds to start this spring. In addition, we are still actively pursuing warranty coverage for the repairs. Materials spending looks like a reduction in a budget – we will still have \$500,000 and the difference is made up by the City was closing out expiring bonds. Ms. Schmidt also noted that, although these are not reflected in our budget, Public Works has funding to add a road for the Westside Library Project and as FMS will have an increase to support the library HVAC systems.

The committee recommendation to approve the FY25 budget as presented in the packet carried with unanimous approval.

- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair.
 - **Action:** 2.00 Collection Development. This policy defines a way to respond to the public on the library materials they'd like in our collection and how we maintain a collection. Materials Manager Erin Horst reports that patrons request materials regularly. Print material requests are generally fulfilled, though the digital requests are greater than our budget allows. The policy also dictates how we weed materials. For example, books can be purchased in high volume to meet demand and later weeded, given to the Friends. There are no recommended changes for this policy.
 - **Action:** 2.02 Gifts and Memorials. This policy gives guidance on how gifts and memorials are directed including funds, property, art, and donated materials. The only change is to clarify that materials donations may be integrated into the collection or given to Friends for sale at the library's discretion.
 - **Action:** 2.03 Evelyn Zerzanek Collection This policy had extensive edits in 2022 when we took over storage of the collection. It was previously held at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art following the flood. There are no recommended changes.

The committee recommendation to approve the reviewed policies as presented in the packet carried with unanimous approval.

- Westside Project Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - The committee and staff have worked with OPN to further hone the building's layout following a square footage reduction to remain in budget. The reduction

will not impact the exterior shape of the building or public spaces. We will host a final community open house on March 25 to share final designs. In addition, we're preparing a request for bid to hire a commissioning agent for LEED certification as the project unfolds. Ms. Schmidt also met with OPN and Design Engineers to discuss the possibilities of being solar ready, a net zero building design, and potential battery capability.

- **Action:** Westside Library Recognition Opportunities. The Foundation developed a list of recognition opportunities for board approval in 2023 for known items, such as the children's library and young adult area. Ms. Tyler is requesting that the board approve the new list to share with donors. As the design is nearing completion, Ms. Schmidt and Ms. Tyler will continue to look at other opportunities.

The committee recommendation to approve the revised Westside Library Recognition Opportunities as presented in the packet carried with unanimous approval.

- I. Library Director's Report
 - Ms. Schmidt shared that physical circulation continues to increase. Physical visits, if they follow projections, should break 400,000 visits this year. Many of our standard outcome data points are doing better and we're hopeful for FY24 to be a baseline data year.
 - Over the next few years, we anticipate tax caps impending growth will significantly impact cities. We are being intentional about decisions we are making now may not be sustainable in future due to the tax cuts.
- 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 5:23 pm.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, March 7, 2024, at 4 pm in the Community Room, Ladd Library