

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES

Date: October 3, 2023

Board Members

in Attendance: Shannon Sebahar, Chair  
Diana Allison  
Sandra Crosland  
Wendy Ogata  
Reed Spencer  
John Watson

Board Members

Excused: Jim Harvey

Others

in Attendance: Bryan Baron, Deputy Weber County Attorney  
Phoebe Carter, Assistant Director  
Alex Greenwell, Associate Business Manager  
Marcia Harris, Development Fund  
Holly Okuhara, Assistant Director  
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.

Glen Mills asked if the Board had made a decision relative to concerns he previously presented about access to free printing on library public computers.

Sebahar provided Mills with a letter detailing refreshed, post-COVID procedures and noted retraining of employees had taken place in order to facilitate judicious use of this resource. However, possession of a library card was not included as one of the requirements for using a computer.

After reading the letter, Mills noted he felt strongly that a library card should be required to use library services, including computers and printers. Mills further stated that printing from library computers should incur a charge of \$0.10 per page as is the practice in Davis County. He noted that limiting printing to 25 pages was not effective because individuals could get around the limit by printing at different times throughout the day or by printing at different buildings on the same day. He noted, in fact, that he had done so. He objected to his tax money being used to provide free printing services.

Wangsgard explained there are several ways to look at the dilemma of whether to allocate resources for charging fees, especially very small fees. Consideration had to include the best use of staff time in determining what is most cost effective. There is an opportunity cost that has to be considered in allocating employee time.

As an example, she noted, the allocation of staff time in Davis County to charge for services precludes employees from other focusing on other activities. In Weber County's libraries, staff time is prioritized for providing services; that is, hosting programs and meetings, building popular and core collections, and providing literacy and other services that may not be done in the same number or with comparable vigor in other libraries. In addition, Weber County allocates staff time to collecting overdue fines where some libraries, including Davis County Library, waive these fees. Not every library can do everything, choices have to be made, she said. In the Weber County case, the cost of procuring equipment and maintaining the software needed to charge for printing services was many times greater than the cost of providing complementary printing.

Mills acknowledged the overhead would certainly eat into the value of the fees collected and asked how much money is spent each year on paper for printing.

Quoting directly from the 2024 budget request, Sebahar noted the allocation was less than \$16,000 for all five buildings, including the paper used by employees in the day-to-day operation of the libraries. She also noted that it is hard to control the behavior of those who cheat the system, but the staff was recently retrained on managing these people.

Wangsgard noted those observed taking advantage of the service will be identified and may be disallowed use of the computers and printers.

Watson explained the board is asking all those who use the library to be honest and display good character. The board is allocating resources where there is the greatest public return. It is not those with low income who are abusing the system, he said; they are not printing thousands of pages. They use the library for serious business.

Spencer thanked Mills for his time in pointing out an issue that had since been reviewed and the staff refocused. He noted the board takes misuse of public resources seriously, including charging for overdue and damaged books. There is commitment to using valuable staff time to best advantage in order to help keep costs down.

#### Selection of Library Board Vice Chair:

Sebahar noted the library board bylaws, approved during the first reading on September 5 meeting, call for election of a vice chair. She therefore asked for nominations.

Spencer nominated Ogata. Watson seconded the motion.

After discussion, Ogata agreed to serve as vice chair. All present voted in favor of the motion.



Approval of August 29, 2023, and September 5, 2023, Meeting Minutes:

Sebahar called for questions, comments, or corrections to the September 5, 2023, meeting minutes. Hearing none Spencer moved approval. Crosland seconded the motion. All voted in the affirmative.

Director's Report:

Wangsgard invited Baron to report on an article printed in the September 27 issue of the *Standard-Examiner*. Titled *Weber County's Public Defender Office Gets Kudos from the State*, the article featured a presentation by the director of the Utah Indigent Defense Commission who noted the work done locally could be a model for other Utah counties.

During a review of 23 or 24 different contracts for indigent defense, Baron said it was determined the large number of attorneys involved made the service hard to coordinate. Working with county commissioners, a single non-profit entity was developed within the Weber County Attorney's Office and then attorneys were hired full-time to provide this service. Employing attorneys in this Weber Public Defender Group created a savings, since there was no longer a cost for coordinating the contracts and services. The savings can now be devoted to bolstering representation of those in need as they navigate the legal system.

Valle reported on a correction to the statistical report. The number of hours open had been entered incorrectly for Ogden Valley Branch. The correct number was 273, not 2,763. The error was not reflected in the total monthly gate count of 7,009.

Wangsgard called for questions on the statistical and financial reports. There were none.

Sebahar noted the board meeting packet was so large that the mailing required additional postage to be delivered. She suggested packets, especially minutes, be sent electronically. There was general agreement that an electronic copy was sufficient.

Staff Development Day was scheduled from 12:00-9:00 p.m., Monday, October 23, at the Southwest Branch. Major presenters included Ogata who will discuss a style guide she had been developing while editing posts for the new website. She will explain what a style guide is and why it is needed. Resa Mai, Director Morris Area (IL) Public Library, will present on leadership; and Equality Utah will present on building allyship through education and action. County officials were also being included as were employee presentations and program announcements.

Special glasses were being made available to facilitate community members viewing the annular eclipse on October 14. Ogata had procured a large inventory free of charge while attending library training meetings. Eclipse viewing events were to be held at each of the five libraries.

Carter reported on Weber Reads, including the annual Indigenous Day gathering Friday, November 3. The Southwest Branch will stay open until 9:00 p.m. that Friday to host films,

cultural presentations, and performances. Deidre Henderson, Utah Lieutenant Governor, will be in attendance and the library board will have a place on the agenda to welcome the group and present the board's land acknowledgment.

#### Land Acknowledgment Proposals:

Greenwell reviewed draft land acknowledgments for consideration and approval, noting they will provide multiple options for incorporation as placards, signage in Weber County Library buildings, and can be used at appropriate Weber County Library System programs and events. Greenwell noted that, alongside these acknowledgments, resources should be curated and presented, highlighting indigenous culture. He provided sample lesson plans, references, and articles that can be developed further for this purpose.

The six draft acknowledgments presented included one for the entire library system and separate text for each unique facility. The library system acknowledgment read:

The Weber County Library System resides and operates on Indigenous land. We acknowledge this land as the current, traditional, and ancestral homelands of the Goshute, Shoshone, and Ute tribes.

We understand this land has always been a gathering place for Indigenous peoples, including all eight federally recognized sovereign tribes of Utah, and will continue to be a crossroads for many Indigenous peoples.

The Weber County Library System recognizes and honors these sovereign nations and their historical, current, and future stewardship of the land.

As an organization, the Weber County Library System will continue to empower, honor, and serve all our patrons within our communities through equitable access to relevant information resources, programs, and services that enable users to achieve their own individual goals and happiness.

After discussion, Watson moved to approve the six acknowledgments, Ogata seconded the motion. All voted in the affirmative.

Sebahar will represent the Board and present the land acknowledgment during the Indigenous Day event November 3.

#### Interlocal Cooperation Agreement for Cooperative Borrowing with Brigham City:

Wangsgard acknowledged that Baron and the legal counsel for Brigham City had worked together to produce the Agreement under discussion. The purpose of which was to extend borrowing privileges across jurisdictional lines. The agreement was for a period of five years unless otherwise terminated and will automatically renew.

Sebahar asked if other agreements were being considered.

Wangsgard said she was in the process of reviewing an agreement with Logan City. Morgan County has not maintained an active list of Weber County residents and renewal was not being



considered or recommended at this time. An agreement with Davis County was recently renewed.

In putting the Brigham City agreement in perspective, Wangsgard explained the population served by the library was approximately 19,600. The city spent \$5.28 per capita for books and materials during 2022. The budget for Weber County was \$5.23 per capita. The number of items shared with Brigham City residents during 2022 was approximately 5,000. This number of items loaned is insignificant compared to the total circulation in Weber County. The convenience for borrowers is most cost effective when weighed against the cost of interlibrary loaning of materials.

Sebahar asked if renewing the agreement with Morgan County Library would create a burden.

Wangsgard said it would not.

Watson observed that Mountain Green is closer to both Huntsville and Washington Terrace than it is to Morgan City. At some point in time, services are going to have to be extended to this population center. This will be a challenge with the current library location significantly farther east.

Wangsgard noted the entire circulation to Morgan County residents is not significant in the scheme of things, approximately 10,000 items out of a projected total of 2,250,000 that will be loaned this year. The extra workload is not even noticed. But while there is a reasonable return on the investment in loaning to Brigham City and Davis County, there is not as much of a reciprocal benefit received from Morgan. In fact, the Morgan County Library cannot provide reliable statistics to document the level of use by Weber County residents.

Service in a rural county needs to be evaluated in a different light, Wangsgard continued. The maintenance of effort has to be put in perspective. There are only 12,700 residents in the entire county, only two-thirds of the population of Brigham City. The tax base is mostly based on personal property with little business and industry. After taxes paid to keep their library building open, bring kids in during the summer and after school, and host programs and meetings, there isn't much left over for books, only \$1.54 per capita. If the board were to ask Morgan County Commissioners for a contribution toward a borrowing agreement to expand access to reading materials, it could well result in a decreased enthusiasm for developing their own library. The staff works hard, Wangsgard noted, but they are operating in a rural county, they have sparse resources.

Spencer said the board should be friendly to the Morgan County Library and should work across jurisdictional boundaries to consider fairness but also with an eye to making books available.

Wangsgard was asked to work with the Morgan County Library Director to propose an agreement for further discussion.

Spencer moved approval of the agreement with the Brigham City Library; Crosland seconded the motion. All voted in the affirmative.

#### Second Review of Board Bylaws with Discussion of Library Director Evaluation Procedure:

Sebahar called for additional comments required for a second review of proposed changes to library board bylaws.

Crosland said that upon reflection of Article VI, Section 12, she concluded that an evaluation of the library director should be referenced and completed by the entire board. Each board member knows and interacts with the director in a different way and brings a different perspective on performance, she said. As a member of the board, the commission representative has a unique perspective but, as library users, members of the board are uniquely qualified to provide qualitative input.

Sebahar wondered if policy board needed approval in the bylaws to allow board evaluation. Do we have the authority to do an evaluation, she asked?

Baron replied that the board can do an evaluation but can't tell elected officials what to do with it. Commissioners could do another evaluation after the board's review.

Ogata noted the current commissioner had previously said he would appreciate input from the board and collective input is a good idea.

Spencer observed he wanted to think about what could possibly go wrong before committing to details in the bylaws.

Allison said the board certainly has the authority, and the responsibility, to evaluate the director's performance. Commissioners may not be library users and may not know the actual quality of services provided. The evaluation should be a positive experience; that is, an opportunity to communicate expectations, share results, and agree upon future goals. The board should take responsibility for an evaluation, whether in concert with the commissioner on the board or separately.

Spencer said he is fine with a concept of the board participating in an evaluation and sharing their perspective and responsibility for input about the director's effectiveness. The result would be an important line of evidence; an evaluation, perhaps not the only evaluation. The director, and therefore the library, should have some measure of protection from politics; that is, from being dismissed for following board policy. While the county may have final authority on whether the person is retained, the board's input should be considered. From this perspective, it makes sense for the commissioner to be part of the board's review and that this be "the" evaluation. Of course, this depends on the individual commissioner.



Ogata said she was not sure the commissioner should be included. Whatever a commissioner says may, in the future, color the discussion and distort the views of others on the board. It could be awkward. The commissioner may rather hear from the board as a group.

Baron was asked his opinion. He responded saying the board cannot have personnel action over the director, they can only provide information for use by a commissioner in this regard. The board can do an evaluation and the commissioner can either participate or ask to be recused. This language could be detailed in the bylaws.

Sebahar will contact Harvey to see whether or not he wants to be part of the evaluation and bring his line of evidence to the discussion and review. After meeting with him, she will report back to the board.

Spencer asked that this report be received before the November meeting so thoughtful discussion can take place at that time. Also, at that time, he said, there should be input as to how the evaluation should be conducted. Perhaps a review of how evaluations are handled for other library employees should be a consideration.

On a final note, Allison asked that the bylaw be fleshed out to include election of the vice chair to take place at the same time as the chair during the July meeting. Baron will make this inclusion.

#### 2024 Budget Update:

Four board members, Crosland, Ogata, Spencer, and Watson attended the budget hearing with commissioners and county finance individuals. Harris represented the Development Board.

Spencer reported on the meeting, noting it paved the way to get funding for the things most important to employees and building managers, including relief from schedules that require working too many days in a row.

Watson said the budget was well prioritized. Commissioners felt some responsibility for what had taken place with the change in workweek and appeared to say they intended to use savings from hiring lag to take care of employees' scheduling issues. In fact, Harvey said to start making the transition right now. The comptroller expressed confidence that the hiring lag will result in enough unexpended funding to cover the cost of paying employees for the extra time needed to schedule alternating Friday and Saturday weekend rotations, even given the current Saturday – Friday workweek.

Wangsgard said she had not raised staff hopes about a fix for the weekend rotations because commitments had already been made for vacations and time to celebrate holidays under the current scheduling system. These commitments will be honored and a change implemented as quickly as possible without harming public service. By January 1, the new scheduling routine will be fully implemented. An announcement of these changes will be shared during staff development day.

Spencer expressed delight that there was going to be some scheduling wiggle room for accommodating employees and attributed this opportunity to a more shared understanding of how the workweek was impacting library staff. There is a different way of thinking about things as a result of the budget meeting, he concluded.

Wangsgard acknowledged that this budget process was an excellent example of how a public policy board can work to resolve issues and address challenges in a proactive manner. It took almost two years but, thanks to the board's intervention, some middle ground was identified that facilitated maintaining the current level of public service while also working within the county framework to help employees. It was a win-win.

Other:

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

Respectfully submitted:

  
Julia Valle

11/7/23  
Date