

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

Board members in attendance: [President] Monica Challenger, Jade Hart, Chris Casey, Susie McDermott, Ana McClain (in person); Elisabeth Hepworth, Rafael Jacobo (via Zoom)

Board members unable to attend: [Vice President] Jeremy Elges, Hassan Selim

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

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

- A. Call to Order
 - Ms. Challenger called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes:
 - August 1, 2024

Ms. McClain moved to accept the consent agenda. Ms. Hart 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 that the Foundation celebrated Westside Library project donors at an event on August 15. Sixty-six individuals attended and received updates on the projects as well as the initial invitation to the groundbreaking event on October 18.
 - The Foundation has another event slated for September 22. The Van Vechten Society Brunch is an annual event, honors those who include the library or Foundation into their estate plans. Later this year, the Foundation looks forward to adding more bricks to the Van Vechten donor wall, which is adjacent near the 4th Avenue entrance at the downtown library.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
 - Ms. Slappey reported. Farmers Market sales concluded for the planned events. However, the sales team is adding a final Farmers Market sale to feature media on September 21. A large donation of music CDs and other media made the sale possible.

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

- The Friends are also preparing for their large weekend sale at the downtown library, which takes place on November 1-3.
- F. Board Education: Summer Reading Challenge Recap – Kevin Delecki
 - This past year, library staff intentionally improved the Summer Reading Challenge with three goals in mind: 1) simplify the program to increase participation; 2) engage adults/parents of readers; and 3) increase participation targets.
 - In order to simplify the program, we eliminated the requirement to register and track reading online, and re-established paper logs. The feedback was immediately positive and improved engagement with patrons as well as interactions with staff. This year, 240 children ages 0-5 completed the program with paper log versus 211 children total in 2019-2023. Teen completions also jumped from last year (10) to 72 in 2024. Ms. Casey asked if staff enter paper records for data analysis. Yes, patrons can turn in logs and staff

would enter data into Beanstack so we could track their information along with digital users.

- Adult engagement also showed a significant increase for enrollments and completions. Of those to enroll, 57.6% completed the program. In past years, completions averaged around 28%.
- Participation data indicated further success. Completions tallied to 1,358, far exceeding the goal of 400. Program attendance was about 4,000 more than last summer. The community as a whole reported over three million minutes read. The 2023 program's minutes read were approximately 987,000.
- Reducing barriers to completions and participation improved the program for many in our community. The programming team looks forward to summer 2025. They plan to evaluate programs and outreach opportunities, update collateral based on feedback, and expand partnerships for school-age children.
- Board members offered their congratulations on a successful program. Ms. Challenger loved the story about the teen reading 30,000 minutes over the summer. Ms. McClain felt more excitement in her family with the paper logs and grand prize opportunities. Both Ms. Casey and Ms. Hart agreed that the paper log is a great tool for equity. Mr. Delecki noted that we used paper logs last summer for Books by Mail patrons and they loved being able to participate because technology was a barrier. Ms. Hepworth felt the paper log helped her family stay accountable with reading because of the excitement to color in the shapes on the kids' paper log.

G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Advocacy Committee – Elisabeth Hepworth, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Hepworth reported no action from the committee other than remind trustees to mark their calendars for the Westside Library groundbreaking event. Ms. Schmidt also noted that on Tuesday, Sept. 10 at noon, the City Council will approve the final rezoning of the land as well as the construction bid award. Ms. Tyler and Ms. Hepworth plan to speak during public comment in support of the library. Ms. McNamara is developing talking points for anyone who wishes to express their thanks and support.
- Building Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - This committee is now the Building Committee instead of Westside Project Committee. We've had multiple large scale and complex building needs at the downtown library, such as the roof repair and plaza refresh. The Leadership of the Board committee felt it'd be advantageous to have a committee provide feedback and oversight.
- Finance Committee – Chris Casey, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Casey reported on the July Financial memo. At this time, we don't have July financial spreadsheets – they will be presented next month. Final FY24 numbers should come by November, following the City's close-out and audit process. At this time, Ms. Schmidt reports that FY24 closed out with a surplus of \$380.
 - **Action:** Resolution Westside Library Construction Bid Award
 - Ms. Schmidt reported that the Westside Library construction was projected to cost \$17,850,000 and the lowest construction bid from Garling Construction came in at \$15,525,000.
 - The City Council will formally approve for awarding Garling Construction the construction bid award on Sept. 10, following library board approval. The resolution is in the packet.

The resolution to approve Garling Construction, in the amount of \$15,525,000, as the construction company for the Westside Library project passed with unanimous approval.

- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - Ms. McDermott shared that the committee did not meet last month so there is no discussion item at this time.

H. Library Director's Report

- Ms. Schmidt reported. Recently, library staff met with OPN to discuss additions to the Westside Library project with the construction being underbid. Ms. Schmidt is trying to be thoughtful and ensure a reasonable project to achieve financial goals. For example, with federal rebates, we can add solar panels and be a net zero library at opening. Another item under consideration is on-site battery storage to store our own power and operate the building fully for up to six hours. Ms. McClain asked about other grants or other funding opportunities for disaster resiliency. We are not eligible for federal grants as it requires everything in the project has to come from the United States. There may be other opportunities if the grant is not specifically tied to the building's construction. Ms. Hart asked about the contingency budget. With the additional funds, we want to increase that budget as well. Some items can't be brought back into the project because it would impact the overall design. However, we could allocate money to furniture, equipment, shelving, and landscaping features.

Ms. McClain left the meeting at 4:46 pm

I. Old Business

- There being no old business, the meeting continued.

J. New Business

- There being no new business, the meeting continued.

K. Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, October 3, 2024, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library