

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Cedar Rapids Public Library**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**April 4, 2024**

**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, Hassan Selim (via Zoom)

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

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

- A. Call to Order
  - Mr. Twedt-Ball called the meeting to order at 4 pm.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
  - Minutes: March 7, 2024
  - Ms. Hart moved to accept the consent agenda. Ms. Hepworth seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.*
- C. Public Comments and Communications
  - There being none, the meeting continued
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
  - The Friends and Foundation Focus newsletter copy was sent out to printers today and should be in mailboxes soon. The annual Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) fundraiser Literary Vines is this month on Friday, April 19 at the downtown library. The event will highlight the second-floor maker space, allowing attendees to demonstrate the technology. The fundraiser will also include information and images of the new Westside Library. An online auction opens tomorrow through the event.
  - This year, the Foundation is participating in the United Way Day of Caring on May 9. Three employers will send teams of volunteers to pick-up trash at the new Westside Library site.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
  - The Friends are in process of setting up for the big spring book sale over the weekend at the downtown library. This event is on the first floor as well as Beems and Whipple auditoriums. Bargain shoppers can fill a box for \$10 on Sunday.
  - Ms. Slappey noted, as campaign co-chair for the Westside Library, that women who give over \$10,000 to the campaign can be part of the Wise Women Circle. This circle is a nod to the women who have elevated the library throughout its history, such as Ada Van Vechten, Marilyn Ladd, and Nadine Sandberg.
- F. Library Board Committee Reports
  - Advocacy Committee – Rafael Jacobo, Committee Chair
    - Mr. Jacobo noted that the legislative session is winding down. Ms. Schmidt shared that all the library-adverse bills did not pass, and that tabled bills look like they are not moving forward. The library will continue to monitor until the legislative session closes later this month.
- G. Library Board Committee Reports
  - Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
    - Ms. Challenger reported on March 2024 financials. At this point of the fiscal year, there are no concerns. Ms. Schmidt noted that the library is working with the City for opportunities to amend the budget for capital funding to align with

groundbreaking at the new library. She hopes to have more information sometime in April and to confirm in May.

- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair.
  - **Action:** 3.02 Unattended Children. The committee reviewed this policy, which designates safety and behavior of children in the library. There are no recommended changes.
  - **Action:** 3.03 Fines and Fees. The committee upheld the policy for how the library assesses fines and fees.
  - **Action:** 3.07 Special Event Alcohol Use Policy. This policy denotes how alcohol can be used in the library for special events and recommends no changes.
  - **Action:** 6.00 Professional Development. Unlike the City, the library wishes to allow professional development opportunities for part-time staff. We previously approved an earlier version that specifically included part-time employees. However, a later version inadvertently dropped this change. The committee wishes to re-affirm the commitment to part-time staff professional development.

*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 met on March 20 and reviewed final designs, which were then shown to the public open house on March 25. That design is at the cost estimators and information is due back by the end of next week. OPN's goal is to release construction bids by May 3. If the cost estimation is off, we might have minor changes that wouldn't cause significant difference than what the board and public have seen.
  - The open house was well attended and library staff heard incredibly positive feedback. Attendees were excited and showed a lot of support for the project.

#### H. Library Director's Report

- In the last few weeks, Ms. Schmidt and the team have been working on details for the Westside Library project. She is hopeful that the project so far will come in under budget and move toward groundbreaking as planned this fall.
- Ms. Schmidt presented at a preconference workshop on advocacy and how to proactively protect your library and staff at the Public Library Association (PLA) conference in Columbus, OH this week. The workshop was well attended and many people continue to share their excitement and their work with Ms. Schmidt. Many libraries are going through challenging times and appreciate support from peers. Ms. Challenger shared kudos for the library's advocacy work – she has met professionals at the conference who have shared their appreciation with her. Ms. Schmidt's presentation was a three-hour panel and interactive exercises. Ms. Schmidt specifically shared on activating advocacy with individuals. Others discussed activating advocacy with partners and community; self-care psychological safety for staff; intellectual freedom; aligning good policies with staff support; and the core ideas of the library.
- Mr. Twedt-Ball asked Ms. Schmidt if she had any ah-ha moments from PLA so far. Ms. Schmidt shared that Shola Richards, a PLA presenter, had a great presentation on the difference between 'kind' and 'nice'. She was impressed and hopes to bring him for a shared corridor library all staff day in future.
- This evening, Ms. Schmidt will attend the Jerry Kline Community Impact Prize party to celebrate Kent Library District; Ms. Schmidt served as a judge. Cedar Rapids will also be recognized as last year's winner.
- In May, Amber McNamara and Kevin Delecki will present on changes to the summer reading program. The programming team developed great programs in February and March, and patrons have shared their appreciation for the efforts.

- 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 4:29 pm.

**The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, May 2, 2024, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library**