

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES

Date: December 7, 2021

Board Members

in Attendance: Reed Spencer, Chair
Diana Allison
Sandra Crosland
Kathleen Jensen
Shannon Sebahar
John Watson

Board Members

Excused: Jim Harvey

Others

in Attendance: Bryan Baron, Legal Counsel
Karen Burton, Ogden Valley Branch Manager
Phoebe Carter, Assistant Library Director
Shari Creer, Friends of the Library
Kathy Gambles, Friends of the Library
Marcia Harris, Library Development Board
David Joy, Community Member
Selby Joy, Community Member
Holly Okuhara, Assistant Library Director
Julia Valley, Business Office Manager
Lynnda Wangsgard, Library Director

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

Public Presentations:



Kathy Gambles, Vice President, Friends of the Library, addressed the Board, noting she was standing in celebration as one of three generations who continually benefit from the Weber County Library. As a teacher/librarian at Horace Mann Elementary School, she was the only teacher who had the opportunity to work with every student in the school. Teacher/librarians are in a unique position, she noted, to develop a relationship with each student and some of these relationships last a lifetime. David Joy, who now teaches physical science at Wahlquist Junior High, is one of the students with whom she has enjoyed an ongoing association. They have stayed in touch and Gambles was recently invited to read students stories in his class.

David's daughter, Selby Joy, is an 8th grader at Orion Jr. High. She addressed the Board and distributed name badges she created in the makerspace at the Main Library. There was a badge for all those in attendance at the meeting, and for the three members of the County Commission.

S. Joy acknowledged she had also made Christmas gifts using the laser equipment at the Main Library.

Spencer complimented S. Joy for being “an unbelievable force at the truth in taxation hearing where she set the tone for a radically civil exchange between community members and elected officials.” “If anyone doubts the power of young voices,” Spencer said, “ they should have been at the hearing. It was to her credit as much as anything that the hearing was so respectful.”

Others on the Board also acknowledged how S. Joy represented young people as a “force for good” and thanked Gambles, D. Joy, and S. Joy for their presentations.

Approval of November 2, 2021, Meeting Minutes:

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

Commissioner’s Report:

Commissioner Harvey was out-of-town and had asked to be excused.

Director’s Report:

The financial report, printed at the point when 92% of the fiscal year had been completed, illustrated that 81% of the operating budget was encumbered and/or expended. The Board would complete the year with a surplus. The largest savings was in “salaries” and in a multiple of benefits categories where hiring and retaining part-time employees was becoming increasingly difficult. Two line item transfers were to be made before yearend to accommodate inflationary increases in “special services” and “print copy.” The final expenditure report will be available in February after all late December invoices clear the payment process.

Sebahar asked for clarification on the revenue report that seemed to illustrate only 14.7% of the property tax revenue had been used.

Wangsgard noted 14.7% was referring to the amount of revenue actually collected and deposited to the Library Fund at that point in time. Deposits lag a bit in time, especially during November when the Treasurer’s office is overwhelmed with tax collection. The revenue totals for those items collected by the Treasurer will not be known until a final closing deposit is made to the Library Fund, probably also during February. Until taxes are collected, the County runs on fund balances and then on money borrowed against tax anticipation notes.

As with the financial report, Wangsgard noted, final output measures will be available to the Board during their February meeting.

Library use totals as of October 31 illustrated community members were streaming back to libraries throughout the summer and early fall as the pandemic subsided; however, as the new Omicron variant began to make its way into the community, folks were being more careful about community gatherings. Still, the statistics were strong.

For example, reference transactions, for which Weber County leads the state, totaled more than 6,500 for the month. Almost 9,500 individual computer sessions were clocked and the staff assisted more than 59,000 people with these reference, directional, and computer services. Program attendance topped 6,800 for the month, and meeting room use was just 80 shy of 8,000. Materials loaned will exceed 2,000,000 at yearend and visits will approach 1,000,000 by December 31. A major goal for 2022 will be to reinvigorate usage to pre-COVID levels.

Wangsgard completed her report by noting that people are generous in their sharing their donations and praise during this time of year. Letters and cards stream in and remind the staff of how much they are appreciated. She shared a letter from a community member who makes contact every year around Christmas, always enclosing a small gift. Her letter this year noted that she was grateful for the help she received from staff in getting important documents notarized, and for the Library hosting the wellness bus where she received a basic health check and referrals to vital community resources.

Winter Fest Celebration Plans, 12-3 p.m., Main Library, Friday, December 24:

Okuhara reported on the annual Winter Fest celebration at the Main Library. There will be new hats, gloves, scarves and socks for everyone, along with a box lunch, live music, and activities for children to enjoy. Everyone is welcome to attend and spend the afternoon.

Spencer asked how the event was being promoted.

Okuhara said a press release was being distributed, there were signs in the Library, and notes were being distributed at places where people congregate. Community partners, such as the Ogden-Weber Community Action, were also being asked to inform their contacts.

Harris encouraged the donation of stockings. They are hard to wash, hard on a person's feet if not in good shape, and they are not readily available at second-hand clothing outlets, she said.

Winter Fest is now entering its third decade and has become a tradition for those who are at loose ends on the day before Christmas, Okuhara concluded.

Yearend Performance Reviews and 2022 Performance Plans:

Wangsgard recognized Library managers who have a tremendous responsibility for performance oversight and reviews.

Managers had participated that morning in a "leveling meeting." Supervisors completed draft performance reviews and recommended score as required by the County procedure. This score was placed on a master spreadsheet, sorted by job title, and then ranked lowest to highest. During the leveling meeting, managers took turns explaining and justifying their recommended scores to the group in order to ensure the final result was equitable and free of bias. It was a humbling experience, Wangsgard said, to hear each supervisor share the accomplishments of members of their group. Every effort has to be made to be fair because money is now associated with the performance score.

Sebahar asked if employees' bonuses were contingent upon their performance plan score.

Wangsgard said that was the case.

Carter had proofread all of the performance reviews, making grammatical corrections and seeking clarifications where needed. The goal was to produce literary reviews that every employee would be proud to have represent their work in their personnel file.

The next step, Wangsgard said, was for managers to meet individually with each employee to talk about the results they achieved, deliver coaching statements, and sign off the review. Each employee will then meet with their supervisor again during the first two weeks of 2022 to complete and sign their 2022 performance plan.

Wangsgard noted that completing the performance process this year was particularly challenging because the County changed the workweek. Instead of running from Friday – Thursday, it will run from Saturday – Friday. While this probably doesn't seem like a big challenge to those who don't work for an organization that is open evenings and weekends, it has been very disconcerting at the Library. It was proving next to impossible to schedule employees without requiring them to work too many days in a row without a break. This change, coming at the same time as performance reviews were due, created a significant challenge for everyone.

Spencer asked why the workweek was changed.

It was a business decision for the County, Wangsgard said. It has some advantages for some County departments. She, Carter, and Okuhara had met with several in the County to determine the best way forward. During the meeting, Library staff schedules were displayed on a large screen to demonstrate problems the change would create. None of the "simple" solutions others brought to the table were workable. The Library group is putting their best face forward. It has to be done, and we will get it done, Wangsgard said, but because it takes effect on Christmas day, and because the Winter Fest celebration is on the day before Christmas, it has required an extra measure of flexibility and good will. It will also cost money, she noted. Employees can't be expected to work long periods without having time off. Plans and solutions will be forthcoming.

Spencer noted that few things are as challenging as performance reviews and thanked the staff for their efforts.

2022 Budget Adoption, 10 a.m., Commission Chambers, Tuesday, December 14:

County Commissioners will officially adopt the 2022 FY budget during their meeting on December 14. Library employees will be there to show their support of the County process. Board members will join the staff if in town. There will not likely be an opportunity for additional public input but Friends of the Library will be there is a show of support.

Spencer noted the Board sincerely appreciates what the Commission is doing in adjusting the Library tax rate. It is not what was wanted initially, but holding a truth in taxation hearing takes political courage.

We are a team and they are appreciated, Wangsgard added.

