

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

Date: November 7, 2021

Board Members

in Attendance: Reed Spencer, Chair
Sandra Crosland
Jim Harvey
Kathleen Jensen
Shannon Sebahar
John Watson

Board Members

Excused: Diana Allison

Others

in Attendance: Karen Burton, Ogden Valley Branch Manager
Phoebe Carter, Assistant Library Director
Shari Creer, Friends of the Library
Holly Okuhara, Assistant Library Director
Kimberly Slater, Library Business Office Specialist
Lynnda Wangsgard, Library Director

Spencer called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Public Presentations:

There were no public presentations or comments.

Dianna Allison and Marcia Harris had asked to be excused. Bryan Baron had a conflicting obligation.

Approval of October 5, 2021, Meeting Minutes:

Spencer called for additions or corrections to the meeting minutes. There were none. Jensen moved approval; Crosland provided a second to the motion. All voted in the affirmative.

Commissioner's Report:

Harvey asked Wangsgard and Spencer to report on the Commissioners' work session where a proposed increase to the Library budget was discussed.

In response, Wangsgard distributed the final version of a handout, an earlier version of which she had referred during the meeting, summarizing the points she presented. Please see the Appendix.

Wangsgard noted public demand for services was on the rise during 2019 as all five libraries were back in operation after the capital building projects were completed. The 2020 year showed a slowdown as a result of the pandemic, but studies conducted throughout the previous five years by credible research groups illustrated growth in public use of libraries would continue to be robust. She emphasized that, according to reports from the State and Federal government, funding for Weber County's Library System was below the average provided to libraries along the Wasatch Front and across the U.S.

The handout also contained a list of cardholder benefits that illustrated the difference in the depth and breadth of services provided in Weber County compared to those in other political jurisdictions where services were focused primarily on loaning materials. Wangsgard noted Weber's library mission to serve the community as a learning platform had been confirmed by a vote of the public during 2013 when the Board's capital improvement plan was authorized. This plan did not include additional money for operations, however. A rainy day fund the Board had been relying on to balance the operations budget was now all but depleted as a result of an early payment to retire bonds used to finance the Pleasant Valley Branch and a \$3,000,000 transfer set aside in the Library Capital Fund.

Wangsgard had concluded her presentation during the work session by asking Commissioners to approve holding a truth in taxation hearing where members of the public could weigh-in on a proposed increase in the certified tax rate for the Library System.

Spencer said Commissioners all expressed recognition of the need to nudge the Library forward while signaling their intent to support the concept of third space libraries. He indicated everyone seemed to agree there is a need to provide for an adequate operating budget while also building the Library Capital Fund balance.

Harvey said the proposal Commissioners subsequently agreed upon included presenting plans for 4.5% tax increase in the General Fund with a permanent shift of \$1.1 million to the Library Fund. The 4.5% increase would only be in the County General Fund and will not increase a taxpayer's total amount due across all taxing entities by that percentage. The proposed increase will equate to about \$1.50 per month on the average household and \$2.97 on the average commercial property. The Library's share of the overall increase will be approximately \$0.85 per month. The \$2.1 million increase in revenue generated will be only for the Library and stormwater management. "This is not a bait-and-switch," Harvey said.

Those who have homes and businesses contribute to the other challenge that is being addressed by the proposed increase; that is, management of stormwater that flows to western Weber County. Harvey noted the gallons per minute is constantly increasing as a result of development, and it has increased dramatically over the past four years, requiring ongoing cleaning of the waterways so the flow can make its way to the Great Salt Lake.

Harvey noted the \$1.1 million currently being proposed for the Library, added to the \$1.5 million permanent tax shift from the General Fund to the Library Fund in 2021, and augmented by the additional \$500,000 that is no longer set aside in the operating budget to pay debt service on the Pleasant Valley Branch, will place the operating budget on a firm financial footing. Excess budget not expended each year can be added to the Capital Improvement Fund, after reviewing the rainy-day fund for adequate savings, with a goal of adding a sixth library in the future.

Harvey noted the Commission members were well aware that inflation is growing at a rapid rate and devaluating this capital savings account. Elected officials and Board members need to work together to find options to raise private funding to increase the money available in order to put the project on a priority list for bonding. Harvey noted there is at least one donor on the horizon who has signaled their wishes to contribute toward a new library.

Harvey said County finance officials had planned to propose a 40% increase in the Municipal Services Fund that serves unincorporated Weber County, but sales tax revenue grew at a rate that made this increase unnecessary. Revenue projections for the County are strong. Weber County was one of only two counties in the nation to see an increase in sales tax during 2020. The existing infrastructure, including a rail spur to the western side of the County; available power, water, natural gas, and sewer ponds; and planned upgrades in broadband, portend significant growth in the future. While growth is challenging, it should be remembered that 70% is a result of growing families within the state, not from in-migration. If there is to be housing and good jobs for these people, the County needs to prepare for the future.

Spencer said he feel great about the direction the Commission has set for the Library System. He asked Wangsgard to prepare a list of items for Board members to consider presenting during the hearing so they can talk from their heart and not reiterate what has already been said.

Harvey agreed, suggesting people speak from the heart and avoid repetition.

Director's Report:

The revenue side of the financial report illustrated the collection of fines and fees was running ahead of projections as were deposits to sundry revenue and registered vehicle fees. Commercial lease rent and meeting room rental collections were below projections. Other income line items were on target for this time of year.

The expense side of the report was current as of October 27, which represented 83% of the operational year. Expenditures totaled 75% of the authorized budget although this number did not reflect personnel costs that are posted a week to ten days after they are incurred. Still, Wangsgard noted, the year will be completed with expenses totaling less than the amount authorized in the budget.

Books and other materials loaned exceeded 172,000 for the month of September; 54,394 visits were logged; and 1,522 library cards were issued or renewed. Program attendance was increasing after the COVID-19 lull (5,892) as was the number of community members using public meeting rooms (7,249).

A gallery exhibit opening for the works of Paul Trentelman was scheduled for the following evening and a "poemball" machine, a device that is traditionally used to dispense gumballs, was dispensing poems for a quarter. All proceeds will go to Weber Book Links, the Weber County arm of the Utah Humanities Book Festival.

Four Library employees had trained as Certified Application Counselors in order to provide assistance for uninsured and eligible residents who need to obtain insurance on the exchange made possible by the Affordable Care Act. The goal was to provide service to those who might

not otherwise be able to manage chronic health conditions or participate in preventive health screenings.

Wangsgard also reported on the proposed location for a Jefferson Avenue Utah Transit Authority (UTA) station. UTA had not consulted with anyone in the County during the plan development and had been unresponsive to Library requests that they adjust the location which will block the line-of-site to both the Blue Sky sculpture and the promenade, east-side entrance to the Library. The station as currently configured also requires reworking the grading on Library turf and landscape area as well adding a concrete ramp up to the loading platform from the current sidewalk elevation. As proposed, the fall from the ramp to the Library entrance is approximately 10 inches.

If UTA were to shift the station 10 feet to the east, much of this disruption could be avoided, Wangsgard noted. Less grading would be required because the fall to the Library entrance would be only about 2 inches, and the views of the Library and sculpture would not be as drastically impaired. “We are very concerned that their plan is disrespectful to the presentation of a work of art created by an internationally acclaimed sculptor,” Wangsgard said.

Relocating this expensive work of art, commissioned by a major Library benefactor, produced by an internationally acclaimed artist, and installed on a professionally designed and lighted public presentation base, would require reworking the underground storm drain and running electrical and data cables for lighting, surveillance cameras, etc. This work, along with a new concrete base, would cost approximately \$200,000.

“It is unfortunate that UTA proposed this station design without any input from the County,” Wangsgard said, “especially since the Library is on the National Register of Historic Places.”

Harvey asked Wangsgard to send him the details of the plan so he could communicate the Commissioners’ concern to UTA officials during an upcoming meeting.

Wangsgard noted there was a controversy making its way to Utah concerning banning books in school libraries. A list of 850 books were being challenged by a legislator in Texas and special interest groups were also rallying to have them removed in other states. Librarians in Utah were working together to prevent censorship in Utah. Wangsgard reminded the Board that their Materials Selection Policy details both how materials are selected for inclusion in the public Library collection and the process for evaluating an item challenged by an individual or group wishing to have it removed. No one has the authority to arbitrarily remove a book, she noted.

2022 Operating Budget:

The tentative 2022 operating budget had been approved by County Commissioners as presented by the Board. Additional details will continue to be forthcoming after the truth in taxation hearing.

November 23, 2021, Truth in Taxation Public Hearing:

A truth in taxation hearing was scheduled for 6 p.m., Tuesday, November 23, in the Commission Chambers (2380 Washington Blvd).

The advertised tax increase is \$18.72 per year on an average Weber County home (assessed at \$350,000). The total revenue produced by the proposed increase will be \$2,100,000. If

approved, fifty-four (53.8%) percent of the increase (\$1,100,000) will be allocated to the Library operating budget. Forty-six (46.2%) percent (\$1,000,000) will be allocated for flood control. The Library's share of the new revenue will be used to cover increased operating and capital costs brought about by:

1. Continuing growth in the number of library users,
2. Ever increasing level of sophistication in the way information is produced, accessed, stored, shared, and protected from malicious actors require on-going upgrades to library technology,
3. Expired construction and equipment warranties on the County's new and enlarged libraries that now require service agreements be put in place to maintain the public's investment, and
4. Increased labor costs making it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain qualified library employees.

The fact sheet handed out earlier during the Board meeting will be distributed throughout the community and sent via email to all Library users who have registered for a card and for whom an email address is available. Personal experiences shared by community members will be useful for Commissioners as they deliberate and make their decision about future Library funding.

Meeting Room Policy:

Copies of the Meeting Room Policy were reviewed as a courtesy to Board members who are sometimes asked to intervene when a group is denied free meeting space. In a recent case, for example, a Board member had been contacted by a member of a community service club who expressed concern that the club was asked to pay a \$25 fee for use of a room. Wangsgard noted that not-for-profit groups are not charged a rental fee if their meetings are open to the public. In the case in question, however, the club wanted to hold a private board meeting. In this case, there is a charge.

Wangsgard encouraged Board members to invite community members to attend a public Board meeting and express their concerns about Library policies or procedures. A public airing of concerns is healthy and it takes the pressure off of individual Board members when they can explain that no single Board member can change the way in which policy is written or administered.

Staff Development Day Training Plans:

The tentative staff development day agenda was discussed and Board members were invited to attend. The focus will be on planning, performance measures, and group expectations as well as retirement benefits, creating a safe work environment, and radical civility.

As is tradition, the winning entries in the Ugly Pumpkin Decorating Contest will be announced by Friends of the Library and the Library Staff Association will hold their annual fundraising raffle.

Employees will gather at two separate locations, Pleasant Valley Branch and Southwest Branch, in order to keep the group properly distanced.

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	
Staff Development Day	
November 11, 2021	
Tentative Agenda	
12:00 - 2:00	Looking Back, Looking Forward, Looking Good: Shared Vision, Goals, Radical Civility, Pay for Performance Lynnda Wangsgard, Library Director
2:00 - 2:15	Break (Purchase raffle tickets) Food & Drinks Provided
2:15 - 3:15	Workers' Comp Flint Belk, Director of Safety & Risk, Workers Compensation Fund
3:15 - 4:15	Utah State Retirement Russ Bulloch, Retirement Planning Advisor
4:15 - 4:30	Break (Purchase raffle tickets) Food & Drinks Provided
4:30 - 5:15	Communications Policy Update Phoebe Carter & Holly Okuhara, Assistant Library Directors
5:15 - 6:15	Dinner (Purchase raffle tickets) On your own
6:15 - 7:15	Bridges Out of Poverty Bobby Workman, Library Social Services Specialist
7:15 - 7:30	Break (Last chance to purchase your raffle tickets) Dessert & Drinks Provided
7:30 - 8:30	Safety/Security Philip Rogich, Library Safety and Security Specialist
8:30 - 8:45	Ugly Pumpkin Awards Shari Creer, President, Friends of the Library
8:45 - 9:00	Raffle Drawing, Sponsored, in Part, by Friends of the Library and the Library Development Fund Staff Association

Other:

There being no additional business to consider, Watson moved to adjourn. Crosland seconded the motion. All voted, "aye."

Respectfully submitted:


Julia Valle

07 December 2021

Date

APPENDIX

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

What do we do with your tax dollars?

- Service 131,000 active library cards – 48% of all Weber County residents have a card
- Host 1,072,000 in-person visits – an average of over 3,100 per day
- Complete 829,000 requests for reference service – the highest per person in Utah
- Loan 2,373,000 physical and digital items – 9.1 for every person in Weber County
- Host 4,700 classes and learning events attended by 83,000 people
- Facilitate 239,000 computer sessions

Cost:

Spending per person for Library service in Weber County is **\$2.44 less** than the average of other major Wasatch Front libraries (Davis County, Murray Public, Orem Public, Provo City, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County Library) and **\$1.17 less** than the national average (Utah State Library, *Annual Report*, 2019; Institute of Museum and Library Services, *Public Libraries Survey*, 2019).

Trends and Research:

A Gallup poll published during January 2020 found the cultural activity that Americans engage in most often isn't going to a movie theater, concert, or sporting event, but visiting a library (*Smithsonian*, 2020).

The Pew Research Council noted that young people (Millennials and Gen X) are among the highest users of public library services (2016).

Utah has one of the fastest growth rates in the U.S. and enjoys the youngest population, illustrating why use of the public library system is on the rise (World Population Review.com/states/Utah-population, 2021).

Libraries are unequalled community-based resources for job seekers, small businesses, struggling students, early readers, and isolated seniors.... It's hard to overstate the value of guidance from a trained librarian who can competently sort through and organize available resources on your search topic (*Governing*, April 14, 2021).

Library capital spending has at least two effects. First, library capital investments cause patrons to use the library more.... Second, library capital investments cause students to perform better on standardized tests. In particular, we observe persistent improvement in reading test scores in the years after library capital spending. Our [study] results highlight the importance of public libraries ..., even in an era with widespread access to the Internet and smartphones (Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, *The Returns to Public Library Investment*, 2021).

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Cardholder Benefits

Buildings and Spaces:

- Art galleries & display cases
- Ballot drop-off locations
- Bean-a-Colada cafés
- Comfortable seating and workstations
- Copiers and digital scanners
- Electric vehicle recharging
- Makerspaces
- Meeting rooms & outdoor amphitheaters
- Natural history exhibits
- Open over 340 days a year, including evenings & weekends
- Public computer centers

Collections (in-library and online):

- Audiobooks, downloadable eBooks & eAudiobooks
- Educational toy lending
- Graphic novels and comics
- Language learning resources
- Large print materials
- Legal resources
- Magazines & eMagazines
- Movie & music streaming
- Music CDs & movie DVDs
- Newspapers
- Research learning platforms
- Spanish language materials
- Special collections & archives

Learning Events:

- Book discussions for all ages
- Children's discovery time and bilingual storytime; STREAM after school programs; summer reading, coding, and LEGO robotics camps; and virtual gaming clubs
- Guest authors and presenters
- Literacy, ESL, citizenship, and computer courses
- Movie screenings and musical recitals
- Senior lunches, Zumba, yoga, and tai chi classes
- Teen art and writing contests
- Virtual programs, including storytime, arts & crafts, and book discussions
- *Weber Reads* community-wide reading & discussion program

Services:

- Assistive technology
- Book bundles
- Certified Application Counselors, Health Insurance Premium Support
- Curbside pickup
- Dial-a-Story
- Email newsletters & notifications
- Homework help
- Mobile printing, scanning & faxing
- Notary public
- Public computers (all ages)
- Test proctoring
- Tours and library speakers' bureau
- Translation services
- Voter registration forms
- WiFi 24/7

Staff:

- Professional, helpful, and radically civil