

WEBER COUNTY LIBRARY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES

Date: September 5, 2017

Board Members

in Attendance: Diana Allison
Jim Harvey
Kathleen Jensen
Cynthia Mattson

Board Members

Excused: Judith Jones
Spencer Stokes

Others in

Attendance: Farr West Mayor, Lee Dickemore
Lynnda Wangsgard, Library Director
Julia Valle, Library Business Office Manager
Bryan Baron, Deputy Weber County Attorney
Evelyn Bertilson, Friends of the Library

Allison called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and welcomed Farr West Mayor Lee Dickemore. Those in attendance introduced themselves to the Mayor.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

Allison announced that Wangsgard had been selected by the Weber State University Alumni Association to receive Lewis W. Shurtliff Award for advancing educational excellence in the community.

Wangsgard said she was honored to have been selected and would accept on behalf of all those associated with the public library who have worked to provide the community with the County's new third place platforms for life-long learning. Board members were invited to attend the awards presentation at 7 p.m., September 21st.

Allison asked if there were objections to reordering the agenda to allow Mayor Dickemore to make his presentation. Hearing none, she invited him to proceed.

Mayor Dickemore requested that Wangsgard first present an overview of how and why the Farr West library building site had been selected by the Board.

Historical Overview of the Northwest Branch Site Selection:

Wangsgard referred to minutes of several Board meetings held during 2015 in order to detail the events that led up to the selection for the preferred site for the northwest branch.

The search began during 2014, under the direction of Commissioner Gibson who met with area political leaders concerning possible sites that might be donated to the Library Board. Gibson invited Wangsgard to tour northwestern Weber County with him and talk with Mayors and others concerning their vision for how a library project might proceed. Commissioner Bell and the County public relations specialist also participated in the tour. Two sites in particular were visited, one in Farr West and one in Plain City, but the entire western Weber County area was considered.

During 2015, Commissioner Ebert asked the Board to propose a methodology for vetting and selecting a site. The Board responded by establishing a citizen review committee. The committee was composed of highly knowledgeable individuals, none of whom lived or owned property in the service area, allowing them to be unswayed in their evaluation by personal or financial interests. Marcia Owen, former Weber County Purchasing Director, who knew from years of experience how to conduct a review so the process would be above reproach, chaired the committee.

Advertisements, articles, and letters to the editor were published in the *Standard-Examiner*, informing the public that the Board was interested in proposals of land donations for a public library building site. Library patrons received email notifications, the request for proposals was included in the Library's social media postings, and letters were sent to elected officials and other community leaders seeking responses.

Once the deadline for responses had passed, the selection committee convened. They spent time reviewing site evaluation criteria developed by the American Library Association. The committee reviewed maps, studied geography, looked at flood and fire zones, studied transportation routes, and looked at present and possible future school locations and the number of students served. They also took an in depth look at current and projected future demographics.

Once their study was complete, the review committee traveled together to visit each site. With their American Library Association recommended site selection criteria in hand, they reviewed each site and then traveled the neighborhoods and beyond to get a first-hand look at the surroundings. Once their tour of a particular site was completed, they filled out and rated the site using the non-biased, national site selection criteria, and then traveled to the next proposed site.

Owen gathered all the responses and tabulated the results, which were reported to the Library Board in a public meeting. The results were unanimous. Every committee member gave the Farr West site their highest ratings.

Following Owens' report, the Board met in an executive session to discuss the results and then, in a public meeting, voted unanimously to select the Farr West site as their preferred choice for a branch to serve northwestern Weber County.

Wangsgard noted that funding to build the library was not available, but Commissioners wanted to get a preferred site in place to create enthusiasm and perhaps generate contributions. Site selection can also be divisive, so choosing early can help avoid acrimony later in the process.

Mayor Dickemore had since been patient while the Library Board's capital plan proceeded, but recently met with Commissioners to ask their support for moving forward on a northwest library. Commissioners had advised the Mayor to meet with the Library Board, indicating the impetus to proceed should rightly come from this group.

Northwest Branch Conceptual Plan:

Mayor Dickemore introduced himself and detailed his life-long dedication to a career in education. He had already made a presentation to the Farr West City Council, and they were supportive of donating three and one-half acres of land as a building site. The property is located directly across from Wahlquist Junior High and next door to Farr West Elementary School. He noted a third school is to be built within walking distance of the proposed library in an area known as Remuda Court. The building site is part of a City owned parcel that will be developed commercially. It is on the major east/west roadway, near a crossroad of the major north/south artery, less than two minutes' drive from a freeway entrance, and within walking distance of a UTA Frontrunner stop. The site is developed with access to utilities and there is a municipal infrastructure available, including sidewalks, making it accessible by bicycle. Dickemore valued the site at \$1,000,000.

Dickemore presented each Board member with a portfolio that contained the conceptual plan for a branch. The first pages in the plan included letters from mayors of surrounding cities, expressing their support for the Farr West City location.

Dickemore discussed an overview of funding options, looking specifically at government bonds as a revenue source. While general obligation bonds were used to fund the most recent library capital plan, they will not work for the library in Farr West because they have to be approved by a public vote. Now that every area of the County has a library, except the northwestern area, people will not want to vote to raise their taxes to provide equitable access. Voters may see the need and agree with the fairness of a library in Farr West, but they will not likely vote approval.

Tax revenue bonds are the best option for funding the northwest library and, in fact, this funding mechanism was used to build the Pleasant Valley Branch Library in Washington Terrace. These bonds have also been used in Weber County to build the landfill gas project, health department building, animal shelter, and ice sheet expansion. They are approved after holding a truth in taxation hearing. The Mayor pointed out that market conditions dictate that now is a good time to finance using government bonds because interest rates are still low. It is expected that the bonds will be issued for 20-year payback, so a low interest rate could save taxpayers a considerable amount of money in the long run. Mayor Dickemore distributed a chart, illustrating tax rate comparisons for Wasatch Front Libraries. The chart, he said, spoke for itself.

2016 COMPARATIVE WASATCH FRONT LIBRARY FUNDING LEVELS OF SUPPORT			
Tax Rate Comparisons for Wasatch Front Libraries			
Library Tax Levy Cap Specified in Utah Code = 0.001			
9-7-401(2) for City Libraries			
9-7-501(2) for County Libraries			
Jurisdiction	Current Tax Rate (2016)	% Tax Levy Used	% Tax Levy Available
Logan City	.000923	92.30	07.7
Salt Lake City	.000700	70.00	30.0
Provo City	.000663	66.30	33.7
North Logan	.000643	64.30	35.7
Salt Lake County	.000639	63.90	36.1
Weber County	.000597	59.70	40.3*
Brigham City	.000595	59.50	40.5
Davis County	.000370	37.00	63.0

(Source: Utah State Library)

*Weber County Library's tax rate for operating expenses must be evaluated with the knowledge that approximately \$530,000 is taken from the operating budget on an annual basis to service debt on Pleasant Valley Branch tax increment bonds. The WCL tax rate is also used to cover the costs of running the County Law Library and providing electronic legal services to County Attorney's Office and to other County officials. These costs are not reflected in the tax rate of other libraries in this State comparison.

Extrapolating from the cost of servicing debt on the current Library Capital Plan, it would cost the owner of a home valued at \$163,300 approximately \$8 per year, just 16¢ per week over a period of 20 years, to service a tax increment bond that will provide equitable access to library services for those living in northwestern Weber County.

Farr West City had engaged Prescott Muir Architects, the firm responsible for designing three Weber County Library buildings, including the new Headquarters, to prepare a site plan for the proposed branch and surrounding commercial development. The Mayor distributed the plan and proposed using the basic conceptual design for the Pleasant Valley Branch to save on architectural costs.

The Mayor presented a basic budget plan for the project, including:

Item	Source of Funding
Building Site	Donation, Farr West City
Architectural & Engineering Fees	Tax Revenue Bond
Construction	Tax Revenue Bond
Collections	Tax Revenue Bond
Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment	Library Foundation, up to \$1,000,000 Balance Tax Revenue Bond

The plan also included as estimated savings of \$500,000 from the current capital projects that may be able to be used for construction.

The Mayor emphasized that projected construction costs over the next four years would increase by 15-20%, so the following aggressive schedule was being recommended:

Contract with Prescott Muir Architects (PMA) (Pleasant Valley Branch plan is PMA's intellectual property)	October 1, 2017
Complete construction documents and advertise project to general contractors for bid	March 1, 2018
Hire general contractor and begin construction	June 1, 2018
Complete the entire County Library capital plan and dedicate new Northwest Branch Library	August 31, 2019

The final portion of the Mayor's presentation consisted of demographic reports with graphs overlaying both the current North Branch service area and the proposed library in Farr West City library service area. The demographics offered a vivid illustration of one of the reasons why the proposed library site in Farr West was selected by the Library Board, as opposed to one further west, perhaps in Plain City, or further south in the Marriott/Slaterville area.

The Farr West site offers extensive coverage of northwestern Weber County with easy access via major thoroughfares as well as by train, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. Plain City as a site location would result in the same issues that restrict the serviceability of the North Branch; that is, a major portion of the service area would be in a location where soil conditions dictate there will not ever be a residential population. Marriott/Slaterville is surrounded by commercial and industrial developments and will not be home to neighborhoods with a concentrated population.

Mayor Dickemore noted there was a strong possibility 750 homes would be built in the general service area of the recommended site during the near future. The Weber School District is also planning another elementary school that would be within walking/biking distance.

The Mayor asked the Board for their thoughts.

Harvey complimented the Mayor on his presentation. It was the second time he had heard it and he had been thinking about what might be possible. Harvey was weighing several pressing needs in the County, including an aging and deteriorated parking structure at the Weber Center and upgrades to storm water systems. He said that for him the library falls within the range of these high priorities.

However, Harvey noted, it was not up to one or two people to establish these priorities. He was working as chair of the County Finance Committee to establish a professional management process for selecting priority projects for funding. Once all the projects in contention are identified, the Finance Committee can weigh in on their relative merits. The County is in a very strong financial position, Harvey said, and the County Auditor and Comptroller, as well as the County Treasurer, will lend their professional judgment to the recommendations. All proposed projects will go through the process.

Harvey went on to note, however, that libraries work for everyone and the northwest branch would complete the County System.

Allison asked if Harvey was pleased with the site. Harvey responded that he had a construction business for several years and thought there may be other considerations. He would want to ensure it was in the right place looking decades into the future.

Dickemore asked the Board if they were in a position to offer a vote in support for the proposed plan. Harvey said it was proper to ask, but the Board may have some additional questions.

Jensen complimented Dickemore on his presentation, stating the concept looked good.

Mattson was impressed with the demographic information and wondered if there was some County project that was about to be paid off that would not result in requiring a tax hike; library bonds could just pick up where bonds for another project left off. Marketing would be the key, Mattson noted, emphasizing that other areas have beautiful new libraries and the service is needed for children in northwestern Weber County.

Allison looked at major highways and accessibility, rather than a service radius to evaluate a proposed site. She thought the timing was right and applauded Commissioner Harvey and the Finance Committee for their fiduciary responsibility in developing a process for prioritizing capital investments.

Harvey noted that the cost of ongoing operations was not included in the conceptual plan presented by the Mayor. This is an issue that would also need to be addressed. Before a truth in taxation hearing could be held, operational costs would have to be solid.

Allison concluded the discussion by asking Wangsgard to distribute copies of the Mayor's conceptual plan to those three Board members not in attendance. She suggested adding further discussion of the plan during the October meeting when the full Board had a chance to voice their opinion.

Allison complimented the Mayor on his thorough proposal and thanked him for his interest and work on behalf of a new library.

Commissioner's Report:

Harvey reported on the wildfire that started that morning, fed by uncharacteristic winds blowing south to north and driving flames in the direction of hillside homes. Three homes had been lost so far and the fire was not contained.

Every employee in the 911 dispatch is to be congratulated, Harvey said, for their flawless methodology that resulted in a complete evacuation of residents, schools, and other facilities in the danger area. It was a fantastic success. Not one person was injured.

Those fighting the fire did a phenomenal job of protecting structures, Harvey reported. Fire burned around all four sides of some homes but the structure was unscathed. Local businesses responded with donations of food and drinks, everyone came together to minimize the impact as much as possible.

Bertilson noted that Marcia Harris was not at the meeting because her home was among those currently in the path of the fire.

Director's Report:

Wangsgard reported very briefly on the operating budget, noting that a surplus was still developing and would be deposited in the fund balance by year-end.

2018 Draft Budget:

Wangsgard began the budget presentation by framing the methodology used for gathering data with which to make projections of both revenue and expenses. The process makes its way from the divisions where firsthand details and justifications are built into their request; the requests are then forwarded to the administration office where items are scrubbed and evaluated for possible inclusion in the proposed budget.

The business office staff keeps meticulous records of all expenses throughout the year, and these records are used to forecast costs for future budgets. Wangsgard showed pages from the current, fiscal year budget book, item after item updated in red pen by Valle as expenses were validated and invoices paid. Other business office employees, including Kimberly Lee and Janice Dalley, manage spreadsheets and ledgers used to project costs. Once each division budget is evaluated and revised, the information is downloaded to a summary sheet.

Board members reviewed the scrubbed division requests, line item by line item, as posted to the summary sheet. Each line item request was compared to the current budget authorization, giving an amount and percent of increase or decrease proposed for 2018. Board members were given an explanation for each increase, or decrease, on the spreadsheet. For example, an increase in the line item, building improvements, included repair of the septic system at Ogden Valley Branch and a lightening protection system for the Headquarters library.

Wangsgard's detail of the septic system repair proposed that the cost be offset by a transfer from the capital account set up for construction of new libraries. This transfer would recognize the fund balance should be reimbursed for payments made from the operating budget to cover costs associated with the capital improvement plan. Because general obligation bonds were not sold until December 2013, all the expense for the capital plan was initially paid from the operating budget. Payments included much of the design cost for the Headquarters Library, which was put to bid during January 2014, as well as all the cost estimating and other work that was done for the other three other capital projects. These costs totaled approximately \$225,000.

The only capital equipment item requested in the 2018 budget was a replacement projector for the auditorium at the Ogden Valley Branch. The projector currently in use was moved from the Main Library when the auditorium was closed for renovations. The projector is now more than eight years old and no longer compatible with current technologies, making it unfit to accommodate the needs of the public using the Ogden Valley Branch. The entire cost of this item will be covered by a State grant that was built into the 2018 budget revenue projections.

The most challenging line items in the budget related to personnel costs. Opening a Main Library that has a 50% increase in public service space, and a North Branch with a 100% increase in public service space will require additional staff, including as many as 20 full time equivalents at the Main Library. New staffing patterns, resulting from third place operational requirements, will require new positions be built into the position management system. The process will proceed by addressing promotions into new and open positions for those employees who have earned them, and then opening the remaining positions to the public. Work had been done to determine the cost of these promotions and "what if" scenarios were being worked through to detail the required new staffing patterns. Some part time positions were being combined to make benefitted, full time positions in an effort to retain experience and talented employees.

Wangsgard noted that a salary survey would be needed for the Library. When taxes were raised last year to establish salary parity with those working in surrounding areas, the County Human Resource Department did not include library employees in their salary surveys. The result was that adjustments were not made in the Library System as they were in other areas of County government. The Library has since been losing employees to other departments in the County and to surrounding area employers. In-house opportunities for promotions will address this issue for some of the highest performers, in the short run, but will not ameliorate issues of attracting new talent or retaining experienced talent in the future.

Wangsgard was meeting with Commissioners to get direction on how staffing patterns for the next several years should be structured. After receiving direction from Commissioners, the final salaries and benefits line items will be fleshed out in the 2018 budget request.

The final expense line items addressed in detail were "auto allowance" and "cell phone allowance." County officials were still determining how these line items will be handled.

The plan, as Wangsgard understood it, was to eliminate these costs during 2017. Twenty-seventeen requests for additional cell phone allowances for Library maintenance staff were not funded in the current budget. This created a disparity among employees. Some maintenance employees who have twenty four-seven responsibility for a library facility have a cell phone allowance, others with this same level of responsibility do not. Wangsgard had reentered proposed allowances into the 2018 budget in order to establish parity among the employees. If allowances are taken from those who already have them approved, then those new requests for new allowances included in the budget can be ignored. If, however, the current allowances are funded, the new requests should also be approved. Taking cell phone allowances away from employees is problematic because they are actually treated as wages and are taxed as such. To take them away is viewed by employees as a cut in their hourly income.

With the overview of budget preparation and a detailed look at expense line items completed, Wangsgard reviewed projected revenue numbers, some of which were estimated by County officials. Revenues produced in-house, such as meeting room rental fees, and fines and fees for lost or overdue books, were estimated by Wangsgard. Comparing projected expenses to projected revenues illustrated that approval of the budget as it was shaping up for submission would require a significant draw upon the fund balance. A three year projection for operational expenses will be prepared and submitted with the budget to give County officials an in depth look at when adjustments in the Library tax rate may be required to operate new facilities.

Wangsgard will prepare a budget preface, which is really a statement of budget intent, for inclusion with the final version. The intent language will detail the approved historical plan that allowed for creation of a fund balance, the purpose of which was to draw upon as the expanded libraries are opened to the public. The Board has saved a hefty fund balance that, even though drawn upon for County general fund projects, should be enough to carry operations forward for at least three years.

The budget was due to the County Auditor's Office on September 15th. A hearing will be scheduled during October. Additional work will be done on the submittal over the next two weeks to develop the most accurate projections possible. Wangsgard asked that a representative or two from the Board attend the budget hearing.

Harvey noted changes in Library positions are being made during 2018 to help with retention of key employees. As soon as two Commissioners have an opportunity to approve the plan, hiring will take place to begin training those who will open the Main Library. During the early part of 2018, new hires will be brought onboard to prepare for the North Branch opening.


Other:

Baron asked if there would be an opportunity to vote on the Mayor Dickemore's conceptual plan during the next meeting. Allison said the northwest Branch should be placed on the October meeting agenda. Wangsgard reminded the Board that opening a new library would require an adjustment of the Library tax rate to cover operational expenses.

Allison called for a motion to adjourn. Harvey so moved. Jensen seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted:


Julia Valle


Date