



Agenda: Board of Trustees
February 3, 2022, at 4 pm
Conference Room, Downtown Library

Literacy, Access, & Inclusion

Library Board Nominating Chair – Matthew Wilding

- A. Call to Order
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - o Minutes: January 6, 2022
- C. Public Comments and Communications
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
- F. Library Board Committee Reports
 - o Finance Committee – Monica Challenger, Committee Chair
 - o Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - State Library of Iowa, Trustees Handbook Discussion: Chapter 4
 - **Action:** Policy Review:
 - 1.05: Statement on Labeling
 - 1.05a: Labels and Rating Systems
 - 4.01 Meeting Rooms
 - o Advocacy Committee – Mary Sharp, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - o Westside Project Committee – Clint Twedt-Ball, Committee Chair
 - No Action
- G. Library Director's Report
- H. Old Business
- I. New Business
- J. **Closed Session:** Iowa Code §20.17(3). Union Contract Discussion
 - o **Action:** Approve Contract with CWA Local 7101
- K. Adjournment

The next Board of Trustees meeting is set for **March 3, 2022 at 4 pm**, in the Conference Room, Downtown Library

To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, masks are required for all Library trustees, staff, and meeting attendees regardless of vaccination status, per the City of Cedar Rapids' mask policy effective August 3, 2021

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a City program, service, or activity, should contact Jessica Musil, Library Administrative Assistant, at 319.261.7323 or email musilj@crlibrary.org as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the meeting.

DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
January 6, 2022

Board members in attendance: [President] Jade Hart (in person); [Vice President] Clint Twedt-Ball, Susie McDermott, Matt Wilding, Monica Challenger, Hassan Selim, Jeremy Elges, Mary Sharp, and Rafael Jacobo (all via Zoom)

Staff in attendance: [Library Director] Dara Schmidt and Jessica Musil (in person); Patrick Duggan, Amber McNamara, Jessica Link, and Sarah Voels (all via Zoom)

Others: Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library (via Zoom)

- A. Call to Order
 - Ms. Hart called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes: December 2, 2021
 - The motion to accept the consent agenda carried with unanimous approval.*
- C. Public Comments and Communications
 - There being none, the meeting continued
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
 - Ms. Schmidt reported for Ms. Tyler. The Foundation has received multiple grants from major corporations to support Dolly Patron's Imagination Library (DPIL).
 - Ms. Tyler received results from the planned giving survey. Of those received, 12 surveys requested more information and another four indicated the Library has been named in the individual's will. Ms. Tyler felt the survey was successful.
 - In February, the Foundation will host their annual Stay Home and Read a Book Ball. The event is Alice and Wonderland themed. Invitations will be mailed at the end of January.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
 - The Friends had a successful sale for the Merry Cherry Open House in December. The sale spaces included the newly revamped basement books and on the first floor.
 - With current COVID conditions, the Friends are still hopeful to host the larger May sale. In the meantime, Friends will continue to host small sales on Saturdays in the downtown library. Ms. Slappey reported that the Friends received a large gift from a lapsed donor.
 - Ms. Sharp asked how much money was earned from the December sale. Ms. Slappey reported Friends earned over \$1600.
- F. Board Education: Library's 125th Anniversary – Amber McNamara
 - 2022 marks 125 years of library service for the Cedar Rapids community. Starting January 15, both downtown and Ladd libraries will host exhibits themed 'The University of Cedar Rapids,' which is a nod to *The Gazette's* early reference to the new library. The exhibits are different – Downtown's outlines the Library's overall history in a timeline and Ladd's explores service and locations over time. The exhibits will be up through May and will swap buildings in mid-March. The research team combed resources: photos, news reports, old board documents, and annual reports to build out the history on the website, in the special edition of *OPEN+*, and the exhibits. Digging through the research shows that since the Library was established, its primary focus has been on access and inclusion.
 - The Library will host a pandemic friendly celebration on Saturday, January 15 at both locations including exhibits, special take home activities, displays, a video presentation, cookies, and special bookmark giveaway. Throughout the year, we will show a portion of a video series monthly that focusing on a different aspect of library history, as well as a reading challenge throughout the year.

- Community members can share their memories of the library either in-person or on the website. These memories will be posted on the exhibit walls and social media.
- Ms. Sharp encouraged trustees to review the website's history page. She asked what the library plans to do with the community comments. We will post in the exhibits and we've also asked for contact information in case a patron would like us to follow-up.
- Ms. Slappey asked if literacy clubs was meant to be literary clubs. Ms. Schmidt noted that commonly because access to books and libraries were limited, literacy clubs were mostly to access books and information. Many public libraries rose out of these clubs. Ms. McDermott shared that one local club founded in the late 1800s is still active.
- Ms. Hart praised the commemorative edition *OPEN+*, which highlights the Library's history instead of events. *The Gazette* has also provided tremendous coverage.

G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Finance Committee – Monica Challenger
 - Ms. Schmidt reviewed the November 2021 financials. She shared that some COVID expenses will need to move into operations; these expenses include Zoom subscriptions and some digital access costs. Ms. Schmidt is not concerned about absorbing the costs, which are tracked.
 - **Action:** County Contract for Library Service FY22
 - This annual contract with Linn County, as copied in the packet, provides unincorporated county residents with library services, as they are not paying for library service otherwise. The contract's terms remain the same though the amount changes annually, and is based on previous year's usage. Approximately \$450,000 is split between 11 Linn County libraries. Ms. Schmidt believes this year's increase is due to other libraries service disruptions in response to COVID, the derecho, and construction. Next year's amount may decrease as service stabilizes this fiscal year.
The contract with Linn County for Library Services for \$94,075.56 was approved unanimously.
 - **Action:** FY23 Budget
 - Ms. Schmidt provided an overview of the library's proposed budget for fiscal year 2023. A vast majority of the Library's funding comes from tax payer dollars. The largest account is the general fund; the remaining accounts are made up of capital expenses, grants and trusts, and the now expired library levy, which collects very little in owed back taxes.
 - Every request for budget increases in the General Fund were approved: increase WiFi hotspots; an additional Service Navigator position to expand the downtown program; increase for electricity with Alliant's rate change to cover the expenses; and supply and upkeep expenses for Facilities. Ms. Schmidt reviewed line items, highlighting where increases were modified.
 - Mr. Wilding asked if the personnel increase was driven by the Union contract. The Library has not yet negotiated the contract starting in FY23 so an estimate was calculated though we may need an amendment. He also asked for clarification on the City IT services line item. The money is used to support software and hardware shared across all City departments. Mr. Wilding asked if the Library budgeted for any westside library planning. At this time, money is not allocated because depending on what is needed could be an expense of the Library or the Foundation.
 - Ms. Schmidt then reviewed the Public Library Grants fund, which holds money for projects that unforeseen at budgeting but we need a mechanism to pay for it if the projects occur. While the budget appears out of balance, we have approximately \$300,000 between two funds –

Library Enrichment or Foundation Enrichment – to support unexpected needs.

- The 7020 account holds around \$44,000 from the now expired library levy, and funds can only be used for circulating materials. Ms. Schmidt anticipates the account should close in two years. The money will support hoopla streaming services with additional funding from the Foundation.
- The 310 account holds the funds for materials purchasing. The majority of money for materials is through bonding, as decided by the City. Currently, the Library receives \$500,000; though next year, Dara wishes to increase the materials budget to equal 10% of overall budget, as this is the general standard for libraries. The fund this year has a budgeted \$100,000 to replace downtown furniture – the money is from the Foundation and needs their board’s approval.
- In February, Ms. Schmidt will present the budget to City Council. The budget will be approved in March to start on July 1.
- Ms. Sharp asked if there is discussion to purchase materials with general funds instead of bonding. Ms. Schmidt responded it is ultimately up to the City to determine where the funds come from. The purchase of circulating materials is an appropriate use for bonds. Ms. Schmidt also noted that the City has proven they use bonding responsibly and always in accordance with the law.
- Ms. Challenger shared that the Finance Committee recommends the approval of the budget. They feel confident because the City approved increases and the Foundation is providing additional support as well.

The FY23 budget, as presented in the packet, was approved unanimously.

- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - State Library of Iowa, Trustees Handbook Discussion: Chapter 16
 - The chapter on Library Buildings is written mostly for smaller libraries. Ms. McDermott specifically discussed the information regarding library meeting rooms. The Library considers meeting rooms an extension of our materials. Rooms are open to all for any reason so long as users follow the Meeting Room and Behavior policies.
 - **Action:** Policy Review. The trustees reviewed the following policies.
 - 1.06 Table of Organization. The committee recommends removing this policy as it is more appropriate as a procedure.
 - 3.00 Library’s Message. The policy does not have any suggested changes.
 - 6.01 Staff Certification. To match the wording from the State Library, the committee recommends replacing the word ‘certification’ with ‘endorsement’ in both the policy text and header.
 - 6.02 Human Resources Authority. The policy has no suggested changes.

The policy changes, as noted in the packet, were approved unanimously.

- Advocacy Committee – Mary Sharp, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Sharp reminded trustees to sign-up for and complete executive interviews with community leaders, as this information may inform the next strategic plan. Last month, Ms. McNamara shared the questionnaire form and sign-up sheet. This will be sent again with updated talking points to include the budget for conversations with City Council members.
- Westside Project Committee – Clint Twedt-Ball, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Schmidt shared that she submitted the County’s ARPA grant application to request funding for the project; she anticipates knowing the grant’s status by the end of February. Otherwise, Ms. Schmidt and others have had great conversations to advocate for the project.

H. Library Director’s Report

- At next month's meeting, we will talk about the Meeting Room policy. Key staff members are reviewing the policy.
 - Community COVID rates are high right now and the Library is experiencing the highest staff illness/exposure rate. Even with the staff illnesses and exposures, Library service has not been impacted. We continue to work with City Human Resources and follow CDC guidelines. Library leadership continues to monitor conditions and may need to make changes on short notice. Our choices will remain thoughtful to reduce spread so we don't need to pull back much. At this time, the Library feels safety measures are adequate and will continue as is.
 - Communication Workers of America (CWA), the staff union, is set to negotiate its next contract in a week. The contract will go to the full board for approval as well. The current contract expires June 30.
- 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 5:08 pm

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, February 3, 2022, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library

LIVING

Cedar Rapids library celebrates 125 years of access, inclusion

A page IN history



Yarcho Grocery was one of the stores that hosted a library station as the Cedar Rapids Public Library expanded in the 1910s and 1920s. The library's goal was to ensure book access within walking distance of every section of the city. (Cedar Rapids Public Library)

New exhibits showcase a legacy bigger than books

By Elijah Decious, The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — Since the beginning of its 125 years, history shows that the Cedar Rapids Public Library's mission of accessibility, inclusion and empowerment was not just something that looked good on paper.

"Do you realize that the library building is the only absolutely neutral ground in the city? Here there are no distinctions of age, race, or religion. Every one, young and old, should feel at liberty to come here freely every day in the year," librarian Harriet A. Wood wrote in the 1907 Annual Report.

"They were in a time when a lot of society was very segregated," said Alison Gowans, content writer for the Cedar Rapids Public Library whose history research will be displayed in upcoming exhibits. "As far as evidence found shows, everyone was welcome from the very beginning, which is very encouraging and a major value of the library today. ... That's embedded in our history."

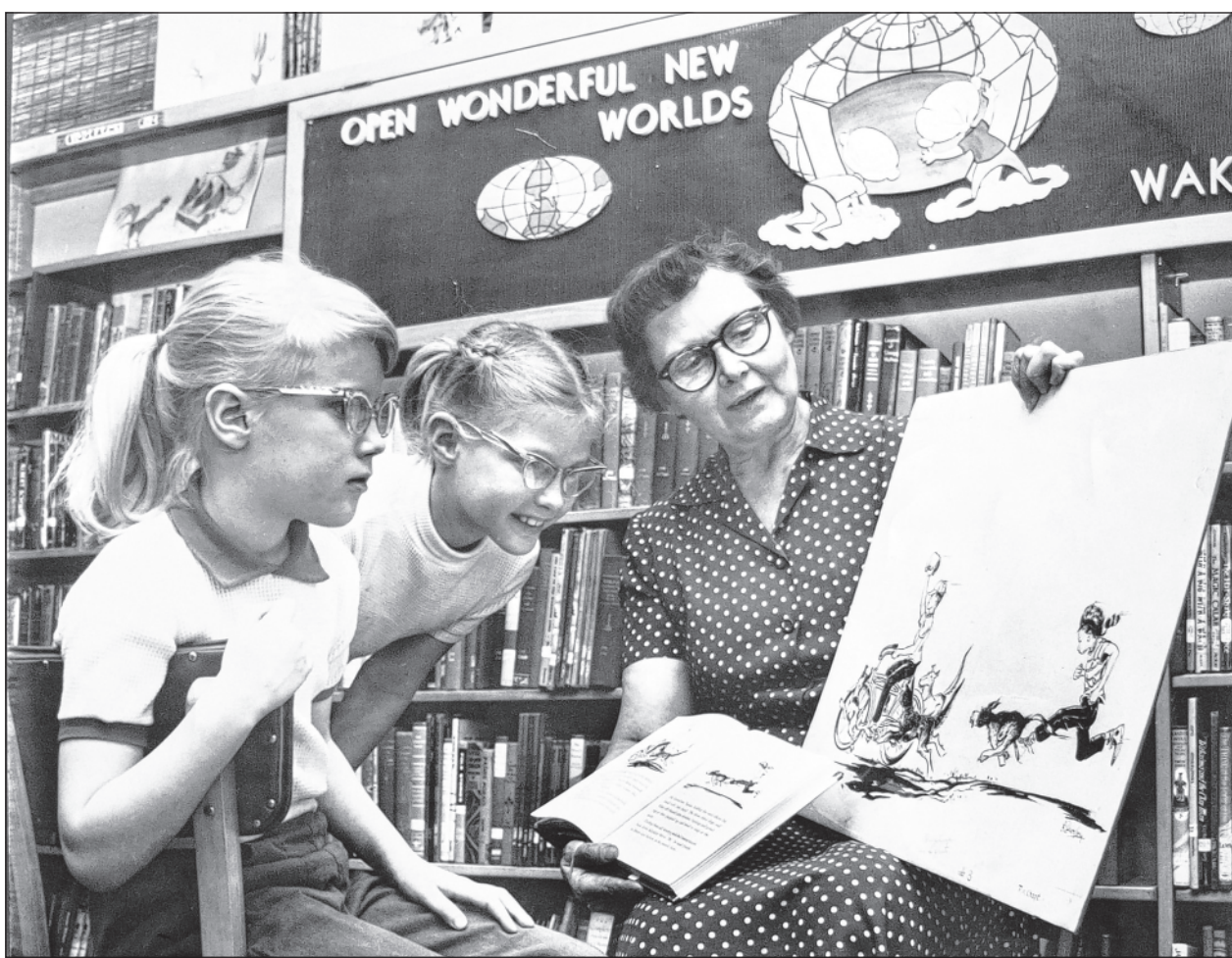
"As far as evidence found shows, everyone was welcome from the very beginning, which is very encouraging and a major value of the library today."

Alison Gowans, Cedar Rapids Public Library

Perhaps that's not surprising for an institution that owes its success to women, starting in 1896 — a time when they were excluded from many parts of society. As they exercised their newly-won right to vote on limited tax issues in Iowa, the library was approved by a margin of only 59 votes.

Vote returns showed half the men who voted didn't vote on the question at all, speculating that the vote could be challenged on the grounds that

► **LIBRARY, PAGE 8B**



Children's librarian Evelyn Zerzanek, who procured a collection of original illustrations from famous children's book illustrators by writing to them, reads to children in a Cedar Rapids Public Library archive photo. Zerzanek's collection of children's art grew to hundreds of pieces. (Cedar Rapids Public Library)

CEDAR RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY CELEBRATES 125 YEARS

- **WHAT:** A spotlight on the library's history, innovation and adaptation over 125 years through two exhibits, plus one day of craft stations, history film screening and more.
- **WHEN:** Jan. 15 to May 28
- **WHERE:** Downtown Library's third-floor gallery, 450 Fifth Ave. SE; Ladd Library gallery, 3750 Williams Blvd. SE
- **DETAILS:** One distinct exhibit will be open at each location from Jan. 15 to March 13 before switching

locations from March 19 to May 28, to ensure patrons of both branches have a chance to view them.

During a Jan. 15 celebration from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., both locations will have family-friendly craft stations, a library history film screening, commemorative bookmarks, complimentary cookies, a chance for visitors to share their library memories and registration for the 125th Anniversary Community Reading Challenge.

A LOOK BACK AT 125 YEARS OF HISTORY AT THE LIBRARY



In 1897, the first Cedar Rapids Public Library was outfitted in a room in the Granby Building at the corner of Third Avenue and Second Street SE. (Cedar Rapids Public Library)

● **1895:** Ada Van Vechten organizes the City Federation of Ladies Literacy Clubs, which campaigns to establish a library.

● **1896:** Women are allowed to vote on municipal tax issues and help pass the library levy by 59 votes.

● **1897:** The new Cedar Rapids Free Public Library opens in a room in the Granby building on Jan. 15, at Second Street SE and Third Avenue SE.

● **1900:** The library moves to the Dows building, at Second Avenue SE and Third Street SE.

● **1905:** The new library building, funded by business tycoon and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, opens on Washington Square, now known as Greene Square.

● **1909:** The library begins looking for ways to reach new people, opening stations — small library outposts, putting books in schools, grocery stores, drugstores, hospitals and factories. By 1918, there are 22 stations around the city.



The former Downtown Library of the Cedar Rapids Public Library. (Cedar Rapids Public Library)

● **1930:** A new Kenwood branch opens in a Spanish adobe-style building.

● **1952:** The first library bookmobile arrives, taking over for the library stations. A second arrives in 1954.

● **1963:** Kenwood branch expands.

● **1971:** First two bookmobiles are retired in 1971 and 1972. Edgewood branch opens at 221 Edgewood Rd. NW.

● **1985:** A new 83,100 square foot library opens at 500 First St. SE., thanks to a \$6.8 million grant from The Hall Foundation, city-issued bonds to secure a site for the building and \$1.3 million raised from 18,000 donors by the Library Foundation and Friends of the Library.

● **1988:** A new branch opens in Westdale Mall. The Edgewood branch closes.



Patrons wait in line to tour the new downtown branch of the Cedar Rapids Public Library on Aug. 24, 2013, in Cedar Rapids. (The Gazette)

● **1992:** Kenwood branch closes; new branch opens at Town and Country Shopping Center.

● **2008:** The library loses about 160,000 books, movies and media items after the Cedar River inundates 10 square miles of downtown Cedar Rapids, forcing the building to be gutted. With the downtown library closed, the library expands inside Westdale and opens a small storefront location in the Armstrong Centre.

● **2013:** Ladd Library opens, replacing the Westdale location. The new Downtown Library opens adjacent to Greene Square.

● **2017:** The library receives the 2017 National Medal for Museum and Library Services, the nation's highest honor given to libraries.

Library/Getting materials to as many as it can

► FROM PAGE 7B

“the women are illegal,” according to Gazette reports at that time. Ada Van Vechten, who organized women’s literacy clubs to campaign for the library, was elected the library board’s first president and dubbed “the mother of the library” by The Gazette.

ACCESS

Though the conversations about what the library should offer have changed over the years, the guiding principal of getting as many materials to as many people as possible has stayed the same.

“As information access changes happen, that brings in the tough questions about what a library should be. We’ve always fallen on the side of more access, more materials, more thoughts being available to the community,” said Director Dara Schmidt. “We laugh about ‘the evils of fiction’ today, but I bet those were heated (discussions) back in the day.”

From the beginning, the library strove to ensure information access was a matter of outreach, not simply an unlocked door at its building. By 1911, books and magazines were available to factory workers in places like Quaker Oats and T.M. Sinclair Packing Co.

“The library stepped up and said, ‘These are our people, let’s make sure our education is accessible to people working these jobs. That’s the backbone of our community,’” Schmidt said.

Friends of the library ensured the librarian had a horse or automobile to travel to rural areas and schools in other townships. By 1918, the library had 22 stations to support its goal of having books available within walking distance of every section of the city.

“We provide access to everything that we can because we want our citizens to be well educated ... and want people to be curious,” Schmidt said. “It’s not about content. ... It’s about access.”

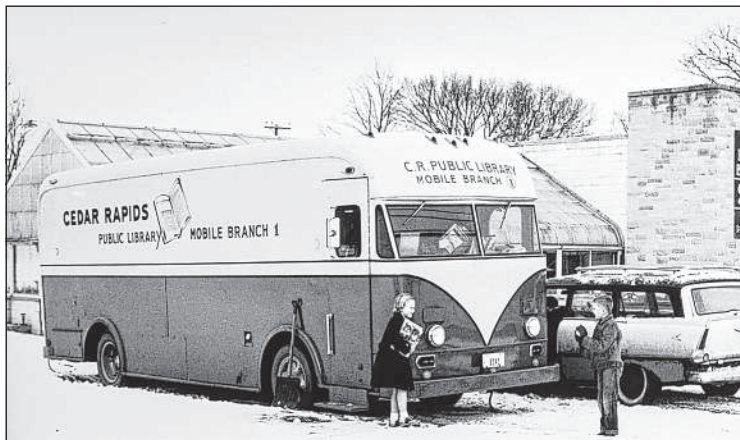
Bookmobiles starting in the 1950s grew in popularity over the following two decades as another means to meet residents where they were.

ADAPTATIONS

With over a dozen building



The former Downtown Library building of the Cedar Rapids Public Library is seen from an aerial view after the flood of June 2008 inundated downtown Cedar Rapids. The library lost 160,000 books and media items from the flood, which forced the building to be gutted. (Cedar Rapids Public Library)



Children wait at a stop for one of the Cedar Rapids Public Library’s original bookmobiles, which started service in the 1950s. (Cedar Rapids Public Library)

changes, additions and moves over the years, the library has remained a reflection of Cedar Rapids, through thick and thin.

For an institution of its age, Schmidt said the library is unique in the sense that it has two locations less than 10 years old. That’s due to the flood of 2008 that claimed 160,000 books and media items, gutting the Downtown Library.

But through all the changes, Schmidt said the library’s proven ability to flexibly reach as many people as possible proves that “the more things change, the more they stay the same.”

Early in its history, the library ensured access to German and Czech language books for its immigrant populations. Now, it ensures access to French books for newer immigrants from Africa.

The bookmobiles that started in the 1950s got an upgrade in 2021 with the Mo-

bile Technology Lab loaded with laptops, 3D printers and robots to reach both children and adults in various neighborhoods.

“We’re bringing resources out to people instead of keeping them in the building,” Gowans said.

Looking to the future, the library is considering its permanent locations and technology to reach a growing, more diverse population. After the pandemic dramatically changed the appetite for digital access to the library’s materials, the role of digital access will become a larger part of future conversations.

With digital information access more ubiquitous than ever, the role of librarians has changed from being gatekeepers of information to being navigators of it.

“These are big picture things we’re working on. They’re not anything different from what they’ve done, but the approach might be differ-

ON THE NET

To learn more about the library’s extensive history over the last 125 years, visit cribrary.org/our-history. There, you can read more about fascinating excerpts such as:

- The instrumental role of women in the library.
- The library’s role through World War I and II.
- Pandemic responses throughout the library’s history — COVID-19 was not the first.
- How children’s librarian Evelyn Zerzanek curated original illustrations from illustrators, such as a sketch of Dr. Seuss’ dog and H.A. Rey’s Curious George, for the library’s original collection.
- Photos of the library’s physical changes over the last 125 years.

ent,” Schmidt said. “How do you walk into the library and know this is the place for you, no matter who you are?”

A LIVING LEGACY OF CONNECTIONS

Perhaps the best way to measure the library’s legacy over 125 years is not through its circulation numbers or attendance statistics, but the stories embedded in Cedar Rapids memories for generations.

“If you ask people about (library) memories, they’re quick to talk about what the library meant to them,” said Gowans. “That shows the importance of the library in the community.”

And with decades of memories still alive with patrons today, everyone has their own library story.

“People remember when they went to the Kenwood Branch as a kid, or when the bookmobile used to stop at their grandma’s house, or a baseball mitt chair in the library basement that flooded,” said Schmidt. “That’s been an amazing thing — helping people connect to their personal story as we connect to our history as an institution.”

And while the anniversary is a celebration of books, access and history, the reflection of the library in personal, human connections is what has made the library’s story more than a good novel to check out.

Comments: (319) 398-8340; elijah.decious@thegazette.com



THINGS TO DO TODAY

POWERED BY HOOPLA:
WWW.HOOPLANOW.COM

MUSIC Michael Moncada

Country rock artist Michael Moncada will perform.

- **When:** 6 to 8:30 p.m. today
- **Where:** Playtime Tap, 933 14th Ave. SW, Cedar Rapids
- **Cost:** Free

FOOD Chili Cook Off

Come eat some chili. Feel free to enter your own Crock-Pot of chili.

- **When:** 11 a.m. today
- **Where:** Solon American Legion Stinocher Post #460, 222 E. Main St.
- **Cost:** \$5

OUTDOORS First Day Run, Hike, Explore

Start the new year off with the Pleasant Creek Trail Runners and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. **As of last night, the event had not been canceled because of bad weather. Check online at iowadnr.gov/Portals/IDNR/uploads/parks/2022firstdayhikes-guided.pdf**

- **When:** 2 p.m. today
- **Where:** Pleasant Creek State Park, 4530 McClintock Rd., Palo
- **Cost:** Free

OUTDOORS

Walking Meditation

Winding Path Sangha takes its meditation outside.

- **When:** 10 to 11 a.m. today
- **Where:** Hickory Hill Park North Park Entrance, 800 Conklin Lane off Dodge Street, Iowa City
- **Cost:** Free

Sharing Faith

Our religious communities welcome you!

Assembly of God

CR FIRST
Sunday Services
8:30, 10 and 11:30 AM.
Kids Worship Experience at 10 and 11:30 AM.
3233 Blairs Ferry Rd. NE, Cedar Rapids
crrfirst.org 393-6353

Catholic

St. Patrick Catholic Church
500 1st Ave. NW, Cedar Rapids
www.stpatrickscr.org
Mass Times
Saturday 4pm
Sunday 8am, 10am, & Noon
Eucharistic Adoration
Seven Days a Week 9am-9pm
Come and spend an hour with our Lord.

Christian Science

First Church of Christ, Scientist
640 Blairs Ferry Rd. NE • 393-1207
Sunday Service • 10:30am
Sunday School • 10:30am
Wednesday Service • 12 Noon
www.cschurchcedarapids.com

Lutheran

Bethany
Lutheran Church
Living and Sharing God's Love
8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship
9:45 a.m. Education Hour
11:00 a.m. Contemporary Worship
2202 Forest Dr. SE • 364-6026
LCMS • bethanycr.org

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
LIVE Sunday @ 9 a.m. Traditional & Sun. @ 11:15 a.m. Celebration
firstlutherancr.online.church
replay @ youtube.com/firstlutherancr
In the heart of the city with God's heart for all.

King of Kings
LUTHERAN CHURCH
3275 N. Center Point Rd (in Robins)
SUNDAY 8:00AM-10:45AM
Education hour for all ages Christian education 9:30am
393-2438 • www.kingofkingscr.org • LCMS

St. Paul's Lutheran Church (MO)
915 27th St., Marion
319-377-4687
www.mystpauls.org
SUNDAY CHURCH WORSHIP: 8AM, & 10:30AM, 9:15AM. SUNDAY SCHOOL/BIBLE STUDY

St. Stephen's
Lutheran Church - ELCA
610 31st St SE, Cedar Rapids
You can join us every Sunday for two services.
8:00 a.m in-person
Between the two services there will be an education hour
10:30 a.m. on Facebook Live, YouTube, or in-person.
To Know, Live, and Share Christ.
Check our website for more information: ssluth.com

Non-Denominational

River of Life
We Worship, We Connect, We Contribute
3801 Blairs Ferry RD NE | (319) 393-3709
www.riveroflife.org
Sunday Worship: 9:00 & 10:45 am
Weekly small groups

ANTIOCH
CHRISTIAN CHURCH
Visitors & Newcomers Welcome!
Marion Campus & Online Services
Saturdays | 6PM
Sundays | 8:15, 9:45 & 11:15AM
lifeisforliving.org
433 Cross Road, Marion • 377-3410

Presbyterian

1st Pres
In-person service
10:00am
Or join us online
fpcr.org
Pastor Heather Hayes
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
310 5th Street SE, Cedar Rapids

Westminster
Presbyterian
1285 Third Avenue SE
366-7185
Sunday
In person worship 10am
live streaming on YouTube.

Religious Society of Friends

Whittier Friends Meeting
Unprogrammed Quaker Worship
Sundays 10:30 a.m.
Silent Meeting
All Welcome
County Home & Whittier Rd., Springville
393-2508 / 563-590-4294

Seventh-Day Adventist

Turning the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.
Malachi 4:6
1260 29th St., Marion, IA
Saturdays - 2:00 p.m.
(319) 361-8630 • hpindahouse.org

Unitarian Universalist

Peoples Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation
Any Age, Race, Sexual Orientation
Spiritual Growth & Social Justice
319-362-9827 | www.peoplesuu.org

Sunday Service 11:00am
In Person, Zoom & YouTube
4980 Gordon Ave., NW 52405

United Church of Christ

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
"A Community of Faith, Learning and Service"
Sunday Worship
9:30am & 11:00am
361 17th St. SE • 362-1926
Rev. Melanie Van Weelden • www.fcocr.org
An Open and Affirming Congregation

United Methodist

Lovely Lane
United Methodist Church
2424 42nd St. NE - Cedar Rapids - 393-6674
Services 8:30 AM & 10:30 AM
Online Worship 10:30 AM
Sunday School 9:30 AM
www.lovelylane.org
Let's Find Hope Together!

ST. PAUL'S
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
SUNDAYS
9:00 am • Worship (English)
11:15 am • Worship
1:00 pm • Worship (African Nationals)
1340 3rd Avenue SE - Cedar Rapids [fb](https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsumccr) [yt](https://www.youtube.com/c/StPaulsUMCCR) 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
319.363.2058 stpaulsumccr.org
Like us on Facebook [fb](https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsumccr)
[youtube.com/c/StPaulsUMCCR](https://www.youtube.com/c/StPaulsUMCCR)

Please check with your religious community before attending a social gathering. For all of your Worship and Church Event advertising needs contact Joann Dodson at 319-398-8237

TOP STORIES

Expanded tax to boost Solon fire station

Voters approved new uses for penny sales tax by huge margin

By Izabela Zaluska, The Gazette

SOLON — Various new projects are on the horizon in Solon thanks to a local-option sales tax expansion voters approved in November.

The city asked residents to expand use of the current local-option sales tax to include emergency and recreation facilities, as well as remove the 2025 expiration date on the tax.

The majority of voters — 75 percent — approved the tax expansion and extension. The change will take effect July 1.

City Administrator Cami Rasmussen said the biggest challenge ahead of the election was educating residents that it wasn't an additional penny tax but instead an expansion of the tax already in place.

Residents first approved the 1 cent sales tax in 2014. Local-option sales tax revenue in Solon can be used toward street, water, sewer and stormwater improvements, as well as toward recreation activities.

The city has collected just over \$3 million in local-option sales tax funds since 2015, Rasmussen said. The money has been used to support at least 10 projects, and there are at least three additional projects in the works.

Among the projects are a sidewalk section from Solon Middle School to the Solon Recreation and Nature Area; Highway 1 and Fifth Street traffic light; splash



Gear lockers run along the side of a vehicle, which is a hazard to personnel, at the Solon Tri-Township Fire Department in November 2018. The fire department broke ground on a new fire station this past September. (The Gazette)



Pictured is a concept rendering of a new firehouse for the Solon Tri-Township Fire Department. The new firehouse will be much bigger than the current space. (Solon Tri-Township Fire Department)

pad infrastructure; and Fox Ridge storm sewer improvements.

The main reason why voters were asked to consider the expansion was because of the city's new fire station, Rasmussen said.

"We faced the derecho and the pandemic in 2020, and as the fundraising effort began to slow because of the economy, there was a real concern ... construction costs are rising at such a pace that it's going to diminish the

value of the dollars that had been raised," Rasmussen said.

The city broke ground in September on the \$4.2 million firehouse. Rasmussen said \$1.3 million in donations had been raised for the project as of mid-December. The remaining nearly \$3 million will be paid through general obligation bonds, with the city responsible for \$2 million.

The Solon Tri-Township Fire Department serves 112 square miles of Johnson County, including Solon. The city's fire station was built in the 1950s and responded to about 50 calls each year. In 2019, the volunteer fire department answered more than 450 calls.

Rasmussen said the city wanted to get ahead of the construction costs, as well as the growth of the fire department and increase in residents. Solon grew by 48 percent in the past 10 years, according to the 2020 census — from 2,037 residents in 2010 to 3,018 residents in 2020.

Another emergency facility that the local-option sales tax funds now can be used toward is the satellite office the Johnson County Sheriff's Office is planning to open.

The satellite office would be a place for deputies to meet with the public, take reports, conduct interviews and follow up on calls for service. Deputies also would

have a space to complete reports and paperwork.

Rasmussen said the satellite office will be at 223 S. Iowa St., which has had a number of uses over the years, including being the site of the former City Hall.

The building has had improvements made over the years, Rasmussen said, but it will need additional updates to accommodate the satellite office.

"We're not quite at the gathering quote stage, but we're close because we want to make sure we get this incorporated into the budget in January because it's a priority for the council," Rasmussen said.

The reason recreation was included in the expansion, Rasmussen said, is because the city has started preliminary discussions about building a gymnasium or recreation center.

Solon's Community Center currently is housed in a former school building. Because of how old the building is, Rasmussen said, the utility bills are a challenge. The original part of the building was built in 1917.

"The school's been very gracious to have a lease agreement with us that makes it affordable, but it's not a sustainable long-term plan," Rasmussen said.

As for the extension of the tax beyond 2025, Rasmussen said the city asked for it because the fire station bond is 15 years, and it's unclear what a bond for a future recreation center will look like.

Comments: (319) 339-3155; izabela.zaluska@thegazette.com

C.R. library earns sensory inclusive certification

Initiative aims to aid patrons with sensory needs

By Marissa Payne, The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — The national not-for-profit KultureCity has partnered with the Cedar Rapids Public Library to make the library and its programs and events sensory inclusive.

This new initiative fosters an accommodating and positive experience for all guests and patrons with a sensory issue who visit the downtown or Ladd Library facilities, according to a news release.

"It is important for the library to be a welcoming place for everyone in our community," Cedar Rapids Public Library Executive Director Dara Schmidt said in a statement. "Being certified sensory inclusive is an important step toward achieving our goals of access and inclusion."

The certification process involved library staff being trained by leading medical professionals on how to recognize those patrons with sensory needs and how to handle a sensory overload situation.

Sensory bags equipped with noise-canceling headphones from Puro Sound Labs, fidget tools, verbal cue cards and weighted lap pads are available to all guests at either library who may feel overwhelmed by the environment. The libraries also offer designated quiet areas marked with



The Cedar Rapids Public Library downtown branch is seen Feb. 5, 2014, in Cedar Rapids. (The Gazette)

"It is important for the library to be a welcoming place for everyone in our community."

Dara Schmidt, C.R. Public Library executive director

signage for those who may need a quieter, more secure environment.

People with autism, dementia, post-traumatic stress disorder and similar conditions often experience sensory sensitivities or challenges with sensory regulation, such as sensitivity to overstimulation and noise. According to the library, it now is better equipped to assist guests with sensory sensitivities and ensure an accommodating experience.

Before visiting the library, families may download the free KultureCity app to view what sensory features are available and where to access them. There also are Social Stories on the app for both the downtown and Ladd Libraries, which will provide a preview of what to expect when visiting the library. They also can be viewed at CRLibrary.org.

"Our communities are what shape our lives, and to know the Cedar Rapids Public Library is willing to go the extra mile to ensure that everyone, no matter their ability, is included in their community is amazing," KultureCity Executive Director Uma Srivastava said in a statement. "We're honored to partner with the Cedar Rapids Public Library to provide a truly inclusive experience for all guests."

KultureCity is recognized nationwide for using its resources to effect change for those with sensory needs. Since the program's inception, KultureCity has created over 700 sensory inclusive venues in four countries, including special events such as the NFL Pro-Bowl, NFL Super Bowl, MLB World Series and MLB All-Star Weekend.

Comments: (319) 398-8494; marissa.payne@thegazette.com

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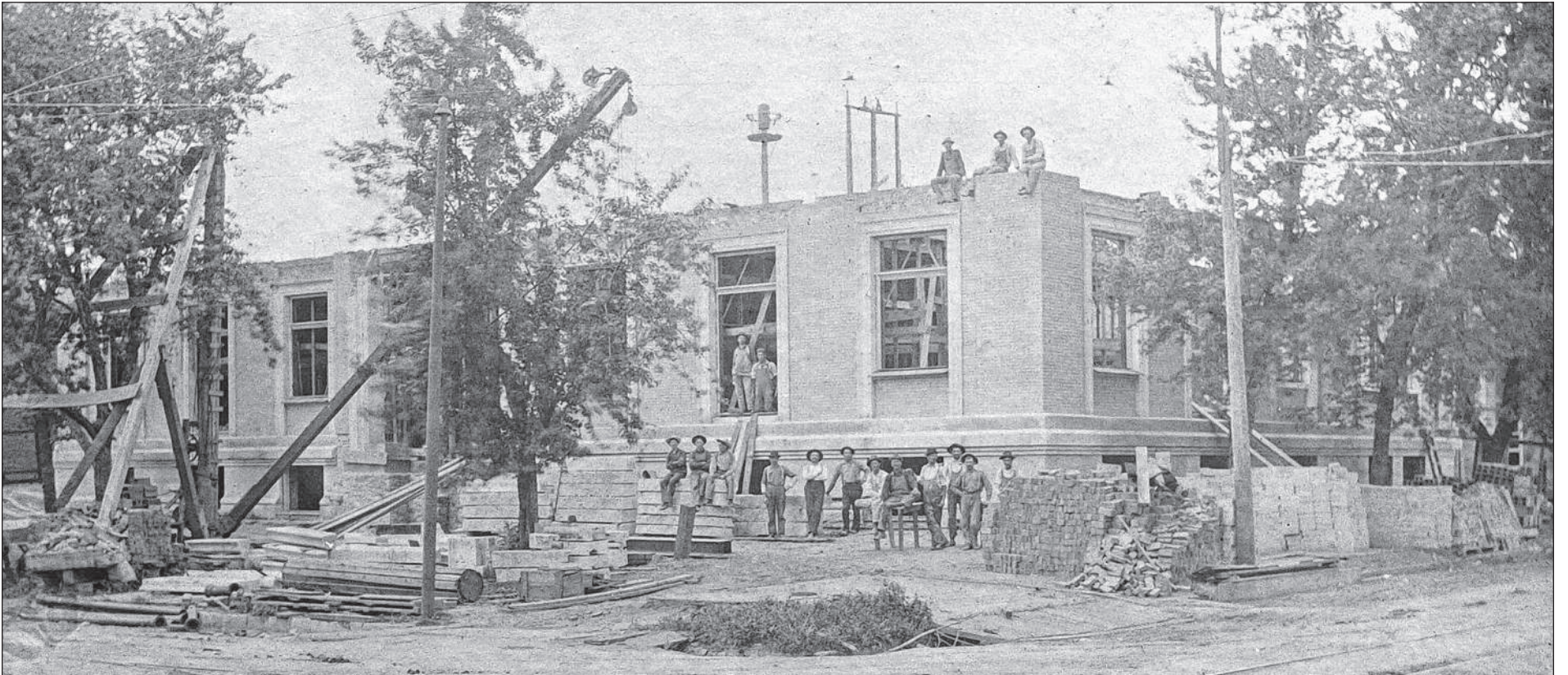
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TIME MACHINE

A LOOK BACK AT PEOPLE, PLACES, EVENTS IN EASTERN IOWA



Workers continue construction of the Cedar Rapids Free Public Library on July 11, 1904, at the corner of Third Avenue and Fifth Street SE. The building, funded by steel baron Andrew Carnegie, was the city's main library from 1905 to 1985. (Cedar Rapids Public Library photos)

'The people's university'

Library turns 125, thanks to women's efforts in early 1900s

By Diane Fannon-Langton, correspondent

In the city election of March 2, 1896, Cedar Rapids gained a public library by a mere 59-vote margin, 1,105 to 1,046.

Ada Van Vechten had begun the drive for a library and shepherded it to its successful conclusion. Women, who were able to vote on the issue even though they couldn't yet vote in general elections, were credited for the win, according to *The Gazette*.

Van Vechten chose the new library board's trustees at the request of Mayor George Lincoln. The four women and five men were confirmed by the city council in June 1896 and elected Van Vechten as board president.

Virginia Dodge, the first librarian, started work in November 1896. And the Cedar Rapids Free Public Library opened Jan. 15, 1897 — 125 years ago — on the first floor of the Granby Building, 230 Second St. SE, with a collection of 1,325 books.

It was dubbed the "university of Cedar Rapids" by attorney Frank F. Dawley, the library board's vice president. When the library ran out of space in the Granby Building, the library moved to the second floor of the Dows Building, 200 Second St. SE, in May 1900. For the first time, the children's room was separate from the adult reading rooms.

"The room has proved so attractive that children come to us in overwhelming numbers," Harriette McCrory wrote in the library's annual report. "Over 400 children who have never used the library before have registered during the last three months."



The \$50 million Cedar Rapids Public Library opened in August 2013 at 450 Fifth Ave. SE. More than half the cost was covered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency after the 2008 flood swamped the library at 500 First St. SE.



Librarian Ruby Taylor offers books to workers at the library station set up in the Wilson Packinghouse dining room in Cedar Rapids. Librarians also visited rural schools via horse and automobile.



The second floor of the Dows Building, 200 Second St. SE, housed the Cedar Rapids Public Library from 1900 to 1905, when the new Carnegie library opened.

floor of the Dows Building, 200 Second St. SE, in May 1900. For the first time, the children's room was separate from the adult reading rooms. "The room has proved so attractive that children come to us in overwhelming numbers," Harriette McCrory wrote in the library's annual report. "Over 400 children who have never used the library before have registered during the last three months."

NEW LIBRARY

In 1904, library board members turned their focus to building a new library at Third Avenue and Fifth Street SE. They wrote Andrew Carnegie, a rich steel baron who was giving away millions to build libraries around the nation. He sent a

check for \$75,000. The new library was designed by architect Henry Josselyn of Josselyn & Taylor. The cornerstone was laid May 10 without a lot of fanfare. The library building, at 428 Third Ave. SE, was dedicated June 23, 1905, and opened to the public the next day.

"A good collection of books has truly been called by Carlyle 'the people's university,'" Iowa State Library Commission Secretary Alice Tyler said at the dedication.

Ada Van Vechten died five months after the new building's dedication.

EXPANSION, TRENDS

The library expanded in 1909 with branch libraries at Tyler, Van Buren and Harrison

schools, though the schools soon opened their own libraries run by teachers.

The library also made books available in manufacturing plants, including Quaker Oats, T.M. Sinclair and Williams & Hunting.

In 1912, Kenwood Park — a neighboring town annexed to Cedar Rapids in 1925 — contracted for library services.

In the ensuing decades, the library expanded services to coincide with popular trends. A record-playing room was added in 1950 along with a wide variety of records. In 1951, a first-floor browsing room, which allowed smoking, was added and furnished with comfortable sofas and chairs.

The first bookmobile

— a van that took books into neighborhoods on a regular schedule — was ordered in 1952, and the library would add three more for use over the next 20-plus years.

NEW BUILDINGS

As the city grew and library use increased, the need for a new library was evident.

But voters rejected five bond issues — between 1969 and 1980 — that would have funded construction.

Following the last defeat in January 1980, the Hall Foundation offered \$6.8 million over 10 years to build the new library if the city would provide the land and the library foundation would raise \$1 million in private donations.

The Carnegie building

WHAT ARE YOU INTERESTED IN?

- Have a suggestion of where the Time Machine should travel? We want to look back at key people, places and events in Eastern Iowa and need your help. Email d.fannonlangton@gmail.com
- Time Machine is online, too, with additional time lines, photos and other materials at thegazette.com.

LIBRARY HISTORY

- **More stories/pictures:** crlibrary.org/our-history
- **Celebration:** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, downtown library, 500 Fifth Ave. SE
- **Exhibits:** Jan. 15 to May 28 at downtown library and Ladd Library, 3750 Williams Blvd. SW

closed — it's now part of the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art — and the \$7 million, 83,000-square-foot library opened in February 1985 at 500 First St. SE.

AFTER THE FLOOD

After the June 2008 flood filled the library's first floor and destroyed 160,000 items, a new 94,000-square-foot library was built at 450 Fifth Ave. SE, opening Aug. 24, 2013.

The total cost approached \$50 million, with the Federal Emergency Management Agency providing more than half that sum and the library foundation collecting \$7 million in donations. Significant grants also came from the state's I-JOBS program, the Hall-Perrine Foundation and local-option sales taxes.

In February 2013, the Ladd Library opened as a permanent west-side branch at 3750 Williams Blvd. SW, replacing the temporary library set up in Westdale Mall after the flood.

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LIVING



Soluna Joy, who is non-verbal and a senior at Washington High School, uses a touch screen to communicate her feelings to teachers Amy Shoemaker (left) and Jordan Schroeder during a sensory-focused art class Thursday at Washington High School in Cedar Rapids. (Geoff Stellfox photos/The Gazette)

Creative outlets

Programming provides artistic, cultural opportunities for children with sensory needs

By Elijah Decious, The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — A growing number of institutions are recognizing not only the importance of inclusivity but the evolving definition of what it means to be inclusive of people with different abilities and needs.

For many organizations in Eastern Iowa, that definition has grown over the last several years to include programming specifically for children with sensory needs — an environment or materials that don't overstimulate their senses.

"There's definitely a need for these services," said Heather Wagner, an adaptive arts specialist and director of operations at the Eastern Iowa Art Academy. "We've noticed we went from having eight students in class to having 38 students. It's growing."

Wagner and the Eastern Iowa Art Academy have been providing art classes for children with autism and other disabilities for the last seven years and have expanded their services into five organizations and local schools such as Washington High School and Jefferson High School in Cedar Rapids.

With special air-dry clay, brushes, colors and materials tailored to sensory needs, weekly classes provide an outlet for expression that not only aids creativity, but teaches students with other disabilities how to express themselves and establish skills for life.

For students who are "tactile defensive," Washington High School teacher Amy Shoemaker said this kind of programming is often overlooked as a critical need.

With hand over hand movements and plenty of breaks, students are embedded with skills for life after school, such as choice making and prioritization through fun projects like clay fish.

"We've seen them express themselves in ways we've never seen before," through the art classes, Shoemaker said.

Other projects highlight of-



Teaching aides Kaylee Weems (left) and Maleaha Anderegg (right) comfort senior Ryan O'Connell on Thursday during a sensory-focused art class at Washington High School in Cedar Rapids.

"We've seen them express themselves in ways we've never seen before."

Amy Shoemaker, Washington High School teacher

ten overlooked parts of art — its textile stimulation through sound and touch.

"This one student had a very hard time focusing on what they were painting. We went around in a circle with a brush," Wagner said. "We chose a paint that glided nicely on soft paper. She was just overjoyed by that."

It's an experience traditional art would not have been able to provide her, and a simple joy many take for granted. Through art, they can articulate things outside of their verbal skills.

Over the last few years, other institutions have started to catch on to these needs, too. In 2014, the Iowa Children's



Senior Soluna Joy uses a touch screen to communicate her feelings to teachers Thursday at Washington High School in Cedar Rapids.

Museum in Coralville introduced sensory-inclusive events each year to give all kids an equal chance to get in on the fun.

"All kids deserve to play and have experiences," said Amanda Thys, communications director for the museum.

Now, the museum has the

events one morning each month, a quieter time for families with special needs to get the most out of their visits.

"The thought process was instead of having one event per year, have an event that's accessible throughout the year," Thys said.

They were an early adopter

IF YOU GO

Now, there are multiple institutions that provide programming and equipment for families with neurodiverse kids who have special sensory needs.

• **Cedar Rapids Public Library:** All staff are trained to recognize those experiencing overstimulation.

The library provides free loaner bags to kids with noise-canceling headphones, fidget tools, verbal cue cards and weighted lap pads. Quieter, more secure rooms also are available.

• **Iowa Children's Museum:** The Iowa Children's Museum has been sensory-certified for eight years and offers Super Hero Night, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on the last Sunday of each month, for families with special needs.

• **National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library:** The next Hubert's Night Owls for those with sensory needs will be from 4 to 5 p.m. Feb. 5. The museum adapts exhibits and offers more tactile opportunities to neurodiverse learners.

• **The Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium:** This Dubuque destination will offer its first sensory-friendly morning from 8 to 10 a.m. Feb. 6.

among local institutions that has prompted others like the library to follow.

Late last year, the Cedar Rapids Public Library earned a sensory-inclusive certification and started providing sensory bags with noise-canceling headphones, fidget tools, verbal cue cards and weighted lap pads. The libraries also offer designated quiet rooms for a more secure environment.

For a relatively quiet place like the library, the need came to the institution's consciousness in an unexpected way.

"We were talking about it ... and then we had a complaint from a parent who was using the library with their child, who was on the autism spectrum," said Dara Schmidt, executive director of the library. "The hand dryers in the

► **SENSORY, PAGE 6B**

Sensory/Library, museums participate

► FROM PAGE 5B

bathroom were so loud that it was really disruptive. The kid was afraid to come to the library.”

Schmidt said examples like that help highlight the evolving definition of inclusivity and accessibility, core pillars of the library’s mission.

“I was definitely unaware of how things like that can be so overwhelming,” she said. “It goes to (show) what matters to us and how libraries work as institutions — responding to our communities’ needs. It’s our responsibility to ensure we’re changing along with our community to help those who need help the most.”

In February 2020, the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library introduced new sensory-friendly programming



LEFT: Quick reference sheets taped to a desk help non-verbal students communicate their needs during a sensory-focused art class Thursday at Washington High School in Cedar Rapids. RIGHT: Amy Shoemaker, a teacher at Washington High School, helps her student, senior Trevor Sakshaug, with an art project. (Geoff Stellfox photos/The Gazette)



for those on the autism spectrum, a follow-up to efforts in 2018 that introduced exhibit tours for the visually impaired and personalization for special education classes.

Hubert’s Night Owls, the sensory-friendly night each month,

modifies exhibits by reducing stimuli. Lights are dimmed, displays that make noise are turned off and additional opportunities are put in place to produce a more tactile experience, like allowing visitors to touch and feel pieces of

traditional folk attire from the teaching collection.

“At the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML) we believe we are a museum for all, encouraging self-discovery so that the stories of freedom, identity,

family and community will live on for future generations,” said Michelle Dupuy, marketing content specialist for the museum.

Following others in Eastern Iowa, the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium

in Dubuque has a new sensory-sensitive event starting next month.

“One thing that we do here is we try to keep the pulse on the best practices in facilities like ours,” said Jennifer Drayna, education coordinator for the museum. “We started to notice a lot of our counterparts exploring that idea.”

Like other museums, the Mississippi River Museum will set aside a time and make some simple but helpful changes to exhibits. After testing sensory-inclusive programming with outreach programming, they’ve opened it up to the rest of their campus.

“We knew there was a need,” Drayna said. “We wanted to make sure we did it right.”

Comments: (319) 398-8340; elijah.decious@thegazette.com

 SAVVY SENIOR | JIM MILLER

Tax breaks for caregiver of elderly parents

Q. Are there any tax breaks that you know of for family caregivers? I help financially support my 82-year-old mother and would like to find out if I can write any of these expenses off on my taxes. — Supplemental Sam

A. There are actually several tax credits and deductions available to adult children who help look after their aging parents or other relatives. Here are some options along with the IRS requirements to help you determine if you’re eligible to receive them.

TAX CREDIT FOR OTHER DEPENDENTS

If your mom lives with you and you’re paying more than 50 percent of her living expenses (housing, food, utilities, health care, repairs, clothing, travel and other necessities), and her 2021 gross income was under \$4,300, you can claim your mom as a dependent and get a non-refundable tax credit of up to \$500.

If you happen to split your mom’s expenses with other siblings, only one of you can claim your mom as a dependent, and that person must pay at least 10 percent of her support costs. This is called a “multiple support agreement.”

The IRS has an interactive tool that will help you determine if your mom qualifies as a dependent. Go to [IRS.gov/help/ita](https://www.irs.gov/help/ita), scroll down to “Credits,” and click on “Does My Child/Dependent Qualify for the Child Tax Credit or the Credit for Other Dependents?”

MEDICAL DEDUCTIONS

If you claim your mom as a dependent and you help pay her medical, dental and/or long-term care expenses, and weren’t reimbursed by insurance, you can deduct the expenses that are more than 7.5 percent of your adjusted gross income.

So, for example, if your adjusted gross income is \$80,000, anything beyond the

first \$6,000 of your mom’s medical bills — or 7.5 percent of your AGI — could be deductible on your return. So, if you paid \$8,000 in medical bills for her, \$2,000 of it could be deductible. You also can include your own medical expenses in calculating the total.

You should also know that your state might have a lower AGI threshold, which means you might get a break on your state income taxes even if you can’t get one on your federal income taxes.

To see which medical expenses you can and can’t deduct, see IRS Publication 502 at [IRS.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p502.pdf](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p502.pdf).

DEPENDENT CARE CREDIT

If you’re paying for in-home care or adult day care for your mom so you are free to work, you might qualify for the Dependent Care Tax Credit, which can be worth as much as \$4,000.

To be eligible your mom must have been physically or mentally incapable of self-care and must have lived with you for more than six months. To claim this tax credit, fill out IRS Form 2441 ([IRS.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f2441.pdf](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f2441.pdf)) when you file your federal return.

FLEXIBLE HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

If you have a Health Savings Account or your employer offers a Flexible Savings Account, you can use them to pay for your mom’s medical expenses if she qualifies as a dependent. But be aware that if you use an HSA or FSA to pay for your mom’s medical costs, you can’t take a tax deduction on those expenses too.

For more information, see IRS Publication 969, “Health Savings Accounts and Other Tax-Favored Health Plans” at [IRS.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p969.pdf](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p969.pdf).

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit [SavvySenior.org](https://www.SavvySenior.org).

Bidens finally have a White House cat

Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The long-awaited White House cat has joined the Biden family — and her name is Willow.

Michael LaRosa, a spokesman for first lady Jill Biden, confirmed the 2-year-old, gray-and-white, short-haired tabby’s arrival, saying the cat is “settling into the White House with her favorite toys, treats and plenty of room to smell and explore.”

Willow is named after Jill Biden’s hometown of Willow Grove, Pa. The cat comes from an unnamed western Pennsylvania farm where the Bidens made a campaign trip in 2020.

“Willow made quite an impression on Dr. Biden in 2020 when she jumped up on the stage and interrupted her remarks during a campaign stop,” wrote LaRosa in a news release. “Seeing their immediate bond, the owner of the farm knew that Willow belonged with Dr. Biden.”



Willow, the Biden family’s new pet cat, sits near a window in the White House on Wednesday. (White House handout)

The cat joins Commander, the German shepherd puppy the Bidens adopted last month, following the death of their dog Champ and the rehoming of their dog Major, both German shepherds. Major had trouble adjusting to his new home in the White House, having made headlines for several biting incidents. Major was the first shelter dog in the White House.

Willow will be the first cat to live in the White House since President George W. Bush’s

cat, India, in 2009 — and one of only a dozen feline inhabitants in the entire history of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Andrew Hager, historian for the online Presidential Pet Museum, attributes the disparity to personality — both the presidents’ and the cats’. Presidents tend to be extroverted, a trait they share with dogs, which have been the most popular presidential pet.

“I always think that some of it is the fact that cats are a little bit less trainable,” says Hager.

“So it’s harder to bring a cat to a news conference and have it sit there and look cute.”

The Biden family had announced their intention to get a cat before they even moved into the White House, in a late November 2020 interview with CBS.

The subject came up frequently in briefings: Last March, White House press secretary Jen Psaki deflected a reporter’s question, saying, “We know that the cat will break the internet, but I don’t have any update on its status.”

Since then, the White House has teased the cat’s arrival as being imminent.

In September, Jill Biden told the New York Times that the cat’s arrival was delayed because of Major’s behavioral issues and revealed that the pet was in another household’s temporary care.

No word yet on if Willow has been introduced to Commander and whether they get along.

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BOOKS

AUTHOR PROFILE | HEATHER GUDENKAUF

A chilling mystery

Obsession with crime, tale of a frozen woman leads to Iowa author's latest thriller

By Laura Farmer, correspondent

New York Times best-selling author and proud Iowan Heather Gudenkauf is back with another page-turning thriller sure to keep readers up late on these long winter nights.

"The Overnight Guest" is set in the fictional town of Burden, Iowa, in an isolated farmhouse where a gruesome murder took place 20 years ago. Crime writer Wylie is snowed in, working on her latest book, when her solace is interrupted by an unexpected guest.

Prairie Lights in Iowa City will host a virtual event with Gudenkauf at 7 p.m. Feb. 1 via Zoom. She will read from her latest work and participate in a conversation with author Hannah Mary McKinnon. The event is free, but you must visit prairielights.com to register.

In a recent e-interview, Gudenkauf discussed the power of keeping — and revealing — secrets, the inspiration behind "The Overnight Guest," and why we are so obsessed with crime stories.

Q. The main character, Wylie, is a crime writer who is curled up in an isolated farmhouse, looking for some time to write. Isolation, as we've found out through the pandemic, can provide solace and can also be overwhelming. Did your relationship to solitude change during the pandemic? Why is it often something we fear?

A. I was just talking about this exact topic with two other thriller writers. The pandemic has provided so many different challenges — that feeling of isolation being a big one. While we were chatting, we realized that all three of our new books are set in homes that were supposed to be the safest places on earth for our characters. That turned out not to be the case.

I've always been a homebody, so staying close to home wasn't a big adjustment. The only places I really went were to the grocery store and to see my folks. What was hard for me was how it impacted those around me. While solitude can be a positive thing, isolation and loneliness are not. I think, because of the pandemic and



Iowa author Heather Gudenkauf just released her ninth book, "The Overnight Guest," a thriller sparked by an obsession with crime and a real-life story of a frozen woman. (Erin Kirchoff)

because connections have been scarcer, I work harder to be present in my interactions with others. At least, I hope so.

Regarding "The Overnight Guest," home and solitude became frightening for the inhabitants when they had nowhere to go and no one to call for help. The characters must rely on their own resources and wits to survive.

Q. Of course, there are lots of secrets and twists in this novel: The farmhouse was the site of a double murder, an abused child appears during a snowstorm, and Wylie has a past of her own. How did the character of Wylie come to you? Is she similar to you in any way — other than your profession?

A. Besides being writers, Wylie and I have very little in common. Wylie is a true crime author, and I write fiction. Wylie and I both have dogs, but again there are differences. I fell in love with my dog, Lolo, the moment I saw her while it took some time

for Wylie to warm up to Tas, the stray dog that adopted her. Wylie is estranged from her son and has a contentious relationship with her ex-husband, and, fortunately, I'm very close with my family. While we both welcome solitude, Wylie comes to hers from a place of pain and loneliness.

Q. At various points a secret is revealed and that changes our perception of a character — we see them in a new light. I found these moments disarming, and it reminded me of just how often we make assumptions or take things for granted. Any thoughts on this?

A. I agree. It's so easy to take the people we meet at face value — to judge on appearance and initial encounters. Like in real life, I want readers to know my characters beyond first impressions. To do this, I slowly reveal their back stories and secrets, and as readers learn more, they hopefully will become more invested in and eager to

VIRTUAL EVENTS

- **What:** A reading and conversation with Heather Gudenkauf
- **When:** 7 p.m. Tuesday
- **Where:** Online with Prairie Lights Books in Iowa City
- **Cost:** Free

- **What:** A conversation with Heather Gudenkauf
- **When:** 2 p.m. Feb. 15
- **Where:** Online with Barnes & Noble
- **Cost:** Free

know what happens to each character.

Q. Are parts of the narrative inspired by any true crime events?

A. I typically get my ideas from something I read or see in the news, which was also true of "The Overnight Guest." In this case, it wasn't necessarily a crime that was the inspiration; it was a remarkable true story about a blizzard, a young woman, and a hypodermic needle. I was online looking for inspiration and came across an article from the early 1980s that described a young woman's harrowing ordeal. In icy weather, the 19-year-old ended up stuck in a snowy ditch. She left the safety of her car and began walking the 2 miles in 20 below zero temps to get help. The young woman made it to the doorstep when she collapsed. Hours later — she was found with eyes frozen open and near death. She was so cold that the hypodermic needles doctors used to try and treat her kept breaking! Remarkably, the young woman survived.

When I read this account, I knew I had to include it in my next book somehow. Thus, in "The Overnight Guest," the main character finds a young child in the snow, which is the catalyst for all that happens next.

Q. There are so many wonderful layers in this novel and you manage to bring three storylines together into a suspenseful conclusion. When you start writing a novel, do you begin with just one narrative? Or how do the various stories emerge for you as a writer?

A. Thank you! I really love writing stories from multiple points of view and shifting timelines. As I started thinking about this book, I knew it needed to be written in this way. I decided to start with the chapters set decades earlier and chronicled the awful crime that took place in the farmhouse. This allowed me to get to know the characters, the crime, and how it impacted the community. Once I had a good start on these sections, I was ready to jump into the blizzard scenes with Wylie. As I wrote, I discovered that I needed a third perspective to make the story complete. Those discoveries along the way — about plot, characters, even the ending — are my favorite part of writing. It's those unexpected moments that pop up along the way that make what I do so much fun.

Q. Crime novels, podcasts, and television shows are very popular. What do you think fuels our desire for these sorts of stories?

A. Our society is obsessed with crime — especially true crime stories. I count myself as one of those who is always searching for the next great podcast, documentary and true crime book. I recently read some articles on this topic, and there was a consensus that our obsession is (because) crime has been a part of our

society since our hunter and gatherer days. We readily consume these types of stories because we want to know what motivates criminals to better protect ourselves and those for whom we care. While I'm listening, watching and reading true crime accounts, I try to remember that behind these stories are real people — real victims and their families who have suffered the worst the world has to offer.

Q. What are you working on next?

A. I'm just finishing up my 10th novel! I can't say too much about it, but I can say that one of my main characters steps out of her home state of Iowa and encounters some of the most devious, diabolical characters you can imagine. It's a different kind of story than I've written in the past but still filled with plenty of twists and turns. I can't wait to share it with readers.



CEDAR RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Check out the most borrowed books, audiobooks

By Alison Gowans, Jill Martinez and Erin Horst

We're looking back at some of the most popular items in our collection in 2021.

We analyzed the data to put together lists of the most borrowed books and digital resources to see what Cedar Rapids residents were reading, listening to and watching last year.

Information for these lists was collected in mid-December. A mid-year Information Library System transition means book circulation data is from the second half of 2021, while digital circulation data is from the full year.

The most popular books in our adult collection were all fiction, and they focused on dramas.

1. "The Last Thing He Told Me," by Laura Dave
2. "The President's Daughter," by Bill Clinton and James Patterson
3. "Finding Ashley," by Danielle Steel
4. "The Four Winds," by Kristin Hannah

5. "Sooley," by John Grisham

Young adult readers favored older books over new ones, with fantasy dominating the category and Suzanne Collins coming in twice.

1. "The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes," by Suzanne Collins
2. "Shadow and Bone," by Leigh Bardugo
3. "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian," by Sherman Alexie
4. "Catching Fire," by Suzanne Collins
5. "A Court of Thorns and Roses," by Sarah Maas

Manga is popular enough we gave it its own category. Some have dozens of issues per title, so here were the five most borrowed series.

1. "One Piece," by Ei-ichiro Oda
2. "My Hero Academia," by Kohei Horikoshi
3. "Bleach," by Tite Kubo
4. "Fullmetal Alchemist," by Hiromu Arakawa
5. "Case Closed," by Gosho Aoyama

Kids in Cedar Rapids continue to love "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid," with four books making the top five ranking.

1. "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Double Down," by Jeff Kinney
2. "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Deep End," by Jeff Kinney
3. "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth," by Jeff Kinney
4. "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel," by Jeff Kinney
5. "Splattoon," by San-kichi Hinodeya

For digital resources, we looked at Overdrive. The top ebooks from the last year were dominated by historical fiction.

1. "The Vanishing Half," by Brit Bennett
2. "The Four Winds," by Kristin Hannah
3. "The Midnight Library," by Matt Haig
4. "Sold on a Monday," by Kristina McMorris
5. "The Alice Network," by Kate Quinn

The top digital audiobooks from Overdrive included biographies and

1. "The Four Winds," by Kristin Hannah
2. "Bridgerton: The Duke and I," by Julia Quinn

3. "Where the Crawdads Sing," by Delia Owens

4. "A Promised Land," by Barack Obama
5. "Greenlights," by Matthew McConaughey

~IOWA AUTHOR~

Stone City is a work of historical fiction set in and around Stone City, Iowa, during the summer of '69. As their society is being torn apart by war and racism, these star-crossed lovers will come together for one fateful week that will forever change the trajectory of their lives.

Ashley Morgan, thirty-eight, married and mother of three, is in Cedar Rapids for an educational conference. But a chance encounter with Jaymes Fitzgerald, a free-spirited U of I graduate student and consummate blues player, quickly turns into a dinner invitation and an offer to ditch the conference.

They visit historical Stone City where Ashley learns about Grant Wood's Art Colony Schools of the 1930's where Jaymes's dad, a renowned regional artist, had attended as a student.

Hungering for more time together, the couple travel farther north to see the Bily Clocks Museum in Spillville. Each was oblivious to their looming destinies in this emotional charged story of two opposing truths.

Available in HARDCOVER and E-BOOK

The Libraries of Today: This Is YOUR Space

by [MEGAN D. ROBINSON \(HTTPS://WWW.IOWASOURCE.COM/AUTHOR/MEGANDROBINSON/\)](https://www.iowasource.com/author/megandrobinson/)

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Behind their sometimes staid exteriors, libraries have been busy expanding their resources, increasing access, and promoting freedom of information. (Photo by Daniel at Unsplash.com)

Libraries today are much more than just collections of books. And with the insidious spread of misinformation so prevalent these days, libraries are more valuable than ever. “Librarians are navigators of information,” says Dara Schmidt, director of the Cedar Rapids Library. “They provide patrons with tools to ensure they are finding what they need in a safe and secure way.”

We asked librarians from Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, and Fairfield to weigh in on the issues they face today, including how they promote intellectual freedom, how they deal with censorship and misinformation, and how they see their role in creating safe spaces and promoting diverse reading choices.

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The Libraries of Today: This Is YOUR Space

ACCEPT

Access for All

“Libraries provide access to information, services, and resources for anyone in the community, regardless of their background, income, or interest,” says Amber McNamara, Cedar Rapids Public Library Community Relations Manager. “They are the one place in the community where people are encouraged to come together and learn or connect without barriers.”

Iowa City Public Library Community & Access Services Coordinator Sam Helmick believes libraries are important because they are one of the few spaces left in society that fully belong to the public. “This is your space, everyone’s space,” he says, “to simply be, or browse, sit, learn, explore, and linger without restraint or purchase.”

In allowing people to educate themselves about their interests, “Libraries are an equalizer and an empowerer,” says Dan Gall, Librarian for Social Work & Distance Education at the University of Iowa Libraries. “Sometimes those interests are extremely practical—think of cookbooks and car repair manuals—and sometimes those interests are more long-term, including literature, philosophy, and entertainment.”

Beyond Books

Although indelibly associated with books, the libraries of today have greatly expanded their range of services. Schmidt says that libraries provide access to vast collections of information and materials, from books, movies, and recording technology to classes on resume writing, spreadsheet usage, and internet navigation. Patrons can use their library cards to access a variety of free digital resources, including ebooks, audiobooks, music, movies, television shows, magazines, and a variety of educational databases. “Having fun, engaging programs for all ages is a staple of public libraries!” Schmidt says.

So what other services do libraries offer that people may not be aware of? “My library—like many others—offers discovery kits that enhance learning opportunities ranging from music and hiking to astronomy and cooking,” Helmick says. “Checking out equipment from the library provides a try-before-you-buy approach to new hobbies and life-skill development.”

Helmick adds that their library has an ICPL Digital Media Lab—a space providing free access to media converters (for example, VHS to DVD) as well as video and photo editing software and equipment.

“I think folks are always surprised to learn that library staff will thought-partner with you during the resume and application process, when building your own business, when planning a vacation, when researching local history, and much more,” Helmick says. “Staff are eager to support you through your goals.”

Gall asserts that library services directly affect the community in a positive way, an investment that has a high rate of return. “As a stakeholder in society, I would much rather pay taxes to provide opportunities for people without them than for those people to become desperate or dispossessed,” he says. “I want unemployed folks to have a place with computers and career books to help them find a job rather than remain unemployed. I want teenagers to have interesting things to engage their minds and inspire them. I want parents to have stories to read to their children so those children are inspired and those families are bonded.”

Censorship & Calls for Removal

When it comes to decisions about what materials will be selected for the library, McNamara explains that a collection is carefully built to serve the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the community. The collection development staff use their professional training, knowledge, and expertise to make choices.

So what happens when patrons challenge books or materials in a collection? Initially, the library staff will meet to discuss the concerns and identify alternate materials. After this, patrons may request a formal reconsideration of library materials, which goes to the library’s materials manager, then the director, and ultimately, the library’s board of trustees.

“Recognizing the distinctions between a challenge and a call for censorship is my launching point,” says Helmick. As the former Intellectual Freedom Committee chair and oncoming VP/President Elect for the Iowa Library Association, Helmick is very aware of censorship and the importance of freedom of information. “In an open democracy, we rely on transparent dialogue to discuss and dispute ideas. However, when calls for the removal of information are made, it flouts the constitutional rights that library workers are charged to safeguard and uphold.”



Helmick emphasizes the value of following set procedures. “Honoring the process to disagree and reconsider materials is essential to practical, open governance,” he says. “Honoring the First Amendment right to read and to speak is the other essential half of that coin.” Exploring each other’s perspectives “often helps challengers perceive censorship as detrimental to them as much as to others.”

McNamara adds that one of the Cedar Rapids Public Library’s guiding principles is intellectual freedom. “We are committed to the free and open exchange of ideas, she says. “We facilitate access to information, free of judgment. A publicly supported library provides free, equitable, and confidential access to information for all people of its community.”

In addressing the issue of censorship for an academic research library, Gall says, “It is our responsibility to provide a variety of ideas, positions, and points of view on topics such as politics, sexuality, and religion. . . . We have wide latitude to purchase what we need. To my knowledge, we have never had to remove an item due to censorship.”

Gall explains that censorship comes up more frequently in public libraries or K–12 school libraries that report to a community board. “The Iowa Library Association and Iowa Association of School Libraries are strong advocates for individuals having access to a wide variety of views.”

Misinformation

Libraries do their best to combat misinformation, but Gall maintains that libraries are only one part of the solution. “Misinformation targets individuals. Information, true or false, spread through social media may reach many people, but it is only effective when it convinces individuals to believe or act a certain way. So the trick is empowering individuals to determine what is true and untrue. Libraries, schools, media can all teach skills to evaluate information and recognize ways they may be manipulated, but individuals need to become conscious consumers of information.”

Helmick says that supporting the use of primary sources, critical thinking, and literacy are the foundational roles of library workers. “We combat misinformation by equipping our communities to recognize it and circumvent its manipulative algorithms. We challenge ourselves and our patrons to examine information and to remain curious.”

Schmidt points out that their staff are experts at sifting through information and finding relevant sources. “Libraries and library staff are also champions of intellectual freedom,” she says. “We can encourage intellectual freedom by continuing to provide access to materials and resources of all kinds and continuing to fight censorship on any level.”

Welcoming Diversity

Libraries enable patrons to read about other places and experiences, and to learn about other cultures and beliefs. “We are global citizens who can no longer afford to silo ourselves within a narrow scope of existence,” Helmick says. “Libraries are one of the most expedient and economic platforms for communities to embrace differences and diversity.”

McNamara emphasizes that access to a wide range of materials is essential to a free and open society. “Our communities are filled with people of different races, backgrounds, and religions,” she says. “Each member of our community deserves to see themselves reflected in a public library’s collection and to have their experiences understood and validated.” Both fiction and nonfiction can open a window into the experiences of others, something that provides connection and understanding.

“Our library is for everyone,” McNamara says. “You are welcome here. That means providing safe and welcoming spaces for anyone who enters our doors, free of judgment.”





Alecs Mickunas, Youth Services Librarian at the Fairfield Public Library, reads to children in the Fairfield square.

Alecs Mickunas, the Fairfield Public Library Youth Services Librarian, says his department has been partnering with Fairfield’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to come up with storytime programming “that is racially diverse and addresses a wide range of topics such as depression, empathy, and historically underrepresented communities.” The youth services collection has also been consciously expanded to include more well-reviewed and award-winning books about young people from diverse communities. Mickunas says that at least half of the families at storytime events are first-generation Americans or non-native speakers of English.

Mickunas recognizes that to serve an increasingly diverse population, librarianship itself needs to diversify. It is still a primarily white profession, with more women working in the field than men. “In this era of worldwide mass migrations, we can expect the population of the U.S. to continue to diversify,” he says. “For libraries to continue to be relevant and valued by all, we must do more to encourage people from all walks of life to take advantage of the amazing resources we have at the library.”

As libraries evolve to serve growing and changing populations, they continue to provide incredibly valuable access to a wide range of knowledge, information, and services that support and strengthen our communities.

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Category	Platform	Metrics	December 2020	December 2021	% Change
Virtual Programming	Facebook	Virtual Program Views (minutes)	5,599	1,552	-72%
Digital Collection Use	OverDrive	eBook Circulation	6,432	5,917	-8%
		eAudiobook Circulation	4,615	5,268	0%
		New Users	201	159	-20%
	cloudLibrary	eBook Circulation	1,373	1,384	1%
		eAudiobook Circulation	819	1,039	21%
		New Users	118	32	-73%
	Hoopla	eBook Circulation	795	816	3%
		eAudiobook Circulation	650	1,041	38%
		eMusic Circulation	104	131	20%
		eVideo Circulation	408	488	16%
		New Users	47	37	21%
	Freegal	eMusic Downloads	1,318	1,201	-1%
		eMusic Streaming	4,260	3,352	-21%
New Users		4	9	55%	
Kanopy	eVideo Circulation	1,155	1,301	11%	
Total	Total Digital Circulation	21,929	21,938	0%	
Other Online Use	Databases	Visits	15,082	17,860	15%
	CRLibrary.org	Visits	10,141	11,331	12%
	WiFi	Logins	2,299	7,788	70%
Social Media	Facebook	Followers	10,337	10,511	2%
	Instagram	Followers	3,550	3,719	5%
	YouTube	Views	830	8,815	90%
Meeting Room Use	Downtown	Number of Reservations	0	248	N/A
	Downtown	Number of People	0	2873	N/A
	Ladd	Number of Reservations	0	64	N/A
	Ladd	Number of People	0	567	N/A
Number of Visitors	Downtown	Door Count - Downtown	0	20,162	N/A
	Ladd	Door Count - Ladd	0	6,456	N/A
	Total	Door Count - Total	0	26,618	N/A
Curbside Holds	Total	Curbside Holds - Number of Patrons	11,784	163	99%
*Number of items was not possible after Polaris transition					
Materials Circulation	Circulation	Print Circulation	22,654	35,063	36%
		Total Circulation	38,767	51,433	25%
		MLN Circulation (Print only)	39,975	57,352	30%

To: Monica Challenger, Finance Committee Chair
From: Dara Schmidt
Date: 1/27/2022
Subject: **December 2021** Financial Report

Library Operations 151XXX: I have reviewed the December 2021 financial information. Here are items, concerns, and highlights that you should be aware of, or that need addressed:

- When reviewing budget to actual, we assume 1/12 of the expenditure budget is spent per month; likewise that 1/12 of revenue will be received per month. If we assume this, that means thru November actual revenue should be at least **6/12 or 50%** of budget and actual expenses should be no more than **6/12 or 50%**.
- Actual revenues are expected to meet or exceed budgeted amounts. We department depends on these revenue streams to fund expenses. Having revenue in excess of budget or having a fund balance does not mean a department can spend more than their expenditure budget.
 - **Total actual revenue (less Flood insurance transfer in) is 46% or \$332K of budgeted \$725K. – slightly below budget.** If we are slightly short revenues at yearend, unspent expenditure budget will cover.
- Regardless of funds/cash available, total actual expenses, excluding transfer out, may not exceed total budgeted expenses.
 - **Total actual expenditures are 49% or \$3.4M of \$7.1M budgeted. On track with budget.**
 - *Total FY22 COVID expenses recorded thru December is \$4.3K.*
 - Personal Services is tracking at 46% or \$2.51M of \$5.42M budget.
 - Refresh savings of \$92K reduced budget for FY22.
 - Discretionary is trending above budget. Total incurred thru December is \$457K of \$633K budget or 72%.
 - Accounts over budget are: IT related for computer hardware & software maintenance including one broadband payment that was for FY21 of \$4.8K, building & grounds supplies.
 - Rent of Land & Buildings has incurred 8 months of Lease & Cam (\$16,387.67) for Ladd library. Parking actuals thru December is \$18.9K.
 - Electricity is over budget thru November. 47% spent or \$89.1K of \$188.8K budget.
 - Facilities Maintenance has posted EMS costs thru December - \$8.1K. Maintenance for July – October is 89.5K, estimating annual \$26.6K budget remaining for discretionary spending.
 - Fleet Services is billed thru July for work order billing. Currently at 55% or \$138 of \$250 budget. (no change from last month)
- **Current budget amendments** = July adjustment posted to remove Refresh Savings (\$92K)

CIP:

316 – 45% or \$224K spent of \$500K budget on circulation material.

Special Revenue:

7010 – 7% or \$14K of budgeted revenues \$200K have been received and 7% or \$44K of budgeted expenses \$663K has been spent.

- Budgeted \$463K use of fund balance in FY22, current use is \$30K.

City of Cedar Rapids
151 General Fund - Library
2021-12-31

Account Name	Account	Prior Fiscal Year 2021 YTD Actuals	Current Fiscal Year 2022 Adjusted Budget	Current Fiscal Year 2022 YTD Actuals	Favorable (Unfavorable) Variance	Percent of Budget Received Spent	Current Month 2022 Actuals
Revenue							
Taxes							
Total Taxes		-	-	-	-	0%	-
Intergovernmental Revenue							
State Operating	422001	97,473.90	115,000.00	106,452.67	(8,547.33)	93%	75,778.38
Local Govt Grants	423000	14,831.63	130,000.00	6,594.63	(123,405.37)	5%	-
Total Intergovernmental Revenue		112,305.53	245,000.00	113,047.30	(131,952.70)	46%	75,778.38
Other Revenue							
Printing & Duplicating of Form	431006	557.65	25,000.00	2,225.85	(22,774.15)	9%	369.65
Admin Charges - External	431012	164,097.45	330,000.00	166,226.37	(163,773.63)	50%	11,701.21
Library User Fees - Not Fines	431201	-	600.00	5,094.29	4,494.29	849%	518.01
Vending Sales	431301	-	-	32.04	32.04	0%	-
Library Fines	441001	2,919.17	-	-	-	0%	-
Other Fines & Forfeits	441002	-	-	-	-	0%	6.25
Building Rental	461001	4,216.00	43,455.00	16,357.20	(27,097.80)	38%	3,279.20
Contributions & Donations	471002	41,917.29	70,000.00	28,500.00	(41,500.00)	41%	-
Sale of Inventory	471003	390.25	7,000.00	785.25	(6,214.75)	11%	133.50
Other Miscellaneous Revenue	471005	-	3,500.00	-	(3,500.00)	0%	-
Total Other Revenue		214,097.81	479,555.00	219,221.00	(260,334.00)	46%	16,007.82
Proceeds of Long Term Liabilities							
Total Proceeds of Long Term Liabilities		-	-	-	-	0%	-
Transfers In							
Operating Transfer In - Inter	483001	14,000.00	14,000.00	14,000.00	-	100%	-
Total Transfers In		14,000.00	14,000.00	14,000.00	-	100%	-
Total Revenue		340,403.34	738,555.00	346,268.30	(392,286.70)	47%	91,786.20
Expenditures							
Personal Services							
Regular Employees	511100	1,783,427.55	3,899,390.00	1,862,462.23	2,036,927.77	48%	318,062.88
Temporary/Seasonal Employees	511200	-	31,803.20	-	31,803.20	0%	-
Overtime	511300	(890.56)	114,773.40	37,668.08	77,105.32	33%	8,397.13
Other Special Pays	511400	16,811.38	18,894.00	19,478.12	(584.12)	103%	6,852.00
Group Insurance	512100	213,326.63	503,982.00	209,031.45	294,950.55	41%	34,557.57
Social Security Contributions	512200	130,689.00	317,122.00	139,168.08	177,953.92	44%	22,042.02
Retirement Contribution	512300	166,192.19	392,024.00	176,137.25	215,886.75	45%	28,545.72
Unemployment Compensation	512400	3,338.74	-	-	-	0%	-
Workers' Compensation	512500	68,848.87	143,639.00	65,123.70	78,515.30	45%	10,200.80
Other Employee Benefits	512600	3,091.34	6,365.76	3,155.16	3,210.60	50%	557.00
Total Personal Services		2,384,835.14	5,427,993.36	2,512,224.07	2,915,769.29	46%	429,215.12
Discretionary Expenses							
Advertising & Marketing	521100	7,441.37	25,000.00	6,851.98	18,148.02	27%	11.99
Consulting & Technical Service	521104	1,890.00	-	25,931.70	(25,931.70)	0%	25,931.70
External Contracted Labor	521105	28,697.03	63,000.00	44,377.49	18,622.51	70%	4,030.62
Health Services	521106	147.50	-	174.05	(174.05)	0%	32.45
Other Professional Services	521108	-	5,250.00	2,097.00	3,153.00	40%	1,480.00
External Banking/Financial Fee	521109	4,102.75	17,700.00	6,276.83	11,423.17	35%	1,217.44
Security Services	521110	-	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	0%	-
Computer Hardware	522100	25,349.96	35,000.00	39,743.94	(4,743.94)	114%	-
Computer Software Maintenance	522101	181,650.77	175,220.00	144,968.76	30,251.24	83%	153.72
IT Services - External	522102	37,292.75	20,500.00	28,804.73	(8,304.73)	141%	3,913.51
Building & Grounds Services	522104	449.00	-	1,543.80	(1,543.80)	0%	-
Equip/Furniture/Fixtures Serv	522105	13,971.22	9,000.00	-	9,000.00	0%	-
Phone Services	523107	12,845.52	26,500.00	15,290.15	11,209.85	58%	2,513.58
Rental of Equip & Vehicles	524101	-	500.00	-	500.00	0%	-
Printing, Binding, & Duplicate	525102	3,880.59	15,500.00	6,071.34	9,428.66	39%	347.07
Awards & Recognition	531102	15.00	500.00	15.00	485.00	3%	-
Books & Subscriptions	531103	91,067.06	109,171.80	86,997.89	22,173.91	80%	4,712.56
Cleaning & Janitorial Supplies	531105	1,194.36	1,250.00	97.36	1,152.64	8%	-
Computer Supplies	531106	1,545.94	5,000.00	1,737.68	3,262.32	35%	107.24
Equipment/Furniture/Fixtures	531109	335.91	11,500.00	5,212.57	6,287.43	45%	973.00
Photography Supplies	531110	-	500.00	-	500.00	0%	-
Miscellaneous Supplies	531114	188.35	2,000.00	314.34	1,685.66	16%	-
Office Supplies	531116	5,697.26	15,320.00	8,693.40	6,626.60	57%	1,162.44
Program Supplies	531118	5,799.14	37,000.00	16,891.07	20,108.93	46%	3,375.59
Shop Supplies	531119	12.10	250.00	11.89	238.11	5%	-
Sign & Signal Supplies	531120	-	-	235.13	(235.13)	0%	-
Uniforms	531123	-	694.00	-	694.00	0%	-
Personal Protective Gear	531124	999.02	-	3,071.86	(3,071.86)	0%	598.94
Building & Grounds Supplies	533100	48.40	1,748.15	3,160.43	(1,412.28)	181%	938.72
Equip/Furniture/Fixtures Parts	533101	112.00	-	222.76	(222.76)	0%	196.00
Conferences, Training, Travel	542102	1,074.00	14,747.29	289.67	14,457.62	2%	(507.40)
Dues & Memberships	542103	5,201.24	10,000.00	5,843.55	4,156.45	58%	500.00

City of Cedar Rapids
 151 General Fund - Library
 2021-12-31

Account Name	Account	Prior Fiscal Year 2021 YTD Actuals	Current Fiscal Year 2022 Adjusted Budget	Current Fiscal Year 2022 YTD Actuals	Favorable (Unfavorable) Variance	Percent of Budget Received Spent	Current Month 2022 Actuals
Miscellaneous Costs	542107	-	-	-	-	0%	-
Postage & Freight	542108	1,175.82	17,500.00	1,578.96	15,921.04	9%	315.63
Mileage Reimbursement	542111	6.90	3,000.00	162.18	2,837.82	5%	30.24
Admin Charges - Inter Departments	521114	-	-	-	-	0%	-
Chemical Supplies - Non-Snow & Ice	531104	-	-	-	-	0%	-
Facility Services - Non-routine	522107	-	-	-	-	0%	-
Fleet Services - Abnormal Maintenance	522108	-	-	-	-	0%	-
Fleet Services - Non-Safety Modifications	522108	-	-	-	-	0%	-
Fleet Services - Accidents	522108	-	-	-	-	0%	-
Total Discretionary Expenses		432,190.96	633,351.24	456,667.51	176,683.73	72%	52,035.04
Other Expenses							
City Accounting Services	521113	36,500.52	75,000.00	37,500.00	37,500.00	50%	6,250.00
City Information Tech Services	522109	4,621.32	9,242.64	4,621.32	4,621.32	50%	770.22
Electricity	523100	83,294.00	188,800.00	89,172.71	99,627.29	47%	14,473.74
Natural Gas	523103	507.26	4,500.00	659.00	3,841.00	15%	535.69
Rental of Land & Buildings	524100	113,593.52	245,000.00	149,979.61	95,020.39	61%	36,006.59
Liability Insurance	525104	11,697.00	31,315.00	17,842.93	13,472.07	57%	4,795.03
Property Insurance	525107	26,256.54	88,821.00	44,410.50	44,410.50	50%	7,401.75
Vehicle Insurance	525108	300.00	1,746.00	873.00	873.00	50%	145.50
Gasoline Fuel	532101	-	498.58	40.31	458.27	8%	-
City Inter Department Charges	521114	-	-	-	-	0%	-
Chemical Supplies - Snow & Ice	531104	-	-	-	-	0%	-
Facility Services (Routine)	522107	66,640.56	311,558.07	97,703.94	213,854.13	31%	38,420.59
Fleet Services (Routine)	522108	117.70	250.00	137.60	112.40	55%	-
Total Other Expenses		343,528.42	956,731.29	442,940.92	513,790.37	46%	108,799.11
Capital Outlay							
Vehicles, Equipment, Software	554000	-	48,452.71	17,974.44	30,478.27	37%	-
Total Capital Outlay		-	48,452.71	17,974.44	30,478.27	37%	-
Debt Service							
Total Debt Service		-	-	-	-	0%	-
Transfers Out							
Total Transfers Out		-	-	-	-	0%	-
Total Expenditures		3,160,554.52	7,066,528.60	3,429,806.94	3,636,721.66	49%	590,049.27
Net Revenues over/(under) Expenditures		(2,820,151.18)	(6,327,973.60)	(3,083,538.64)	3,244,434.96		(498,263.07)



Chapter 4: Hiring a Library Director

Your job as a library board member is to make sure the library is well managed. To do that, the board hires a qualified director to manage the day-to-day operations of the library. Before hiring a library director, the entire board should have a good grasp of the work that public library directors do. Your library director is the department head of a city service who has many responsibilities.

What Do Public Library Directors Do?

- ❖ Act as a professional and technical advisor to the library board of trustees on policy, finances, planning, library performance, laws affecting libraries
- ❖ Hire and supervise staff
- ❖ Implement and interpret board policy to staff and the public
- ❖ Administer the library budget
- ❖ Develop the collection (“collection” is everything the library has on hand for its customers: books, DVDs, CDs, magazines, newspapers, subscriptions to electronic resources, puppets and more)
- ❖ Manage library services and programming
- ❖ Supervise outreach services to the community
- ❖ Manage and maintain the physical facility, computer technology, the library’s automation system, and other equipment
- ❖ Represent the library in the community by promoting its services and programs
- ❖ Instruct users how to access, evaluate, and use information resources

As you can see by the list of responsibilities, hiring a library director is one of the most important duties of the library board.

In small cities with few or no other library staff, the library director serves customers directly and may also:

- ❖ Provide preschool story time to build early literacy skills in young children
- ❖ Help students find resources to complete school assignments
- ❖ Help readers find a good book
- ❖ Answer reference questions from patrons
- ❖ And yes... check out books!

To ensure that the most qualified candidate is hired, it is critical that the library board follow standard hiring procedures as outlined on the following pages.

Conduct a Preliminary Assessment

The board must reach consensus on what they want a new director to accomplish and what qualifications are needed in a director for the library at this point in time. In order to do this, the board needs to discuss the following questions:

- ❖ What is the role of the library in the community?
- ❖ Have community needs changed? Has the library kept pace?
- ❖ What direction does the library need to go?
- ❖ What qualifications are needed in the next director?
- ❖ What is the reason for the job opening?
- ❖ Was the previous director dissatisfied? Why?
- ❖ Was the board dissatisfied with the previous director? Why?

Develop a Timeline

A timeline should be established to include the following tasks:

- ❖ Appointing the search committee (should be less than a quorum).
- ❖ Reviewing the current job description and updating if necessary.
- ❖ Writing the job advertisement and sending it through various communication channels (library website, city website, local / area newspapers, State Library Job List posting, etc).
- ❖ Determining the deadline for applications.

- ❖ Reviewing the applications and deciding on persons to interview.
- ❖ Determining interview schedule and questions.
- ❖ Determining the time needed for the board to make a decision and offer the job to the candidate.
- ❖ Determining the timeframe for the candidate to respond.

Set up the Search Committee

The board as a whole can function as the search committee. An alternative is to form a committee of board members and staff to review the applications and recommend candidates for the board to interview. If the board decides to appoint a subcommittee, the subcommittee must meet in open sessions as long as it is doing deliberative work. If a search committee is appointed, be sure the duties of the committee and the deadlines are clear.

Applications for public positions are confidential documents under **Iowa Code 22.7(18)**, so protect applicants' identities by referring to them as "Candidate A, Candidate B," etc. during this stage of the process in open meetings. Deciding whether or not a subcommittee meeting has to be an open meeting is complicated and often turns on the specific facts of a particular meeting, refer to the **Iowa Public Information Board** (515-725-1781) with questions.

Review and Update the Job Description

The job description should indicate the minimum requirements for education and work experience. The job description should also include any desirable areas of expertise and technology competencies (online learning experience, website experience, social media use, etc.). All minimum requirements and desirable qualifications must be job related and should be delineated as required vs. preferred. The board should not hire a person with less than the minimum requirements.

Obtain a copy of the current job description from the current library director, the acting director, or the city. (If no written job description exists, the board will need to write one before continuing with the hiring process.) Review it to ensure that it meets current requirements including:

- ❖ Minimum requirement for education and previous work experience
- ❖ Primary management duties
- ❖ Desirable areas of expertise including technology skills
- ❖ Salary and benefits

- ❖ Probationary period
- ❖ Physical and environmental requirements of the job

Determine Salary and Benefits

The first step in achieving pay commensurate with the work performed, referred to as “pay equity,” is to understand the job duties and responsibilities. It may help to re-read the list at the beginning of this chapter titled “What Do Public Library Directors Do?”

In small towns, the library director’s position might be comparable to the city clerk. In larger cities, the library director’s job will compare more favorably with another city department head. Another valid job comparison to make is to compare the education requirements and job responsibilities of the library director with that of school district personnel or county government workers.

Too often the work of library directors and staff is not well understood, too often undervalued and unfairly compensated for the complex level of management expectations. In other words, many library directors (and staff) receive lower pay than other city employees who do comparable work, who also supervise staff, and who also have considerable management duties and education requirements.

A caution: library boards and directors often ask about salaries of directors in nearby towns of similar size. While that can be useful information, it should not be the sole basis for making decisions on library director and staff salaries. The reason is that low pay is a common fact among library employees. So comparing to other libraries’ salary scales often results in comparing to equally low salaries that don’t adequately compensate for the work performed.

Advertise the Position

The job description should be used to write the job advertisement; in turn, the advertisement should be as comprehensive as possible. Provide a fair summary of the position, the required education, experience, and skills needed, and the desirable areas of expertise and work experience. Include the salary range and benefits, a brief description of the library and community, where to send applications, and application deadline. Request a resume and professional references.

Integral to providing equal employment opportunities is a practice of openly advertising all available positions. Many city governments have policies regarding how city employment must be advertised so that all applicable laws are being followed. The city might also require consistent employment applications for city jobs. If your city has a human resources department, check there first before placing ads, or check with city hall.

While there is no state statute or regulation that explicitly mandates such advertising, the

“veterans’ preference” law in **Iowa Code 35C.1** requires cities to post a public notice of the application deadline to fill a public job at least ten days prior to that deadline. The spirit of the “veterans’ preference” law ensures that everyone has an equal opportunity to work for the government; that the best candidates have been sought for all public positions; that only the most qualified people work at all levels of government; and that when applicant qualifications are equal in every other way, veterans are the preferred candidates.

The job advertisement should be publicized widely. If the library board is considering hiring a director with a master’s degree in Library Science, then notify library schools or purchase an online ad through the American Library Association. If you decide to place print ads in professional journals such as *American Libraries* and *Library Journal*, check publication deadlines and see how those deadlines fit within your timeline. In addition to advertising in local newspapers, you are welcome to send your notice to the **State Library Job List** to be posted at no cost.

Review the Applications

Many times, the city will receive the applications to ensure all requirements are complete, then send the applications to the library board. If your city has an HR department, use them to ensure all laws are followed. As applications arrive, each should be marked with the date of arrival to determine whether it falls within your timeline. Before applications are reviewed, evaluation criteria should be developed and used to rank them. It is helpful to develop a form that can be used by each member of the search committee; the form ensures a consistent screening and an easy way to compare each applicant’s qualifications to the requirements of the position.

The board must discuss applications in open session when determining which candidates will be contacted for an interview. Once the board has chosen which applicants will be interviewed, each of those candidates should be notified that they are a finalist and that the list of finalists may (or will, depending upon the particular city’s practice) become public. Some candidates may opt to drop out if they feel that their present jobs or working relationships would be compromised or endangered once their applications for different jobs become public. If a candidate agrees to be interviewed, again confirm whether a closed interview is required by law.

Interview Process

Interviews should be conducted in “stand alone” sessions—not regular board meetings—in which the interviews are the only business before the board. If an interview is conducted during a closed session in accordance with **Iowa Code 21.5**, be sure the board follows the laws in subsections 2, 3, 4 and 5, especially those pertaining to recording and documenting the closed session.

Prior to the interviews, the search committee should provide all candidates an

information packet that could include but is not limited to: the library mission statement; planning document; recent budgets; community demographics; employers, shopping, schools, churches, recreation, higher education, and any other information that will inform candidates about the library and community.

Develop a list of questions to be asked of every candidate interviewed. And be sure to apply the questions consistently, even if the interview team is familiar with the candidates. Typical questions to cover in the interviews are questions about the candidate's prior management experience, their library service philosophy, their staff supervision experience, their technology competencies, etc. Check with your city to see if there are any required questions for city employment. **NOTE:** It is illegal to ask certain questions of candidates, such as marital status, age, family plans, etc. For more about interviewing see [**Iowa Workforce Development's Successful Interviewing Guide**](#).

As part of the interview, arrange a tour of the library, a meeting with staff, and an opportunity for the candidate to learn about the community.

Evaluate the Candidates

During the interview process, it's helpful to use your page of interview questions to record candidate responses and search committee impressions. Once all of the finalists have been interviewed, the search committee can then compare their notes, discussing and ranking the finalists. Some qualifications to consider in ranking candidates are:

- ❖ Library service attitude and philosophy; enthusiasm for librarianship
- ❖ Knowledge of foundational library principles such as intellectual freedom, patron privacy, etc.
- ❖ Knowledge of current library trends and literature
- ❖ Direct yet thorough responses to questions
- ❖ Evidence that the applicant has done some research for the position
- ❖ Ability to explain how their experience and talent can be used as library director
- ❖ Understanding the role of trustees; successful record of working with boards and community leaders
- ❖ Successful record of staff supervision
- ❖ Comfort level with technology, automation systems, online learning, social media, etc.
- ❖ Experience being involved in the community and comfort level with public relations
- ❖ Commitment to continuing education for self; support of continuing education for

staff and board

Check references before offering the position to a candidate. When calling references, agreed-upon questions should be asked with space on the questionnaire to record responses. The search committee may want to seek out references other than those provided by the applicants. Be aware: some employers will only verify such things as dates of employment and last salary earned.

Make the Hiring Decision

Finally, decide if one or more of the candidates should be offered the job or if the search needs to be reopened. The top candidate should be offered the position by telephone. When a candidate accepts the position, follow up with a letter of agreement indicating date employment begins, salary, benefits, etc. The board may want to consider a formal employment contract. Soon after the job offer has been accepted, notify the other candidates.

For further information and to follow all applicable hiring laws, refer to the **Library Law FAQ** on the State Library website.

**Statement on Labelling
An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Labelling is the practice of describing or designating certain library materials by affixing a prejudicial label to them or segregating them by a prejudicial system. The American Library Association opposes this as a means of predisposing people's attitudes towards library materials for the following reasons:

1. Labelling is an attempt to prejudice attitudes and as such, it is a censor's tool.
2. Some find it easy and even proper according to their ethics, to establish criteria for judging publications as objectionable. However, injustice and ignorance rather than justice and enlightenment result from such practices, and the American Library Association opposes the establishment of such criteria.
3. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate an endorsement of their contents by the library.

[Based on a policy adopted July 13, 1951; amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981; June 26, 1990 by the ALA Council.]

Adopted: 03/30/89

Revised: 06/06/96, 10/07/99

Reviewed: 2013, 09/2015, 01/2019, 2/3/2022

Labelling and Rating Systems An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in resources accessible through the library. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, providing access to digital information does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library. Labeling and rating systems present distinct challenges to these intellectual freedom principles.

Many organizations use or devise rating systems as a means of advising either their members or the general public regarding the organization's opinions of the contents and suitability or appropriate age for use of certain books, films, recordings, websites, games, or other materials. The adoption, enforcement, or endorsement of any of these rating systems by a library violates the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and may be unconstitutional. If enforcement of labeling or rating systems is mandated by law, the library should seek legal advice regarding the law's applicability to library operations.

Viewpoint-neutral directional labels are a convenience designed to save time. These are different in intent from attempts to prejudice or discourage users or restrict their access to resources. Labeling as an attempt to prejudice attitudes is a censor's tool. The American Library Association opposes labeling as a means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library resources.

Prejudicial labels are designed to restrict access, based on a value judgment that the content, language, or themes of the resource, or the background or views of the creator(s) of the resource, render it inappropriate or offensive for all or certain groups of users. The prejudicial label is used to warn, discourage, or prohibit users or certain groups of users from accessing the resource. Such labels sometimes are used to place materials in restricted locations where access depends on staff intervention.

Viewpoint-neutral directional aids facilitate access by making it easier for users to locate resources. Users may choose to consult or ignore the directional aids at their own discretion.

Directional aids can have the effect of prejudicial labels when their implementation becomes proscriptive rather than descriptive. When directional aids are used to forbid access or to suggest moral or doctrinal endorsement, the effect is the same as prejudicial labeling.

Libraries sometimes acquire resources that include ratings as part of their packaging. Librarians should not endorse the inclusion of such rating systems; however, removing or destroying the ratings—if placed there by, or with permission of, the copyright holder—could constitute expurgation (see "Expurgation of Library Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights"). In addition, the inclusion of ratings on bibliographic records in library catalogs is a violation of the Library Bill of Rights.

Prejudicial labeling and ratings presuppose the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is appropriate or inappropriate for others. They presuppose that

individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. The fact that libraries do not advocate or use proscriptive labels and rating systems does not preclude them from answering questions about them. The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read or view.

Adopted July 13, 1951, by the ALA Council; amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981; June 26, 1990; January 19, 2005; July 15, 2009; July 1, 2014.

Adopted: 08/04/05

Revised: 01/2019

Reviewed: 2013, 09/2015, 2/3/2022

Meeting Rooms

I. PURPOSE

At the Cedar Rapids Public Library we value civic engagement. We demonstrate that value by serving our community with a variety of accessible public spaces for meetings, programs, training sessions, and events. In full support of free expression of ideas, the library Board of Trustees neither approves nor disapproves of any particular program or its content.

II. GENERAL MEETING ROOM POLICIES

1. Food is allowed in all meeting rooms except the Technology Classroom.
2. Room capacities must be observed.
3. Rooms must be reserved by adults age 18 or older.
4. The library is not responsible for loss or damage to the private property of individuals or organizations using meeting facilities. An outside organization may be required to submit evidence that the organization is covered by general liability.
5. Deliberate misuse of or damage to library meeting rooms or equipment may result in billing the user for damages and/or refusing any further requests for meeting room use. All use of meeting rooms is subject to the Library's Behavior Policy.
6. Library programs and events take precedence over any other use of civic space. The library may cancel a reservation or change room assignments for library business.
7. ~~In keeping with our goal of open access for all, the library does not charge for traditional use of civic space. Library facilities are also available for celebrations and commerce including, but not limited to parties, weddings, and a variety of for-profit activities. A fee schedule and detailed planning guide is available for special occasion use.~~
7. In keeping with our goal of open access for all, the library does not charge for use of civic space with specific exceptions. Library facilities are available for celebrations and commerce - including, but not limited to: parties, weddings, and a variety of activities.
 - Room use charges apply to events:
 - Requiring additional staffing time
 - Charging a fee to attendees
 - Where funds are exchanged
 - Where fundraising occurs
 - Held on the Living Learning Roof
 - Outside regular library hours
8. _____

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Board Policy 4.01

8.9 To achieve our goal of being open and welcoming to all, only Library approved signage or postings, typically in the form of listings outside rooms, may be used to promote or direct people to events being held in Library spaces. All postings and signage within rooms must be displayed in the designated space only and not in full view of public spaces.

Adopted: 03/29/90

Revised: 05/25/95, 12/02/99, 02/05/04, 05/08/07, 11/4/10; 2/06/20, 02/03/22

Reviewed: 2013, 11/15



Director's Report
February 3, 2022

Department Updates

Community Relations. Design and Marketing celebrated the History of the Library with the opening of our two exhibits and several articles and pieces of additional collateral. Focus has shifted to the spring issue of *OPEN+* and our plans for Summer 2022.

Events has had another busy month particularly managing daily use of our spaces. Many of our planned corporate events have been moved to March due to the Omicron variant. One event that did not get rescheduled was hosted by Swamp Fox Bookstore from Marion who held a public conversation with author Heather Gudenkauf in Whipple Auditorium on January 26 to celebrate her latest book.

In January we implemented a new process for volunteer Holds Hunters to pull holds utilizing the new Polaris/Leap software. Volunteers now use tablets to pull holds in real time. The electronic holds list is searchable and data can be sorted in multiple ways. This new format provides faster fulfillment of holds for patrons, increased levels of efficiency and independence for volunteers, and saves the Library staff time in printing the list while reducing waste by over 300 pieces of paper each week. Volunteer Hours in December 2021: 272 hours

The *Materials* team has been working on integrating more eContent into the public catalog. Hoopla records will begin appearing in the catalog for patrons to search along with physical materials. Having multiple digital services offers a great variety of materials but can be difficult for patrons to remember to check different services for content. This will help reduce the need for patrons to check multiple services. These will appear as eContent or Electronic Resources in the catalog. Material deliveries are beginning to pick up after a very slow holiday season so we're glad to have more new releases to offer patrons. Planning is beginning for summer and the team will work with the Programming Department on potential outreach and deposit collections to coordinate with offsite programs in the warmer months.

The *Technology Solutions* team continues to update meeting room technology and hope to start work at Ladd soon. Hardware is still slow to arrive and this holds up the installation process. Grant funded laptops are arriving and are being processed for public circulation now. This involves setting up protective software and adding records to the catalog so patrons can check them out to take home. The group continues to coordinate with City of Cedar Rapids IT on security updates and new staff password procedures.

Much has been happening recently in *Programming!* January saw the return of in-person Story Time and Mother Goose on the Loose events, with effective safety measure in place. More than 250 people participated in the Winter Reading Challenge, and read more than 16,500 minutes, earning over 500 badges. The 125th Anniversary Celebration was a success, with patrons viewing beautiful galleries, watching our brand new documentary, and picking up crafts, cookies, and beautiful metal bookmarks commemorating the occasion. Look out for more short videos celebrating the library's history over the next year!

The Maker Room at the Downtown Library will open for patron reservations on February 7, and will allow patrons a 1-on-1 time to learn in depth about some of the exciting technology the library, including 3D Printing, laser cutting, and more. We have also started planning for Summer Dare 2022, including beginning our work as part of the ULC cohort focusing on Building Equity with Middle School STEM. We will increase our reach into the community, and find new and exciting ways to connect our patrons to their library. Also, we started to expand our reach into workforce development, and have been using our resources to elevate the work done by our amazing partners in the community – from Grab-A-Job, to hiring events for Afghan refugees, Youth Job Fairs, and expungement clinics, we are working hard to support those in the community looking for a new opportunity, and those who serve them.

The *Public Service* Department is focusing on Active Service and how that looks with COVID safety measures in place. Part of the tremendous success we saw in the Teen area at DT came from taking time to get to know the teens and build those important relationships. We are starting the work to expand this model for other user groups in the library in which we have

seen behavior issues and expect to have the same success we saw in the Teen Area. This will be an ongoing focus for the department the next few months.

Director Goal Updates

1. Engage stakeholders and the community by updating the strategic plan while maintaining the priorities of Literacy, Access, and Inclusion: Working on individual stakeholder conversations in January and February.
2. Connect with patrons and stakeholders to help them engage in the library's story and make it their story. Utilize new and existing pathways (committees, board packets, data and metrics) to further storytelling: No progress this month.
3. Prepare a long-term west-side service strategy: MSR has completed the initial report and Library is working with City and County to secure commitments of ARPA funds for the project.

Great Stories

A patron came up to me around 5 pm one night and told me that he had just been released from the Linn County jail. He had very little money and no cell phone, so he could not contact his family, all of whom lived a couple of hours away. It was also very cold-- not a good night to have to sleep outside. Having exhausted the usual resources, I didn't know what to do and was afraid we wouldn't be able to help. I asked a coworker for advice, and with the help of her considerable research skills, we helped him get in touch with his family via social media and found him a bus ticket on credit. It took a couple of hours, but his happiness made it all worth it. This situation taught me two very important lessons-- one, we can accomplish so much more together than we can alone, and two, working in a library is not just about helping patrons navigate the resources we have. It's about being a resource. – Audrey Brock, Public Service Associate

A woman called from Texas to find some information - address and phone number of an acquaintance. I located the information for her and she let me know that she used to live in Cedar Rapids. She called us because the libraries down in Texas had weird hours and were not as helpful (apparently not as capable in finding information?). She said she missed the CR library -- even with the snow we get here. 😊

December. A gentleman came into the library looking for a specific book. Our collection did not include it, so I described our InterLibrary Loan (ILL) option and he said he was definitely interested in that. He also needed a card, so we got that made for him and then finalized the details on the ILL. He was so appreciative and happy; he briefly described why he wanted the book and how he had been in the war. He said a friend of his had the book but didn't want to loan it out, so he was so pleased to find a way to read it. It's wonderful when we can help someone find an item they have their heart set on!

A patron called to check on the spelling of a Hebrew phrase. She was so thankful for our help (she did not have it spelled correctly, although she was close). She said she doesn't have a computer and appreciates us. She said, "I love this service; I hope it never ends!" – Penny Frischkorn, Patron Services Specialist