

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES

Date: August 29, 2023

Board Members

in Attendance: Diana Allison
Sandra Crosland
Wendy Ogata
Shannon Sebahar
Reed Spencer

Board Members

Excused: Jim Harvey
John Watson

Others

in Attendance: Robert Armstrong, Professional Maintenance Manager
Bryan Baron, Deputy Weber County Attorney
Karen Burton, Ogden Valley Branch Manager
Phoebe Carter, Assistant Director
Shari Creer, Friends of the Library
Ben Johnson, Technical Services Division Manager
Randy Mueller, Professional Business Manager
Holly Okuhara, Assistant Director
Bryant Reeder, IT Division Manager
Deborah Smith, Pleasant Valley Branch Manager
Julia Valle, Business Office Manager
Lynnda Wangsgard, Director
Monyee Yip, North Branch Manager

Public Comments:

Sebahar called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. and invited public comments. There were none.

Approval of August 1, 2023, Meeting Minutes:

Sebahar called for questions, comments, or corrections to the minutes. Hearing none from others, she proposed a clarification of her comments, explaining her intent was to communicate a proposal to produce a single priority list with fiscal issues that can be addressed through budgetary discussions and then work through other priorities at a later date. She will email suggested changes to Wangsgard and the revised minutes can be reviewed and voted on during the October 3, 2023, meeting.

Update on Capital Projects:

Armstrong reported he had received a certified letter from the contractor, Rocky Mountain Mechanical, selected to replace rooftop heating units at the Ogden Valley Branch. The letter indicated shipment of one Trane unit was delayed by the manufacturer and would not ship until December. Because the roof area outside the penthouse can't support both the weight of snow and that required to exchange the units, the late arrival will delay installation until spring.

BML Construction will have the base and architectural lighting for the outdoor sculpture completed by end of September. The sculpture will be relocated by the artist by mid-October. The lead time for the exterior pole lighting fixture will require that installation of this fixture be held over to 2024. This additional lighting was being installed to help deter vandalism on the southwest corner of the building.

The manual for an efficiency upgrade of the ductwork at Pleasant Valley Branch was in process. As soon as it is completed, the project will be bid. Once a contractor is selected, completing the work should take 10-12 days.

2024 Budget Planning and Priorities:

Wangsgard was asked to provide an overview of draft budget documents along with staff recommended priorities. The goal for the meeting was to sift through these priorities and separate them into categories, then address those with fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget implications.

Wangsgard distributed and briefly introduced the following draft items:

- Budget Summary spreadsheet detailing item allocations approved for FY 2023 compared to the budget allocations requested in the draft FY 2024 request. This was still a work in progress.
- Revenue projections as provided by the county comptroller. Projected revenue of 3.1% was less than what was required to cover expenditures as detailed on the draft budget summary.
- Analysis of the percent of budget used 2017-2022. Interruptions to services that resulted when libraries were closed for renovation, and then for accommodating the COVID-19 pandemic, skewed this data to the point it was not useful for establishing trends.
- List of additional requests for individual items that totaled more than \$5,000. This list was in the process of being forecast to include equipment and building maintenance projects, at today's costs, over a period of 50 years.
- A summary list of services provided.
- The year-to-date spreadsheet, detailing output measures as of July 31. This spreadsheet illustrated increases in public use during FY 2022, compared to FY 2023:

OUTPUT MEASURE COMPARISON

Service	January-July 2022	January-July 2023	Percent + or -
Patron Registration	11,286	12,277	9
Items Loaned	1,359,325	1,381,515	2 *
Visits	476,953	621,661	30
Reference/Help Transactions	276,568	285,468	3
Technology Use	184,737	231,366	25
Program Attendance			
Groups	2,201	2,177	-1
Individuals	59,524	76,145	28
Meeting Room Use			
Groups	3,244	3,634	12
Individuals	78,271	91,276	17

* Private sector processor was unable to deliver summer reading materials as contracted, affecting the number of items available to loan June-July.

Wangsgard noted the staff is reaching their limit in terms of accommodating the increasing demand for service without adversely affecting quality. If the Library is to continue to serve county residents as a learning platform, additional resources will be required. Library division managers were invited to attend the board meeting to provide input and answer questions.

Ogata asked why some FY 2024 maintenance line item requests were so much higher than those of the current year.

Wangsgard noted many services in these line items are provided under contract and cost keeps escalating.

Armstrong put into perspective why many of the items provided by private sector contractors keep escalating in cost. Noting that, in addition, it is getting more difficult to get value out of the contracts. The contractors used are some of the best available, he said. That is, they offer the best service for the cost. However, it is usually not the company owners who do the work. Their employees want to come in and get out as soon as possible, moving on to the next job. They damage facilities, waste supplies, and are not always competent. These service providers have to be supervised or they don't perform at a rate that results in getting the value of what they have bid. Costs are continually going up, and getting results is more of a challenge. Taking the low bid is not always the best option.

The current scarcity of labor is driving costs up, Armstrong said. Carpet cleaning was contracted at nine cents per square foot (\$0.09/sq. ft.), but the contractor was unable to hire employees that would allow holding to this cost – they wanted \$45 an hour, more than the owner makes. The final cost negotiated with another provider was \$0.16/sq. ft., a 79% increase for the service. Labor costs for those who maintain heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems has increased by approximately 50%. These two examples illustrate what the labor shortage is doing to inflationary costs of building and equipment maintenance.

Wangsgard noted the costs associated with providing services can be seen in the administrative fees the county bills for their services provided to the library. Risk management (insurance) was being billed at a 15% increase and administrative services at a 22.5% increase.

Wangsgard also noted that, because of the lag associated with filling positions, the county estimates how much salary and benefits funding will not be spent each year. This amount is what is reflected in the line item “allocated salary” as a negative number. If positions could be filled in a more expeditious manner, it would take a considerable strain off of an already challenged staff but then this amount would not be available to turn back each year.

In summary, revenue was not keeping pace with costs and adjustments would need to be made during 2024.

As the Board had requested, a list of prioritized additional library budget items for discussion was presented. These items included:

1. A “capital project evaluation form” was being prepared to document costs associated with construction of a northwest branch library. Costs were being updated from those projected in 2021 and reflected a 34% increase over two years. The goal was to see a relative position of this project on the county’s capital facilities list. Knowing where the projects falls on a timeline will facilitate planning and good use of the library budget in areas such as collection building. Holding books no longer needed in existing libraries to create a core collection for another branch is a good use of resources, if the materials will still be relevant when needed; however, there is no need to spend time processing and holding items that will not be useful at a future point in time.
2. Budget for overtime, allowing employees to resume their historical work rotations that facilitated alternating Friday and Saturday weekend shifts, rather than working up to 16 days with only one weekend day off. Four hours overtime every two weeks would facilitate non-FLSA exempt employees working 48/32 hours per pay period, the schedule needed to accommodate rotating evening and weekend shifts.
3. Create and fund a human resources position to handle training and performance issues as well as create a “staff ideas program” to encourage brainstorming and collaborative problem-solving.
4. Enrich and fund an upgrade to circulation manager positions to facilitate employees being scheduled to oversee building functions when needed to cover evening and weekend hours. This would be done over time to have an appropriate mix of supervisory and support staff available.
5. Fund substitute positions to have trained staff available when there is illness or special projects that need extra hands in public service areas.
6. Create and fund a digital branch manager position to facilitate development of a new county-wide service.

7. Create and fund an emerging technologies position to enhance adaptive technologies, maker space training, and integration of virtual reality learning services.

8. Create and fund a part-time security position in each of three branch libraries: North Branch, Pleasant Valley Branch, and Southwest Branch. These three individuals would be responsible for providing security service during peak business hours as well as training employees to maintain a safe environment while open to the public. When not providing security services, they can do double duty at ready reference and circulation desks, helping cover alternating schedules.

9. Create a line item for promotions so advancements would not require usurping pay for performance allocations or waiting for a retirement before recognizing long-term, outstanding productivity. As is, the highest performers are being awarded pay-for-performance at a rate that does not leave an appropriate amount for recognizing others.

10. Create and fund an employee recognition program for part-time employees. Half of the library group works part time and no longer receives what was historically a standard recognition for longevity. This change is not in keeping with the equitable spirit of how full-time and part-time share responsibilities in the library system.

Those items that did not have direct impact on the library 2024 budget submittal fell into three broad categories that included:

1. Share budget allocations with other departments to facilitate upgrades in the county Oracle software system in order to facilitate the ability to produce needed management reports and provide department level access to the position management system.

2. Create opportunities for discussion within the overall county framework to facilitate better human resource coordination and use of public funding.

3. Provide enhanced training for program and support staff as well as professional development opportunities for supervisors and managers.

Ideas for additional funding included:

1. Request American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to help establish a digital branch.

Sebahar noted the branch is a solid qualifier for needed infrastructure to set up the services directed at mitigating the effects of COVID-19.

Spencer asked what services a digital branch would offer.

Johnson noted it would be a centralized resource where people could go for resources. Employees would curate resources, answer questions, provide real-time classes and interactive learning resources, and live stream events.

Mueller said a digital branch would provide online space where the library digital community would receive services, just as they do in physical facilities. A digital branch requires its own, dedicated staff who have delivering this service as their primary job responsibility.

2. Fund major capital improvements from the “library capital improvement fund.”

Wangsgard noted the current balance in this fund is approximately \$3,000,000. It was set aside from the library operating fund balance to begin a savings account toward construction of a northwest branch. It was also to provide a “rainy day” fund to protect against emergencies and large cyclical costs, like a new roof. The operating fund balance is sufficient to cover operating costs for approximately three months. The draft amount of capital funds requested for FY 2024 totaled \$1,864,688, of which \$1,350,117 is for books and materials.

Sebahar suggested it might be appropriate to see what can be funded by the operating budget and then, if additional funds are needed, request allocations from the capital fund.

Spencer remembered the board was pleased when the capital was fund created. It signaled the northwest branch project was on the horizon and the board was doing their part to save for this new building. The fund should not be nicked and dimed away, he said.

Crosland also recalled that, when the fund was established, it was to facilitate a new branch which was to get underway in a very short period of time. County priorities have changed. Inflation is eating into the savings account and the branch may not be on the horizon for years. Value in this account may be lost to inflation.

Armstrong reminded everyone that building and equipment maintenance costs were relatively low over the past few years because all the new and renovated buildings opened with a five-year warranty. North Branch was the last to reopen during June, 2018. All new building are now out of warranty. During the past 12 months, the following unbudgeted expenses had to be absorbed by the operating budget:

- North Branch, replace a compressor on the air conditioner, \$12,000;
- Main Library, repair a failure in the chilling unit, \$18,000; and
- Pleasant Valley Branch, replace a failed condenser, \$23,000.

Armstrong offered another example of how the capital fund may be needed in the future to mitigate significant building or equipment failure. Every lighting fixture above stacks in the Southwest Branch reading area failed, during the first three years of operation. The fixtures were replaced under warranty. The labor for this replacement alone would have been \$85,000; the total cost, closer to \$125,000 if new fixtures had been needed. These costs are only going to escalate as the buildings age, Armstrong counseled.

Reeder noted that during November, 2022, none of the thin-clients attached to the library network met new specifications for secure certificates, requiring replacement of 48 public

catalog clients at approximately \$600 each. There is no warning when this is about to happen, especially if equipment is used beyond its expected life, which is typical practice for the library.

Okuhara spoke to the wisdom of hiring part-time security personnel, rather than having sheriff's resource officers in county libraries. Trained security personnel do double duty; they also work public services desks so they don't have down time while being available as needed. The lead security person at the Main Library is a retired police officer who trained school resource officers in Davis county; a second person worked in the emergency room at local hospital; and the third part-time security person at the Main Library was trained and worked at the Internal Revenue Service.

Wangsgard said these trained personnel model behaviors and demonstrate procedures that are appropriate for a public library and helpful to regular staff.

Sebahar asked for suggestions of the top priorities among all those items presented.

Carter said overtime to solve scheduling problems and ease burdens on existing employees was her top priority.

Spencer noted having substitutes available was important as was increasing the speed for being able to engage community members electronically by way of a digital branch.

Sebahar suggested prioritizing a digital branch as a way to illustrate the library is continuing to move forward and improve services.

Johnson said the position focusing on adaptive technology was important to ensuring those with disabilities are included as important members in the library's service community.

Watkins said contractual help to move website forward and training for using the web to enhance marketing was an important element that should be considered in the budget.

Crosland summarized her thoughts, saying there is a need for giving and receiving input with the county, some conversations are not budget items but need to be addressed going forward. In addition, placing the northwest branch on the county priority list should not be overlooked. The actual date is not as important as knowing when for planning purposes.

Others agreed. Good planning requires a look at least five years into the future. Board members will coordinate to make a contact and determine if the property pledged for the northwest branch is still available.

Wangsgard was asked to prepare a budget with two columns, in addition to the one requested by the county comptroller. The first of the two columns should detail what is needed to hold the line on current levels of service, recognizing increases in both costs and the public's utilization of services. The second additional column should include a prioritized list of recommended

additions. The Board will meet September 5 to review the revised budget and set priorities for submittal to the county.

Other:

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

Respectfully submitted: Julia Valle 10/3/2023
Julia Valle Date