

Fort Madison Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the regular meeting held January 20, 2022, 5:30 p.m. in person and electronically via Zoom.

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

Board members present online: Phil Hecht

Others present: Sarah Clendineng, library staff and Jack Gray, City Council Liaison, in person

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

Excused Absences: Motion to excuse the absence of Mary Whitcomb – Welder; 2nd – Smrt. The motion was carried unanimously.

Approval of Agenda: A motion to approve the agenda was made by Heitz; 2nd – Smrt. The motion was carried unanimously.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting December 16 –Bartlett; 2nd –Smrt. The motion was carried.

Approval of January 2022 Bills: Trustee Bartlett was curious about the holiday library ads and asked if the director knew if there was any increase in use from it. The director said that there is not a way to know. She purchased these ads thinking that people might be listening to more Christmas music during the holidays and it might be a chance to get word out about the library.

Motion to approve the January 2022 bills – Burkhardt; 2nd –Smrt. The motion was carried unanimously.

Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

Director's Report: See attached report.

Unfinished Business

2022/2023 Budget

The director shared with the board the budget request submitted to the city. This comes out to about a 3% increase over last year.

New Business

Review Library Board By-Laws

Trustee Bartlett pointed out that the city ordinance says that one of the boards powers is to elect a secretary from among its members. There was also concern about liability issues for the director taking the minutes. The director will check on this and get back to the board.

In preparing to reapply for library accreditation, the director said that the by-laws need to be reviewed before the end of February. She discovered that she did not have the library board by-laws on her policy review schedule but has corrected this for the future.

The director wondered if the board wants to keep three consecutive absences as a reason for removal and also would recommend removing having the board president be part of the orientation briefing.

Third, she would like to amend Article VI: Section 4 to read, "All policy statements adopted by the Board shall be stored in a dedicated cloud computer file that can be accessed by employees. Each policy and each revision shall carry the date of its adoption."

There was discussion of what constitutes an excused absence and if a board member had ever been removed for lack of attendance. As long as there is a quorum, the absence can be excused and a board member was removed due to lack of attendance once in the last 15 years.

Motion to amend the library board by-laws to remove "three consecutive" absences, remove the board president from the orientation briefing and amend Article VI: Section 4 to read, "All policy statements adopted by the Board shall be stored in a dedicated cloud computer file that can be accessed by employees. Each policy and each revision shall carry the date of its adoption." – Smrt; 2nd – Pollpeter. Motion carried unanimously.

Review Collection Development Policy

Trustee Burkhardt expressed concern about the director having the authority to remove items from the collection without any oversight. She is concerned about the curb appeal of the genealogy section and that it seems to have dwindled. She would like for the board to be informed if items are removed from the genealogy, local history and special collection areas. Trustee Welder further expressed concern about a potential future librarian's personal bias weeding books from the collection that they disagree with or find personally offensive. The director understands these points of view but her concern is that this is sliding into micromanagement. However, the specific sections in question do have difficult to replace, if not completely irreplaceable materials. With that in mind, the board could add to the deselection section that items will be approved by the board before they are removed from those specific sections.

Trustee Hecht inquired about what the board felt the library's position should be in preserving local area scholarly research. He is aware of a scholarly work on archeology that was weeded because it wasn't used. The director replied that while the book may not be in our library, it does exist in other libraries, in this case, probably academic libraries and our patrons would have access to those through interlibrary loan.

Motion to approve the collection development policy updating the mission statement and adding the sentence under de-selection, "Items to be weeded from the Genealogy, local history and special collections area will be approved by the board before deletion." – Smrt; 2nd – Pollpeter. Motion carried unanimously.

Review Personnel Policy

The director knows that the city is working on revising its personnel policy and the director will share that once it is completed. For the most part, library employees are covered by the same personnel policy as other city employees. This policy has not been updated since the last time the board reviewed the policy. The board has adopted two additional personnel policies that address situations that are unique to library employees. One addresses employee pay due to inclement weather and part-time employees making up time due to illness, vacation or inclement weather. The other policy addresses library hours and holidays that fall on Saturdays.

The library does follow the same holidays as the city.

Motion to approve current personnel policies - Welder; 2nd – Smrt. Motion carried unanimously.

Review ADA Checklist Priority 3 – Toilet Room

The library is in compliance with the listed standards.

Motion to approve the report as presented – Heitz; 2nd – Smrt. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Room Software

The director presented several options for meeting room reservation software and showed an example of a county that is currently using the software she would recommend. This county is currently using the product as a community calendar and that is the direction we would like to move, based on the strategic planning process. Eventually, the director would envision the library's role as being proactive in contacting groups to get events put on the calendar.

Trustee Burkhardt asked if the director had thought about a fee for other groups that would want to be included in a community calendar. The director replied that she had not but it could be part of the policy discussion.

Trustee Bartlett asked if the director thought that this expense could be fit into the budget. The director replied that yes, she did think that this could easily be paid for of the County fund.

Trustee Heitz asked if we needed something this sophisticated this early on. Trustee Smrt and Bartlett didn't think this was early and we might be slightly behind by just doing this now. Trustee Heitz explained that her reasoning was that the example website had a lot more activities than we do. The director replied that we will be using most of the features, though not quite to the extent that the example county is. Additionally, this fits in with the goals of the strategic plan we are working on and the director wants to avoid spending time setting up and training on a free, or less expensive product, and then having to reinvest that time in setting up and learning something new if we need to add capacity.

Trustee Heitz asked about how long it would take to get this up and running if approved tonight. The director replied that it would be about 8 weeks that includes setup and customizing the system and then staff training. And set up will include consideration of the direction we want to go with this product in the future.

Motion to approve using Library Calendar to create a room reservation and events calendar and paying for it from the County trust fund – Heitz; 2nd – Smrt. Motion carried unanimously.

Newspaper Database

The genealogy society has expressed interest in a newspaper database. There are three main products that the director is aware of and she included prices in the board report. The director is under the impression that the genealogy society would be interested in paying for a database for one or two years. Trustee Burkhardt asked how much the library pays for Ancestry because the Newspapers.com product price is significantly more than a personal subscription. The director replied that AncestryLibrary.com is \$2,500 per year. The genealogy society has a meeting on Saturday and trustee Burkhardt would like to take this information to them and then see what direction they would like to go. She will bring back the recommendation to the board for discussion.

Motion to table this item until the February meeting – Welder; 2nd – Smrt. Motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Education

Lee County Library Funding

The director handed out a diagram of the various funding streams for the library, including county funding, showing where money comes from to support the library and how that is spent.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm until the regular meeting 5:30 pm, February 17, 2022.