

Fort Madison Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the regular meeting held September 15, 2022, 5:30 p.m. in person and electronically via Zoom.

Board members present in person: Candice Smrt, Karthy Burkhardt, Jane Bartlett, Mary Whitcomb, Lon Spurgin and Ron Welder.

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 Anne Heitz, Sharon Groene and Tom Pollpeter – Spurgin; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Burkhardt. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda – Spurgin; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Bartlett. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments: No public comments.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve the minutes of the August 18 meeting correcting minor typographical errors– Whitcomb; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Spurgin. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Bills: Motion to approve the September bills with the exception of G Bradley Publishing Inc., that item to be decided under new business – Burkhardt; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Whitcomb. Carried unanimously.

Correspondence: No correspondence.

Director's Report: See the attached report.

New Business

Pre-approve computer purchase from the Special Projects Endowment Fund: This is the second presentation and the director is requesting the board's approval at this meeting. Nothing has changed since this was presented at the August meeting. Trustee Burkhardt asked if there were a lot of people who use laptops. The director replied that there haven't been as many since COVID and they are mostly used for library programming such as Minecraft or computer classes. Trustee Burkhardt also inquired where the 5 desktop computers would be used. The director replied that one would be used to replace a staff workstation at the front desk, three would replace (or add) computers at the public computer area and one would replace a computer in the genealogy area.

Motion to approve spending not more than \$15,000 on 12 new laptops and 5 desktop computers when suitable pricing becomes available.– Burkhardt; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Spurgin. Motion carried unanimously.

Approve signing contract to receive copyright for Ted Sloat book:

Trustee Burkhardt stated that the report mentioned putting the book on line, clarifying that the library wouldn't be receiving money for it even though the library is spending a lot of money for it as a resource for the community. Trustee Burkhardt stated that she had an issue with spending this amount of money and giving the book away for free. She inquired if there was a copy in the library that people could access. The director did state that digitizing and putting the book online for free is just one option.

Trustee Welder wanted to clarify that the library wouldn't be selling copies of the book because we wouldn't be printing copies of the book and the director agreed that this was an accurate statement. Though we could print hard copies to sell, if we thought there was a market for them.

Trustee Spurgin inquired about how many copies of the book the library has and the director replied that the library has two or three.

Trustee Welder stated that he suspects there probably isn't anybody else out there who is interested in the copyright of this books and if we don't buy it, who else will? With that said, it is his understanding that the company is going out of business and what are they going to do with them? Are they just going to throw them away?

The director clarified that the copyright is \$2,000, to purchase the plates themselves is just \$250 and if the library had the plates, they could digitize them for in-house use but they would still be under copyright so we would be limited as to what people could do with those. The director sees this project as a way to provide a resource to people who may have lived in Fort Madison at one time and have moved away.

Trustee Welder stated that he isn't opposed to purchasing them, he is opposed to paying \$2,000 for something the owner probably cannot find a buyer for. So if we told them we'll give you \$250 for the copyright and \$250 for the plates, they've just made \$500 off of something that they weren't going to make money off of anyway.

The director understands that but she was told the lowest they would go is \$2,000. Several trustees stated that this was a very large amount of money, especially since they're closing down because the publishing company is not selling anything.

Trustee Burkhardt's question is what happens to the copyrights when the company goes out of business if nobody buys them? Who's going to take us to court about a copyright when the company no longer exists? Trustee Spurgin and the director stated that copyright still exists and would be owned by the publisher owners or their heirs.

The director stated that she didn't see this as something that the library would make money off of but, rather, as a piece of Fort Madison history and there are pictures in there of things in Fort Madison that no longer exist and to have the right to those and to be able to access them in a digital format has significant value.

Trustee Burkhardt stated that she doesn't have a problem purchasing the book because she likes history but she does want to know what the goal will be and wanted it confirmed that the goal would be to digitize this and make it public and the director agreed.

Trustee Smrt confirmed that we do have the money. The director confirmed that we do and added that we could use the direct state aid money we receive from the state for part of this purchase.

Trustee Bartlett inquired if this met any of the library's strategic goals and the director replied that it did not. However, the director does think it falls into the category of one time opportunity that will be an important community asset.

Several trustees mentioned that their primary issue is the price.

Trustee Welder stated that he agrees using the gift money because people who've donated have left money for the betterment of the library and this will improve the library, and he agrees with the end use of the book but he is having a difficult time with the price, especially knowing that there is no other buyer.

Motion to approve purchasing this book and the copyright for \$2,250 with the understanding that it will be digitized – Burkhardt; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Spurgin.

Those in favor:

Smrt

Burkhardt

Bartlett

Whitcomb

Spurgin

Those against:

Welder

Motion amended to approve the director signing the contract – Burkhardt; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Spurgin. Motion carried unanimously.

Upcoming Events:

The Lee County Libraries will be meeting September 20 at the library, Candice Smrt will represent the Fort Madison Library board.

Trustee Welder inquired if everyone had turned in their evaluations and the director collected those that members had brought.

Meeting adjourned at 5:55 pm until October 20, 2022.