

## Fort Madison Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the regular meeting held August 20, 2020, 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 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.

A motion to excuse the absences of Kathy Burkhardt and Jane Bartlett was made by Welder; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Smrt. The motion was carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Heitz; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Pollpeter. The motion was carried unanimously.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting July 16 completing two sentences that were left unfinished –Welder; 2<sup>nd</sup> –Smrt. The motion was carried unanimously.

Approval of August 2020 Bills: Sharon Groene asked about the purchase from Tina Manka. The director explained that this is a local author. The director decided to try one of her books and see if they are popular. Trustee Heitz asked if the amount of the Des Moines Register was correct. The director replied that it was the correct amount for seven day a week delivery. Trustee Groene asked how the electric bill compared to last year and the director said that it was about \$200 less than last year so we are on track to be within budget.

Motion to approve the August 2020 bills – Heitz; 2<sup>nd</sup> –Whitcomb. The motion was carried unanimously.

Correspondence: No Correspondence.

Director's Report: In addition to the attached report, Trustee Groene really likes the idea of the young adult book club. The director also asked for feedback on the draft of the annual report to the city. Trustee Welder recommended including numbers of people using library resources.

### Unfinished Business

#### Replacing the Library Security Gates

This topic was first discussed at the July 16 meeting and the director reached out to the city manager for possible assistance from the city. The city manager's opinion was that we should look to funds in the library trust funds including the Leland Fehr fund, the gift fund and the Special Projects Endowment Fund.

The director did not think this would be a legitimate use of the gift fund. The vast majority of people who donate funds to the library do so with the understanding that those funds will be used for library materials, resources and programs. The exception to this would be the direct state aid we receive from the State Library but the director does not know how much that will be this year. This would be a legitimate use of the Leland Fehr fund. New security gates might be a legitimate use of the Special Projects Endowment Fund which states, "Whereas, designated gifts and memorial should be expended as requested, non-designated monetary gifts and memorials should not be used to benefit library employees or for the general maintenance and upkeep of the

libraries, but in tangible pursuits consistent with the long and short range plans of the libraries....These funds may be used to augment the city's budget allocation when planning improvements to the buildings, etc. There must be two presentations of any plan for expenditure of these funds at the regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees, before any action can be taken."

The current cost of replacing both gates at one time is \$9,975. If we finance this over 3 to 5 years the total cost would be \$13,000-\$15,000. If we can pay it all this year, we could ask for a price reduction, though there is no guarantee.

The director's recommendation was that we ask if they can get the price down to \$7,000 and, if they can, we pay for this as follows:

\$3,400 – Leland Fehr

\$2,000 – Lee County Joint Projects Fund Technology

\$1,000 – Reduce amount spent on library materials

\$1,000 – Reduce amount budgeted for computer replacement

If we are not able to reduce the cost this much, we finance this over the number of years that would allow us to pay \$4,000/year using the Leland Fehr fund and money from the building maintenance fund.

The board agreed that we should not use money from the gift fund for this expense. However, this cost will protect us from potentially greater loss of materials. Trustee Smrt asked what else the Leland Fehr fund is used for. The director replied that it is earmarked for repair and maintenance of the building so this falls right in line with that.

Motion to ask for \$7,000 and find money this year as recommended by the director – Welder; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Smrt.  
Motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Heitz asked about the money in the budget to take care of building maintenance. The director replied that part of the budget process this year should be getting estimates on repairs/maintenance issues of the library building and budgeting for those for future years.

### New Business

#### Updating Exterior Lighting to LED

The director went to replace the bulbs in the lights illuminating the library sign on the planter and discovered that at least one, if not both of them, need to have the fixture completely replaced. The director got an estimate for replacing these and the rest of the exterior lights with LED fixtures.

The director got an estimate from 3rd Generation Electric, the company that does most of our lighting replacements, as follows:

Sign lighting - \$116

Other exterior lights - \$756

Total of both projects - \$872

The director recommends at least replacing the sign lights with LED fixtures. We could wait on the rest of the fixtures if we don't want to do the whole project right now.

Motion to replace the sign lighting and wait on other exterior lighting - Heitz; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Whitcomb. Carried unanimously.

### Strategic plan process updates and revisions

We planned to start the strategic plan process in the spring with two community groups, one in May and one in June. Due to Covid-19 those were cancelled. Currently, large indoor gatherings are not advisable and the State Library is discouraging in-person meetings for their employees. The director spoke with Becky Heil, the state library district consultant, and she has a plan to call people individually and ask them key questions, rather than having them meet in a group. If we do this, we would send a letter in advance asking if they are willing to talk to Becky and also letting us know what a good time to call them would be. We still have the list of recommended people to contact from the brainstorming in February and would use that contact list for this revised process. The other option would be to wait until a future time for this project.

Becky Heil, the state library southeast district consultant, joined the meeting for this discussion. She shared the questions that would be asked in the phone calls that would cover opinions both about the community and the library. Using phone calls, rather than in-person meetings, is a new process that Becky hasn't used before.

The director would like to go ahead with this because we have succeeded in most of the goals in the current strategic plan and she would like direction on where the library would like to head in the future.

There was concern from the board about whether or not the community was in the right frame of mind to be thinking about this right now. There was also concern about losing the group dynamic of in-person discussions.

The consensus from the board was to postpone this to a future time when in-person meetings are possible

#### Presentation on Special Library Levy

Becky Heil presented information on the Special Library Levy, the history of the state law that allows for it, the process of putting it on the ballot and what the board and the city can, and can't do, legally.

After the presentation, the board discussed what they had learned. Several board members expressed concerns about public support for an additional tax measure. Pursuing this would take both a lot of work from the library board as well as the development of a community group beyond the board to get support from the voting population.

#### Upcoming Business and Events

Lee County Libraries Advisory Board Meeting – Tuesday, September 29 via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm until Thursday, September 17