

Fort Madison Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the regular meeting held February 24, 2022, 5:30 p.m. in person and electronically via Zoom.

Board members present in person: Sharon Groene, Jane Bartlett, Ron Welder, Kathy Burkhardt and Mary Whitcomb.

Board members present online: Candice Smrt, and Anne Heitz.

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 absences of Tom Pollpeter and Phil Hecht – Welder; 2nd – Bartlett. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda – Bartlett; 2nd – Whitcomb. Motion was carried unanimously.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve the minutes of the January 20 meeting, correcting some wording in the discussion of the Collection Development policy – Burkhardt; 2nd – Bartlett. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve the minutes of the February 17 meeting – Welder; 2nd – Whitcomb.

Correspondence: There was no Correspondence.

Director's Report: In addition to the attached report, there was discussion of how the library copes with staffing shortages. Trustee Bartlett asked about the county joint projects report and the director explained the breakdown of the funding that the library receives from the county. The director was also asked to include a report on relocating the thermostat in her office at the March board meeting.

Unfinished Business

Newspaper Database: Trustee Burkhardt reported that the genealogy society will be meeting the coming weekend to discuss the newspaper database options.

Motion to table this business item until the March meeting – Bartlett; 2nd – Burkhardt. Carried unanimously.

Library Board By-Laws – Secretary Position: After doing some research into the wording of the ordinance and consulting with the State Law Librarian, the director is recommending changes to the by-laws to bring them into line with the ordinance as it is written. The director recommends that these changes be made at the March meeting and that a secretary be nominated with the other officers at that meeting, for election at the April meeting with their term starting July 1. There was discussion of what it would take to change the ordinance instead and the director explained that anything that changes the composition or duties of the board has to be approved at a city election. Trustee Welder asked if we could elect a Secretary, have the director type up the minutes to send to the Secretary who would read over the minutes and sign off on them. Based on the wording of the position description recommended for the by-laws, this could be an option.

New Business

Review Study Room Policy: The director wanted to add a sentence prohibiting reservations for the last 15 minutes of the day. We currently do not allow use during the last 10 minutes but the reservation software we are setting up used 15 minute intervals and this wording would then match what the reservation software can do. Trustee Burkhardt asked if we still had any Covid restrictions. The director replied that this was the second thing she wanted direction from the board about and if it is time to go back to capacity of four people in the small rooms and ten people in the big room.

Motion to approve the amended Study Room policy and lift the final Covid restrictions – Burkhardt; 2nd – Whitcomb. Motion carried unanimously.

Weeding “Genealogical Research: Methods and Sources, volume II”

In January, the director was given a box of genealogy and family history books to be considered for addition to the collection. One of the titles was the two volume, “Genealogical Research: Methods and Sources”, copyright 1983 which was added to the collection. Trustee Burkhardt inquired if it was the same book and the director replied that it was.

Motion to approve weeding the book “Genealogical Research: Methods and Sources, volume II” – Burkhardt; 2nd – Bartlett. Motion carried unanimously.

Review and Add Digital Resources: The director reported that Bridges is up for renewal and she strongly recommends renewing that contract. Beanstack is a new product that allows for online reading tracking. The director would like to use this to help track reading this summer. The product would also allow for other in-house smaller reading programs as well as programs that they develop. If we do decide to pursue 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten as part of the strategic plan, this resource would help facilitate that. Trustee Burkhardt asked about what it does, more specifically. The director replied that you set goals and you tell it when you meet those goals and then, in the case of the library reading program, those goals can be redeemed for prizes. The patrons can put the information in themselves or library staff can enter the information for patrons. Trustee Bartlett inquired where the library would pay for this. The director replied that Bridges and Beanstack would both be paid for out of the County trust fund.

Trustee Groene commented that AtoZ world travel seemed nice but the same information might be found in books in the library or through Google. Trustee Bartlett commented that some of the library’s travel resources are outdated. The director explained that this database would come with remote access. Trustee Burkhardt commented that the other databases make more sense to her because they are directly related to the library’s plans. The director indicated that this was the database she wasn’t sure about adding. She wasn’t aware of significant request for this source of resource but wanted to see if the board was aware of interest she didn’t know about. No board members indicated that they were aware of interest and Trustee Bartlett mentioned that this didn’t seem to fit into any of the library’s strategic goals. There was also discussion of awareness and ease of access of the library’s online resources.

Motion to continue with Bridges and we begin a 3-year contract with Beanstack and that these be paid for out of the County Trust Fund – Burkhardt; 2nd – Welder. Motion carried unanimously.

Strategic Plan Objectives

The director presented a very rough draft of the service responses, goals and objectives. The service responses were recommended by the community and approved by the board and then the board set the goals. The director discussed the service responses and goals with the library staff and determined some objectives from that discussion as well as comments made by the board. Before finishing this document, she is looking for any final input from the board regarding additional objectives that they may have or want to see added to this document.

The director was specifically looking for possible ideas for objectives to meet the goals about healthy living and helping parents and caregivers. Trustee Burkhardt inquired if we had any knowledge about demographics of library users. Looking at the goals, there is a lot for children but doesn't seem to be a lot of things geared toward an older population. Trustee Bartlett mentioned that the plan does include lifelong learning and wondered about objectives geared towards adults in that. Based on this feedback, the director asked if there would be any objection to amend Service Response: Satisfy Curiosity, Goal #3 and take of "healthy living" and just leave it as "Residents will have regular programming", with the understanding that this programming could include an emphasis on healthy living.

Based on earlier discussions in this meeting, the director will also add something about making it easier to locate the library catalog to the objective of evaluating the usability of the library's website.

Trustee Welder requested that the special purchase in memory of Carol Sandrock be placed on the agenda for the March board meeting.

The director informed the board about a State Library education opportunity, the Iowa Intellectual Freedom Seminar for Public & School Librarians and Boards on March 9 from 6:00-8:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 6:16 pm until March 17, 2022.