

## Fort Madison Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the regular meeting held December 16, 2021, 5:30 p.m. in person and electronically via Zoom.

Board members present in person: Sharon Groene, Candice Smrt, Ron Welder, Anne Heitz, Tom Pollpeter, Kathy Burkhardt and Mary Whitcomb.

Board members present online: Phil Hecht

Others present: Sarah Clendineng, library staff, in person.

Meeting called to order with a quorum present at 5:30 pm.

Excused Absences: Motion to excuse the absence of Jane Bartlett – Welder; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Whitcomb. The motion was carried unanimously.

Approval of Agenda: A motion to approve the agenda was made by Welder; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Heitz. The motion was carried unanimously.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting November 18 –Heitz; 2<sup>nd</sup> –Hecht. The motion was carried.

Approval of December 2021 Bills: Trustee Burkhardt inquired about the frequency of window washing. The director replied that it is 3 times a year, though one of those is only exterior. Trustee Burkhardt also asked if the sealing of the windows was related to the water damage that was noticed earlier in the year and the director replied that it was. There was discussion about the heating bill. Trustee Welder inquired about the thermostat settings and the director replied that most of them are set at 72. Trustee Welder asked about reducing that to 68. The director replied that there are places it is still chilly at 72. Trustee Welder said that he is remembering the thermostat settings in state buildings. Trustee Groene mentioned that she thought there would be complaints about that and Trustee Smrt said that there are complaints now. Trustee Welder asked if 70 could be considered instead. The director stated that she would need an official directive from the board for that. The topic was dropped for further discussion later in the agenda.

Motion to approve the December 2021 bills – Welder; 2<sup>nd</sup> –Burkhardt. The motion was carried unanimously.

Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

Director's Report: In addition to the attached report, the board discussed the heating costs for the library. The director explained that usage for November was slightly higher than last year, possibly due to it being about 5 degrees colder than average. However, this does not explain the significant increase in heating costs. That increase is due to the change in the cost of heating which was about \$.20 per unit last year and is about \$.80 per unit this year. The director did go around and check all of the thermostats. She also adjusted the meeting room slightly so that it is set to 60 degrees on Saturday and Sunday, rather than just on Sunday. The thermostats are all also timed so that the temperature automatically lowers when the library is closed. They are currently set to 72 throughout the main part of the library. Trustee Welder said that, looking at expenses, he doesn't see 68 or 70 as being really cold. The professional buildings he has seen in Fort Madison are in line with that. The director replied that even with the thermostats set at 72, there are places in the building where the air temperature is 68 or 70 and stated that we can't take it as low as 68. Trustee Welder asked about how the library

would deal with an excessive financial situation at the end of the year if we have \$2,000-\$8,000 in utility bills that were not budgeted for. The board has worked for several years, led by the director, to stay within budget and asked where we anticipated taking a short fall from. The director replied that it could be taken from library materials. There is a fairly significant buffer in the gift fund that could be used for library materials the last two or three months of the year, if needed. We currently spend about \$2,000 a month for library materials from the general fund and the director plans to keep doing that unless something changes drastically. But, we can look at where the budget stands in February and see if we need to shift that spending to either the gift fund or the county fund to make up a short fall in the general fund. At this point, the director is concerned about some of the older employees who are already uncomfortably cold in the winter at the current thermostat settings. Trustee Welder said that he was willing to move on from this subject with the understanding that we can resume discussions in January if we see evidence that we need to make corrections. Trustee Smrt asked about what the air was set at in the Summer. The director isn't sure, she'd have to double check her notes. Trustee Burkhardt asked about budget billing for the gas bill. The director replied that it doesn't make as much sense for the library as it does for an individual person. For an individual person who is paid every week or two weeks, budget billing can help spread out costs over the course of a year more manageably, rather than getting hit with a bill that is three times what it was last month that is suddenly due. However, the overall amount that needs to be paid doesn't change, just the time frame in which it is paid. For the library, we aren't allocated money on a weekly or monthly basis, we are allocated a lump sum of money by the city council at the beginning of the fiscal year that can be spent over the course of the year. Getting a larger heating bill than the previous month doesn't automatically throw our whole budget out of whack. The exception is if the amount is significantly larger than the previous year that was used to determine how much to budget for. In this case, budget billing would still not help because the same amount would be due without extra money in the budget to pay for it. The director will check if this is even an option on a non-residential account. Trustee Pollpeter asked about if we could get someone to look at adjusting the system, making sure it is balanced and possibly relocating where the thermostats are located. Trustee Burkhardt also suggested that adding ceiling fans might be an option to help with energy usage.

### Unfinished Business

#### Review Meeting Room Policy – addressing snow removal during winter months

The director added the following to the meeting report. The library and the public works department are both paid out of the general fund. We both get our funding out of that same pool of money. This issue has come because the public works department does not have people scheduled for sidewalk snow removal on Saturday and Sunday. The other reason the director is bringing this up is that if we are going to continue providing the meeting room to the public for free, using the same pool of resources, it would be nice if we could help offset the extra costs they may incur for that snow removal. Last month the possibility of charging a small fee of \$25 was suggested. If that were charged for Sunday use from November 1 through March 31, it would bring in about \$500. It is estimated that snow removal for a snow event would be about \$500. Without knowing how much snow we are going to have in a given winter, the public works director suggested planning on ten for the period between November 1 and March 31, and \$5,000 would help to offset snow removal costs. If we were to just charge during the season, it would be \$250, just for Sundays, or \$125 if we charged for both Saturday and Sunday. Alternatively, we could spread it out over the year and if we charged \$50 for reservations on Saturdays and Sundays that would bring in enough to help offset the cost of snow removal in the winter. While the money would not go directly to public works, it would help provide extra funds to the city general fund from which both the library and public works get their operational budgets.

Trustee Burkhardt asked about snow removal at the historic depot for Amtrak stops on Saturday and Sunday for which the city is responsible. The director replied that this is still an unknown for the public works department because this will be the first year but the city has a contract to provide for snow removal, either with their own personnel or by contracting with someone else. Trustee Burkhardt wanted to know why the city couldn't just do the library, as well, if they are already taking care of snow removal at the depot.

Trustee Hecht asked if the director had any idea how many people attend private events at the library. The director does not have numbers on how many people use the meeting room for non-library events.

Additionally, as the director was reviewing room usage, it was very rarely used on Friday evenings and that could be offered as an alternative for Sunday reservations. There is enough availability on Friday evenings to pick up the events that couldn't be held on Sunday

Trustees Heitz and Groene both said that it made sense to them to not have it available on Sunday.

Trustee Welder said that we could try it and see if there are a significant number of complaints. Several trustees said that they hated the thought of starting to charge for use of the meeting room.

Trustee Smrt asked if this would just be seasonal. The director confirmed that yes, this would just be from December 1 through March 31, during the most common time for snow events. The room would be available for use on Sundays the rest of the year. Trustee Burkhardt asked about existing reservations and the library replied that they would be honored for this year but no new reservations would be added.

The director clarified that the city hasn't told the director that we can't have events or that they are going to charge us. This has come out of working with other department heads and being aware of their budget issues as we also have budget issues and finding ways to work with them to make it easier to keep this resource free and, as Trustee Welder mentioned, safe for the public to use.

Motion to not allow use of the meeting room on Sundays from December 1 through March 31 – Welder; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Whitcomb.

Votes in favor:

Sharon Groene  
Candice Smrt  
Ron Welder  
Anne Heitz  
Tom Pollpeter  
Mary Whitcomb.  
Phil Hecht

Votes Opposed:

Kathy Burkhardt

### New Business

#### Library Mission Statement

The director suggested this as a starting point, "The Fort Madison Public Library will provide materials and resources to support residents in lifelong learning, as they explore new interests and ideas, becoming informed citizens."

Trustee Hecht asked about rephrasing the end to keep people from reading the last line as saying that they are not currently informed. The director suggested possibly "becoming more informed citizens". Trustee Heitz suggested, "to enhance information for citizens." After further discussion, it was decided to leave off the last phrase and adopt the revised mission statement of, "The Fort Madison Public Library will provide materials and resources to support residents in lifelong learning, as they explore new interests and ideas."

Trustee Burkhardt suggested making sure this is posted, for example on the bulletin board. The director will also make sure that it is on the library website.

Motion to approve the library mission statement, “The Fort Madison Public Library will provide materials and resources to support residents in lifelong learning, as they explore new interests and ideas.” – Welder; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Smrt. Motion carried unanimously.

### 2022/2023 Budget Discussion

The director reported that the library is doing well in regards to the budget and presented a rough draft of her recommended budget to the board. Looking at the numbers through the end of the year, while there are a couple of outstanding repair items, specifically two outside lights in front of the building, the library seems to be in good shape to be under budget. For next year, for most line items, it is very similar to this year’s budget. The director did put in an increase in the heating budget based on the numbers she has seen and assuming that the price of gas doesn’t climb any further. The rough draft is less than the current budget because the director has only included maintenance items that should be annual costs and not any special, one-time projects. That is where the director is looking for direction from the board, which of those projects should be included?

Based on previous discussion with the board, we probably want to definitely do the landscaping updates. Also, going forward, cleaning the air vents should probably be an annual expense.

There was discussion of reupholstering the chairs. They aren’t damaged, they are primarily faded and, if they can be recovered for \$600 or less, it is cheaper to recover them than to replace them. Trustee Burkhardt asked if steam cleaning might be a good stop gap measure. Since Prison Industries no longer has a furniture shop, the director would need to find a different upholsterer. Trustee Welder knows of someone in Burlington and will get her that information.

Trustee Burkhardt asked if the director had considered more efficient lights. The director hasn’t gotten an estimate on LED lights recently. This could be something that the building maintenance fund might be used for. Trustee Pollpeter mentioned that they do make LED tubes for fluorescent light fixtures.

There was also discussion of replacing the automatic flush mechanisms with manual handles. It was determined to minimize service calls to replace three in the next budget year and then three more the following budget year with the intention of replacing the mechanisms in the ladies rooms in 2022/2023 and the men’s room the following budget year. This is also something that could be supplemented with the building maintenance fund.

The director will add landscaping, cleaning the air vents and replacing three toilet flush mechanisms to next year’s budget request. We will plan on making cleaning the air vents an annual expense.

### Discussion and possible action on adding the Craftsy database to library services

The board all thought this would be a good service addition. We would set a monthly budget for use and if it isn’t all used, it would stay in our account and once the budget was reached the service would not be available until the next month.

Motion to add the Craftsy service with a monthly budget of \$90/month - Heitz; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Smrt. Motion carried unanimously.

### Trustee Education

#### Trustee Handbook Chapter 10 “Evaluating the Library Director”

A lot of the items included in this chapter are included in the library’s job description which is the current basis for the annual budget.

The director handed out a copy of the board by-laws in preparation for reviewing them at the January meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm until the regular meeting 5:30 pm, January 20, 2022.