

Bozeman Public Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Bozeman Public Library—Board Room
Wednesday, May 16th, 2018
Minutes

Attendance Board Chair Judy Mathre; Trustees John Gallagher, Jennifer Pawlak, Ron Price, Ken Spencer; Bozeman Public Library (BPL) Director Susan Gregory; BPL Department Heads Kit Stephenson, Jason Greenwald, Mary Jo Stanislaw, Lois Dissly; Administrative Assistant Lauranna Cossins; Friends of the Library President Stewart Mohr; City Commissioner Terry Cunningham; BPL Foundation Director Janay Johnson; BPL Foundation Board President Bill Stoddart.

Call to Order The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Mathre at 4:00pm.

Approval of the Minutes Trustee Pawlak moved to approve the minutes from the April 18th, 2018 meeting. Trustee Gallagher seconded. Board Chair Mathre pointed out that City Commissioner Terry Cunningham was listed in the attendance but he was not present. City Commissioner Chris Mehl attended in his place. The Board voted unanimously to approve the amended minutes.

Foundation Report Bill Stoddart shared updates from the BPL Foundation Board. He said that the Foundation has recently changed its investment manager, and is in the process of planning for future projects and determining what the next capital expense will be. Janay Johnson added that the Foundation may need to implement a formal process for planning the Foundation's next phase.

Trustee Pawlak said that she, Susan Gregory, and Brit Fontenot and David Fine from the City's Economic Development department met a few weeks ago to discuss partnering to work on parking expansion and maximizing existing space at the Library. Gregory said that A&E Architects will do a general study of the site to see what areas might be possibilities for expansion, as well as to get ideas for ways to blend parking needs with the Library's need for more event space. Fontenot and Fine and maybe an architect will attend a future Board meeting to discuss this. Janay Johnson brought up the idea of a task force to work on this project. Gregory said that City Economic Development and the Downtown Bozeman Partnership have committed \$15,000 toward a site plan, and is asking the Library for an additional \$5,000 (for which Foundation discretionary funds could be used). She added that the Library is in discussion with the school system about sharing space in the new high school library as a beginning step toward expanding Library service in the western part of town.

Terry Cunningham asked if there is anything in the capital improvement plan about expansion. Gregory said that the Library has approximately \$80,000 in the Library Depreciation fund reserved for parking lot upgrades. She said City Facilities Coordinator Mike Gray has quoted the parking lot improvements as costing \$15,000, and not \$50,000 or \$80,000 as previously believed. Trustee Pawlak asked for clarification about what \$15,000 worth of improvements will include. Gregory said the price is for the plan the Board approved about four months ago: including fixing storm drainage problems, re-striping the lot, and the construction of pedestrian bridges over the dog bones.

Johnson said that she would like to structure any future fundraising campaign as a comprehensive campaign that includes things like program expansion, and possibly an endowment. Stoddart said that the Foundation put an offer on the Nash Finch building next door, but it looks like another offer is going forward.

Friends of the Library Report Friends of the Library President Stewart Mohr reported that the Friends get about 25% of their income from the Lindley Perk coffee shop's rent payments and book sales. For the past year, rent payments have been late, and the Friends have just found a new buyer who will run the shop as is, but has ideas about how to improve business. Mohr said this will be the fourth proprietor, and all of them have struggled to make a profit. He said the Friends will look into how to work with the proprietor to make it a viable business, since the coffee shop is a valued part of the Library.

Trustee Price asked if the current owner will be responsible for the overdue rent he owes the Friends after he sells the business. Mohr said that the lease termination had a clause that requires the proprietor to pay all outstanding money owed, and that the current proprietor is aware of and onboard with this obligation.

Mohr said that the Friends have continued to work closely with the Foundation, including collaborating on the online fundraiser, Give Big Gallatin Valley. He said the Friends are also looking at ways to make dispensing money to the Library an easier process.

Mohr reported that the next book sale is June 22nd – 24th, and that there will be a parking lot book drop off event this weekend. The Friends have some pop-up sales planned as well. He added that book storage continues to be limited, but that the Friends want to continue to keep the community engaged in book donation through events like the drive through drop off.

Library Fines Susan Gregory said that Mary Jo Stanislaw brought this issue to the department heads after attending conferences and observing a national trend in other public libraries of evaluating their policies and processes around charging late fines. Librarians at BPL are concerned about how much fines are a barrier to access, especially for families with young children. The idea today is to start a discussion, and to make a decision at a later date.

Stanislaw said that this year's revenue in fines was about \$49,000. She said she tracked the costs of collecting fines (including staff time, credit card equipment, and credit card fees), and found that the Library spends about \$26,000 collecting these fines. Other public libraries in Montana have eliminated fines, including Flathead County and Butte.

Stanislaw added that the Library waives about \$5,000 in fines a year through Food for Fines three times a year, through Read-Away Fines year-round, and through staff discretion (if a patron has a hardship or illness the staff always takes the patron's word and waives fines accordingly). A fine-free precedent has also been set with the Bookmobile, whose items do not accrue fines.

Board Chair Mathre asked how the Library will get the items back if there are no fines. Stanislaw said that the Library would still send overdue notices, charge for lost books and continue to enlist Unique Management (a collections agency) to recover long overdue items. Stanislaw said that from July 2017 – March 2018, Unique Management recovered \$11,000 in payments for lost materials and \$24,000 worth of lost materials for a total expense of \$6,000. She said that many

libraries have observed increased circulation and no unusual issues with items being returned after eliminating fines.

Terry Cunningham said that it would be helpful to get some anecdotal and/or statistical information from other Montana libraries about their experiences with going fine free. He added that with the large number of credit card transactions, many of these fines are probably adding to credit card debt for some patrons. Kit Stephenson mentioned that the director of ImagineIF (Flathead County) Libraries came to BPL's Staff Day a few years ago and spoke about their experience eliminating fines. In addition to the benefits Stanislaw listed, Stephenson recalled that the director said it was a very positive move from a customer service standpoint.

Trustee Price said that staff time should be pulled out of the cost equation, unless the plan was to get rid of staff hours as a result of this. Jason Greenwald said that perhaps the Library could quantify what it would do with that staff time if fines were eliminated. Price said that he would like to see some input from City Finance, as well as some numbers about the rate of materials being returned by libraries that have gone fine-free.

Stanislaw added that the Library is looking to purchase three new self checkouts, and will need to decide if the new machines will have fee collection capabilities.

Correspondence Susan Gregory shared correspondence from the community. Someone would like a Warriors book. Someone suggested 'cookies for employees everyday all day.' A person complained about the homeless population at the Library. Board Chair Mathre mentioned a message from Kathy Ball, a BPL neighbor who had concerns about the labyrinth plan being an invitation for people to loiter and sleep. David Kingman wrote back reassuring her that they would keep her concerns in mind.

Director and Staff Report Susan Gregory reported that she was appointed to a global parking committee for the community. The Library recently had a quarterly staff meeting, where City Manager Andrea Surratt spoke to staff about the City strategic plan. BPL is working with Solstice Landscaping to do a spring cleanup of Library grounds. This cleanup, a fall cleanup, and monthly maintenance have been budgeted in the general fund. Foundation discretionary funds have been used to buy seven large planters that will be planted with annuals and installed with drip irrigation, to add color to the front of the building in the warmer months.

Gregory said that Andrea Davis did a great job with the volunteer brunch. About 75 people attended, including some City personnel. Gregory said she is working with the City to get the Library budget request through by the end of June. Trustee Pawlak asked if there was a follow up about signage for employee parking. Gregory said that before the Library starts adding signage to the parking lot, she needs to make sure that there was not some sort of agreement from when the Library was built that guarantees shared parking for parks and trails.

Lois Dissly reported that she attended the Montana Shared Catalog meeting in Helena. She said that the membership cost is going up a little bit, but it is still a very worthwhile service.

Jason Greenwald reported that he is working with others on creating a printed publication about what is going on in the Library, to be published twice a year with the first issue out in the fall.

Mary Jo Stanislao reported that she, Director Gregory, Kit Stephenson, and Dissly met with other Gallatin County library directors to discuss issues with Bridgernet group. They are trying to meet more regularly to learn from each other and share ideas. Gregory added that the Bridgernet group is working with Pine Cove Consulting to investigate offering videoconferencing services. Bridgernet has access to a grant for rural libraries, and the libraries in Bridgernet hope to apply as a group.

Kit Stephenson reported that the Library and City received a grant to get a VISTA position for one year to research and develop a plan for a business center at the library, and to create a podcast about local entrepreneurs. Stephenson and City Economic Development Director Brit Fontenot are in the process of selecting a candidate. Stephenson said that she is working on the civil discourse program outlined in the Library's strategic plan. The program will be called Symbozium: Talking Tough Topics. A committee has been formed and the first topic will likely be democracy and freedom of speech, to be held before the midterm elections. The discussion will include a panel of national and local experts from the fields of technology, policy, and journalism.

Stephenson said that there will be a program in September called Our Yellowstone, which will include speakers, writers, audio archives from MSU at BPL, and an art exhibit and reception celebrating Yellowstone National Park. BPL is working with the Museum of the Rockies, Yellowstone Forever, and the MSU Library on this.

City Report Terry Cunningham reported that the City Manager has proposed a budget and the commissioners are going over it. The budget is scheduled to be finalized June 21st. He noted that Board Chair Mathre's term on the Library Board of Trustees is nearing an end, and that the commissioners are vetting a new candidate, who will be appointed by the mayor.

Foundation Report Janay Johnson passed around the Foundation's 2017 annual report. She said the Foundation will mail it to top donors. She reported that the Friends and Foundation made a little bit over \$15,000 in the Give Big event, compared to about \$2,000 for the Foundation and \$1,000 for the Friends last year. She said it probably helped to have only one option when potential donors searched the 196 participating organizations for the Bozeman Public Library. The Library had 129 donors give during Give Big, which put it second in the medium-sized organizations category. About half were new donors.

Johnson added that the Foundation, led by its marketing and communications manager Dawn Hobson, is beginning to work on a marketing plan for the Foundation to help it achieve some overarching goals, including benchmarks for giving and new donors, as well as an active planned giving program.

Johnson said that the Library Gala is on October 13th, and planning is underway. The theme is Starry, Starry Night, A Celestial Celebration, with the Cornerstone Award going to astronaut and MSU faculty member Loren Action.

Adjournment There being no further business, Board Chair Mathre adjourned the meeting at 5:11 pm.