

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

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

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

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

**Others:** Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Foundation of the Cedar Rapids Public Library (via Zoom); Libby Slappey, Presidents, 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: August 3, 2023
  - 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 successfully completed their second annual Van Vechten Society Brunch. She shared her appreciation and thanks for those who helped with planning and attended. The society honors those who are committed to caring for and nurturing the library now and in the future by including the Library Foundation in estate plans. Following the event, the Foundation has added two more members. Ms. Schmidt presented on the Westside Library Project at the brunch.
  - Libby Slappey and Lois Buntz, campaign co-chairs, have been working hard with Ms. Tyler to meet with people regarding donations to the Westside Library Project. Development Associate Jess Netolicky has begun communication for annual fundraising and outreach.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
  - The Friends are in a lull period after the Farmers Markets have concluded for the season, and prior to the big fall sale. Ms. Slappey reports that the market sales were lucrative following after some tweaks to their offered inventory.
  - The fall sale is scheduled for the first weekend in November at the downtown library. The Friends welcome any volunteers to help with this event.
- F. Board Education: Summer Dare Recap – Kevin Delecki
  - Programming Manager Kevin Delecki provided an overview of the summer reading program's successes. This was the third year with Tech to Go Outreach using the library's mobile technology van, culminating in 111 visits reaching over 5,500 people at 15 various locations or events throughout Cedar Rapids. Those served increased by 22% from last year. Mr. Delecki showed pictures of summer reading highlights including special programs with performers, park visits, and the kickoff and ending parties.
  - In-library programs added up to 243, serving 10,397 patrons. Attendance numbers are an increase of 330% from last year. Programs included routine events like story and play time as well as special performers back for the first time since 2019 and maker space use to never before done programs.

- The program ended with 778 active readers with 1,147,816 minutes read. Mr. Delecki also showed historical data on numbers of programs and attendance based on location for 2019-2023. Following the pandemic, we can see participation is returning to 2019 levels. However, as with each year, the programming team will discuss ways to reduce barriers and increase access.
- Ms. Hart asked for clarification on the Opportunity Center, which recently hired a coordinator position. Mr. Delecki explained that through a partnership with the library, City of Cedar Rapids, and Kirkwood Community College, we have a person to oversee the daily operations of the Center with a three-year commitment. The goal is to continue making connections and partnerships with local organizations in relation to workforce development. Ms. Schmidt noted after the coordinator has been working for six months, we'll provide a report out to the board.
- Mr. Twedt-Ball appreciates seeing growth in the program again and would like to hear observations on the Ladd participation – programs increased but attendance is close to 2022's numbers. Mr. Delecki believes this is due to re-engaging the community that programs occur at Ladd Library – most attend the large-scale events downtown though they are offered at both locations – and space limitations can impact this as well. In 2019, we held summer meals in conjunction with programs, which inflated attendance. In addition, the 2022's numbers are skewed as some downtown events were shifted to Ladd due to a fire, closing the downtown library.

#### G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Advocacy Committee – Rafael Jacobo, Committee Chair
  - The committee is developing an Advocacy Toolkit. They recently went through a draft, which should be a resource for the board in future.
- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
  - Ms. Challenger reported on July 2023 financials. As a reminder, it appears we are overspent on software but this subscription is always paid at the beginning of the fiscal year and the remaining funds will balance out as the year progresses.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
  - The committee has no action items at this time but they anticipate discussing new policies here in the coming months. Those recommendations will be brought to the full board in due course.
- Westside Project Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
  - There is nothing new report at this time. The project is paused as fundraising continues.

#### H. Library Director's Report

- The library hosted City View High School for their initial community kickoff and held three classes for one week while construction concluded in their new space. In addition, the maker spaces are regular classroom spaces for the school. The students also received library cards with modified applications with parent permission.
- The Opportunity Center partners leadership held a quarterly strategic meeting to ensure goals and metrics align across the key partnerships. Ms. Schmidt feels like the partners are satisfied with the work in the past quarter and look forward to the new space.
- The City developed a report on the on-going maintenance of public art. The library has several pieces including *Generations*, a bronze sculpture at Ladd Library that recently sustained damage. Ms. Schmidt is working with the City and insurance to repair the piece that may go to the new library. The plan also includes budgeting for long-term care and movement of pieces as needed.
- Ms. Schmidt participated in the first meeting for the Westside Library Park designs. The committee has completed surveys and in-person engagement events with other a thousand responses. Major themes have surfaced, such as water features, active sport opportunities, quiet reading spots. The committee reviewed three initial concepts and discussing features they liked from the concepts. On September 27, there will be an open

house at Ladd Library for community to review and provide feedback on concepts and types of elements.

- Ms. Schmidt is also working with an independent engineer and City Engineering to align the Westside Library Project's needs with budgeting and planning cycles. This project has turned into a City project so there is more collaboration with other departments to bring it to fruition. The FY25 budget cycle starts soon, and Ms. Schmidt will work with the Finance Committee to develop recommendations to the City and full board.
  - The Director's Report has completed a full fiscal year. The data is now showing a rolling 13-month calendar, showing trends, as well as year-to-date information within the current fiscal year. Ms. Schmidt encouraged trustees to ask questions if the information is unclear. The report also includes great stories and photos celebrating the ten years of the downtown library.
  - As part of the strategic plan, the Materials team evaluated and made a recommendation to shift collections to better serve the community. Staff and volunteers completed the initial shifting of materials in the children's library. Already, patrons are reacting positively to the change. Ms. Hart asked what is next for the project. Library leadership is discussing a further shift of materials on November 10, when we are closed for professional development. This would allow the teams to focus on Fiction, large print, science fiction, and sections in Non-Fiction.
  - The light replacement at the downtown library continues. We anticipate a delay next week due to unforeseen events happening with the City at the library. The contractors have completed the electrical re-wiring and will focus next on dry wall repairs and painting. The installation should be done by mid-October.
  - Ms. Hart asked about the Books by Delivery pilot program, specifically if deliveries made by volunteers would save postage. Ms. Schmidt noted that the postage costs are minimal as we are charged book rate, providing a savings from the regular postage rate. A second volunteer has been added to the program. Books by Delivery gives patrons a different experience with human interaction versus receiving a package in the mail.
- 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 4:48 pm.

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