

Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
December 5, 2024

Board members in attendance: [President] Monica Challenger, [Vice President] Jeremy Elges, Jade Hart, Susie McDermott, Elisabeth Hepworth (in person); Rafael Jacobo, Hassan Selim (via Zoom)

Board members unable to attend: Ana McClain, Chris Casey

Staff in attendance: Dara Schmidt, Jessica Musil, Amber McNamara, Todd Simonson, Kevin Delecki (in person)

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

- A. Call to Order
 - Ms. Challenger called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes:
 - November 7, 2024

Ms. Hart moved to accept the consent agenda. Ms. Hepworth seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.
- C. Public Comments and Communications
 - There being none, the meeting continued
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
 - Ms. Tyler reported. The Foundation participated in GivingTuesday again – the theme is every story matters, every gift counts, which will benefit the Westside Library. Donors gave through a specific online link, that shared on social media and via email as well as online. The Foundation exceeded this year’s goal. In addition, the year-end annual appeal went out in mid-November to nearly 900 households. Donations are also coming in through the fall newsletter, which contains an envelope to mail back any contributions.
 - Ms. Tyler sent out a donor appreciation letter the week of Thanksgiving, providing an update on the Westside Library project and fundraising goals. Several conversations are still on-going with donors. She shared that over \$7.2 million has been raised and she looks forward to closing out the campaign by the end of this fiscal year.

Ms. McDermott joined the meeting at 4:08 pm.

- A year-end appeal for the Wise Women Circle went out to those who did not get an appeal otherwise to share information on how this campaign started with 34 women giving over \$10,000. At this time, the circle has 80 members with a gift value of \$3 million. The commitment speaks to the investment and passion of the community for this project.
 - The Foundation is partnering with Lion Bridge for a Library Lager special brew. Ms. Tyler shared a preview of the label. In the next week, the Foundation will promote a brew master for the day opportunity, a six-hour experience to brew the lager, to be auctioned. At this time, Lion Bridge will brew about 60 cases of cans with the possibility of other areas for sale depending on popularity. Ms. Tyler is excited for this opportunity to raise awareness and generate excitement in support of the Library Foundation.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
 - Ms. Slappey reported. She encouraged people to attend the Very Cherry Holiday sale on December 7. Friends will open at 9 am, one-hour earlier than the event. All basement books will be half price, with giftables on the first floor. Children’s books will be

individually priced and widely available with pricing low enough to encourage sales. This sale is the last of the calendar year. They will resume in 2025 with a similar calendar to 2024 – big spring and fall sales plus Farmers Market sales as well as pop-up sales.

F. Board Education: Age Friendly Community at the Library – Kevin Delecki

- In 2019, the City of Cedar Rapids' Wellbeing Advisory Committee joined the Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. The library joined an action plan steering committee in 2021 and in 2022 an action plan was developed to intentionally address livability for older adults in Cedar Rapids. Eight livability themes were identified, and within those, each had goals and subgoals. The library was directly assigned goals or in partnership to help achieve this action plan.
- For Housing Goal 1.2: AUD Promotion and Education, the library received money to replicate a gingerbread house contest, focusing on education and awareness of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Over 250 gingerbread house kits given out in six hours. We received over 100 entries with prizes given for various ages and categories. In addition, we hosted information sessions on ADUs.
- The Opportunity Center's addition to the Unite Us Community platform helped achieve the Health and Community 1.1 goal. Since the Center's addition, we have made over 300 referrals, some of which have served an older population.
- The Outdoor Spaces 1.2 goal generated an art show geared toward older community members with the Reflections Exhibit in 2023. Library staff worked with individuals at in-library workshops and in care centers. We hosted an opening reception and displayed work for three months
- As we were re-engaging the technology classroom into a maker space, we were able to tackle the Social Participation 3.3 goal. We specifically added daytime classes to target older adults – our highest users are retired engineers – as well as technology assistance at the Opportunity Center for weekly programs. Reference librarians are also available to provide individual attention for questions. Social Participation 3.4 goal also focused on technology by increasing circulating technology options, such as Chromebooks, digital materials, in-house DVD players, and Tonies.
- Outside of the action plan, the library offers other older adult engagement options. In-library programming includes Tai Chi hosted by Heritage Agency on Aging, chair yoga, and book clubs. For outreach, staff provide biweekly story reading and armchair travel programs at several senior living and memory care facilities. Our collection boasts Reflection Kits, which are book club kits specifically for those with memory loss/dementia, as well as Favorite Things to spark conversations around a time period or specific topic like farming. In November, we became a Dementia Friendly Organization with specific staff training and making changes to be more accommodating. Staff have shared positive feedback about the training. Books by Mail and Books by Delivery continue to be successful ways to access materials for homebound patrons.
- Several trustees shared their thanks for the work and services the library provides to positively impact older adults in our community.

G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Advocacy Committee – Elisabeth Hepworth, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Hepworth reported. The 2025 legislative session will start in the coming months. The committee is preparing to review proposed bills that impact library services and educate the community. Ms. McNamara noted that we will schedule City Council advocacy conversations. Look for an email soon with talking points.
- Building Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Hart reported. The committee started work on the Urban Plaza refresh project. Two vendors presented on their qualifications, and the committee selected Fehr Graham. They have a great reputation and City partners gave positive feedback about their work. The design work contract is in the packet but doesn't require a vote as its under \$50,000. Library staff and trustees participated

in a kickoff meeting to share ideas on what we want and don't want. The goal is to have schematic design by mid-January and start the bid process not long after for construction. Part of the conversation with Fehr Graham is how we can retain access for parts of the space over the summer. The goal is to have a tiered implementation plan, prioritizing sections. Ultimately, we want to improve access to the library and the enjoyment of the space as well as replace the pavers, which are crumbling. This refresh construction is funded by the Foundation.

- The Westside Library progress continues. Ms. Schmidt shared we had another Owner, Architect and Contractor meeting this morning. She feels good about the process as the construction experts are working together to resolve issues as they arise or even proactively, such as understanding lead times. The packet includes the second pay application – votes are not needed but included for transparency. The new library's foundation is dug out and basement pouring should be complete within the next two weeks.
- Finance Committee – Chris Casey, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Schmidt reported for Ms. Casey on the October Financial memo. The budget is 33% through the fiscal year and is straight forward with no issues.
 - The initial FY26 budget has been submitted though it won't be finalized in January due to tax valuations. This is the first year for removal of property taxes for people over 65 and impacts are unknown. There is still an expectation of growth in the tax base but caution around tax caps. The anticipated growth will be 1-2%, which does not meet the overall City's budget's growth. It is likely the board will see the budget in February.
- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - **Action:** Policy 4.03 Community Postings. The committee did not recommend any changes as it is working well. Postings are in the public print and copy nooks at both buildings.
 - **Action:** Policy 4.05 Non-Smoking Policy. Similar to the previous policy, there are no recommended changes.
 - **Action:** Policy 5.02 Fundraising Policy. The committee did not recommend changes to this policy as well.

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

Mr. Elges left the meeting at 4:58 pm.

H. Library Director's Report

- Ms. Schmidt reported. She passed around Save the Date cards for the first Corridor Libraries all staff day on Feb. 20. Trustees also received information via email. This day will be a joint professional development day with Cedar Rapids, Coralville, Hiawatha, Iowa City, Marion, and North library libraries. Staff have volunteered to develop educational content for programs and services, public service, advocacy and more. The day will start with a keynote presentation by Shola Richards at the DoubleTree before heading back to the library for lunch and other sessions.
- Ms. Schmidt flipped through the most recent copy of *OPEN+* magazine. She specifically highlighted the groundbreaking event on page 8 and encouraged everyone to read the article on the Opportunity Center's newest AmeriCorps RIVA staff members. Their support has been an incredible resource to help people while using their native language. Ms. McNamara is leading a strategic planning committee on how we can be more welcoming at the libraries. The RIVA's work highlights the importance of the strategic work.
- MerryTubaChristmas will be at the library on Saturday, Dec. 14. On KCRG this morning, the organizers were hyping their event and shared the value of hosting the event at the

library. Ms. Schmidt feels it is one of those special community moments, where you feel like you're a part of something.

- 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 5:04 pm.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, January 2, 2025, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library