

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES

Date: July 11, 2023

Board Members

in Attendance: Diana Allison
Sandra Crosland
Jim Harvey
Wendy Ogata
Shannon Sebahar
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
Steven Ellsworth, Assistant Building Manager
Alex Greenwell, Associate Business Manager
Marcia Harris, Library Development Board
Randy Mueller, Professional Business Manager
Holly Okuhara, Assistant Director
Margaret Rostkowski, Weber Reads
Julia Valle, Business Office Manager
Lynnda Wangsgard, Director

Public Comments:

Crosland called the meeting to order and invited public comments. There were none.

Glen Mills had previously contacted Wangsgard to request time to voice a concern. However, he did not attend the meeting.

Election of Chair to Serve August 2023 through July, 2024:

Crosland called for nominations to serve as board chair. Allison nominated Sebahar; Ogata seconded the motion. There being no additional nominations, Crosland called for a vote. All present voted in the affirmative.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

After review of the June 6 meeting minutes, Allison moved approval. Ogata seconded the motion. All present voted in the affirmative.

Commissioner's Report:

Harvey congratulated Crosland who had been reappointed to a second term on the board. He invited questions. There were none.

Friends of the Library Report:

Creer noted the annual book sale will be held Saturday, August 26. Additional information will be presented during the August board meeting.

American Library Association Conference Reports:

Spencer reported on his attendance at the annual conference of the American Library Association (ALA), sharing details by way of a PowerPoint slide presentation. He noted participation with the staff was a wonderful experience, especially for those who enjoy being surrounded by incredible architecture. Chicago is home to unique and distinctive cityscape. The first skyscrapers were built in Chicago and city planning includes many model concepts. For example, service and delivery trucks run on access roads constructed below the city, freeing city streets from congestion and noise. Chicago's museums are also world class.

A major conference theme focused on censorship. Book banning was clearly on people's minds and programs served as a rallying cry to support the right to read. Attempts to criminalize librarians work, including state legislatures passing laws and convicting librarians for providing access to reading material, was in the forefront of many sessions. Advocates for the right to read were advised to quietly gather evidence that illustrates why particular titles deserve a place on library shelves. This evidence, along with talking points, should be freely shared with Friends of the Library and community members. Legislators need to be informed. Board members should build relationships and offer help and support, not engage only when elected officials are being asked for something.

Speakers were enlightening and fun to be around. One presenter encouraged trustees to have an email posted on the library website; not their personal email but a business email that promotes transparency. This presenter also noted that while board policies govern actions of the library, bylaws govern actions of the board. Boards were encouraged to consider having bylaws that govern renegade board members; that is, board members who are not authorized to speak for the group but insist on doing so. A simple due process provision was encouraged. The Board's fiduciary responsibility is by far its most important function. Fiduciary responsibilities are about more than money management; they include making decisions that are in the best interest of maintaining and protecting the library into the future.

Confidentiality of user records was stressed, including protecting the identity of those asking for items to be reconsidered for continued inclusion in the collection. Attendees were counseled to not make names public without legal advice. As a general rule, however, boards should be careful in taking the advice of an attorney who is an employee of the sponsoring municipality.

Other insights included discussion of First Amendment rights which can be tricky. The presenter noted that it is easier to regulate behavior than speech. Boards can control people who make a ruckus. If they come privately and insult, they have much more leeway – very interesting. When concerns are voiced, they should be acknowledged and the concerned person should be guided through due processes as provided in library policy.

Spencer said he attended a session on graphic novels and comic books. He initially did not have a high opinion of them, but it's a big world out there, he said. The program reminded him that teaching is a subversive activity. Readers need materials that are engaging in order to progress. In other words, someone who has only 20% or 50% of standard use of language can benefit significantly from reading graphic novels. Surprisingly, audio books are even being created from graphic novels. This format is very attractive to young people. "Listening to a book IS reading a book," one poster in the exhibits area read. That's a thought to ponder.

An interesting service on display in the exhibits area was library pickup lockers. Like the familiar Redbox seen in community locations for borrowing DVDs, pickup lockers allow delivery of books to remote locations where people have limited mobility. The end user simply enters a personal code to retrieve the material. These lockers are available from several manufacturers and can be made compatible with library integrated computer systems.

"World building" around a character was a fun, interesting session. This concept of setting up the place where a character interacts is especially vivid in science fiction and fantasy novels and online gaming. There are no rules except that what you do must be in service to the story, not just entertaining yourself.

The author of a book that explores artificial intelligence (AI) predicted it will be possible to connect "my brain to your brain" via neurons by the year 2030. How will the power of artificial intelligence (AI) change the world? How will it change libraries? The author, an advanced black belt himself, tasked an AI program to find a viable new hold in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. The program did it on its tenth try. AI is very powerful and many are worried about how it can be managed.



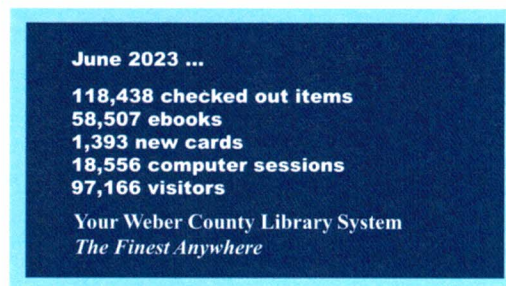
Spencer attended a session that addressed which books are losing copyright status each year and another on the Obama Presidential Center.

The Center is an eight-story, multi-use facility that includes a branch of the Chicago Public Library. The Center is being built on 20 acres in Jackson Park and is scheduled to open during 2025. Jackson Park was the site of the World's Columbian Exposition.

(Rendering courtesy of *Topos Magazine*)

The chair of the Federal Communications Commission announced E-Rate funds were being proposed to install connectivity on school buses. Spencer noted that his grandkids can't even submit their homework without an Internet link. A lot of kids don't have connectivity and this gap needs to be bridged in order to help low income students connect, complete, and submit homework. Connectivity is important for empowering students to stay inside the school system.

Finally, Spencer noted he returned with the conviction that Weber County has a truly remarkable library system, but more needs to be done to let residents know what is available. In as few words as possible – easy, short, succinct, powerful – usage numbers should be shared and people invited in. Example:



Following up on Spencer's presentation, Ogata asked if board bylaws should be reviewed and revised to include a statement on inappropriate behavior.

Baron said it could be done.

Spencer noted the ALA trustee section has sample bylaws available.

Ogata summarized her conference experience and asked that her full report, including a summary of the closing general session, be sent to board members and staff.

The opening session featured, among others, Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, who was cheered when speaking about Illinois' recently adopted ban on book bans. "Authoritarian regimes ban books, not democracies," he said.

Judy Bloom, whose young adult books have been banned since they were first published in the 1970s, spoke of living in Florida, which has been making headlines for restricting books, including Amanda Gorman's *The Hill We Climb*, based on the poem she read at the Joe Biden inauguration. Asked what she would tell Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a supporter of making book bans easier, if she had the opportunity, Blume said, "I would ask him, 'What are you so afraid of?'"

The closing general session featured Gorman who has written second a children's book called *Something, Someday*, illustrated by Christian Robinson. It is being released in September 2023. Both spoke at the closing session in a conversation with Dr. Eve L. Ewing, an author, scholar, and cultural organizer from Chicago.

The ALA convention website describes the book as “a timeless message of hope, with intimate and inspiring text and powerfully stunning illustrations. Sometimes the world feels broken. And problems seem too big to fix. But somehow, we all have the power to make a difference. With a little faith, and maybe the help of a friend, together we can find beauty and create change.”

Robinson read out loud one of his favorite lines from the book: “You’re scared and confused and you’re angry and maybe, just maybe, a little hopeful.” Robinson said of his illustration of that line, “I got the chance to draw hope.”

Asked by an audience member what she’s doing to combat censorship and book banning, Gorman said, “I’m writing.” She has also helped with distributing thousands of banned books to school children. She said when she heard news her book, *The Hill We Climb*, was restricted in a Florida school after a parent complained it is not educational and has indirect hate messages, “At the time ... it was a punch to the gut.”

Using her best fierce dragon voice, referring to dragon fire in the “Game of Thrones” TV series, she said her initial reaction was “Burn it all! Burn it all!” The audience roared with laughter.

She also used that grief to walk her dog up a hill. “And I was like wow, how much power this grief has given me, and I’d never felt more emboldened in my life. It was like I felt like I could spew fire.”

“This sadness that I expected to nail me to my bed raised me up.... So, I was actually very grateful for the experience because it taught me a way to change my grief into hope, actually, and to be more inspired than ever.”

Gorman and Robinson were asked by an audience member what is their “something, someday.”

Gorman said she wants more than for us to live together in peace someday; she wants harmony. “Peace, it can feel like inertia, meaning nothing is happening, it’s kind of a stalemate. Harmony is actually when all those pieces are working together for a greater good. I would take that difficulty, that discomfort that still comes with contributing something better to society over a peace that is empty and still.”

Robinson said, for him, his “something, someday” is for people to enter the world and have the ability to “be themselves, for people to recognize each other and have space and empathy and understanding for each other.”

Ogata reported on a session titled “How to Fight Book Bans,” and another conducted by Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress, and Louise Bernard, director of the Obama Presidential Center, who offered an update. Uniquely, the Center will include a small public library, as well as a vegetable and fruit garden, a recording studio the public can use to create music and podcasts, and a full-scale replica of the Oval Office so a kid can sit at a replica of the president’s Resolute Desk.

Presentations on activating community support with UABB (Unite Against Book Bans) was discussed at the conference, along with tips on what board and community members can do to counter censorship efforts. There was a procrastinators' guide to the upcoming eclipses. Ogata and Carter collected approximately 550 free eclipse glasses for distribution to library users. Ogata's final session featured information on library collective bargaining and unions.

Crosland thanked Spencer and Ogata for their conference attendance and for sharing their reports, noting it would be nice to reestablish monthly reports by board members. Their insights and experiences are always very wonderful and enlightening.

Allison mentioned an article referencing the Brooklyn Public Library's "Books Unbanned" initiative, a response to increasingly coordinated efforts to remove books from library shelves. Seattle Public Library had joined as a partner in defending the right to read. Books Unbanned invites anyone between the age of 13-26 to apply for an eCard and use it to access their entire eBook collection and learning databases.

Spencer noted that he had also read that several libraries were offering teens and young adults unlimited access to their eBook collections.

Wangsgard thanked board members and the Library Development Fund for their support of employees' attendance at the ALA conference. Participation allowed staff to experience innovations and trends that are on the horizon and return with the enthusiasm needed to take on challenges and continue improving services for members of the community.

Director's Report:

Wangsgard called for questions on the financial report.

Ogata asked for clarification about the equipment line item, asking Wangsgard to reiterate why it was over expended.

Wangsgard said the expenditure allowed savings of \$55,000, plus the cost of components required to make a configuration of eight servers operational during 2023, instead of implementing four new servers this year and the additional equipment the following year. Monthly totals on the output measures report were strong with the exception of program attendance. The 2022 numbers reflected visits that resulted from a drawing held during May that brought families into libraries and encouraged participation in summer reading activities. With expansion of the America Reads program this summer, it was determined the drawing would be more effective if offered during August to emphasize back-to-school services.

Crosland asked the source of the reference statistics reported for support services.

Valle noted these numbers were generated by the work centers including the business office, maintenance, information technology, production services, and technical services. They reflect

direct help to the public and assistance provided to public service staff in support of their direct service to the public.

Wangsgard noted that while the number of monthly visits was higher than during May of 2022, the number of items borrowed was lower. This is counter-intuitive but has an explanation.

Mueller explained the library's materials jobber, Baker & Taylor, serves more than 1,000 libraries and provides a large portion of materials as "shelf-ready"; that is, they add a spine label, RFID tag, book pocket, and complete other processing required for loaning. The books come boxed and, after being inspected and checked in, the items go directly to the shelves. Baker & Taylor had been suffering staffing shortages and got behind in their processing warehouses. Books ordered during March were expected to arrive during April and May in order to prepare for big summer reading demands in June. The books are just now starting to arrive. Deliveries will not be caught up for another six or seven weeks. Baker & Taylor is sponsoring job fairs and doing everything possible to engage the required workforce but the problem will take time to resolve. Without the arrival of copious amounts of summer reading materials, borrowing has suffered.

Wangsgard said the library first experimented with shelf-ready processing while building new collections to accommodate major library expansions during completion of the five-year capital plan. There was not enough staff, nor was there adequate space available, to process all the new materials. It worked well to have the jobber do simple cataloging and processing of fiction, picture books, easy readers, board books, and other popular materials. Baker & Taylor stored these shelf-ready items in their warehouse for delivery as the new and expanded buildings opened. It worked so well that the service was continued although all non-fiction items requiring sophisticated Dewey decimal cataloging and cutter numbers is still handled inhouse.

In addition to problems recruiting competent staff, Baker & Taylor was the victim of a ransomware attack last year. It took time to recover their accounts. The library's jobber is likely many hundreds of thousands of items behind in its processing center. The work is not simple. It requires exactness and is labor intensive. Hiring competent people to address the backlog will take time.

Ogata noted eMedia use was continuing to increase and may pick up some of the slack. Mueller agreed, noting borrowing of these materials had increased 10% over previous year. It's where a lot of funding is needed to keep waiting lists down.

Ogata asked how long wait lists can be.

Mueller said names on waiting lists can pile up quickly to 50-100, or more on popular titles. Additional copies are ordered to help mitigate the wait time as funding is available.

Ogata asked if social media drives hold lists.

When books are in the news, Mueller noted, interest drives holds, not just with new titles but with those that people want to read and know about. Hoopla is driven differently from other eMedia contract providers. The Library has a quota for each day and once the quota is met, no one can borrow or use the streaming service until the next day. People call when the service is not available and are advised to get up early the following morning and borrow their materials before the daily quota is met.

Weber Reads: Land Acknowledgment Proposal:

Rostkowski reported on Weber Reads, the library's community-wide reading program now in its 15th year. The program began with the reading and study of *Beowulf* and has since focused on an annual book, author, or topic including, but not limited to, *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, Shakespeare, the transcontinental railroad, and literature of the Japanese-American internment. The many topics have been explored in cooperation with the Utah Writing Project and local schools. This year the discussion topic is "Ways of Living: North American Indigenous Voices," Ellsworth and Carter were taking the lead in coordinating programs, Rostkowski noted.

Ellsworth said Weber Reads is designed to pick up in early fall, as summer reading programs draw to conclusion. He had been working to ensure programs were done appropriately by engaging with groups that are knowledgeable and able to speak for Indigenous cultures. A sampling of program participants included the Northwestern Band of Shoshone Indians; the Utah state archeologist; Nino Reyes, storyteller; and modern-day Indigenous poet, Joy Harjo. "American Experience," will be screened. This acclaimed PBS five-part documentary tells the story of pivotal moments in U.S. history spanning almost 400 years from the Native American perspective.

Greenwell presented a PowerPoint, summarizing research he had completed for a proposal that the library board sponsor a land acknowledgement program (LAP). A LAP, he explained, is a statement before an event recognizing the Indigenous communities that originally inhabited the space where the event is taking place. The acknowledgment recognizes Indigenous communities' rights to territories seized by colonial powers. They tend to focus on the social and political histories of Native people in a defined geographical space. LAPs from non-Indigenous vs. Indigenous people/organizations tend to look different.

For example, LAPs can take either a short or long form. Greenwell presented samples of each type, including short forms from the National Museum of the American Indian and the Seattle Public Library. Examples of the long form used by Weber State University and the University of Utah were also detailed. Sample plaques installed in conjunction with adoption of LAPs were reviewed and the structure of the acknowledgment presented.

Greenwell noted LAPs should be created with the purpose of celebrating present and thriving Indigenous communities and to build real, authentic relationships with Indigenous people. They serve as a starting point for organizations to provide historical context and address the current ongoing process of colonialism in connection with the longstanding history of land occupied by

that organization. The LAP could provide a first step toward action in supporting Native communities.

Greenwell noted feedback is needed and is being sought. Some resources included:

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GOSHUTE

PO Box 6104
199 Tribal Center Road
Tropic, Utah 84034
Amos Murphy, Vice Chairman
amosmurphy@ctg.us
Phone: 435/734-1138
FAX: 435/734-1162

PAIUTE INDIAN TRIBE OF UTAH

1410 North Route Dr
Cedar City, Utah 84701
Corrina Bow, Chairperson
corrina_bow@piutetribes.com
Phone: 435/586-1112
FAX: 435/907-2059

SAN JUAN SOUTHERN PAIUTE TRIBE

PO Box 966
Tuba City, Arizona 86045
Johnny Lehi, Jr., President
Phone: 928/312-9294
Fax: 928/313-8948

NORTHWESTERN BAND OF SHOSHONE NATION

7575 Commerce Way
Ogden, Utah 84401
Dennis Alex, Chairman
danner024@gmail.com
Phone: 435/734-2286
FAX: 435/734-0424

SKULL VALLEY BAND OF GOSHUTE

407 Skull Valley Road
Skull Valley, UT 84029
Candace Bear, Chairwoman
candacebear@goshutes.com
Phone: 435/331-4019

UTE INDIAN TRIBE OF THE UTAH AND OURAY RESERVATION

PO Box 195
Fort, Duxterine, Utah 84028-0195
Shaun Chappoose, Chairman
shaun@utetribes.com
Phone: 435/707-1341
FAX: 435/707-1334

UTE MOUNTAIN UTE TRIBE

PO Box 11
Towaoc, CO 81134
Manuel Heart, Chairman
ManuelHeart@utemountain.org
Phone: 970/565-7651
FAX: 970/564-5195

WHITE MESA COMMUNITY

PO Box 198
White Mesa, Utah 84031
Malcolm Lehi, Council Rep
MalcolmLehi@utemountain.org
Phone: 970/564-6007

NAVAJO NATION

100 Park Ave
PO Box 3440
Window Rock, Arizona 86515
Buu Nygren, President
Phone: 928/811-1000
Fax: 928/811-4015

Drafts of both a short and long version of a possible land acknowledgment to be used by Weber County Library were presented, accompanied by a selected bibliography of Weber County Library materials and sources for further study.

Wangsgard asked the Library board to consider sponsoring a LAP as part of the Weber Reads program. She asked for their thoughts, noting if approved, library staff will need to begin immediately to engage with appropriate consultants.

Ogata said she supported the LAP, noting a land acknowledgement was presented during ALA conference and increasingly at other public events. Make sure when Weber Reads is over, she implored, that we don't let it fall off our radar. If done, the library needs to continue with a commitment to address Indigenous history and culture.

Crosland said LAP was new to her and Greenwell's presentation was appreciated. If the library sponsors this presentation, it can serve as an example for others who wish to lend their support to Native American history, issues, and culture.

Allison said Greenwell's presentation really illustrated why LAPs are important and pitfalls to avoid.

Spencer complimented Greenwell on his thoroughness and asked if a LAP would in some way set a precedent for accommodating others asking for recognition. The LAP is a good idea, but we must be careful in the way we proceed. We don't want to cause any legal entanglements.

Sebahar agreed but noted this process would have been vetted by Weber State University and the University of Utah. Their advice could allay fears. It is important that this is being considered not because it is "politically correct," but to complement Weber Reads and as a commitment to continue to engage with Native American history and culture.

Harvey noted some may not want to engage. When people have been excluded or marginalized, they may be wary of engaging. Building relationships by creating connections and partnerships is important.

Harvey said if commission support were to be sought, there would need to be unanimous approval from commissioners during a work session.

Crosland summarized responses saying board members were supportive of moving forward with the LAP and asked staff to contact those at Weber State University for their advice and suggestions.

2024 Budget Planning and Priorities:

Board members were reminded the 2024 budget would be completed during August. One of the revenue items to consider was doing away with overdue fines. Salt Lake City Library, Davis County Library, and many other libraries across the nation no longer charge fines. This does not mean that people get away with not returning items borrowed; if items are not returned on time, there is a grace period and then the cardholder is billed for the replacement cost and a processing fee.

Fines are regressive, Wangsgard noted, and can keep families with children and those in lower income brackets from using the library. The dilemma is obvious. It would be advantageous to quit collecting overdue fines, but where do we get \$80,000 to replace the income stream. The cost of collecting fines is not insignificant, but the equipment is already in place to accommodate these transactions. While it would lighten the workload and create better public relations, it would not cut the number of employees needed in circulation divisions.

Think about the ethics of charging library fines and decide what should be done. If fines are not charged, where should budget cuts be made – staffing, programs, books, building maintenance?

Rather than feed board members a particular group of articles, Wangsgard encouraged them to research the topic for themselves and prepare for a discussion during the next meeting.

Harvey offered a preemptive heads up.

The county has enjoyed pretty spectacular growth during past several years, he said. The way the county increases its budget is through growth or raising taxes. Times have been good. However, growth is projected to be only around two percent (2%) next year, and costs are increasing at a more rapid rate.

For example, Harvey noted, employees typically receive more than a two percent salary increase each year and insurance premiums are projected to increase by at least 14%. Costs in other line items may increase by double digits. State agencies are requiring more and there are other things on the horizon. Elected officials are looking for ways to better manage budgets. Each year, the library is asked to turn in money, and the staff has risen to the occasion and accomplished this for decades in order to be able to project there being adequate funding to support the library for the next five years. There will be some changes. He doesn't know what they are but they are coming. Employees will be taken care of first. It's going to be a challenge. Hard things are coming in the budget. A cut in overdue fines of \$80,000 may be the right thing to do philosophically, but the budget will have to be balanced.

Sebahar said she would like to hear from staff concerning what they believe should be the priorities 2024.

Wangsgard noted items in every line item are prioritized by every division in their budget submittals. The board meeting gives an opportunity for them, as representatives of the community, to lend their insights and guidance.

Spencer asked to see the draft budget and then discuss recommendations as actual parameters are made known.

Other:

Allison thanked Crosland for her service as chair. Wangsgard concurred on behalf of the staff. It has been a productive year under her leadership.

Allison moved to adjourn at 6:25 p.m. Sebahar seconded the motion. All voted in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted:


Julia Valle

01 August 2023
Date