CITY OF OREGON CITY
LIBRARY BOARD
WORK SESSION MINUTES

Conference Room (2nd Floor), Oregon City Public Library, 606 John Adams St, Oregon City

Meeting

Wednesday, October 25, 2023 at 5:00 PM

Remote attendance for this meeting is available via Zoom; please contact Denise Butcher (dbutcher@orcity.org) for the meeting link.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair David Goldberg called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Cynthia Andrews, Heidi Blackwell, Bill Carton, David Goldberg, Lisa Oreskovich, and Larry Osborne were present in person. Nick Dierckman was present via Zoom.

Staff Present: Greg Williams, Library Director, and Denise Butcher, Library Operations Manager, were present in person. Blake Kincaid, Adult Service Librarian, Sabrina Tusing, Teen Librarian, and Barratt Miller, Youth Services Librarian, were present in person.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. 2023 Summer Reading Program Review

Greg Williams introduced staff to present their report on the 2023 Summer Reading Program. Barratt Miller said the summer reading program introduced separate programs for children and teens. Sabrina Tusing noted the return of the teen bingo card activity. Blake Kincaid stated that with his May start date, there was limited time to modify the program, but was enthusiastic about the level of adult engagement in the program.

Barratt noted that challenges included the partial reinstatement of incentives close to launch and uncertainty about prizes. Barratt said many of the incentives were reintroduced as discount options rather than free prizes, due to reductions in funding from Clackamas and Washington Counties.

David Goldberg asked if all the prizes were distributed. Barratt said that they were not, and that while prizes were offered, many patrons declined prize redemption.

Sabrina noted that teen participants read materials from both the young teen and young adult collections (located on two different floors), so a bit of extra time was required to cross train staff at both desks.

Blake said reduced staffing meant that most of the adult prep work fell to one librarian and the adult program was unchanged from prior years. Greg recognized Jen Giovanetti as the librarian who implemented this year's program.

Barratt and Sabrina cited Ready to Read grants, awarded by the State of Oregon, as the funding source for prize books, software, and family events. David asked if that funding would be available next year; Barratt said funding was guaranteed if the grant application was completed and that it had been awarded for just under $10k. Blake identified Friends of the Library and the Library budget as funding sources for the adult program. Blake predicted that next year's program would require more funding as the three adult events were cost-free this year and it was unlikely that would continue in future years.

Barratt said the children's program was designed for customizable goals. Sabrina identified encouraging broader reading patterns as a focus of the teen program. Blake said the adult program was entirely paper based. Greg noted Barratt's innovative logo design for the teen program.

Barratt said in the children's program incentives were awarded at sign up, after meeting goals for 42 days, and prize drawing tickets were awarded at regular intervals. Sabrina said incentives were awarded at sign up, for different bingo accomplishments, and as a grand prize. Blake said incentives were awarded at sign up, drawing tickets were awarded for completing activities, small prize drawings occurred weekly, and a grand prize drawing happened at the end of the program.

Barratt reported 908 children, 174 teens, and 301 adults participated, representing maintenance or increase in all demographics compared with last year. Of the children, elementary age children were the largest age group, and first-graders had the highest participation numbers of any grade. Children averaged 26 days read by participant, which was above pre-pandemic target numbers. Barratt noted gift cards to Menchie's were the most popular incentive, as measured by allotted prize drawing tickets, and that program attendance was higher than the previous year for programs that occurred. Two events were cancelled/postponed due to weather and air quality.

Sabrina reported that teen participants read an average of six books and the most popular bingo category by participation numbers was music from a different decade. The most popular prizes by ticket entry were Dutch Brothers gift certificates, which had been requested by Teen Advisory Committee (TAC). Sabrina said the four teen programs were well attended. Sabrina noted that teen book boxes were continued from COVID era due to popularity and required registration. Books in the boxes were specially curated based on the reader's stated preferences and surprise snacks and trinkets were included with each box.

Blake reported the adult statistics were different due to the paper-based nature of the program and, based on prize entries, the writing prize basket was the most popular incentive and bingo was the most frequently completed activity. Feedback was split on the inclusion of the cryptogram activity.

Barratt reported a 22% increase in participation rate by elementary students, which corresponded with higher overall foot traffic numbers. There was a 24% decrease in youth prize drawing ticket entries.

Sabrina reported a 71% increase in the number of books read by teen participants.

Blake noted a 8% decrease in the number of adult participants, and an increase in the number of prize entries per person.

Barratt shared feedback derived from end of program surveys, and spotlighted the reoccurring feedback to have a children's book club or meet up to talk about books they were reading. Barratt discussed the challenge of balancing implementation of rewards based on parental feedback and research around developing lifelong readers. Barratt spoke to the importance of visualizing progress and the possibility of doing a more visual and community-focused progress tracking for next year's children's program, while taking sustainability into mind, and possibly an all-ages end of summer reading celebration and the possibility of providing support to parents with Beanstack.

Blake spoke to the possibility of doing a hybrid paper and online program for adults to retain patrons who prefer paper, to streamline the program to patrons managing their children's online programs, and to include adults with disabilities for whom paper-only programs might not work.

Heidi Blackwell asked how the surveys were administered. Barratt said that upon Beanstack sign up, participants provided an email address and a one question Google survey was sent to participants. Blake said that adult participants provided contact information upon sign up and thought next year's survey would be administered differently.

David Goldberg asked if there was anything provided for non-English speaking participants. Sabrina said Spanish reading logs and bingo cards were provided for children and teen participants. Barratt noted that Beanstack was fully translatable for any language supported by Google Translate.

Nick Dierckman spoke in support of the program for its span of ages, its reach, its interplay with the Parks Department, and thanked staff for making it happen. David thanked staff as well. Greg thanked the program organizers and recognized that the entire Library staff plays a large part in the successful implementation of Summer Reading.

Nick asked for data breaking down program participants' city or unincorporated residency. Barratt stated that the way the program enrollment had been set up, that data was not attainable, but for child participants, residency could be approximated by school enrollment.

2. Library Tactical Plan Update

Greg Williams stated he would formally bring the Tactical Plan to the Board for approval at the next regular Board Meeting and provided an overview of the document format and status classifications. Greg highlighted a quarterly update document that provided more detailed information about the work being done to realize the tactical plan objectives and took feedback on the format and progress. Greg spoke positively about the progress made towards signing students up for library cards and noted that a Memorandum of Understanding was the next step. Board feedback for the existing format was positive.

Greg asked if there were questions regarding the tactical plan. Greg noted that there had been a past question of why the tactical plan focused on children enrolled in the school district and he identified that group of children as being the largest and easiest to reach initially as a group.

David expressed hope that the timeline for student cards could be shortened. Greg said a pilot program was scheduled for May to confirm that data transfer was possible. Greg said the parental permission form for the creation of library cards based on student IDs would be drafted in June for distribution in school registration packets, school rosters would finalize in mid-October, and information for eligible students would be shared for the creation of cards starting in November or December.

David asked about the role of book lockers in the plan. Greg said they were included in Section 4. Bill Carton noted that there would be budget implications. Greg agreed and said that $100k had been put aside for it. Greg said that because multiple libraries were considering adding lockers, discussion amongst LINCC Directors leaned in favor of a County-wide procurement, which meant specific processes needed to be followed. Greg hoped some sort of solicitation (such as a Request for Proposals) would be ready at the start of the new year. Greg said conversations were happening regarding library needs for the lockers and expected that once the RFP was active, the process would be fairly straightforward and anticipated running a pilot location before the full rollout of at least one location in the next year.

3. Behavior Policy Update

Greg noted that there may be additional changes to the proposed behavior policy between this meeting and the next Board Meeting, should the City Attorney have any additional feedback. Greg noted that it was a goal to review policies every three years and the last several years had provided new behavioral challenges and exposed areas where the existing policy was insufficient.

Larry Osborne asked about the frequency of problem behaviors. Greg said it depended on the day and severity of the behavior and referenced a recent incident requiring evacuation of portions of the building.

Greg noted that the most notable change concerned limits on weapons in the library; the current policy defined weapons in accordance with Oregon City Municipal Code. Greg stated staff feedback had been in favor of expanding prohibited items and informal talks with the City Attorney indicated that increasing the scope of prohibited weapons utilizing language from Oregon Revised Statutes might be feasible.

Greg recognized changes in the formatting of the document had been made for visual clarity.

Greg stated that language explicitly delineating what patron information could be shared following a behavioral violation was added to clarify acceptable communication between libraries or other parties.

Greg highlighted the addition of an alternative approach for minors violating behavioral policies. Greg noted changes in the exclusion appeal process with the intention to simplify the process and allow for someone who was excluded to share their perspective.

Bill Carton asked about the amount of people suspended and who was responsible for monitoring for the presence of excluded patrons. Greg stated that photos of excluded individuals used to be displayed in the circulation room, but the library had moved to incident tracking software, which all staff had access to. Bill asked if excluded people entered the library before their exclusion. Denise Butcher said it happened and depending on the behavior that led to their exclusion, staff would either remind the patron they were not welcome at the library at that time or would call the police. Greg stated occasionally patrons with exclusions were allowed back if their behavior was improved.

David Goldberg spoke to his observations of patrons in mental health distress.

Larry suggested minor word changes for consistency in 1.4, suggested that point 2.11 be run through the insurance agency as listed items might not be comprehensive enough, and suggested the addition of “or” in 3.6 for clarity.

Greg highlighted changes to the language regarding the duration of exclusions for severe violations, noting that previously the exclusion ended after a period of time and that the updated version changed that to a permanent exclusion that could be appealed after a certain period of time. David asked if the City Attorney was looking over this revision; Greg confirmed this.

Cynthia Andrews asked if the exclusion prevented the excluded patron from using online resources. Greg said that was not the case and that the exclusion was from the premises. Cynthia noted that an exclusion did not reduce the library access; Greg clarified that they would not be able to access physical materials from the library if they were excluded. Nick Dierckmann noted e-content would still be available. Greg said that exclusions from one LINCC library did not carry over to other LINCC libraries.

Greg asked for feedback. Cynthia noted that with the continued access to online resources, even a full exclusion was not completely cutting off library access. David and Larry noted comfort with the draft.

COMMUNICATIONS

Library District Advisory Committee (LDAC)

David Goldberg asked if there had been a response from the County Commission to LDAC's letter. Nick Dierckman said he had not heard anything. Greg Williams said that from what he understood, the County was still reviewing information but no sort of public meeting or discussion had been scheduled.

Library Foundation

Cynthia Andrews reported there had been no Foundation meeting.

Friends of the Library

Larry Osborne reported the Friends were still discussing the annual meeting, had covered the cost of the pine needle basket weaving program, and made a donation towards electronic resources, which would be added to the LINCC collection. Greg stated this donation had been made in response to the survey results indicating patrons in the unincorporated area identified additional e-content as a priority. David noted that the save the date flyer for the Friends/Foundation fundraiser was out.

Teen Advisory Committee (TAC)

Heidi Blackwell reported that TAC elected their own chairperson, created their own code of conduct, and were anticipating a future discussion about redesigning the Teen Area.

Greg noted that two Board positions were soon to expire and interviews would likely happen in November. Larry asked which positions were expiring; Greg said David and Heidi's current appointments were expiring, but both were eligible for reapplication. There was general agreement to have a work session immediately preceding the next regular Board meeting. Greg said that, absent any Board feedback, he anticipated the existing interview questions used in prior years would be used again.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair David Goldberg adjourned the meeting at 5:25 pm.