

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES

Date: November 7, 2023

Board Members

in Attendance: Shannon Sebahar, Chair
Diana Allison
Sandra Crosland
Jim Harvey
Wendy Ogata
Reed Spencer

Board Members

Excused: John Watson

Others

in Attendance: Bryan Baron, Deputy Weber County Attorney
Phoebe Carter, Assistant Director
Shari Creer, Friends of the Library
Holly Okuhara, Assistant Director
Deborah Smith, Pleasant Valley Branch Manager
Julia Valle, Business Office Manager
Lynnda Wangsgard, Director

Public Comments:

Sebahar called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and invited public comments. There were none. She continued by noting she had responded in writing to a community member who had previously made comments concerning services provided free of charge in public computer centers. Sebahar explained the overall cost of paper to provide printing for staff and public at all five libraries was approximately \$16,000. She had not received further communication from this individual.

Approval of October 3, 2023, Meeting Minutes:

Sebahar called for questions, comments, or corrections to the October 3, 2023, meeting minutes. Crosland noted that action described in the third paragraph, under the heading “public comments,” was actually undertaken by Sebahar. Noting this correction, Ogata moved approval. Spencer seconded the motion. All voted in the affirmative.

Commissioner’s Report:

Harvey focused on the pending public vote concerning a general obligation bond to fund a Weber County Justice Center, noting the current jail was built 20 years ago and right-sized for the county at that time. The jail is currently grossly over capacity and ill designed to cope with community needs, especially since the opioid and mental health crises have created added stress.

Voter approval of a general obligation bond is the least expensive way to move forward to meet needs of the community, he explained.

Department heads were asked to “sweep the corners” and find savings that could help offset revenue shortfalls predicted for 2024. Together, employees identified \$2.4 million in operating expenses that could be put toward cost-of-living increases and help offset rising costs for health insurance. Because of inflation, however, an additional \$3.9 million is needed to fund the fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget. Harvey noted it had been seven years since taxes had been increased for the general fund. Commissioners reluctantly decided the best way forward was to consider a property tax rate adjustment.

As required by law, a truth in taxation hearing had been scheduled for Tuesday, November 28, 2023, noting a proposed 7.25% increase in property taxes. The additional revenue will go to employees who are increasingly lured away from employment with the county for more lucrative options. Without the good work of county employees, Harvey said, the needed increase could otherwise have been 14-15%. The FY 2024 tentative budget was adopted anticipating this additional revenue.

Allison explained there was a misunderstanding about the voter information factsheet included with vote-by-mail ballots. Some thought both sides of the issue needed to be presented. Was the county getting feedback, she asked?

Harvey noted it is the responsibility of the county to provide facts to voters, keeping the communication neutral. If there is a drive to encourage voting for or against an issue, it has to be done by non-governmental entities.

During the FY 2024 budget preparation, seven major capital projects were identified, including approximate cost in today’s dollars and the projected timeframe for funding. A branch to serve those living in northwestern Weber County had been included.

County Wide Capital Projects & Facility Improvements Plan

The following schedule shows the County’s requested capital projects. Funding has not yet been identified for these projects.

Requested Capital Project	2025	2026	2027	2028+	Total
Weber Center Parking Structure	\$ 15,000,000	\$ 15,000,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,000,000
Weber Center Remodel	7,000,000	10,000,000	-	-	17,000,000
Ice Sheet Renovation	8,000,000	8,000,000	-	-	16,000,000
Golden Spike Renovation	-	-	10,000,000	90,000,000	100,000,000
Ogden Eccles Conference Center Parking	-	-	25,000,000	-	25,000,000
North West Library	-	-	-	39,000,000	39,000,000
Jail Expansion	-	-	-	40,000,000	40,000,000
Grand Total	\$ 30,000,000	\$ 33,000,000	\$ 35,000,000	\$ 169,000,000	\$ 267,000,000

The county is required by law, Harvey said, to build a parking structure to serve the Weber Center, which will be remodeled, rather than replaced at another location to save costs. Updates to the Ice Sheet rounded up the first priorities on the capital improvement list.

Sebahar thanked Harvey for letting the board know where a future branch to serve those living in northwestern county fell on the priority list and approximately when it might be funded. Knowing the county's priorities will allow for effective library budgeting and planning.

Another request that was raised during budget discussions, Sebahar noted, was an opportunity for regular meetings with county official(s) to get direction and offer input. A regular monthly, meeting had been scheduled. The first meeting will include the new human resource director in order to review issues Wangsgard brought forth as priorities for next year.

Harvey said he was committed to facilitating communication among county managers to address challenges.

Ogata asked if succession to the chair was a part of board service. Wangsgard noted there was not a requirement that the vice chair become chair.

Friends of the Library Report:

Creer reported on the ugly pumpkin decorating contest, noting Wangsgard scours the county for the ugliest pumpkins she can find and then each division creates an exhibit around their Cucurbita pepo and competes for the grand prize.

Creer and Gambles had toured the five libraries and judged the exhibits, graciously accepting an amazing number of exquisite and tasty treats that are traditionally offered to help solidify (sway) the judges' decision.

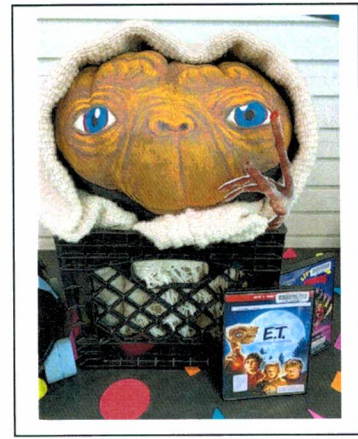
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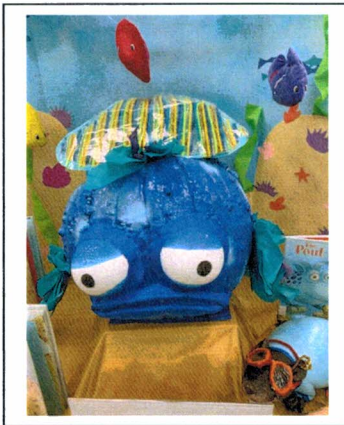
Main Library



North Branch



Ogden Valley Branch



Pleasant Valley Branch



Southwest Branch



Creer complimented the staff on their creative displays, noting how well employees work together, have fun, and ensure each exhibit features a display of books and other items, such as scavenger hunts, and all kinds of web links, to engage community members. The winning entry will be announced during the Thanksgiving holiday week when pumpkin pie will be on the menu.

As was done last year, Friends of the Library were sponsoring the Great Thanksgiving Listen an extension of StoryCorps, a national program drive to record meaningful conversations and archive them in the U.S. Library of Congress. Thanksgiving dinner placemats were being delivered throughout the community, detailing the five steps to recording a StoryCorps interview and sample questions to ask in order to get the stories flowing over the dinner table. KUER Radio (90.1 FM) airs a different StoryCorps recording every Friday morning at 8:30 a.m. Other stories can be listened to by way of the StoryCorps website.

Friends were inviting community members to join in a book talk featuring titles that explore various holiday traditions and cultures. The group will gather at 3:00 p.m., Thursday, November 9, 2023, in the Pleasant Valley Branch activity center. Library employees and a representative from the Queen Bee will lead the discussion and books will be available for purchase.

Creer concluded her report by noting Friends of the Library were also working to invite community members to attend the truth in taxation hearing in order to express their opinions on a proposed tax increase.

Director's Report:

Wangsgard reviewed the financial report, calling attention to various line items that were either over-expended or would be by yearend. Transfers among funds will be made in early December to bring line item allocations to an appropriate level. Funding will need to be transferred to "fuel," "building and grounds maintenance," "software maintenance," and "equipment maintenance." Each of these line items had been adversely affected by inflation and expiration of warranties on buildings and equipment that later failed. Funding will also be transferred from "controlled assets" to cover the purchase of four servers earlier when only two were budgeted.

This procurement was authorized in order to save significant costs over purchasing two servers during 2023 and another two servers the following year.

The “building improvements” line item looked to be significantly under-expended; unfortunately, this was not the case. Funding was being carried in this line item to cover the cost of replacing rooftop units at the Ogden Valley Branch. The equipment manufacturer will not have the units available to ship on time, requiring this funding be carried over to FY 2024. In addition, a project to insulate exterior ductwork at the Pleasant Valley Branch had been budgeted and estimated to cost \$50,000. However only one company bid on the job and the offer was three times what was budgeted. The funding will be carried over to FY 2024 and the project rebid to facilitate a more competitive cost.

In order to take advantage of the funding available in the current budget for building improvements, and keep the maintenance staff engaged, specifications for sealing the parking lots at all five library locations will be developed by Prescott Muir Architects and the jobs put out for bid during February, 2024. Bidding during early spring, before companies have contracted for a full slate of projects, should bring more competitors to the table.

Turning to the output measure report, Wangsgard noted measures were strong. Of particular note was an increase in visits from 615,253 January-September, 2022, to 799,507 during the same period this year. In other words, traffic through the five buildings increased by 30%.

Smith reported on an exhibit Sophia Graza, associate specialist in youth services, saw while attending the annual conference of the American Library Association. Titled, “World on the Move: 250 Years of Human Migration,” the exhibit was a perfect complement to the current Weber Reads theme, “Ways of Living: Indigenous Voices.” World on the Move was sponsored by the American Anthropological Association, Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage, and the American Library Association. Smith and Graza applied to host the exhibit at the Southwest Branch. Only 10 libraries were selected nation-wide and Weber County Library was one of them. The exhibit will be available for viewing November 13-December 20, 2023. The following programs were planned in conjunction with Weber State University’s Anthropology Department:

World on the Move Exhibit: The Peopling of the Americas

Main Library, 2464 Jefferson Avenue, Ogden

Thursday, November 9, 7:00 p.m.

How and when did people first come to the American continents? We will talk about recent archaeological discoveries and understandings for when and how the first populations came to this continent and why this discussion has been so controversial. Presented by Weber State University professor of Anthropology Dr. Madeline Mackie.

World on the Move Exhibit: Chinese Migrants and the Building of the Transcontinental Railroad

Weber Historical Society Lecture Series - WSU Campus LH101, Ogden

Monday, November 13, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Archaeological and historical efforts in Utah with partnership of the descendant community are uncovering new information about the lives and contributions of Chinese railroad workers to the construction and maintenance of the United States’ first transcontinental railroad.

Presented by Dr. Chris Merritt, WSU Anthropology / Utah State Historic Preservation Office

Open House *World on the Move: 250,000 Years of Human Migration*

Southwest Branch, 2029 W. 4000 South, Roy

Wednesday, November 15, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

Do you know your family's own migration story? What about the stories of those in your community? Our open house will feature music and dance from a diversity of cultures, including Ballet Folklorico Newara, Malialole, Entertainment, and Taiko. This exhibit is perfect for the whole family and will run through December 20 in the Southwest Branch art gallery.

World on the Move Exhibit: Panel Discussion: Foreign Policy, Refugees, and Immigration

Pleasant Valley Branch, 5568 Adams Avenue Parkway, Washington Terrace

Wednesday, November 29, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

The panel will give an international snapshot of the world today and then discuss the history of refugee policy and how the rising number of refugees in the United States affects Ogden and our local refugee community.

World on the Move Exhibit: Out of Africa: Early Modern Human Migration

WSU Campus, Lindquist Hall Rm. TBA

Thursday, November 30, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

People have been migrating since the beginning of human history. Though humans live and thrive in nearly every part of the globe today, we can trace our origins to the grasslands of Africa. How and when did we begin to venture out of Africa? What happened when humans met other species such as Homo erectus and the Neandertals? How did we adapt to such dramatically different environments? While migration patterns and processes may change, movement is a fundamental part of what it means to be human. Presented by Dr. Joanna Gautney, WSU Anthropology Program.

World on the Move Exhibit: Climate Change and Human Migration

Pleasant Valley Branch, 5568 Adams Avenue Parkway, Washington Terrace

Thursday, December 7, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Climate change is already with us. It's real, serious, and caused by humans, and it is already in the process of shifting the map of places on Earth that are climatically tolerable for people to live in. Human migration on an epic scale could be the result. Join the discussion with Dr. Mark Stevenson, WSU Anthropology Program.

Ogata asked who would be installing the exhibit.

Smith said she and Graza, assisted by production and maintenance teams, will do the work.

Wangsgard thanked Sebahar for presenting the board's land acknowledgement during the annual Indigenous Day gathering November 3, 2023. Hosting this annual even at the Southwest Branch and presentation of the acknowledgment were significant enhancements to the Weber Reads programming for the year.

Review of Methodology for Conducting Library Employee Performance Reviews:

Wangsgard passed around a container of Atomic Fireball cinnamon flavored candy. The fireballs are made, she said, in large rotating pans of liquid sugar heated by a gas flame. Each piece of candy is formed around a single grain of sugar added to the pan. As the pan rotates, layer upon layer of liquid sugar forms around the grain of sugar, resulting in a hard candy shell. The final liquid sugar features bright red coloring and hot cinnamon flavoring that give the fireballs their kick.

The little grain of sugar in the center of that moving liquid that jumpstarts the atomic fireball is emblematic of how performance planning is viewed at the library, Wangsgard said. The performance plan is the catalyst at the center of all that takes place during the chaotic year,

guiding results toward a colorful, dynamic statement of how each employee contributed to the success of the library.

The library's method of doing appraisals has been refined over a period of more than two decades, Wangsgard explained. The county methodology for performance planning was non-descript and hadn't evolved for many years. During the 1990s, commissioners challenged employees to reinvent government; that is, get away from bureaucratic processes and focus on results.

Library managers stepped up to this challenge by writing new results-oriented position descriptions. Ann Joslin, assistant director of the Idaho State Library and a recognized expert in this field, was engaged to help with the library's project. Joslin met with employees and helped them write position descriptions that called out results, not processes. Results were identified in the seven management areas that are still primary to the way the library is organized to this day: collection management, fiscal management, personnel management, program management, property management, public service management, and technology management. Karen Burton, then assistant library director, took the lead representing the library administration. Once complete, a salary survey was used to adjust ranges for each position.

The position descriptions evolved over time and were updated a couple of years ago as part of a salary survey. Carter took the lead this time and ensured employees had an opportunity to update the results reflected in their position descriptions.

A few years ago, the county human resources department updated the decades old process that was still in use in some departments with a new approach that called for writing "smart goals." This concept was incorporated into the library performance planning process by encouraging employees to go above and beyond what is standard in their position description, or to distinguish themselves in working toward system goals that are set each year.

Right sizing the collection, launching a new website, and working to help all employees understand the board's guiding principles were the three systems goals set for 2023. In addition to the on-going tasks called out in their position description, each employee has the responsibility and opportunity to determine how they can work toward getting the needed results in annual system goals. Performance plans are negotiated and signed by January 15 each year and then employees report back in writing, during April, July, and November, detailing their progress in getting results. If an employee's progress is not up to standard, they get written feedback and coaching from their supervisor. At yearend, there are no surprises.

Wangsgard continued by noting that next week, November 15, 2023, every employee will forward their final performance update. Supervisors will then write a formal review and score the results according to county guidelines. Drafts of all the reviews are turned in at the business office where they are reviewed and edited; after all, the library is a professional organization and the reviews should communicate clearly, Wangsgard said. This year, the editing process will provide an opportunity for supervisors and managers to pay particular attention to the new style guide developed by Ogata and presented during staff development day in October.

Once the draft reviews are received and edited, each employee's score is recorded on a large spreadsheet, arranged by job title. In this way, all materials handling clerks, for example, are listed together and their proposed ratings are listed from highest to lowest. The lines on the sheet are color coded by division. For example, red for the Main Library, green for North Branch, etc. This color coding makes it easy to see how a particular manager is scoring their group; is one color at the top of all the job categories; at the bottom; or scattered from high to low.

Once all the job titles and employee scores are represented, those responsible for conducting reviews meet in what is called a leveling meeting. As the meeting title suggests, this is where managers discuss and defend their scores. For the most part, scores do not change as the result of these discussions. On occasion, however, an unknown factor may be brought forward that needs to be considered. The meeting is concluded when there is agreement that performance scores for every job title are in the correct order, top to bottom, and when there is agreement as to who were the top three or four performers throughout the library during the year. Those consistently in this elite group of top performers are considered for promotion from a I to a II, for example.

Once the leveling process is complete, each manager and a supervisor, or assistant manager, meets with their individual employees and discusses the review. All the reviews are completed, signed, and forwarded to the county human resources department before the library yearend general staff meeting which is scheduled on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, this year. During this general staff meeting, there is a time for looking back on group accomplishments and celebrating a job well done. It is also when the system goals for the coming year are presented.

The "free" time between November 15, 2023, when employees forward their third update, and January 2, 2024, when the process of negotiating new performance plans begins, offers employees an opportunity to think about those "grains of sugar" they want to add to the rotating pan for the coming year. What do they want to contribute, what resources will they need to make a big bang at yearend? By January 15, 2024, all performance plans are completed, signed, and forwarded to county human resources so the new cycle can begin with employees knowing exactly what the agreed upon expectations are and what they can do to help get needed results.

Sebahar wondered if it is correct to assume employees have sufficient time for input on their plan and the results at yearend.

Wangsgard said not everyone may feel they have sufficient time or input, especially if they don't agree with the coaching or the final review from their supervisor. The goal is to have everyone write their own review during the year by providing details relating to the quantitative results they achieved. The supervisor is responsible for assessing quality. Like everything else managers and supervisors do, they are hired for their judgment and not every employee will agree with where they stack up with their peers. Written documentation and leveling meetings are designed to make the process as consistent and fair as possible. Not everyone is always happy, but there are no surprises.

Sebahar noted the system goals should carry over to the review of the library director as well.

Bylaws Update Report and Consideration of Second Approval:

Baron presented the revised board bylaws for review. In conjunction with the revised bylaws, Baron distributed a draft "Executive Director Annual Assessment Policy," that had been edited by Ogata to make it consistent with the new style guide. The policy will be reviewed during the December meeting. The draft policy had been written to implement Article VI., Section 12, of the board's bylaws which stated: Evaluate the library director each year before December 31 to review the Director's performance for the past year and to review the director's goals for the upcoming year.

Spencer asked, "What is the relationship between evaluation done by board and that done by commission?" As written, the statement is not fair to the director, nor does it protect the director from any future unfair pressure. What is the process for implementation. What is the result?

Harvey replied saying the goal is for a board subcommittee to conduct the review and make a recommendation to the entire policy board, which could then make a recommendation to commissioners. The board of commissioners could act on the recommendation.

Sebahar said this recommendation could include salary adjustments. The director should not feel personally required to turn salary increases back each year to enhance funding available to other employees.

Spencer said commissioners could do whatever they wanted to do with the recommendation. The fact is, there have been instances of contention between library board and board of commissioners, what the library board says is meaningless. Spencer said his angst comes from hearing about directors who are being dismissed because of censorship, or whatever. The goal should be to protect the director if the individual is working to implement board policy. The review process should be formal if it is to be meaningful to the commission.

Harvey said everything Spencer said is correct. In his opinion, just because a person is elected does not place them in the best position to do an evaluation. Harvey may be more prepared than some, he said, because he has worked for the county for 30 years. Other elected officials may not have this experience. A performance review conducted by the library board will establish protection for the director that also will help protect the library from undue influence. The goal should be to have some formality that provides the director with a review and establishes a communication path that becomes a standard, a starting point for a process that is professional and fair.

Sebahar noted that savvy commissioners understand how to use a policy board to ward off undue pressure on them. If a special interest wants to ban books, for example, commissioners can tell them to go to the library board, that the board makes those decisions. Deciding which books to have in the library is not the commissioners' purview. If the library director is implementing board policy, the board's review should protect them. No reviews in the file of someone, especially a new employee without a track record, does not give them any protection, Sebahar said. Every employee deserves to have that security and level of support.

Spencer agreed but said employee surveys are problematic and not a viable way forward. Solid criteria have to be laid out in advance. What will the review be based upon? Giving a review in December, at the end of the performance cycle, is not viable. The process has to start at the beginning.

Sebahar asked if the statement in Section 12 presents a problem.

Spencer said no. It is the implementation at the end of a performance cycle that may present a problem.

Sebahar suggested voting on the bylaws and then working to determine process for evaluating the director during December, after the process is authorized.

This agreed, Sebahar asked Baron to read the Article II, Section 2, detailing an addition to the manner and time for selecting a vice chair.

After the reading was completed, Allison moved approval of bylaws. Crosland seconded the motion. All voted in the affirmative.

2024 Tentative Budget Review:

The tentative fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget was distributed and reviewed, including relevant pages from the larger county budget published on the county website. The library tentative budget reflected totals in the board's "hold the line" request.

Wangsgard noted the draft budget details illustrated all county departments are struggling to maintain services in the current economic environment that is fueled by high inflation and decreased revenue collections.

County officials and department heads were asked to review their budget submittals and cut costs as much as possible. The library submittal of a hold the line budget requested only a 2.13% increase over the current FY, even though costs were escalating, some in the double digits. There was no line item increases in the hold the line budget for employee salaries or benefits, however. Cost-of-living and other employee costs, if provided, would have to be funded from a property tax increase.

The draft budget illustrated that authorized full-time equivalent (FTE) library positions had been adjusted from 123 to 122. This decrease in FTEs was not because funding for a position had been cut, Wangsgard noted, but rather because funding for this position had been used to give raises to those stellar performers who had been waiting since the first of the year for acknowledgement of their exceptional results.

The tentative budget authorized \$408,570 in increased expenditures as follows:

1. Upgrade three associate manager positions to compensate staff for taking supervisory responsibility of a facility during public service hours. These positions may take

