

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

Date: December 1, 2020

Board Members

in Attendance: Diana Allison
Sandra Crosland
Kathleen Jensen
Reed Spencer
Spencer Stokes

Board Members

Excused: Cynthia Mattson
Jim Harvey

Others

In Attendance: Bryan Baron, Legal Counsel
Evelyn Bertilson, Friends of the Library
Phoebe Carter, Assistant Library Director
Diane Earnshaw, Community Member
Marcia Harris, Library Development Board
Holley Larsen, Library Circulation Manager
Holly Okuhara, Assistant Library Director
Margaret Rostkowski, Weber Reads Community Coordinator
Julia Valle, Library Business Office Manager
Lynnda Wangsgard, Library Director

Allison called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Patron Account Review:

Earnshaw requested the Board waive a fee charged to her account for a water damaged book. She claimed the damage was not done while the item was in her possession. Larsen summarized the review processes in place to ensure a damaged item is not returned to the shelf after being loaned, but rather is billed to the last patron who borrowed it. Earnshaw indicated she did not notice the item was damaged when she checked it out, nor was it damaged when she returned it.

Board members discussed options and, thinking it unwise to set a precedent that could undermine the effort of those who are responsible for maintaining the high quality of the collection while also not wanting to question the veracity of the community member's explanation for a rather obviously water damaged book, Stokes stepped forward to pay the fee and clear the account.

Allison thanked Stokes for his generosity and asked Wangsgard to write Ms. Earnshaw, thanking her for her presentation and reporting that her account had been cleared.

Weber Reads:

Rostkowski reported on the 14th consecutive year of Weber Reads, this year focusing on the theme of “Telling Our Stories.” The original 2020-21 intent was to explore the writing of Laura Ingalls Wilder, Rostkowski reported. The focus was changed when she and Carter met with teacher representatives from the Wasatch Range Writing group, the teachers who prepare the lesson plans for inclusion in boxes of Weber Reads learning materials distributed to area schools. During this meeting, discussion focused on the difficulty of teaching both online and in person as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The group agreed to focus on just one of Wilder’s books, *The Long Winter*, and include the writing of several other authors, using these works as vehicles to encourage people to reflect and write their own stories. Putting our thoughts and feelings on paper is a wonderful way to give meaning to our lives, Rostkowski noted.

Rostkowski reviewed several books on the Weber Reads recommended reading list and recognized Carter’s contribution to the success of the partnership with area schools. Carter had recommended books appropriate for elementary, junior high, and high school readers which were included, along with the lesson plans, for distribution to every school in Weber County. The lesson plans were available on the Library Web site, facilitating access by teachers, parents, and the general public.

Board members recognized Rostkowski as the intellect and cohesive force that keeps Weber Reads moving forward. It is now the longest running community wide reading program in the State.

Approval of October 6, 2020 Meeting Minutes (the November 3, 2020 Meeting Was Canceled):

Allison called for action on the October 6, 2020, meeting minutes. Crosland moved approval of the minutes as mailed. Jensen seconded the motion. There being no requests for discussion or corrections, Allison called for a vote. All voted in the affirmative.

Tentative Approval of Contract as to Form for Earthquake Remediation:

Baron reported work had been proceeding since the March 18, 2020, earthquake to address damage to all five County Library buildings. Several companies had submitted bids in response to a request for proposals (RFP) and a review team had narrowed the field of applicants to the preferred contractor. The architect had drafted an AIA Standard Form of Agreement between the Owner and Contractor (A101) for Baron’s review. Baron reviewed the draft and did not have any concerns or recommended changes. He recommended it to the Board for approval. The Contractor had already approved and signed the agreement and submitted the performance bond.

Jensen asked if anything was left out of the repair specifications.

Wangsgard said everything known at the point in time the RFP was prepared was included in the contract. Bid documents noted there may be some unknown issues found during the course of making repairs that will also need to be addressed. For example, three sides of the Main Library soffit had been inspected and it was assumed the fourth side would not hold any surprises. If something different is found, it will need to be incorporated into the plan for repairs which could change the overall cost of the project.

Baron noted the facilities had been thoroughly inspected by the Board's architect and a team of engineers as well as by adjusters and engineers representing the Utah County Insurance Pool. He noted the insurance company had not yet agreed, however, to cover the complete repair cost estimated to be roughly \$538,500. If the Board approves the agreement, he will follow through with negotiations.

Wangsgard reminded the Board that any costs not covered by the insurance company will need to be paid for with appropriations from the Library Capital Fund.

Stokes moved approval of the agreement, based on the best deal possible after negotiations with the insurance company are completed. Spencer seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Allison called for a vote on the motion. All voted in the affirmative

Board Training Vignette:

Allison reported on two special collections, New Now and Mind Benders, which are shelved close together in high traffic areas at each of the five libraries.

New Now collections, she explained, are comprised of leased books and DVDs that are currently very popular. New titles are put out each Tuesday and the majority of them are available for six months, after which time they can be purchased at a significant discount or returned to the distributor. The top 40 titles are shelved facing out, but there are many more popular and interesting titles from which to choose.

New Now materials cannot be put on hold so there are always exciting titles available to those who walk into a Library. These books and DVDs check out for just seven days and can be renewed only once. The regular loan period is 21 days, so New Now titles turn around rather quickly. Publishers send advance copies for review and orders are placed approximately 60 days prior to publication. Both fiction and non-fiction titles are included. The books arrive cataloged and processed so they can be shelved as soon as the boxes are opened, ensuring that the most popular and in demand items are available to the public on the first day of release.

Mind Benders are books owned by the Library, many of them pulled from the stacks for display. Mind Bender titles may duplicate New Now titles, but to qualify for this special display the books must expand horizons and stretch the mind. Titles often focus on current issues and discussions taking place in society. For example, books on the history of pandemics are currently being featured in Mind Benders. The books are selected to represent opposing points-of-view. Fiction and non-fiction books are included as well as titles published for children and young adults. For example, Allison noted, *The List of Things That Will Not Change*, by Newberry Award-winning author Rebecca Stead, was currently front and center in the Mind Benders display at the Southwest Branch. Also on display were such diverse titles as *How Fascism Works*, by Jason Stanley, and *A life on a Planet: My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future*, by Sir David Attenborough.

Allison said she borrowed a title that proved to be so compelling she returned it and purchased her own copy – she wanted to highlight the text as she read. Mind Benders is a great way to find a book that is so loved it has to be owned or gifted, she continued. If someone does not know what to

read, a few minutes perusing New Now and Mind Benders will provide many excellent items from which to choose.

Director's Report:

Wangsgard addressed the financial report, noting three line items were over expended. Transfers will be made from line items with surpluses to cover the shortfall. Additional expenses in these line items resulted during the year as priorities changed. For example, the Board hired an architect to review earthquake damages and prepare specifications for repairs. The intent was to have the insurance pool pay for the repairs; however, a purchase order had to be charged against the "building improvements" line item in order to pay the architect. This cost may be reimbursed by the insurance pool. Software and software maintenance costs had also increased as more programs and services were offered virtually rather than face-to-face during the pandemic. She assured the Board the current fiscal year will be completed under budget.

The service metrics report for the month of November illustrated the number of items circulated totaled 186,028. The total for the same time period a year earlier was 199,087, a difference of only a little more than 13,000. Of course, much of this use was of the digital collections which did not require community members to visit the Library. The total number of visits for November 2020 was 56,937, compared to 93,450 a year earlier. Meeting room attendance, program attendance, and other measures of public use were lagging significantly as a result of public health orders limiting group gatherings. Year-end comparisons with other Utah libraries will offer an opportunity for the Board to see how usage stacks up in Weber County compared to other libraries throughout the state.

A general staff meeting was scheduled for December 22. Employees will participate virtually from their home library. As much as possible, employees were being assigned to work in only one building in order to keep individuals testing positive for COVID-19 from exposing staff in more than one location. Wangsgard explained that if an entire division has to be quarantined, one or more buildings may need to be shuttered for a time since there will not be a sufficient number of staff available on any given day to render safe public service.

Presentations during the general staff meeting, will focus on looking back at "silver linings"; that is, accomplishments resulting from unique challenges that can be carried forward to strengthen the Library System. Plans for a new year will also be presented, noting the only constant may be the group's continued ability to make good choices in a constantly changing service environment. Plans will be made for what employees think might happen and what they prefer to have happen, knowing that a shared vision of the future causes people to make the best choices in the present. In this way, the preferred future actually predicts the present.

Much good news will be shared during the meeting, including offering thanks for the opportunity to come to work, give service, and to work for people who appreciate what they do. Group members who are retiring, as well as those who have reached a benchmark in their lives such as graduating from school, will also be recognized. Several promotions will be announced, including Okuhara's selection to serve as an Assistant Library Director, overseeing the Main Library and focusing on assuming responsibilities for coordinating the safety and security of all facilities in the Library System.

During the meeting, there will also be reports on Library finances, including the 2021 operating budget; results of a recently completed salary market survey; and a virtual introduction of staff, Friends of the Library, and Board members. Mattson had asked that each employee receive a special thanks and Valle had located a camp light for distribution. The light was personalized with a quote from Gandhi, "In the midst of darkness, light persists." It also was printed with the words: "Winter Solstice, 2020. Weber County Library."

Early Retirement Incentive:

The County was offering an incentive available to all employees eligible to retire on or before July 1, 2021. In order to qualify:

1. The employee must be employed with Weber County on September 22, 2020.
2. At the time of retirement, the employee must be eligible for retirement benefits under Utah Retirement Systems requirements.
3. The employee must have at least 10 years of service credit with Weber County.
4. There must be a cost savings to the employee's department within two years of the employee's retirement. Such savings must be demonstrated adequately to the county commission and the county comptroller.
5. The employee must give formal notice of the employee's intent to request this incentive by filling out a retirement incentive form (available from Human Resources) and submitting it to Human Resources by December 31, 2020. On the form, the employee will be required to specify the date of retirement. The employee must retire on or before July 1, 2021, and shall not be eligible for re-hire except in accordance with state law and county policy.

Incentives included:

1. The employee will be paid a lump sum in the amount of up to 40 hours of pay for every year of service accumulated as an employee of Weber County, calculated at the employee's rate of pay at the time of retirement.
2. The employee shall be paid the value of accrued leave and compensatory time in accordance with county policy.
3. Employees who are eligible for the post-retirement insurance incentive under County policy may choose one to participate in a health retirement account or receive the standard post-retirement insurance incentive which provides up to five years of health insurance.

There were some penalties and requirements for payback if an employee is re-hired by the County into a benefits-eligible position.

Wangsgard noted that several key Library employees had indicated they will retire under this incentive but only two have made an announcement to their colleagues, including Kevin Wilson,

Professional Property Manager, and Cheryl Potter, System Youth Services Program Manager. Other announcements will be forthcoming during the next six months.

Salary Survey Update:

The tentative 2021 Library operating budget included a one percent (1%) pay increase for performance bonuses; a two percent (2%) pay increase for performance; and a market adjustment of \$382,000. Each year, managers engage during a “leveling” meeting to determine how the pay for performance allocations will be distributed. Wangsgard then works with the Comptroller to establish a new salary set point for each employee. It was important to note, Wangsgard said, that these budget allocations were predicated upon attrition savings during the year totaling \$300,000.

Some savings may result from early retirements and attrition, Wangsgard noted, but because Library salaries have been funded significantly below the market rate, the adjustment resulting from the salary survey will require use of most of the attrition and retirement savings just to fund the new rates of pay. Saving \$300,000 will be a significant challenge. Nonetheless, the salary adjustments are appreciated and will certainly go a long way toward stabilizing the workforce.

2021 Tentative Budget:

Board members reviewed the County’s proposed 2021 Library operating budget and compared it to their requests and projections forwarded to County officials during September.

The only change in the revenue side of the budget was a proposed increase resulting from a tax shift of \$1,500,000. This shift was to compensate for the Library Fund balance being used to pay debt on the Pleasant Valley Branch and establish a Library Capital Fund. Savings in the Library Fund had previously been allocated each year to balance the budget.

The expense side of the ledger included all the items in the Board’s requested budget, including funding for the market rate salary survey, combining four part time positions into two full time jobs, and one-time requests for funding of special projects.

Spencer asked how combining the part time positions would be handled.

Wangsgard said managers would look at areas where it might be possible to keep talented part time employees who would otherwise move on due to the need for full time work. Combining jobs would mean that a position would have to be open before it could be combined with a position currently filled. It may take some time to come up with the perfect match of two jobs, Wangsgard noted. It will not result in additional full time equivalent (FTE) positions. The additional budget allocation was only enough to cover the cost of providing health and dental benefits, not additional FTEs.

As a result of paying off the debt on the Pleasant Valley Branch, an additional \$500,000 was also available in the operating budget to help cover increased costs of operating a much larger and robust Library System resulting from years of capital improvements. Paying off the debt required using \$2,982,000 of the Library fund balance, but will result in significant savings in interest cost.

In addition, \$2,964,000 was transferred from the Library Fund Balance to the Library Capital Improvement Fund. It is estimated that the Library Fund balance will be about \$1,700,000 at year end, which is below the recommended amount of \$3,850,000, or four months of operating expense. Elected officials will be carefully watching benchmarks set for both income and expenses during the next year to see if adjustments will need to be made.

Allison noted this was what the Board had envisioned and it is heartwarming to see it coming to fruition.

Wangsgard said none of the good news about Library finances, including funding of the market survey, had been shared with employees. If approved in final budget, the details should be shared during the December 22 general staff meeting. Board members were invited to attend general staff meeting and make the announcement. Stokes suggested inviting all three Commissioners to give employees the good news, perhaps delivering a prerecording message.

Harris suggested John Bond be invited to explain the change to the Fund Balance and the way in which the bonding was being restructured to save money.

Jensen agreed and suggested the County Finance committee be invited to report on the work done during 2020 and the overall projections for 2021.

Stokes volunteered to make the contact with John Bond, County Treasurer, and invite him to report during the January meeting.

Crosland noted the Board needs to be mindful to get traffic back through the buildings during 2021. While virtual usage of resources has carried the day during the pandemic, reestablishing the high demand for onsite service must be accomplished before additional funding is requested for a new building to serve community members in northwestern Weber County. This will require outreach and advertising.

Board members agreed and noted that getting rid of wellness-checks at front entrances that are usurping valuable staff time is a key to focusing on interacting with members of the community.

Stokes suggested getting billboards donated was also a possibility, letting people know libraries are open and safe.

Spencer advised working with organized groups comprised of parents who are homeschooling their children. They could be an important channel for promoting library services, have great communications infrastructure, and will appreciate the resources available, he said.

Year-End Acknowledgements and Thank You:


Stokes distributed uniquely designed face coverings along with his best wishes for a safe holiday season.

Board members also received an assortment of books and other small items complementary to the Weber Reads theme, Telling Our Stories, with thanks and best wishes for a healthy and happy New Year.

Other:

There being no further business, Spencer moved adjournment; Crosland seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:



Julia Valle

05 January 2021

Date