

Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
March 7, 2024

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

Board members unable to attend: Jade Hart

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

Others: Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Foundation of the Cedar Rapids Public Library (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 pm.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes: February 1, 2024
 - Special Event Application

Ms. Casey 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 welcomed a new administrative assistant this month. They have also made progress on the land for the new library. They closed on the purchase of Parcel A – the eastern most section of the land where the new library will be built, and the remaining parcel of land will be posted for sale within the month. The Foundation staff continue to apply for new grants, as well as receive and process gifts and pledges.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
 - The Friends hosted two special sales in February and March. The Valentine’s Day sale included romance picks and 21 cases of Harlequin Romance books. In addition, they had a pop-up sale to coincide with Community Music Day at the downtown library. Ms. Slappey appreciates that the new sales team have come up with creative sales.
 - The Friends are also preparing for the semi-annual weekend sale on the first and second floors of the downtown library during the first weekend of April.
- F. Board Education: Opportunity Center Update – Kevin Delecki
 - Programming Manager Kevin Delecki provided an update on the Opportunity Center, which is housed at Ladd Library. The OC started in 2016, initially called Center for Working Families with Iowa Works, to address a service desert on the SW side of CR. Since then, partners have worked to improve the physical location, hiring a dedicated navigator, and meeting community needs. For example, in 2020, challenges with the pandemic and derecho forced the model to move back basic services – housing, food, etc. – adopting a crisis model to help people survive. After a strategic planning effort, the Opportunity Center is back to assisting with workforce development and hired a fulltime program coordinator to oversee day-to-day operations. As of July 2023, the center started with full services: walk-in, appointments, outreach, and partner office hours/workshops.
 - Mr. Delecki walked through data for this fiscal year. So far, the center has served 423 individuals, of that 233 are unique individuals, outside of workshops or partners’ work.

Data shows that the center serves a wide spread of ages, generally most are between 25-60. More than two-thirds are unemployed. We are now starting to collect zip code data and in the first month of collection, about 75% reside in the 52404 zip code. A majority of services provided are workforce development related. The center also provides referrals and two-thirds of users don't need a referral so needs are satisfied with a visit.

- The team is working on rebranding and promoting the center as well as recruiting and building additional service provider and employer partnerships.
- Ms. Casey asked if there were concerns on maintaining appropriate staffing levels as the center grows. Mr. Delecki noted that we have three library team members designated to cover when the program coordinator is out of the office or doing outreach. The service model's intention though is to deeply impact a smaller number of people, which can be supported by a smaller team.
- Mr. Elges asked about referrals. Most of the referrals for center users are to different community organizations, such as Linn County Public Health and Foundation 2. However, most of the work we provide is related to job skills and searches. The program coordinator provides open hours for better flexibility for the individual.
- Mr. Jacobo asked about what kind of data we collect from the user. We aim to take a little information as possible and whatever they are willing to give; for example: name, contact number, zip code, birthdate. Previous intake sheets were very in depth. We moved to the bare minimum for follow-up and then use it to look for basic statistical information. We're not currently doing a survey to understand why individuals are coming to the center but the coordinator has developed one at the end of appointments, which also goes out to workshops/outreach. It helps us to understand satisfaction, further needs, etc. Sometimes, there are barriers in getting people here so we wanted to ensure the least barriers from walking in to getting help. In time, we will work with United Way to move from output-based measurements to outcome-based measurements.
- Mr. Twedt-Ball asked about struggling populations between Downtown and Ladd – if they were similar or lessons to learn to aid each other? Ms. Schmidt noted that the buildings see very different populations. People coming into the center are unemployed and workforce ready; they are housed. Downtown individuals are generally unhoused and can't necessarily start working. The Opportunity Center is successful because of strong collaboration –many community groups with different resources and skillsets can pool resources to better serve the client. We're not trying to supersede partners but to strengthen the work in one location.

G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Advocacy Committee – Rafael Jacobo, Committee Chair
 - There being no report, the meeting continued.

H. Library Board Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Challenger reported on January 2024 financials. At this point of the fiscal year, there are no concerns. The library is above target on revenue and around target on expenditures.
 - **Action:** Linn County Contract for Library Services FY24. This is the standard service contract for individuals who live in unincorporated Linn County. It is paid to all 11 county libraries and divided up based on usage.
The committee recommendation to accept the contract for library services as presented in the packet carried with unanimous approval.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair.
 - **Action:** 2.04: Confidentiality of Library Records. The committee reviewed the policy, which guarantees privacy for library users including check-outs and searches. There are no recommended changes.
 - **Action:** 2.05: Programming and Partnerships. This policy gives basic parameters on the library's role with programs and partnerships. A sentence was modified to

strike the implication that we would get a financial gain from sales of products at programs. We don't make money from sales and the change reflects our practice.

- **Action:** 3.00: Messaging. This policy notes that the library director is the official spokesperson and not individual trustees. There are no 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

- **Action:** Westside Library Recognition Opportunities. Last month, the board approved an updated list; however, we missed a space for approval. A discussion was also held on the naming of the Wellness Room, which is technically a room for children and adults who need a quiet space for sensory overload or other needs. The consensus was to use Quiet Room as it aligns with our KultureCity accreditation to be a sensory-friendly location.

The committee recommendation to approve the revised Westside Library Recognition Opportunities with a change of Quiet Room carried with unanimous approval.

- Ms. Schmidt also showed the newest layout after the square footage reduction. The collection spaces did not change and only impacted back of house spaces. She said it opened opportunities for creativity and loves the design more. Changes include an increased children's program room, a restroom with an adult adjustable height changing table, increased friends book sale space as well as storage, moving, and increasing teen computers near a staff station.
- In addition, photo representations of the space were also shown. Ms. Schmidt iterated that the pictures can change and furniture has not been selected.
- Library staff have a few more meetings with OPN to finalize details related to technology and hardware. From there, the design will go back to cost estimators to ensure we remain within budget. From there, OPN will prepare documents for bid. The project remains on target. We will host our final community session to show the designs on March 25. The adjacent park has their own timeline and plans to have their schematic design done soon. We'll know at construction how we can collaborate, and identify which areas of the park will be done as close to library opening.

I. Library Director's Report

- Ms. Schmidt went to Des Moines on Tuesday for Library Legislative Day, sponsored by the Iowa Library Association (ILA). The organization has been tracking bills across states and Iowa has had more library adverse bills introduced than any other state in the nation. So far, none are moving forward. At this point, it appears that legislatures have listened to citizens, libraries, and trustees and conversation around unintended consequences. Some bills are tabled for now so there is a possibility of coming back. Though it seems state legislatures want more collaboration between city leaders and trustees, which can't be solved with laws.
- The April meeting is during the Public Library Association conference. Ms. Schmidt, along with several staff and Ms. Challenger will attend. Ms. Schmidt will attend the board meeting via Zoom with support from staff in Cedar Rapids.

J. Old Business

- There being no old business, the meeting continued.

K. New Business

- **Action:** LEED Commissioning Contract – approval, purchase order and payment not to exceed \$146,645 – to provide commissioning services for the Westside library project to SystemWorks.
 - The Westside Library project needs a commissioning agent early on in the project to ensure sustainability with LEED certification. With the assistance of OPN and Design Engineers, we developed a request for bid. Following a bid process, SystemWorks was awarded the contract. They have previously worked with OPN

and Design Engineers on other projects. The vote is a not to exceed. There is a base price for services with various add-ons, dependent on how the project unfolds.

Mr. Elges moved to accept the contract, setup the purchase order, and schedule payment not to exceed \$146,645 as presented in the packet. Ms. Casey seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.

L. Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:09 pm.

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