

Fort Madison Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the regular meeting held April 21, 2022, 5:30 p.m. in person and electronically via Zoom.

Board members present in person: Jane Bartlett, Ron Welder, Anne Heitz, Tom Pollpeter, Kathy Burkhardt and Mary Whitcomb.

Board members present online: Phil Hecht.

Others present: Sarah Clendineng, library staff. Jack Gray, city council liaison.

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

Excused Absences: Motion to excuse the absences of Sharon Groene and Candice Smrt – Pollpeter; 2nd – Heitz. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Agenda: Agenda was accepted with no objections.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve the minutes of the March 17 meeting – Whitcomb; 2nd – Pollpeter. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Bills: Trustee Burkhardt inquired if the director had noticed a difference with the relocation of the thermostat. The director replied that there had been improvement in the children's program room but based on the duct connections she hadn't noticed a significant difference at the children's library desk.

Motion to approve the April bills – Heitz; 2nd – Bartlett. Carried unanimously.

Correspondence: There was no Correspondence.

Director's Report: In addition to the attached report, the director shared that the city council had approved entering into an agreement with Red Lion for solar panels on nine city buildings, one of which would be the library. This is at no cost to the city. It is the director's understanding that Red Lion will do the installation and provide all the equipment and then will sell the electricity to the city at a reduced rate, which is where the savings come in. The city does have the option to purchase the equipment after a period of time, if they choose to. The agreement also includes updates to the library lighting to reduce electric usage. They anticipate that this might save the library about \$5,000 per year. It will be installed on the roof but it won't be bolted down, the panels will be sitting on the roof heavily ballasted in place. Trustee Welder asked about a time frame and the director was not informed of one. Trustee Bartlett inquired if they would need to inspect the roof to be sure all is well before installation. The director replied that she hadn't thought to ask about what would happen if issues were detected before installation but she would be surprised if things are not well. There haven't been any significant leaks in the center part. Most of the leaks have been around the edges where things join together, including one in the women's restroom that has been addressed. Tom Pollpeter commented that they have this at the Lee County Conservation center and are pleased with it. There was a question about this affecting our budget and the director replied that when we start seeing savings will depend on how soon it is installed.

Unfinished Business
Carol Sandrock Donation -

There was clarifying discussion that the bulk of the donation was put in the building maintenance fund and \$4,000 was set aside to fund a special project. The director isn't sure if that \$4,000 will need to be moved from the building fund to the gift but she has a spread sheet to help track earmarked donations in the gift fund.

Trustee Burkhardt said that she knows a local teacher who had written a book and suggested possibly having a book signing or using this as one of the books to be given away. Trustee Burkhardt will get her contact information to the director.

The director was looking for feedback on incentives as well as formal approval to start this program. Motion to approve using \$4,000 from the Carol Sandrock donation to being a 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program – Heitz; 2nd – Bartlett. Motion carried unanimously.

There was a question about publicizing this at Kindergarten roundup. The director replied that they won't have anything ready that soon and will be looking at the fall to launch this. The target audience for marketing this will also be more towards pediatricians and the hospitals, possibly finding out if the hospital has a new baby kit that we could add a flyer or bookmark to.

New Board Member

The city clerk received an application from Lon Spurgin to join the board. Several board members commented that they thought he would be a good addition. Trustee Heitz asked if he was the only one that filled out an application and the director replied that he was. The director will recommend him to the mayor for appointment to the board.

New Business

Election of Officers:

Nominated of Officers were:

Nomination of Jane Bartlett for secretary

Nomination of Sharon Groene for president

Nomination of Ron Welder for vice-president

Trustee Bartlett did accept her nomination for secretary as she was absent at the March meeting.

Motion to approve the slate of officers – Hecht; 2nd – Burkhardt. Motion carried unanimously.

Approve 2022/2023 Budget:

The director presented the 2022/2023 budget approved by the city council as well as the estimated spending from the library trust funds. Trustee Bartlett asked how this compared to what was requested and the director replied that the city council approved what the library requested. She also asked about what the Library Endowment fund was. The director replied that this was originally started in the 90's to improve technology at the library. While technology is no longer the primary focus it is used for larger special projects than we might do out of the gift fund. This fund, like the building maintenance fund, has to have two presentations to the board before money is spent out of it.

Trustee Burkhardt inquired if all of the maintenance items discussed last fall had been taken care of. The director replied that she thinks they have been.

Motion to approve the proposed budget – Whitcomb; 2nd – Bartlett. Carried unanimously.

2021/2022 Budget Amendments:

The director reported that all of the trust funds are in line with where spending should be but would like to

increase the budget of the gift fund to \$14,000, mostly to cover summer reading expenses. We do have the money in the gift fund to cover the additional expenditures.

Motion to approve the amended budget – Heitz; 2nd – Bartlett. Motion carried unanimously.

Emergency Relocation Shelter Agreement

The director reported that the new child care facility at the hospital inquired about using the library as a possible emergency relocation shelter to bring children to until their parents could collect them. The director doesn't see a problem but wanted approval from the board, since it is a contract. The director thinks the library may be an emergency location for the schools in case of an active shooter incident but that discussion was a while ago and she should probably double check on that. Trustee Bartlett inquired about liability insurance. The director doesn't think it would be any different than when we have a daycare visit for a story hour or summer reading program. Trustee Heitz inquired if there would be a population limit on it and the director wasn't sure. Trustee Welder inquired if it would only be during operating hours and the director replied that it would be.

Motion to approve allowing Kid Zone Childcare and Preschool to use the library as an emergency relocation shelter – Bartlett; 2nd – Heitz. Motion carried unanimously.

Approve Strategic Plan

The director presented the final draft of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. Trustee Bartlett inquired if there were any changes since the last presentation. The director stated that she may have changed a couple of dates and minor wording. Trustee Burkhardt inquired about the library's hours preventing them from meeting a tier level. The director replied that for Tier 2 status with the state library, the library would have to be open 51 hours a week and we are only open 46.5 and aren't able to add more hours without more people to work.

Motion to approve the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan as presented – Bartlett; 2nd – Whitcomb. Motion carried unanimously.

Fine Free Evaluation

The library stopped charging fines November 1 and the six month trial period would be due to end on May 1. The director thinks it is going really well. She hasn't noticed a significant increase in people holding onto materials and not bringing them back. There does seem to be a downward trend in the amount of overdue items, though the data collected was not detailed enough to draw a strong conclusion. The director's recommendation is to stop charging fines permanently going forward. Not being able to check out more books until you bring a book back is a more logical consequence than charging a fine. Also, if you have enough money, a fine is just the cost of doing business whereas if you don't have enough money fines can really penalize you. Trustee Heitz mentioned that the New York Public Library implemented a similar program and had more books come back than they could deal with. The director replied that we have not had that problem but the New York Public Library also waived existing fines which we did not do but would be something to consider. Trustee Welder asked how many people forgiving fines would impact. The director replied about 2400, though most of those accounts are expired and they may not come back. These do not include lost items. The total amount of fines owed on books returned late is about \$14,000. Trustee Burkhardt inquired what would happen if those fines were forgiven and the director replied that some of them would come back and use the library again, especially if we contacted them in some way. Trustee Burkhardt suggested putting it on the library's website, to show how we are trying to support Fort Madison. There was some confusion about the difference between fines and charges for lost materials. The library is not charging for items that are brought back to the library late. However, patrons do need to pay for materials that are damaged or never returned. Trustee Welder stated that his understanding is that the director's current recommendation is to forgive fines but not forgive lost or damages. Trustee Whitcomb inquired if the \$14,000 included lost books and the director replied that it does not. Trustee Bartlett said that more and more libraries are going that direction and Trustee

Welder agreed. Trustee Welder state that, realistically, this is money that the library is never going to see.

Motion to continue with the fine free program, changing the time for patrons to be blocked to 14 days, and forgive fines for patrons who have turned in the materials and just have a monetary fine. – Burkhardt; 2nd – Bartlett. Motion carried unanimously.

Beverly Moultrie Donation

The library received a donation from the estate of Beverly Moultrie in the amount of \$110,000. Trustee Welder commented that he liked the director's recommendations for how the funds would be spent but would like to have cost estimates for those and then determine what would be done and where the remainder of the money would be placed. The director replied that she needs to tell the city's finance director where to deposit this money before the next board meeting. Trustee Welder said his recommendation would be to deposit it into the Special Projects Endowment Fund. Trustee Pollpeter inquired about the ability to move this in 6 months and the director replied that she isn't sure what the process is for that. Trustee Burkhardt clarified that if this is a gift it doesn't have to go into the general fund and this discussion is just about where we are going to store it. Trustee Bartlett stated that for either the special projects endowment fund or the building fund, any expenditure would require two presentations. Trustee Welder stated that the special projects fund might provide a little more flexibility. The director stated that the special projects endowment fund "should not be used for the general maintenance or upkeep of the libraries." The director thought that even a special landscaping project might be allowed under this direction. Trustee Burkhardt inquired about what self-service printing is. The director replied that, right now, when someone prints something from a computer they come to the front desk and get their printout from a library employee. Self-service printing would let them go to a printing station, put their money in and the printer would give them their document. This is the way the photocopier currently works.

Motion to put these funds in the Special Projects Endowment Fund – Burkhardt; 2nd – Whitcomb. Motion carried unanimously.

Other Discussion

Trustee Whitcomb inquired about the item in the director's report that three people had been charged for attaching things to the walls and ceilings and inquired if the damage had been repaired. The director replied that there wasn't any damage but, to prevent significant damage, the library policy prohibits attaching anything by any means to the walls, doors, ceiling or windows. Trustee Welder inquired if there was a way to put up a sign about this. The director replied that it is on the form they sign to use the room and it is on the policy posted on the wall of the meeting room.

Trustee Burkhardt requested that the newspaper database be added to the May board meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm until May 19, 2022.