

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES

Date: September 5, 2023

Board Members

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

Others

in Attendance: Robert Armstrong, Professional Maintenance Manager
Bryan Baron, Deputy Weber County Attorney
Alex Berry, Website Manager
Karen Burton, Ogden Valley Branch Manager
Phoebe Carter, Assistant Director
Shari Creer, Friends of the Library
Marcia Harris, Library Development Fund
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 5 p.m. There were no public comments.

Approval of August 1, 2023, Meeting Minutes:

Sebahar called for questions, comments, or additional corrections to the revised minutes. Crosland moved approval. Ogata seconded the motion. All voted in the affirmative.

Commissioner's Report:

Harvey noted this was the best year with the library at the county fair. He thanked the staff for their effort.

Friends of the Library Report:

Creer reported Friends of the Library greeted community members during the annual book and surplus property sale and distributed 1,000 bottles of cold water, keeping people hydrated and making new Friends.

Valle noted attendance was not as robust as in previous years, perhaps because two competing book sales were held in neighboring counties. Nonetheless, approximately 1,500 people enjoyed perusing both donated books and those withdrawn from the collection. Revenue was not affected by the smaller than usual size of the crowd. The sale grossed more than \$11,000.

Sebahar asked if the cost of books sold was the same as in previous years, wondering if the cost contributed to stable income with a smaller than usual crowd.

Valle said the cost was the same as the year before but those who attended came from as far away as neighboring states with the intent to buy. The weather was cooler this year and people may have stayed longer to browse.

Armstrong estimated that about 18,000 items were sold, more than ever before. It is fun to watch people arrive, especially families with kids who had fun filling boxes with books. The staff worked hard to set up, but with great teamwork they produced an amazing result.

Director's Report:

Wangsgard called for questions or comments on the financial report, noting it was current at a point of 65% of the way through the fiscal year (FY). Funds had been encumbered for major building and maintenance projects with the amounts still available in line items reserved for day-to-day operations.

There being no question concerning finances, Valle was asked to report on a correction to the output measures report. She noted that program totals had not been added to the spreadsheet for the previous two months. The oversight had been discovered and corrected so the current report was up-to-date.

Wangsgard briefly reviewed year-to-date measures reflecting current use of the library system with that of the previous year, noting all were on the increase, some in double digits.

Library staff had shifted from its out-of-school summer schedule needed to accommodate several summer literacy programs, to their back-to-school regular schedule. Okuhara invited the board to review one of the major programs, America Reads, offered during the summer months. Okuhara noted 98 volunteer tutors engaged with almost 1,000 students over eight weeks to build self-esteem and improve reading skills. One student had written a poem, thanking the tutors and the library for their support. A video of the student reading her poem, accompanied by images of the students and tutors engaging with books and reading was screened for board members. Okuhara noted the volunteers had contributed more than 4,000 service hours.

Wangsgard recognized Okuhara who had taken the lead in arranging a thank you event for the tutors. Marlin Jensen was the guest speaker. A “graduation” magic show celebration was also provided for the students who participated at each of the four locations. During 2024, America Reads will be offered at all five libraries in Weber County.

Burton reported on the drawing held periodically to engage families in learning more about the literacy services available throughout the year. The most recent event attracted approximately 23,000 entries.

Harvey asked if other libraries offer the number and types of programs available in Weber County.

Wangsgard said other libraries do a wonderful job of supporting literacy in various ways but she was not aware of any library staff that works as hard or so creatively to engage people of all ages in learning activities.

Employees had prepared a report, analyzing the cost of printing services in public computer centers. It was to be presented later, during the budget discussion.

Report from Committee to Review Board Bylaws:

Ogata and Allison had met with Baron to review Library Board Bylaws and recommend changes, if any. Sebahar asked Baron to report on the results of their meeting.

Baron said the discussions had focused on incorporating state statute and county ordinance into the bylaws, providing one central place of reference. Any changes to the bylaws, he noted, required a report and discussion at one meeting, and adoption of changes during a second meeting. He focused his report on recommended additions and substantive changes.

Article II, OFFICERS, Section 1. Duties of the Chair were changed to include responsibility “to act as spokesperson for the board unless another trustee is selected by majority vote to act as spokesperson for a specific issue.”

There were no questions or discussion of this proposed change.

Article II, OFFICERS, Sections 4 & 6. The library director was referred to in these Sections as the “secretary” and “executive officer.” For sake of consistency, both sections were to refer to the library director as the executive officer.

There were no questions or discussion of this proposed change.

Article III. REMOVAL OF BOARD MEMBERS, Sections, 1, 2, & 3.

Removal of board members had not previously been addressed in the bylaws. This addition stated a board member may be removed for misconduct or for neglect of duty and a provided procedure for removal was detailed.

There were no questions or discussion of this proposed change.

Article VI, BASIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS, Section 6.

The bylaws subcommittee recommended enhancing the statement, “work for higher standards of Library service on all levels,” with the additional language, “and for equitable treatment of Library employees.”

Sebahar asked what this means. Should the statement be more concrete, she wondered.

Spencer observed that maybe this additional language should be added as a separate statement, rather than tacked onto existing language. We want to ensure the law is honored, he said. Would separating the two thoughts better facilitate the intent of these responsibilities, he asked.

Allison said facilitating the legal responsibility was the primary reason for reviewing the bylaws, ensuring they fall under the board umbrella of state statutes and county ordinance.

Watson asked if there was a way to give meaning to the word “equitable.”

Allison said the equivalent might be to say “fairly.”

Crosland said the statement implies the board will work toward higher standards of library service and the board will also work harder to make sure the staff will be treated fairly.

Watson said he agreed that the board should be responsible to make sure employees will be treated fairly as they work toward providing these higher standards of service.

Harvey said he respects the board’s time in discussing and gathering meaning from the bylaws and wondered if they were written in such a way that the lay person could understand the intent.

Allison noted the bylaws are written for the board; they are guidelines for how the board is to operate and must reflect the board’s intent and understanding.

There being no further questions or discussion, Baron move to the next proposed change.

Article 6, BASIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS, Section 12.

This addition to the bylaws was included to establish responsibility for evaluation of the library director.

Sebahar asked if this should fall under the commissioner’s purview, rather than that of the Library Board.

Harvey said he likes the board's purview, but the responsibility also falls under the portfolio of one of the three commissioners.

Sebahar suggested the board's evaluation should be forwarded to the commission.

Spencer said he was skeptical and uneasy of a two-pronged evaluation. Evaluations are subjective. It is not fair to have two separate evaluations. He did not want to add evaluation burdens to the director's chair.

Allison said she was coming to the task from the direction of her experience with evaluations of executive directors; it was not necessarily a negative experience; the way questions were drafted and employee input is gathered made it a productive experience.

Harvey said he should have been conducting an evaluation since he does them for all other county department heads. He asked if Wangsgard had ever been evaluated by an elected official.

Wangsgard said she had never been evaluated by an elected official.

Harvey said he conducts evaluations for other department directors, but none of them have policy boards. So this is an ah-ha moment, suggesting something he now will be doing.

Watson said he was not sure who was more in tune with the information needed to do an evaluation. Why do two evaluations; are the commissioners in a better position to know what is being done or is the board, he wondered.

Spencer said there are several lines of evidence only the commissioner sees, a line only senior staff see, and a third only the board sees. There are not many situations such as this, but the board has a responsibility to contribute a line of evidence.

Sebahar said if the board doesn't have the authority to make a wage adjustment, there is no reason to do the evaluation.

Ogata asked if Harvey would appreciate language from the board giving insight.

Harvey said he would like the Board to forward a review of positives and negatives before he sits down with the director for his evaluation, recognizing there have been, and may be in the future, some elected officials people may not want to report to and they deserve some level of protection.

Baron said there is not another director in the county that has responsibility to work with a policy board as does the director of the library.

Allison suggested deleting Section 12 and then bringing the topic up for further discussion at a later meeting.

Spencer asked that this become an agenda item for the October meeting, after there has been time to think about the language to be added to the bylaws. He suggested the language be discussed in October with the goal of completing an evaluation in November.

There being no further discussion or suggested changes, Baron was asked to produce a revised draft to be distributed in October.

2024 Draft Budget:

As had been requested during the August 29 meeting, Wangsgard distributed a draft budget summary and comparison of line item allocations for FY 2023 and FY 2024. The spreadsheet included two additional columns for a “hold the line,” and a “full services budget.” The hold the line budget did not reflect any new services. The full services budget included additional items for the board’s consideration. Columns also reflected the amount of increase or decrease and the percent of increase or decrease for each line item, comparing the approved 2023 allocation to the hold the line budget and the full service budget. The hold the line budget reflected an increase of 2.13 percent, in line with what is being projected for revenue increases. The full services budget reflected an increase of 5.1 percent. This budget would require additional revenue above what was anticipated, she noted.

A second spreadsheet detailed the items included in the hold the line budget, as well as the additional requests budget. Both budgets included the same allocation for books and materials. A spreadsheet detailing categories of expenses for books and materials was reviewed, along with a listing of online resources paid from the books and materials line item.

Spencer asked if the allocation included funding for the Beehive Library Consortium.

Mueller stated the library’s contribution to the consortium was included. The Utah State Library pays hosting fees and provides a match for these funds. The books and materials budget also included allocations for other eMedia and streaming services.

Library staff had researched costs associated with charging for printing in library public computer centers. Startup costs for necessary equipment in the five buildings, some with centers on each floor, were estimated at more than \$90,000. This cost did not include the cost for personnel time in issuing charge cards to use in the swipe machines, tracking payments made in cash, or reconciling collections at day’s end.

Current costs were limited to providing paper, which was budgeted at \$16,000 for 2024, an amount that included all the paper used throughout the entire library system, not just in the public computer centers. Costs for printer and toner maintenance, again for all library services in the five libraries, not just the public computer centers, was budgeted at \$11,000. If the total cost of providing free printing in the public centers were considered to be approximately \$18,000 (two-thirds of the total), it would take five years of supply and maintenance costs to equal the outlay for charging equipment.

Using credit cards to cover payments was not considered a viable option since transaction fees are cost-prohibitive and, by county contract, are paid by the library.

How do we encourage people to use the printers for library business and not for copies that would be better made at a photocopy shop, Sebahar asked.

Wangsgard noted paper copies of items brought to the library are not eligible for free copying. A person using a library computer can output up to 25 pages without intervention from a staff member. After that, there is a negotiation. Staff can override the number of copies for research or other library related activity. The number of free copies allowed was loosened during the pandemic because staff was wary of coming in close contact with users in order to negotiate and release print jobs. Community members were using the library to file for unemployment insurance benefits, send PDF copies of quarantine notices to their employers, etc. Staff were concerned about their health and rightfully so. They did not want to be in close contact with users to release jobs and negotiate over sheets of paper.

How do we respond to those who object to providing any printing services free of charge, Sebahar asked.

Crosland suggested asking for donations when print jobs exceed the recommended 25-page limit. We thank community members for bringing this to our attention for review and let them know we are more focused on oversight. Language on the website and login page should reflect the limit.

Wangsgard said donations could be made in the checkout area and recorded as sundry revenue.

Board members reviewed the list of the following additional items included in the full-service budget.

1. Enrich and fund an upgrade to three circulation associate manager positions to allow them to qualify as exempt under the Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA). As FLSA-exempt, employees in these positions could then be scheduled to oversee building functions when needed to cover evening and weekend hours. This process would need to be implemented over a period of time as positions are vacated or employees can transfer to other open positions.
2. Budget for overtime payments to allow employees to resume their historical work rotations that facilitated alternating Friday and Saturday weekend shifts, rather than working up to 16 days in a row with only one weekend day off. Four hours overtime every two weeks would facilitate non-FLSA exempt employees working 48/32 hours per week in each pay period. This schedule would accommodate returning to the way in which employees worked before the county redefined the workweek.
3. Create and fund an employee recognition and training 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, nor do they qualify for some types of training under county policy.

This change would ensure an equitable esprit de corps among all full-time and part-time employees.

4. Assign a position number to a previously funded position and then fill the position.
5. Create a line item for promotions so advancements would not require usurping pay for performance allocations, or waiting for someone to retire, 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 who make significant contributions.
6. 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. An organization with 170 employees, especially when so many work part-time, requires considerable time to facilitate good employee support and relations. These responsibilities are now shared across three people who have considerable other responsibilities.
7. Create and fund a part-time security position at North Branch, Pleasant Valley Branch, and Southwest Branch. These three individuals would be responsible for providing security during peak business hours as well as training employees to maintain a safe environment while open to the public. When not providing security services, the employees would do “double duty” at public service and checkout desks serving the public in other ways.
8. Provide a budget sufficient to fund the staff, equipment, and resources required to establish a digital branch library.

Sebahar asked if it had been determined if America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding was available to help with this startup, noting this federal money was appropriated to address coping with increased needs resulting from the pandemic.

Wangsgard said she had made contact with county officials to explain that business and government had moved their services and communications to the web, bringing the library many new customers who needed access to computers and training. She learned there was approximately \$800,000-\$900,000 available, but it was being held in reserve for stormwater, sewer, and broadband upgrades. The funding had been prioritized for these items. The private sector is taking stepping up to take care of broadband needs, but stormwater and sewer needs were more than the ARPA funding could accommodate. Projects outside of this scope were not being funded.

9. Address Oracle functionality upgrades in the human resource software, including providing access to needed reports and position management functions. As the system is now running, it seems to be partitioned so that departments cannot isolate and download needed information to a spreadsheet for management purposes. This lack of functionality creates a lot of extra work.

Wangsgard concluded by saying these additional items would serve two priorities:

- Ease pressure and stress on an already overburdened staff; and
- Provide significantly improved services for community members.

The final document reviewed by board members brought all the other spreadsheets and service estimates into a cohesive whole; that is, the summary sheet that will be forward to the county comptroller for review. This summary sheet included both projected revenue and expenditure line items.

The board was reminded that they have always forwarded a “hold the line budget.” It is, in fact, the board’s responsibility to certify funds needed to operate the library. This would be the first time, however, they would be forwarding a budget with additional requests for service improvements.

Looking at the various sections of the budget summary sheet, Wangsgard noted the board does not have a lot of wiggle room.

Expenses for salaries, wages and benefits are supplied by county officials.

Training and travel is a variable under the board’s control, but is a relatively small line item.

Operating expenses as requested by the county must show zero growth. County folks understand this is impossible but it is a goal that has to be met with the submittal, she noted.

Capital and debt line items can be adjusted by the board, but must link back to capital improvements that have been identified on planning documents. This is an area of the budget where discussion had previously taken place concerning drawing upon the library capital fund to pay for some of these improvements, leaving more funding for operating expenses. As discussed in previous meeting, however, this also has a distinct downside.

Interdepartmental charges were also assessed by county officials. These charges had increased significantly. The county will not be able to absorb these types of increases without additional revenue, Wangsgard said. Something will have to give in both the library budget and the overall county budget.

With all the background, discussion, and study done during the past two meetings, the question put to the board was, “What is the best course of action for the library system?” “What should be included in the certified budget request”?

After final review and discussion, Wangsgard was directed to prepare and forward a budget with two additional board approved columns: hold the line and recommended additions. The recommended additions and approximate costs (\$741,761) were to include:

1. Update three associate manager positions (\$13,622, ongoing cost).

