CITY OF OREGON CITY
LIBRARY BOARD
MINUTES

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

Meeting

Tuesday, April 25, 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, 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.

Others Present: Lisa Oreskovich, Library Board applicant

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Review and approve minutes from the January 25, 2023 Library Board meeting

   Larry Osborne moved to accept the January 25, 2023 minutes as written. Cynthia Andrews seconded the motion. Cynthia Andrews, Heidi Blackwell, Bill Carton, David Goldberg, Nick Dierckman, and Larry Osborne voted aye. The motion carried.

2. Review and approve minutes from the March 22, 2023 Library Board meeting

   Cynthia Andrews moved to accept the March 22, 2023 minutes as written. Larry Osborne seconded the motion. Cynthia Andrews, Heidi Blackwell, Bill Carton, David Goldberg, Nick Dierckman, and Larry Osborne voted aye. The motion carried.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

3. Greg Williams shared that during the review of records for city website migration, it was discovered that some minutes had not been shared with the Board and anticipated presenting them to the Board next meeting.

   Greg thanked the Board for the National Library Week treats they provided staff. Greg shared that May the Fourth programming was upcoming and KOIN 6 would run a segment about the event. Greg highlighted a strong library card registration month by total numbers and county ranking.

   Nick Dierckman commented positively on the percentage of materials checked out by patrons from the unincorporated area.

   Greg said that the Unincorporated Survey was undergoing final testing and was following the expected timeline.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. 2023-25 Proposed Library Budget

   Greg Williams thanked the Board for their engagement in the budget process. Greg shared that the budget shared in the Board packet was the same one that was submitted to the City Budget Committee.

   Greg highlighted the following from the proposal: zeroed out fine revenue (made possible by moving fine revenue from operations to facilities in anticipation of the county discontinuing fines), budgeted additional funds for collections and programs, and the addition of two partially benefitted positions (one Library Assistant II in circulation, one Library Assistant II in youth services) and one full time position (Librarian I in youth services). Greg stated that funding was largely sourced from the Library Fund balance. Greg said he projected that, at this rate of usage and with no additional future General Fund increases, available fund balance above minimum reserve levels could be used for six years.

   Greg said the target fund balance reserve had previously been calculated based on seven months operating expenditures, one year of debt service, and 10% contingency, which totals approximately 65-70% of budgeted expenditures. Greg reported that Finance was comfortable reducing the target reserve to approximately 53% of expenditures, which allowed for more fund balance to be made available to fund operations.

   Bill Carton asked if the no fine initiative treated overdue fines and replacement fines differently. Greg replied neither type of fines were budgeted for in the Library's proposed operating budget, and revenues for both went into the same account, but the fine free initiative was specifically geared towards eliminating overdue fees.

Nick Dierckman asked how much the General Fund contribution was. Greg shared that in the current proposal the revenue increased approximately from \$150,000 to \$230,000 per year and the allocated costs increased approximately from \$103,000 to \$211,000 per year.

Nick asked for clarification about the number of benefitted FTE asked for originally. Greg said there were eight positions originally proposed which were reduced to three.

David Goldberg clarified that the three positions were in the version being presented to the City Budget Committee. Greg clarified that the FTE count was one higher than last year because the two part-time positions absorbed existing on-call hours. Greg thanked Denise for evaluating different situations.

Nick asked why the FTE ask was changed. Greg said that a reduction in the staffing ask was needed based on available funding and the goal of creating a balanced City budget.

Larry Osborne asked about the rationale behind the reduction of the General Fund contribution. David said his impression was that there had been no previous opposition to decreasing funding. Denise Butcher said it had been noted in priori budget discussions that the Library had a secondary source of income other City departments lacked. Greg acknowledged that the General Fund was a finite resource for funding much of the City’s services and the overall proportion going to the Library had diminished over time.

Bill noted that the high citizen satisfaction rating with the Library did not provide incentive to provide additional money, as there might be were satisfaction levels poor.

Cynthia Andrews acknowledged discouragement with the reduction in requests and noted that this year’s preparation would provide a foundation for future efforts to support the Library and alert people who were unaware of the financial challenges facing the Library.

Nick noted that at the point the General Fund allocation exceeded allocated costs, it would be difficult to explain at Library District Advisory Committee (LDAC). Nick noted LDAC concerns about Library District funds being used for allocations, but realistically it was not possible to function without using them in that way.

David shared that he met informally with Mayor McGriff, who voiced a desire to see better balance between funding from the unincorporated area and City. David reported that his request for a work session with the City Commission prior to the Budget Committee Hearing had been declined, based on Commission concerns that if a work session happened for the Library, it would not be equitable not to do so for all other departments. David voiced an expectation a discussion would be ongoing.

David said that the City Manager completed the City's proposed budget, which was progressing to the Budget Committee. David said he was sharing his draft testimony and wanted Board approval to authorize the testimony at the meeting. David shared that budget hearings would begin with public testimony, followed by the meeting. David anticipated testifying at the first meeting and identified a priority of increasing the net contribution to the Library. David supported the Friends of the Oregon City Public Library and Foundation providing testimony on behalf of the Library.

Greg noted that any written testimony for the Budget Committee should be sent to the City Recorder.

David spoke in favor of having a representative from Teen Advisory Council speak at the budget hearing.

David asked that the Board let him know if there was anything that the Board disagreed with in the draft testimony. Cynthia suggested adding populations on the Library Facts page.

Nick asked what new information was being shared compared with the past testimony. David said it was more detailed, emphasized the staffing model's reliance on on-call staff, and included updated information about the Library Fund balance.

Nick asked for clarification on the proportion of non-benefited staff. Greg clarified that non-benefited staff by FTE count was 40%, but when individual staff were counted, two thirds were non-benefited. There was general concern about these proportions and David spoke to the Board's duty to advocate for the Library.

Heidi Blackwell spoke to the demonstrated reduction in youth services as a result of the decrease in contributions and lack of staff.

David spoke to the importance of maintaining a level of funding and pursuing a more supportive levy. Cynthia noted the City Survey results did not support additional levies at this point.

Cynthia stated that the existing language around Library District and debt service could be confusing to non-Library Board members and wondered how it might be explained more clearly. Cynthia proposed including a brief explanation of the Library District and the impact of paying debt service from District Revenue.

Heidi proposed the inclusion of a chart.

Greg asked to clarify Cynthia's communication concern as: the intent of Library District revenue was to fund operations, and that use of Library District funds for other purposes reduces the resources available for operational costs.

Cynthia agreed with summary and concerns that the current set up was not desirable despite it looking acceptable on paper.

Bill asked if the Library District envisioned Cities would support Library debt service, and that the City had stated it would not raise taxes to service the debt, what other sources of funding were available.

Nick summarized that the Library had some existing non-bond funds. Nick said that the funding came up frequently at LDAC and the intent at the beginning was to focus on operations. Nick thought that aside from Sandy, Oregon City was the only library funded in this manner. Greg stated that Milwaukie had recently expanded their library facility and that the debt service on General Obligation bonds had been covered by an additional tax levy on City residents.

Nick expressed agreement with Cynthia's assessment concerning the work being foundational to future efforts and support for the current approach.

Bill wondered if approaching the staffing numbers from an equity perspective would be effective.

David stated that point two would be changed to reflect the objective of District funds for operating revenue, not capital revenue. Nick supported the change. David said he would also add the service area population information to the fact sheet. David proposed adding data about city contributions. Greg said he could provide the requested data.

Nick asked if Sandy was still paying off the bond. Greg said he was not certain.

Bill asked if other libraries had allocations similar to Oregon City. Nick said the majority of the cities used allocations. Bill floated the idea of bringing allocated services in-house. David expressed a belief that the amount of money spent on allocations was appropriate. David and Cynthia expressed concern with the size of the General Fund contribution as not much was left after allocations.

Greg expressed appreciation for the services the allocations allowed the Library to have at a fraction of the price it would cost to create and maintain those services within the Library. Greg said discussions between departments about calculations of allocations occurred routinely.

Larry Osborne made a motion to approve of David's testimony on behalf of the Board. Cynthia Andrews requested an expanded motion to empower David to speak on behalf of the Board for any follow-up questions asked after the reviewed and approved testimony. Larry Osborne moved to approve David's testimony and respond to questions on behalf of the Board. Cynthia Andrews seconded the amended motion. Cynthia Andrews, Heidi Blackwell, Bill Carton, Nick Dierckman, David Goldberg, and Larry Osborne voted aye. The motion carried.

Greg thanked and recognized City Manager Tony Konkol for helping to operationalize Board involvement per the Municipal Code. Bill asked if it was a new format. Greg said he was not sure how it happened before he was Director. Nick said that it had not happened this way in his time on the Board.

Nick thanked David for giving his presentation to the Commission.

COMMUNICATIONS

Foundation

Cynthia Andrews reported the Foundation had not met for this month and she would update the Board in May.

Nick suggested David make a presentation to the Foundation. Cynthia agreed to arrange it.

Friends of the Library

Larry Osborne reported that revenue had increased, including $550 in sales from books sold in the Library. Friends approved the purchase of Star Wars Prizes and Lego set.

Library District Advisory Committee (LDAC)

Nick reported that the meeting was delayed until May 15; discussion about the task force was anticipated.

Teen Advisory Council (TAC)

Heidi Blackwell shared that the Teens were preparing for May the Fourth, Juneteenth, and Summer Reading programs, looking at future collaborative opportunities with the City's Youth Advisory Council, and most were returning next year.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Chair David Goldberg adjourned the meeting at 5:59 pm.