

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES

Date: August 1, 2023

Board Members

in Attendance: Diana Allison
Sandra Crosland
Jim Harvey
Wendy Ogata
Shannon Sebahar
John Watson

Board Members

Excused: Reed Spencer

Others

in Attendance: Robert Armstrong, Professional Maintenance Manager
Bryan Baron, Deputy Weber County Attorney
Phoebe Carter, Assistant Director
Shari Creer, Friends of the Library
Kathy Gambles, Friends of the Library
Glen Mills, Community Member
Holly Okuhara, Assistant Director
Max Shurtliff, Community Member
Julia Valle, Business Office Manager
Lynnda Wangsgard, Director
Monyee Yip, North Branch Manager

Public Comments:

Sebahar called the meeting to order at 5 p.m. and invited public comments, noting remarks were to be limited to three minutes. She also noted that all comments would be taken under advisement for possible action at a later date.

Mills noted he owned property in Davis and Washington counties (UT) and Clark County (NV) and his son has property in Weber County. He waited in line at Weber County Library's (WCL) public computer center while someone printed out third grade coloring books. Someone else printed 150 pages free of charge. Why does the board not charge for people to get a library card and charge 10¢ a page for printing in the computer centers, he asked. Today, he said, a kid printed cartoons.

Mills said he had previously spoken with Carter and Wangsgard about a community member who brought in his own paper to print a flyer. Why wasn't he charged? Staff even assisted him in changing the paper, he said.

Ogata asked which area he was using as she had brought a master in to make additional copies and she did pay. She had to use cash.

Mills said these were files that were sent to a printer from a computer in the public computer center service area.

Ogata asked if there was a policy to limit printing.

Wangsgard said there was not a policy, it was up to employees to determine if the job was recreational or educational and then use their best judgment.

Mills said he didn't want to go to county or state delegates to have them determine that the services should not be free.

Sebahar reminded Mills that the majority of library services are free and reiterated that his comments would be taken under advisement. After pursuing details such as use and cost of equipment for implementing a charging system, the board will report back to him within 60 days.

Mills said he would pay his taxes but not his library taxes. He asked that the response be sent to him by email.

As Mills began to leave the meeting, Wangsgard intercepted him, handed him printed copies of previous board meeting minutes that he had requested, and invited him to stay for the rest of the meeting. Mr. Mills returned to the board room and took a seat.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

After review of the July 11 meeting minutes, Allison moved approval of the minutes as presented. Ogata seconded the motion. All present voted in the affirmative.

Commissioner's Report:

Harvey issued a special invitation to attend the Weber County Fair, recognizing Yip for her good work in overseeing library participation. He was especially thrilled with the prospect of hosting the Junior Livestock Show again this year, an event that accommodates city and country kids in raising an animal, showing it, and then selling it to bring to completion their small enterprise projects. Last year, the Junior Livestock Show put \$1.2 million in bank accounts for those kids, Harvey said. At the conclusion of the fair, the kids say a tearful goodbye to their animals and use the funding for school or other worthy projects.

The Perry's Egyptian Theater opened with talent from throughout the U.S., putting on a fantastic, family-friendly production of "The Music Man." Each performance concludes with local high school marching bands participating in the finale. It is great entertainment and the price is right, Harvey concluded.

Harvey reminded the board that growth in Weber County provides increased revenue from sales and property taxes. During the past few years, growth has been very healthy, although the county budget does not benefit from growth in cities; rather, the county collects the revenue and passes it on to the cities. Inflation has averaged 8.7% this past year and growth has been approximately 2%. Costs are increasing. Employee insurance rates are projected to increase in the double digits. Good management has resulted in the county saving some one-time and on going funds, so there is a reserve to draw upon, but there will be shortfalls. Departments are being asked to “sweep the corners” to help manage the challenge of maintaining services. The county has not had to do anything with tax rates as has been done in cities, water districts, and school districts, but the county may need to make some adjustments this fall. The chief focus is on employees. Weber County has really good people and the goal is to retain them, to keep them whole.

Friends of the Library Report:

Creer introduced Gambles who reported on something the Friends had implemented to benefit older community members.

Gambles said Gentle Movements is one of the programs she enjoys weekly at two of the county’s libraries. Participants range in age from 50-90 years; they exercise, stretch, and make meaningful connections. Some of those who come have special needs and it is a gift to see the energy that results from the interactions.

The digital world is a challenge, and some of the Gentle Movements group wanted to learn how to buy online. So, after the exercise class, a library employee gave them a special class, including an outline that covered the “dos” of staying safe while they shop. Attendees left with the confidence to move ahead. The next class arranged may be how to use the library eBook app, Libby. After these short, introductory classes, each person can then make an appointment with library staff for one-on-one reviews and additional tutoring of these or other computer applications. The entire process helps alleviate fear, Gambles said.

Gambles concluded by calling attention to her shirt that featured some of her favorite books and authors. Sporting the shirt had sparked several healthy conversations. She also invited others to attend a luncheon and book talk at the King’s English bookstore.

Creer noted older people are often intimidated by online technology, so to be able to sit down with someone they trust is important in getting started, and then they can be on their own.

Harvey noted that WCL was one of the only libraries in the state that stayed open to provide services to people of all ages during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also thanked Gambles for her report, the second during the past few weeks.

Creer said the Friends will be on hand to help facilitate the annual book sale planned for the 26th of August. It’s always an adventure, she said with a smile.

Sebahar thanked Creer and Gambles for seeing a need and moving forward to fill it.

Director's Report:

Wangsgard invited Armstrong and Valle to augment the Friends' report on the book and surplus property sale. These two employees take the lead on this annual event.

Armstrong noted the sale area will be expanded this year to accommodate putting out all the material at the beginning of the sale, ensuring buyers get a look at everything available for purchase. Hours will be from 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Valle said the best part of the event is the enthusiasm of the buyers; it resembles "Black Friday." Employees at cash registers do their best work to move the crowds through the checkout area and then at 4 p.m., the focus changes from selling book by book to selling by the bag or box – everything goes for \$1.00 per container. By 6 p.m., the sale is completed and the area cleaned up.

Wangsgard said the sale is approaching its 50th year where consistently between 10,000 and 15,000 items have been available for sale. Included are books donated to the Friends and items withdrawn from the collection because they are out-of-date or are duplicate copies that are no longer needed. Income from items donated goes to the Friends and is used for their literacy and other projects while income from the sale of library property is deposited in the County Library Fund.

Ogata asked if changing the date of the sale would help alleviate issues that arise from the heat.

Wangsgard noted it is a community tradition to have the sale the week before Labor Day, just before school starts, but tradition is not always the best way to proceed. Changing the date is certainly worth considering.

Building on Harvey's report on the Weber County Fair, Wangsgard said participation is one of the best library outreach events for engaging members of the community. It provides an opportunity to speak with the public and thank them for their support. Board members and Friends of the Library were invited to sit at the ticket booth and hear what people have to say about their Weber County Library System.

A copy of the schedule for staff participation at the fair was distributed, illustrating how labor intensive it is to run the library exhibit as well as to illustrate that every employee is given the opportunity to meet the public and hear what is said about the service they offer. Sometimes there is some confusion about what it means to "volunteer" to work at the fair. Employees are given the chance to volunteer for their preferred shift, but no one is there on their own time. To do so would be a violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act. In addition to offering crafts and games, there is an information booth where library cards are issued and questions answered. Staff participate at many, many events during the year, but the fair is the best, Wangsgard said.

The financial report did not illustrate any anomalies. At the point of being 58% of the way through the fiscal year, 53% of the budget had been used. Large capital items had not yet been encumbered so spending will pick up a bit, Wangsgard noted.

Wangsgard thanked Harvey for correcting her statement that under represented the number of visits to the library detailed on the activities report. The actual number of visits during June 2022 was 77,934; during June of this year the number was 105,896. It is heartening, she noted, that these visits represent people coming for educational programs, not just trafficking in and out to pick up popular reading.

Agreement

Armstrong asked the board to approve a contract with BML Construction Services for relocating the Blue Sky sculpture, and other enhancements. Three contractors had responded to a request for proposals and their bids ranged from \$188,816 to \$117,077. The low bid being recommended to the board was approximately \$5,000 under budget.

Harvey asked if this contract included moving and repair of the sculpture.

Armstrong said the contract was for building the base and providing lighting, as well as remediating the area where the original base sits. The artist will oversee the moving and refinishing the sculpture.

Watson asked where the sculpture will be relocated.

The architect, board members, and a contractor who expressed initial interest in the project met together last fall and selected the southwest corner of the building, on the plinth created by the retaining wall.

Watson asked if the lighting would be relocated.

The sculpture will be relit and an additional lamppost will be added, Armstrong said.

Wangsgard reminded the board that there is currently no lighting on the southwest side of the library so an additional lamppost is being added to help alleviate vandalism. For example, someone walking along the sidewalk during the night while the irrigation system was running had kicked off all the sprinkler heads.

Sebahar asked about the contract timeline.

Building the new base, installing the lighting infrastructure and remediating the area around the current base will take about three weeks, Armstrong estimated. Installation of the lamppost and fixture will depend on the manufacturing lead time, so the delivery of just the fixture may need to be carried over until 2024.

Wangsgard noted the draft contract had not yet been reviewed by Baron, so board approval would need to be contingent upon his review and approval.

Sebahar called for a motion to approve a contract with BML Construction Services, in the amount of \$117,700, for the Main Library Sculpture Relocation and Improvements, subsequent to legal review. Watson so moved. Crosland seconded the motion. All voted in the affirmative.

On a side note, Armstrong noted HVAC units for the Ogden Valley Branch were still scheduled to be delivered during mid-September. If the schedule holds, installation can begin as soon as cooling is no longer needed and before the heating season begins.

Sebahar asked how the new Utah Transit Authority (UTA) stop was working at its location on the south side of the Main Library.

Okuhara said the transit stop will officially open on the 20th but it is already being used. The artwork adorning the transit shelter is beautiful and a lot of people are coming into the building as a result.



Mockup of proposed utility cabinet. Courtesy of Reed Spencer.

Harvey was scheduled to tour the new UTA service the following day and asked if there was a message anyone would like him to communicate.

Armstrong asked that Harvey express gratitude for UTA's willingness to move the utility box to a better suited location.

Watson noted that getting the sculpture moved will be a good thing. The sculpture is beautiful.

Review of Board Bylaws:

Sebahar asked that a subcommittee be established to review the Library Board Bylaws in order to determine if they are in line with the County Ordinance. If there are any other issues that should be addressed, they should be brought forth at this time. Wangsgard remembered that Spencer had asked during his report the previous month that sample bylaws from other organizations be reviewed to see if there were any suggestions.

Allison and Ogata volunteered to undertake the review.

Ogata asked if the board's report to the state was completed each year as detailed in the bylaws.

Wangsgard said the annual report was completed and submitted on time each year.

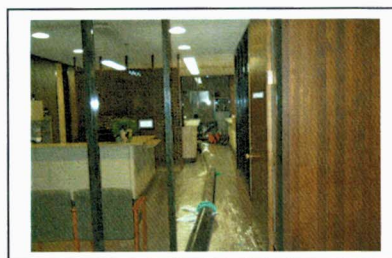
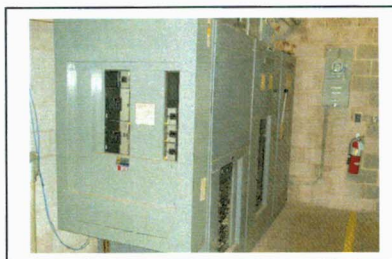
2024 Budget Planning and Priorities:

Wangsgard reminded the board that during their previous meeting they had asked for budget priorities from the staff. In order to respond in a meaningful way, she noted, she would take a few minutes to review library employees' decade of work and contributions, putting them into a budgeting perspective.

Background

During 2011, employees were under tremendous pressure. Library buildings were aging and deteriorating, creating many issues. The Main Library electrical transformer, for example, was located inside the library. It was a Rube Goldberg arrangement as it had been upgraded over time to meet service needs as library equipment evolved from electric typewriters to a full-blown data center needed to support digital services. On December 1, a violent windstorm took out a portion of the library's three-phase power supply. A large fuse in the transformer failed to blow, but instead melted in place. Because of the nature of the problem, the power could not be shut off and began to feed back through the transformer. The resulting heat and smoke set off the fire alarm.

A contractor was called to help shut off the electrical supply because the main breaker was ineffective in this situation. The contractor was involved in a flashback and taken to the hospital. The fire department responded and could not do anything other than advise closing the fire door, separating the boiler and electrical infrastructure from the rest of the lower level. Because power crews were busy restoring power throughout the community, there was no response to calls for help from the power company. Library employees drove around Ogden until they found a Rocky Mountain Power crew that quickly came and disconnected the electrical supply from the pole.



This event was one of several fires which were also accompanied by periodic flooding, which made working in the building unsafe and stressful for employees. On the positive side, the event triggered long-sought permission to conduct a feasibility study of the Main Library to determine if it was safe for public use and weigh in on whether it could be renovated to continue to serve the community or whether the building should be abandoned.

Recommendations from the feasibility study were presented during 2012. They became the essence of the library board's five-year capital plan that included building a new Southwest Branch/Headquarters Library in Roy, renovating the Main Library, finishing unused space in the North Branch, and adding parking at the Ogden Valley Branch. The most economical method of funding the plan was to seek approval of general obligation bonds in a voted referendum. The board and employees launched an information campaign to engage the public while the Friends of the Library advocated for approval. Voters approved the plan and from 2013 to mid-2018 library employees oversaw the building projects, including moving all the books, shelving, furniture, and other holdings as needed to complete construction.

Completing the plan on time and under budget took tremendous effort and the group was proud to get it done.

A little over a year and a half later, while still working the kinks out of the new facilities, the COVID-19 pandemic struck and employees were absorbed in continuing to provide services in another dangerous environment. WCL was one of only a handful of public libraries in the intermountain area and across the nation that remained open for service.

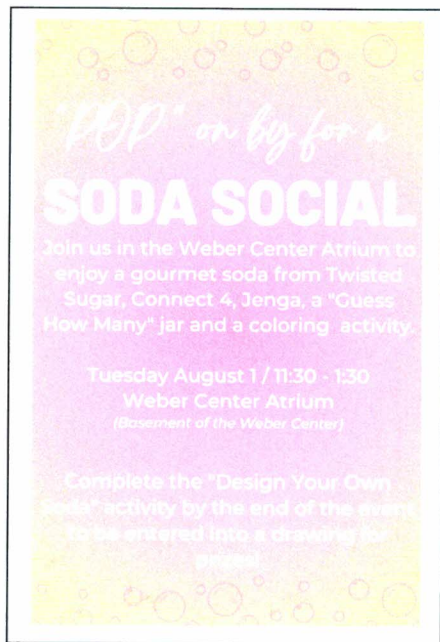
Looking Forward

When the pandemic subsided during 2022, the staff had not had an opportunity for more than 10 years to focus on their primary jobs. The number one budget priority going forward, Wangsgard said, should be the staff, empowering them to provide the public with the services envisioned when they voted in favor of funding for the capital plan. This shared vision for the future of the county's libraries represents a covenant and budgets should be directed at empowering the staff to fulfill this obligation.

A second priority should be to ensure the staff is treated with the respect they deserve. Harvey knows how challenging this can be when employees work "off-campus," outside the county office building, Wangsgard said. They often are not recognized or rewarded for what they do.

The budget should recognize that rewards are not just about salary. Salary is important and county commissioners have worked their hearts out to provide competitive salaries for employees, but library employees also need to be rewarded with job opportunities, a chance to be promoted, and to be treated with respect. The county system for authorizing promotions during the year is very bureaucratic. After a retirement last fall, the salary captured was refocused on creating career ladders and promotions for three people and combining a part-time job into a full-time position. While this process was justifiably slowed by upgrading a software product, it took an additional six to eight weeks to complete. A budget line item for promotions during the year should facilitate recognizing top performers without usurping pay for performance bonuses and leaving less for the rest of the group. Progress in this area is not just about money in a line item; a priority should also be to include a discussion about giving managers the tools and authority needed to accomplish their responsibilities.

For example, the new Oracle human resources system does not yet give managers access to a position control function, nor can they get the management reports they need. Funding to help support the continual upgrade of this system would improve services to employees and, therefore, to the people we serve.



Gambles said it so well earlier during the meeting, Wangsgard noted, "when people come together good solutions are found." The needs of those working off-campus tend to be viewed as the same as those working in the Weber Center office building. For example, today the county hosted a social at the Weber Center, but for those working in library buildings, attending was not possible. Library employees couldn't fit in. Library employees don't work 8-5. I have failed to communicate our needs, those working in the office building fail to communicate their plans. This is where the Board can help, Wangsgard said.

Wangsgard asked that the board schedule a meeting to talk about priorities and meet in time to give real budget direction to the staff. The budget process is more intense this year so time is important.

Wangsgard was asked why it took so long to approve the promotions.

The human resource system upgrade was an A-priority for the county and Wangsgard said she did not disagree with this priority. The example concerning the difficulty in making promotions was to illustrate that job satisfaction is about more than salary. Salary does not make people happy; it just keeps them from being unhappy. Being recognized and having a career where one can self-actualize is what makes people happy. The lack of communication and understanding of the difference in cultures between a library and an office building can make the library a miserable place to be. We should step up and fix it, she said.

Watson said these are hard things. No one would be in business without their employees. The workforce in America has changed, he said. An employee who was content with \$22-23 per hour is now demanding \$32-35. People should be paid for what they are worth. In addition, employers need to have a culture, priorities, and ways to acknowledge and reward performance, otherwise good staff are hard to keep. Care must be taken, however, to live within the budget, but there should be talk about how to keep great employees. There does need to be a discussion about library employees and what is possible to support them.

Allison said she was hearing there were intangible things that Wangsgard is asking for rather than money.

Watson agreed, but said they may cost money. And what is being asked for is control over resources to make a good fit. These are the discussion points. How can a culture of appreciation be created in order to keep good people?

Sebahar noted the discussion has two different elements: the budget and prioritizing other issues, including how operational shifts can make things better for employees. The budget is the priority and has to be considered first.

Wangsgard said budget is being prepared on the same schedule as in previous years. There will be more work involved this year than in the past but it can be done in time to allow for thorough review and board comment.

As for the other issues to make things better, the need is to have a seat at the table when decisions are made or information is shared that affects the library. Those who are immersed in operations deep in the county office building make decisions without understanding the unintended consequences.

For example, Wangsgard shared an overview from a stack of incident reports received that week, summarizing the type of challenges staff regularly accommodate, including verbal attacks, threats of assault, and dealing with lewd behaviors. Library employees deal with a wide range of behaviors, some of which may be experienced in an office building but library incidents are more akin to what the Sheriff's staff experiences. Library staff, armed only with radical civility, deal with a broad spectrum of community members. They don't wear a badge or carry a gun. Socials held in the county office building do not address the need for recognition of the type of work and a job well done in the library public service arena. Lack of understanding of the library work environment also creates training issues and undercuts supervisors as they implement processes and procedures to keep employees safe.

Watson asked if the library representative is at meetings where decisions are made.

Wangsgard said she is not invited when issues relating to the library are being discussed.

Harvey noted that he worked in a satellite department for 24 years so he understands the issues being presented. The issues could be solved if the library were its own district, its own taxing entity. In this case, they would hire or contract for their own human resources and other services. The district would have its own election, set its own services and be separate from the county like water districts and school districts; there would be a library district. In the meantime, an effort can be made to spread appropriate recognitions throughout county buildings that can accommodate schedules and so forth.

Being in the room when decisions are made is no different for the library than for others, Harvey said. The Sheriff is not in the room when decisions are made even though he has 300 or 400 employees. It is just not feasible. Officials would not just want to invite the library to sit in.

Another way to view this issue, Harvey noted, is to realize the county invested millions of dollars in a human resource software system to serve approximately 1,300 county employees. The way it was implemented was not in the interest of off-site employees, except for the Sheriff's department. In another case, some other procedural approvals shifted workflow to departments while lightening the load for those working in the Weber Center. This helped Weber Center

employees absorb extra work created by state and federal mandates. Elected officials have to get the mothership down the road. Everyone, including the library, has to be within the law. Harvey invited library managers and board members to think about solutions that complement the work employees have to do.

Harvey had received similar complaints from those working at the Golden Spike Arena about lack of public civility which seems to be at an all-time low. It is too bad, Harvey said, that anyone has to go through these types of encounters. In an ideal world, those people would deal with the county only online. Lack of civility is not supported. Officials need to know the problems and they need to have departments come forward with solutions to help mitigate these issues. Harvey concluded by saying he didn't realize library staff endured threats of personal harm. Maybe it's time for resource officers, he said.

Okuhara said the issue is that a county department is not working with the library. Library people work really hard; they have their safety threatened; people in the county need to understand they are doing the best that they can.

Harvey said he supports every decision employees make, including mistakes, because we learn from mistakes. So, some new ideas can be fostered to see if they work.

Watson said there are issues that need to be mitigated; there are some ways things can be fixed. The first priority is that we need a budget prepared.

Sebahar said a board meeting should be set to go through the priorities of the library. A complete list of ordered priorities will be needed, some with and some without any associated dollar values. Priorities with dollar values will be addressed during the budgeting process and those without can be discussed at a future date.

Wangsgard agreed, noting that if there was a work session to review issues that are not now acknowledged, when future decisions are made that affect the library work group, officials probably would make a different decision about inclusion. Where possible, streamlining processes and giving authority to responsible individuals gets the best value for the public. We all have a fiduciary responsibility to get the best value and we are not currently doing so. For example, turning back salary money is not unrealistic but freezing every salary line item is not realistic. Seeing what can be changed and what can't gives employees the opportunity to determine if they want to stay with Weber County or move on, but the staff should not be held responsible for things they do not have the authority to achieve.

Sebahar asked for a time when the board can meet to review input on the budget and proposed changes.

Baron advised that to set a time for the entire board would require a public meeting but, if they worked as subcommittees, they could better probe issues and review budget priorities.

It was decided the Board would schedule a public meeting at 3 p.m., August 29, to review the draft budget. During the interim, board members will gather data and meet with Wangsgard as needed to prepare.

Other:

There being no further business, Watson moved to adjourn. Crosland seconded the motion. All voted in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted:



Julia Valle

05 September 2023

Date