

Fort Madison Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of the regular meeting held January 21, 2020, 5:30 p.m. in person and electronically via Zoom.

Board members present in person: Ron Welder, Sharon Groene and Kathy Burkhardt.

Board members present online: Anne Heitz, Mary Whitcomb, Phil Hecht, Candice Smrt and Tom Pollpeter. Jane Bartlett arrived after the start of the meeting.

Others present: Sarah Clendineng, library staff, in person.  
Mark Lair, City Council Liaison, in person.

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

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

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Welder; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Hecht. 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 17 –Heitz; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Burkhardt. The motion was carried unanimously.

Approval of January 2021 Bills:

Trustee Groene asked if the Mediacom bill included internet as well as phone and the director replied that yes, the Mediacom bill includes four phone lines and internet access.

Trustee Burkhardt inquired about Sentry Custom Security and asked if we pay that every month. The director replied that this should be the last bill from them. This was for a door counter for the both doors. We needed a new door counter on the east door and a 3<sup>rd</sup> party device would have cost about the same as getting this program for both doors. Trustee Burkhardt also asked what the Deep Freeze software was, the director explained that this software keeps patrons from making changes to the public computers and is an annual subscription. She also asked if we have air hand dryers in the restrooms, which the library does not and inquired if they would be cheaper than buying paper towels. The director doesn't know, but could look into it.

Motion to approve the January 2021 bills – Mary; 2<sup>nd</sup> –Heitz. The motion was carried unanimously.

Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

Director's Report: In addition to the attached report, the director informed the board that there had been vandalism to the trash can in the men's restroom earlier this week. We do have two suspects, based on camera footage and this was reported to the police. At the most, replacing the whole unit will be about \$300, the director is exploring if we can just replace the lock mechanism.

Trustee Groene mentioned a leak at the corner of the building that is tending to ice over on cold morning.

New Business

Reviewing Covid-19 policies

The library is currently requiring face mask use in the library and that is going well. Governor Reynolds did

extend her proclamation requiring facemasks until February 6. In addition, the director did want to discuss allowing use of the library meeting room by one group each weekend beginning in February.

Two trustees asked about who would do cleaning. The director replied that it would be just one group per weekend and library employees would wipe down the tables on Monday morning. Trustee Burkhardt said she didn't think it is a bad idea and would get people back involved with the community. Trustee Smrt asked about Covid restrictions. The director would recommend wording that would ask users to comply with the current statewide restrictions, though the library wouldn't be enforcing that. Trustee Hecht also said that he agreed that it is a good idea to open it up.

Motion to allow meeting room use by one group per weekend and that groups be asked to follow the current state social distancing rules – Burkhardt; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Welder. Motion carried unanimously.

The director's report recommended extending mask wearing until February 18, the next board meeting, the director's thought was to make this a monthly decision so that we can let it up more quickly if things improve. Trustee Welder asked about making an open ended motion, along the lines of "as long as it's deemed prudent or necessary."

Motion to extend requiring mask wearing with no set end date made by Welder; 2<sup>nd</sup> Hecht. Motion carried unanimously.

#### Budget Discussion

The director reported that the city department heads discussed their budget proposals at the beginning of January and the city is planning a budget work session on January 27. Also, at the last city staff meeting, the mayor suggested that he might consider recommending cutting the library budget significantly, if the library board does not pursue the \$.27 levy at the 2021 election. Based on this information, the director's recommendation was to pursue the levy.

Trustee Heitz stated that she felt like the board was being backed into a corner and several other trustees agreed.

Trustee Welder said that the way he saw it, if we pursue the levy and it passes, the city will cut our budget, if we pursue the levy and it fails, the city will cut our budget, if we don't pursue it and do nothing, the city will cut our budget. He cannot support the levy and, since our last meeting, the few people he's come into contact with and discussed it with, did not support it. He will not publicly oppose it but would have to think long and hard about remaining on the board. He asked Mark Lair if the city council would support the levy?

Mark Lair replied that he didn't know and the staff meeting was the first he had heard of the levy.

Trustee Burkhardt also pointed out the concern of business being down due to Covid such that businesses are struggling or have limited hours. Also, the school board is again asking for money for a new school. There is no money coming into town.

Trustee Pollpeter asked who could pursue the levy? If the library board doesn't, city council members could pursue it as private individuals but could not use city funds or resources.

Trustee Smrt asked if the mayor would support and help promote the levy?

Trustee Hecht suggested that it's not up to the board to do this on their own. What he has seen in successful levies is the board seeking out the assistance of two well-know, well-liked residents to lend their voice and their face to the initiative. They wouldn't have to do the bulk of the work, other board members and the director

could help with promotion and community presentations.

Trustee Bartlett asked about the report from Tuesday night's city council meeting where the city manager said the city fund balance is slowly improving and they're up several hundred thousand dollars from the previous year.

The director clarified that sales tax is usually a guessing game and it came in a bit above where the city guessed and, while, yes, we are in a better place than last year, last year was still a pretty dismal situation so it's not that the city is in a great financial situation, it's just not as bad.

Trustee Heitz asked if the mayor can unilaterally slash the library budget or if that needs to go to the city council?

The director clarified that the city council is the group that approves the budget and the mayor cannot take his pen to it and say he is cutting something. That would have to be approved by the city council but he can use his voice to make recommendations to the council.

Trustee Burkhardt also stated that this feels like being backed into a corner and she isn't going to go out and ask people to pay more taxes for the library and asked if the mayor is recommending cuts in other places. Another problem she has is that when she became part of the board it wasn't to ask people for permission to raise their taxes.

Mark Lair said that we will know more about that after the first budget work session next Wednesday and that workshop will be available for people to attend via Zoom.

Trustee Bartlett asked when the board would need to make a decision.

The director stated that if the levy is pursued, it would need to be on the November election ballot and in order to have a chance at being successful, there would need to be a campaign running up to that.

Trustee Hecht said that it is a two way street, the mayor has a voice but the board has a voice, as well.

Trustee Welder said that he would be a little more enthusiastic if the message he was getting was that if the board supported the levy, they would now have an additional \$80,000 to work with where they could now do really great things with the library.

Mark Lair mentioned that he could talk to the mayor and see if he could come to our next meeting. The director stated that she had invited him to this meeting, he didn't say yes or no but was not at the City Council meeting on Tuesday so may have been away on personal business at the time of this library board meeting and unable to attend.

The director finished by saying that she felt this was information that it was her responsibility to bring to the board. The director will send out information about the budget workshop to the library board members.

No action was taken by the board.

#### Microfilm Machine Policy Review

There are just a few minor changes to this policy. First, the two new machines were purchased by the Friends of the Fort Madison Public Library so we want to give them credit at the top. Also, we don't have volunteers on a regular basis to help anymore so that was taken out. Finally, there isn't a designated machine that prints

anymore, it was taken out so all the printing goes through the print management software.

Trustee Burkhardt asked why there weren't any printers back there, she had been told that there weren't any printers we could buy to hook up to the machine and wondered why the Genealogy Society couldn't pay for printer and ink if it was too expensive.

The director said that she wasn't sure who Trustee Burkhardt talked to but she didn't recall talking to anyone from the genealogy society. Pat Morrison was the director's main point of contact with the Genealogy Society and hasn't had any communication with them as far as requests or concerns in a while. The director hadn't told anyone that they couldn't get a new printer but the cost to replace the printer was several thousand dollars that the library does not have. Trustee Burkhardt said that the Genealogy Society may have money to support this as well as paper and ink and asked the director to get her the information about that. The director added that another reason they moved all the printing to a central printer was that people were not paying for prints and there was no way to monitor the printer in the genealogy room.

Trustee Burkhardt also mentioned that the instructions for the new machines are not good and the computer password is not posted. The director thought that the password was posted and will fix that. She also thinks there may be newer instructions posted on the wall now.

Motion to approve the amended Microfilm machine policy – Burkhardt; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Welder. Motion carried unanimously.

#### Aarin Guzman Donation

There was discussion at the December meeting of ways to use this significant donation.

In early January, the director learned that Iowa Prison Industries has been making Story Walk stands that are vandalism resistant and could be put up along a trail. They have two different styles. They have one with a steel base that costs \$295 each and would need to be anchored to cement. They have another one with a cedar base that costs \$215 each and could be installed directly into the ground. We would need 18 to present each picture book and the cost for the stands with the steel base would be \$5,310 and the cost for the cedar base would be \$3,870. These costs do not include installation and the cost for purchasing books. However, with these stands, it might be possible to use the same book more than once, depending on how badly faded they get from the sun. There might be interest in partnering with the PORT trail on this, potentially to install it along the trail from Ivanhoe Park to the Middle School.

Another idea the director had was to purchase a Cricut maker. This tool could supplement the library's existing die-cut machine by offering a wider variety of shapes that could be cut. It could also be made available for public use to crafters who might not be able to afford their own, or have space for one. Depending on the package we buy, the Cricut costs between \$350 and \$650.

Trustee Burkhardt inquired about the location of the story walk and the director indicated that she was thinking of the PORT trail from Ivanhoe Park to the Middle School. A comment was made that it would be damaged there. Part of the discussion could be the location.

Trustee Welder said that he also thinks it's a wonderful idea but he's also thinking a couple of years in the future when some of them have been damaged. He'd like us to consider something with more library meaning. He likes the idea of something that benefits inside this building.

Trustee Heitz mentioned that, at one time, we were looking at moveable walls for the Sheaffer room. The director had written a grant for movable partitions that black out curtains could be hung from when we do different programs, such as escape rooms or the haunted house.

The director also mentioned the idea of a Library of Things that she wrote a grant for last fall that she didn't get.

Trustee Burkhardt mentioned that the library has free books in the lobby, what about a little free library in front of the library?

The director will gather information on these ideas for the next meeting and bring back details for discussion. The director also encouraged board members to send her any ideas that they may think of before the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm until Thursday, February 18, 2021