CITY OF OREGON CITY
LIBRARY BOARD
MINUTES

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

Meeting

Wednesday, May 24, 2023 at 5:00 PM

This meeting will be held online via Zoom; please contact dbutcher@orcity.org for the meeting link.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair David Goldberg called the meeting to order at 5:03 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Review and approve minutes from the Library Board Meetings and Work Sessions

David Goldberg asked if anyone had corrections or objections to any of the minutes. None were voiced.

Bill Carton moved to accept the Work Session Minutes for January 13, 2021, September 8, 2021, January 12, 2022, August 24, 2022, November 30, 2022, March 22, 2023 and the Meeting Minutes for January 12, 2022 and April 25, 2023 as written. Cynthia Andrews seconded the motion. Cynthia Andrews, Heidi Blackwell, Bill Carton, Nick Dierckman, David Goldberg, Lisa Oreskovich, and Larry Osborne voted aye. The motion carried.

Greg Williams apologized for the backlog of minutes and stated that the workflow irregularity that caused them had been addressed.

Bill Carton expressed appreciation for the historical information the reviewed minutes provided. Greg shared that during COVID, Library staff produced minutes for other advisory bodies within the City.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2. May 2023 Director's Report and Library Statistics

Greg Williams noted that the hold to filled ratio went in an unwanted direction, attributed it to the vacant Adult Services Librarian position, and anticipated it would resume a more even ratio now that it had been filled. David Goldberg noted that the accomplishment of 50/50 was remarkable given the collection was the smallest in the state. There was general assent. Greg spoke positively about the excellence of material selection for the collection.

Bill Carton asked if the holds sent to other libraries were new materials. Greg said that generally they were. Greg said that he had talked with the new Adult Services Librarian about reviewing data pertaining to the types of materials being filled from other libraries and using this to inform collection development.

David asked if there were any further questions. None were voiced.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

3. Budget Update

David Goldberg shared that he, Greg Williams, and Denise Butcher attended the most recent of the budget sessions and reported the atmosphere of the meetings as positive and conducive to discussion. David said the session started with a proposed budget that would have left the Library with $38k net from the General Fund, continuing of the trend of decreasing Library funding, and ended with a proposed budget in which the Library would receive $158k net from the General Fund. David said they had been asked how the Library had functioned with such funding; he had stated that the collection was small and the staffing model was dependent on unbenefited staff. David reported that the committee was receptive and a few questions were clarified. David said that the changes to the Library's funding was one of five changes made at the meeting and thanked Greg and Denise for their work.

Greg thanked David for attending all meetings and thanked Heidi Blackwell for her involvement. Greg expressed optimism about future budget conversations. Greg stated that the newly obtained funding was presented to the Budget Committee as an equivalent to a fully benefitted Library Assistant 2 position, and this would also reduce on-call spending. Greg stated that incorporating the new position would be a gradual process out of respect for existing on-call staff.

David recognized the challenging position that Greg and other City Directors sometimes find themselves in during the budget meeting process as Directors had worked with the City Manager on the presented budget and some Boards communicated their belief the presented budget was inadequate. Greg spoke to respecting and appreciating Tony's role and efforts as the City's Budget Officer.

David expressed a desire to keep communications ongoing so as not to surprise anyone in the future and said that Tony Konkol had committed to meeting with Greg and David quarterly to discuss budgeting. David spoke positively about Tony personally.

David asked the Board for permission to go to the City Commission meeting on June 7 to raise three points: congratulate them on a well-run process, thank them for recognizing the trend of decreasing funding, and share the projection that the General Fund contributions would not sustain Library function once the Library Fund was drawn down, necessitating a future ballot measure to bridge the funding gap. David asked if there were any questions.

Greg asked for questions; none were voiced. Greg thanked the Board for their involvement in the budget process.

COMMUNICATIONS

Library District Advisory Committee (LDAC)

Nick Dierckman said the annual report from LDAC was to be presented to the Board of County Commissioners. The LDAC Chair was going to write and present a cover letter for the report, in part to address different opinions within the LDAC members regarding use of bond funds and fund reserve amounts.

Nick shared that Commissioner Paul Savas was present and shared information about the original permissive intent of Library District funds for Library purposes.

Greg Williams provided context that prior to the pandemic, a Library District Task Force had been assembled by the County to discuss and address issues facing LINCC Libraries. Greg shared that in 2018 the County was going to change language in the District Master Order to explicitly permit the use of Library District funds for capital purposes, which was halted due to public feedback and provided the impetus for the BCC to create the Task Force to explore future directions. Greg relayed that Commissioner Savas estimated that with LDAC support, changes to the Master Order could be requested within 60 days.

Greg asked the Board to consider if the Board would support a change to the Master Order to explicitly allow the use of Library District funds for capital expenses if LDAC pursued the change.

David voiced an opinion that the use of District Funds for Library capital expenses was acceptable as it supported Library function. Nick said he agreed with David's position and that changing the Master Agreement would take time as all participating cities would need to agree.

Greg clarified that the County Commission could change the Master Agreement as a single body, but any changes to the Intergovernmental Agreements would still need City approval.

Nick noted the potential difficulty of navigating and enacting the changes on a city by city level. Nick reported that an LDAC had created a subcommittee to help determine how the work originally envisioned to be undertaken by the Library District Task Force might proceed. David noted that putting new funding options to the public would require participation and buy-in by all Directors and Boards.

David remarked that Nick would be able to share with LDAC that the Library Fund balance was being reduced with a draw down to fund the Library. David noted that Library District funding was not distributed until January, so the Library Fund balance covered operational costs from July to January.

Nick said property tax payments were due in November and took time for the County to collect and distribute.

Heidi Blackwell asked what the implications of the County's budget were for the Library District.

Greg said that the agreement between the County and Library cities was that County General Funds paid for the Network office, coordinating courier service, and computer systems.

David asked what the scale of the Network Office budget was. Greg said it was likely close to $3 million. Greg said when he was there, there was usually a reserve for equipment replacement and that County promised to set funds aside for replacement self-check machines in return for libraries taking on certain operational costs during RFID implementation. Greg said his understanding was that the in order to fund the new County courthouse without going out to voters for additional funds, County General Fund recipients were being asked to reduce their expenditures. Greg shared that for this budget cycle he understood there were no cuts to Network that would result in an immediate impact to libraries. Greg shared that he, and all LINCC library directors, were concerned about future cuts to Network funding, as any cuts to the central service provider would likely result in increased costs to LINCC libraries.

Greg said he a discussion about potentially cutting Sunday courier services had happened and such a cut would have a patron and library staff impact. Greg said this change had not ended up happened this budget year.

Greg said at the LDAC meeting he had voiced support for a new library district with a rate adequate to fund libraries' operational and capital needs, as well as the needs of the central Network office, so that their services would not be dependent on County General Funds. Greg felt his support was well-received.

Nick voiced agreement with Greg's position and acknowledged the complicated funding situation created challenges when presenting and explaining two separate budgets related to funding/operating of Libraries to the BCC.

David noted there were County-operated libraries. Greg clarified that Oak Lodge and Gladstone were never intended to be funded through the County General Fund, but that the Network office was funded through the County General Fund.

David said he had asked why the funds collected on a county wide basis were not distributed on a per capita basis and was told by Nick and Greg that the measure likely would not have garnered City and/or voter support had that been the case.

Nick said that one of the big conceptual changes with the District was for City libraries to serve unincorporated residents; in the past, the thinking had been cities should not spend for individuals outside of their boundaries. Nick said he had asked the same question David had.

Greg stated that the placement of physical libraries within the District would be different if a Clackamas Library District was built from scratch now. Greg noted that he felt the long history of City libraries and the communities' longstanding connections to those libraries would make a Multnomah County-style service model implausible.

David asked when the next LDAC meeting was scheduled and the soonest an election could take place. Nick said he could not offer a guess and anticipated more work needing to be done before anything would be ready for a ballot measure.

Greg said he was unable to guess and that the LDAC subcommittee would likely be reaching out to city management and library boards to determine priorities. Greg shared that LINCC library directors were working on a strategic direction document and one pillar was creating an adequate financial foundation for future success as a library district.

Bill Carton asked why a Task Force was necessary to authorize the use of funds for Library capital. Greg said when the Library District was formed, there was a capital library district in Estacada that had been formed to fund the expansion of the Estacada Library. Greg said that when the Library District was formed, it was formed with the understanding it was to manage operational expenses so as not to be in contradiction with Oregon State Law prohibiting two overlapping taxing districts collecting funds for the same purpose. Greg said that some recalled that the intent at the time was to modify the Library District purpose to allow using District funds for capital costs after the Estacada district ended, however, that change in language never happened. Greg said that in previous communications, the County had indicated that although the influencing factor had passed, the actual restriction on capital usage had not been lifted. Greg said that many in LDAC felt that because the original language was still in place that spending District funds on capital expenses was a violation of voter intent. Greg said that attempting to resolve this issue had originally led to the BCC considering changes to the Master Order language to allow funds for library capital, which led to public pushback and the subsequent creation of the Library District Task Force.

Nick recognized that member libraries interpreted and treated the funding differently.

David noted that the funds were still being used for keeping libraries running and the continued debate over what could be paid for with district funds seemed excessive.

Nick thought LDAC participants might not represent the total view of their library. Nick thought that most libraries were concerned with ensuring operation with available funding and were less concerned with how other member libraries used their funding.

Foundation

Cynthia Andrews reported the Foundation would meet the next day.

Cynthia asked if the Unincorporated Survey would go to a sample of residents or all residents; Greg said it would go to a sample sufficient for a statistically valid sample.

David stated he had received a print copy and his wife found it on Facebook.

Greg said that he had reached out to Jason, who said completed mailed questionnaires were starting to be returned.

Friends of the Library

Larry Osborne reported that the Friends had multiple revenue streams beyond the bookstore including membership fees, donations, and a bottle drop account. Larry shared that the donation program once offered by amazon.com had been discontinued by amazon. Friends anticipated supporting summer reading by providing books, gift certificates, and prizes. Friends also discussed future funding opportunities, including an art display area and couch in the Youth Services area. Larry noted the Friends monthly revenue of around $4,000 and spoke highly about the efficacy of the organization. Greg acknowledged that Friends had done high amounts of sales in the last two months.

Heidi Blackwell asked if that was the total sale of the shop and the shelves in the library. Larry said it was the total, and the shelves in the library were generating upwards of $300/month.

Teen Advisory Committee (TAC)

Heidi Blackwell said she had not been at the last meeting and reported that TAC members voiced a desire for physical books rather than gift cards as Summer Reading prizes. Heidi reported that TAC and City Youth Advisory Committee had been invited to participate in several summer events, including Juneteenth and First City. Heidi reported that the small groups were continuing to meet, newsletters and online content were forthcoming, and all participants still in the area and age group would continue on as TAC.

David asked if TAC would consider having a presence at the Farmer's Market. Greg offered support of the idea of programming and outreach occurring outside of the building and in the unincorporated service area. Greg noted that with the passing of the budget, there would be the potential for an outreach vehicle to help facilitate such outreach programming.

Nick asked if there was library presence at the Farmer's Market as he thought there had been in the past. David said he had not seen any.

Heidi noted that many of the schools had end of year and back to school activities with booths and supported library presence at existing gatherings. Greg said that with additional staff, such outreach was possible.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Chair David Goldberg adjourned the meeting at 6:05 pm.