CITY OF OREGON CITY
LIBRARY BOARD
MINUTES

Meeting
Wednesday, March 22, 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 5:46 pm.

ROLL CALL

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

Staff Present: Greg Williams, Library Director, and Denise Butcher, Library Operations Manager, were present in person.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Greg Williams highlighted January's significantly higher than normal numbers of new card registrations. Greg noted other data would be forthcoming and said the financial data was not included in the current packet as it would be discussed in a budget meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS—PART ONE

2. Review of Draft Unincorporated Survey

   Out of respect for consultant Jason Morado's time, the agenda was reordered so this item was the first discussed. Greg Williams shared that the City typically conducted a satisfaction survey for Oregon City residents and the Library had contracted to use the same company to conduct a survey of residents of the unincorporated area. Greg introduced Jason Morado, consultant for ETC Institute.

Jason said the goal was for 300 completed surveys to be returned to provide a reliable sample size, that surveys were offered online and via mailed paper survey to randomly selected households in the unincorporated service area. The survey was currently being designed, would then be administered, and would then be compiled and summarized.

David Goldberg asked why question six was included and if it was needed. Jason stated he thought it had been duplicated from the City and the Parks Department Satisfaction surveys but said it could be removed. Nick Dierckman said it might be useful to gauge sentiment. Greg thought including the question could be helpful for the snapshot it would provide and acknowledged that if future ballot efforts took place, more specific research would occur, so it was not necessary to include it at this time.

Larry Osborne said he had test taken the survey and thought response options for question 11 should include an option for not applicable or something similar. Larry recommended that question 14 be reworked, suggesting an “or” in the place of the existing “and.” Larry noted the word choice of “selection” pertaining to materials could cause confusion with the library selection process but said it was probably best to include the wording as it was written in this round for consistency with the other surveys.

Greg confirmed that the Board was okay leaving the word choice of “selection” in this round and consider changing it the next time the survey was administered. There was general assent. Greg asked if the Board was okay with removing question six as this was a first survey to the group and including it might cause concern. There was general support for removing six. Greg asked Jason how question 11 could be reworked. Jason said a NA response could be added, or the existing question 11 could be removed and question 22 could be cross tabbed.

Greg verified that these results would be included in the existing contract. Jason confirmed this was the case.

Cynthia Andrews noted that the number of City Survey respondents without children was higher than she expected and wondered if it would be possible to focus on respondents who had children and their preferences for children’s services when the survey was sent to the unincorporated residents. Heidi Blackwell remarked there might be a difference in survey delivery preference and completion rates.

Greg asked Jason if the 300 respondents would be a representative demographic sample of the area. Jason said that was the goal and, based on census data, the results of the City survey were very close to expected with respect to families without youth. Jason mentioned that they would need to double check the demographics of the unincorporated area, with special attention paid to age, race, ethnicity, and gender. Jason said that follow up postcards could be directed to people in demographics with low response rates.

Greg asked for confirmation that the Board was okay with striking the existing question 11 and arriving at demographic data in the manner proposed by Jason. The Board agreed. Greg asked that the wording of question 14 be reworked.

David asked about the expected timing. Greg confirmed with the Board that they were comfortable with the existing survey if the changes were implemented. Jason said that once questions were finalized, it would take two weeks to print, pilot test, and electronically format the survey. One additional review of both versions would occur before the survey would be mailed. Jason said it usually took about four weeks from mailing to reach 300 respondents and estimated results would be available by mid-May.

3. Review and discussion of 2023 Community Survey (City)

Greg Williams shared that the Library the highest satisfaction rates of the City departments and that the number of dissatisfied responses was down compared to rates before the COVID closure. Greg highlighted that OCPL was 15% above regional benchmarks. Greg shared satisfaction with the selection of physical resources available was up and attributed this (at least in part) to targeted efforts to shorten hold lists and purchase more items in prepublication.

Greg expressed disappointment with the decrease in satisfaction regarding events for children. Greg recognized that staff resources were not sufficient to provide programming to the level participants indicated were desired. Greg reflected that due to staff limitations, enhancing services in one focus meant that staff had to be removed from another focus, as had been the case with enhancing teen services and decreasing children’s services. David remarked that the lack of toys in the children’s area was noticeable. Heidi noted that there were few venues for indoor play.

Greg mentioned that toy enhanced playtime was incorporated into storytimes but at current staffing levels additional dedicated playtimes or additional storytimes would leave desks unstaffed.

Cynthia Andrews thanked the staff and administration for good work.

4. 2023/25 Budget Process Update

David Goldberg identified several points that he intended to bring to the Mayor’s attention: the Library’s unique city/unincorporated service area, funding concerns, the staffing model dependent on unbenefited staff, and the administrative complexity of managing the current scale of on-call scheduling. David anticipated talking at the City Commission to draw attention to the trend of decreasing funding and increasing expenses. David said he was finalizing testimony and would send it out to the rest of the Board for feedback before presenting.

Greg Williams thanked the Board for their involvement in the budget subcommittee and noted that the City computer issues had delayed finalized information and a final proposed budget. Greg shared the latest draft of the Materials and Services portion of the departmental budget request. Greg shared that he felt long term sustainable library service was an important goal. Greg said he hoped to zero out fine revenue in the operating budget to demonstrate that OCPL was not dependent on fine revenue for funding operations, in preparation for any potential future LINCC-wide efforts to go fine free.

David stated a goal of using some Library Fund money, discussing the situations leading to its accumulation, and leaving a conservative balance.

Denise Butcher voiced appreciation for the support in budgeting.

Cynthia noted that even if all budget items were not granted, the work that went into the creation of the request created a baseline data set helpful for future requests.

David asked about the possibility of including the community in the budget presentation. Greg said the budget presentation was a public process, with opportunity for public comment, and, per the Code, the Board was involved in the presentation of the Budget, but was not certain that active presentation had happened before. Greg asked that if the Board had ideas, that they let him know. Greg said that the City Manager presented the budget and Directors fielded specific questions. Heidi asked if there was a way to submit written questions. Greg thought it was appropriate for members of advisory bodies to provide feedback.

David said that he would ask the Mayor to set up a work session. Greg said that in talking with the Citizen Involvement Committee, he discussed Community Room policy and how resource constraints had shaped that development of that policy. Greg reported that at a recent City Commission meeting, the Mayor had invited him to bring Community Room policy updates to the City Commission.

COMMUNICATIONS

Foundation

Cynthia Andrews reported that no February meeting occurred, but the March meeting was happening the next day. Expected topics were fundraising and onboarding of new Foundation members.

Greg shared that he planned on talking to the Foundation about supporting fundraising and acknowledged that two items in the budget, outreach vehicle and book lockers, were earmarked for possible Foundation funding.

Library District Advisory Committee (LDAC)

Nick Dierckman said there were no updates.

Friends of the Library

Larry Osborne reported the ability for staff to take credit card payments for items on the Friends bookshelf in the library. Greg thanked the Finance Department for their efforts in making that change.

Teen Advisory Council (TAC)

Heidi Blackwell reported that the TAC members were enthusiastic, invested in May the 4th volunteering, creating displays, and working on summer reading preparation. Greg said that a request for some funds to make the Teen area more inviting had been included in the initial Library budget request.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Chair David Goldberg adjourned the meeting at 6:47 pm.