

Ames Public Library Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes February 19, 2009

The Ames Public Library Board of Trustees met in regular session on Thursday, February 19, 2009, in the Library's Board Room with Anderson, Budd, Campbell, LeGates, Lockett, Meier, Ross, and Warnick in attendance. Seagrave was absent. Staff in attendance: Carey, Thompson, and Weeks.

Call to Order: President Ross called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda: Ross asked for any changes to the agenda; hearing none, Anderson moved and LeGates seconded a motion to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: LeGates moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 15, 2009, with the substitution of Weeks's name for LeGates's in the paragraph on the Library Building Expansion Committee Report. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Anderson moved and Lockett seconded a motion to approve the minutes of January 21, 2009. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Forum: None

Consent Agenda: Anderson moved and LeGates seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

- 1) Motion approving claims reports: January 1, 2009 – January 31, 2009
- 2) Motion approving gifts:
 - a) In memory of June Calhoun from Mary Kate and David Calhoun\$50.00
 - b) From Worldly Goods for Project Smyles\$208.00
 - c) From Anonymous for Interlibrary Loan.....\$10.00
- 3) Motion approving staff changes:
 - a) New Hires
 - i) Hiring of Joyce Moeckly as a circulation assistant at \$7.47/hour, effective February 9, 2009.
 - ii) Hiring of Sharon Sherr as a circulation assistant at \$7.47/hour, effective February 9, 2009.
 - iii) Hiring of Sarah Stark as a circulation assistant at \$7.47/hour, effective February 9, 2009.

Financial Reports: Weeks stated that the library had spent 58.1% of its budget with 58.3% of the year elapsed. Lockett asked why so much had already been spent on periodicals. Weeks stated that most subscription fees are paid at one time to a single service. He also noted that all departmental budget amendments were approved by the City Council earlier this month and the Finance Department is entering the information now; updates will be reflected in the March reports. Meier requested that staff include footnotes in the spreadsheets when there are cost overruns. The financial reports were accepted as submitted.

Communications: A letter from Frankee Olsen thanking Weeks for his leadership on the organizing team of the Story County Philanthropy Day was received as information.

Administrative Staff Reports: Carey related that on Valentine's Day a Library customer gave \$20 to a member of staff at the circulation desk and asked that it be used to pay other customers' fines. Some customers were so gratified by the gesture that they also donated to the cause. In the end, the original \$20 donation covered \$35 worth of fines.

Weeks summarized the written report and noted that implementation of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act has been delayed for a year. This will allow for guidelines to be adopted for the certification of certain children's products, including books. He also commented on the library's 4.4% increase in circulation. While some of the activity could be attributed to the recessionary times, he said that a recent report from the NEH showed an upward trend in reading in all age categories.

Ross inquired about action taken by the City Council on the request to apply unspent Capital Improvement Program funds to the building feasibility study contract. Weeks said a \$51,000 transfer was approved with little discussion. Ross remarked that he had hoped the library would be allowed to use the entire \$98,000 that remained in the fund, but City Manager Steve Schainker instead endorsed a \$51,000 transfer to ensure that the library could cover the \$306,000 contract. Carey stated that Schainker is aware that there will be additional expenses later on, but asked staff to wait and request additional funding at such time as there is a concrete need for it.

Warnick asked if the City was contemplating a reduced budget. Weeks said the City Manager has stated that it doesn't appear necessary now; however, he has asked all department heads to come up with advance plans for an event he terms a "budget tornado." Carey and Weeks will prioritize the areas to be addressed first in the event of a budgetary disaster.

Weeks distributed a schedule of upcoming activities related to the building expansion feasibility study and asked board members to mark their calendars for a March 10 City Council workshop with the architects from Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle (MS&R) at 7:00 p.m. The architects also plan to meet with the Board of Trustees in March and June. Weeks said that, after the February public meetings, MS&R felt it was necessary to add more public meetings. The extra meetings will not result in a change to the agreed-upon cost of reimbursables. The amount remains capped at \$24,000 under the terms of the contract.

There was discussion about the fact that the public meetings in March will fall during Spring Break, but the Board agreed that those dates were the best overall and should not be changed.

Weeks listed the general ideas he gleaned from a swift review of the 39 comment cards turned in after the large public meeting attended by about 110 people on Monday, February 16:

- an overwhelming response to keep the library downtown – there were only two requests for consideration of alternate locations;
- little concern about parking – only two felt there was a problem;
- interest in "green" building;
- interest in breaking down into smaller groups for discussion;
- random comments on desires for meeting spaces, public art, and quiet rooms; and
- several questions about whether or not expansion of the magnitude suggested would be possible on the site at 515 Douglas.

Meier suggested that it would be helpful to have hand-held microphones available at future large meetings. Warnick said she had also heard it would have been better to have smaller groups as the room felt too crowded. She also proposed that the Library Board members be more visible during the meetings. Since the Board members will be making the final decisions, it should be apparent that they are present when the public is making input. Depending on the structure of future public meetings, trustees should perhaps wear name tags, stand up to be introduced, and allow people to approach them to ask questions or make comments. She felt it would help participants know that the Board is listening to the public.

Ross inquired about the session held at Northcrest. Weeks stated that George Lawson, the library director when last addition was built, was present, as was a former library staff member. In general, he said that both Tuesday's meetings were cordial, with no attacks, and he has been getting positive, complimentary comments about Scherer. Weeks noted that on Tuesday Scherer showed examples of libraries that had been renovated or had built new additions, in addition to the

completely new structures that were shown on Monday night. Doing so addressed earlier accusations that there was any predisposition about the project.

Library Building Expansion Committee Report: Weeks said the Library Building Committee would be meeting Monday, February 23, to discuss the issues raised in public forums. He believes the overriding requirement will be to convince people of the necessity for the project. He said it seems that many people are not convinced expansion is necessary – and if they are, they don't seem to recognize a need for a building as large as what has been proposed.

Weeks said he would approach the group about participating in a tour of the St. Cloud, Minnesota, library. He would like to take senior library staff and a few board members, but the architects told him that a group of 80 people, including press, went from Norman, Oklahoma, to visit the library in Fayetteville, and he will ask the committee if they would like to pursue that option. Ross pointed out that the Kendall Young Library in Webster City is only an hour away, but Weeks said he would like people to see a building similar in scale to the one Ames needs.

Luckett suggested that the director consider giving tours of the staff's work spaces. He said people see the stacks and the periodicals, but they have no idea what a mess the work areas are. It would help to time the tours when the children's area and meeting rooms are full. People should understand how all the spaces are used. Anderson agreed and suggested the City Council members also be shown how crowded the back rooms are and how busy the building is. They probably have no idea that supervisory staff now use study rooms as office space.

There was discussion about taking photos of different situations. Carey said staff would like to do that; one problem is getting permission from the subjects to use their photos for publicity purposes.

Friends of the Ames Public Library Report: Budd reported that a reception was held on February 2 at 6:30 p.m. After a short social hour, there was a presentation by Saul Amdursky, the director of the Des Moines Library; later the two groups held separate business meetings. The Teen Advisory Group's representative reported on a Monopoly tournament that was a huge success and helped boost teen involvement at the library. A "heartbreak movie night" was also held on February 13, the day before Valentine's Day, and a fundraising event took place at Pizza Ranch.

Budd stated that Marcia Miller, a former obstetrics nurse at Mary Greeley Medical Center, has now joined the Friends Board and the roster is complete. He also reported that Frances Wilke, Friends' Treasurer, suggested having an outside audit. LeGates questioned why there would be a need for an audit, since Klatt & Associates manages the finances. Budd said that Wilke felt some errors may have been made and she would like a review.

The Friends' Annual Book Sale will take place the weekend of April 17-19. It will be the same weekend as VEISHEA, but it was the only time the group could get the library space needed. Ames Police Officers will most likely be unavailable, however, so the Friends may check to see if an off-duty officer from another nearby community can be hired. It is helpful to have a police presence when so much cash is on hand.

Foundation Report: Carey reported that she, Ross, Anderson, and Budd attended the Foundation business meeting, at which officers were elected for the upcoming year. The new officers are Roger Kluesner, President; Stevin Dahl, Vice President; and Lisa Eslinger, Treasurer.

The annual campaign was discussed and the Foundation Board expressed thanks to the Trustees for their support of the recommendation to have an unrestricted campaign. A fundraising letter will go out in April.

Carey announced that an unrestricted \$10,000 bequest was received from the estate of Margaret "Mardi" Voss. In addition, Foundation funds being held by the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation had a positive return in December.

Luckett suggested, and the group concurred, that a letter expressing gratitude for the donation be sent to Ms. Voss's family on behalf of the Board of Trustees. Staff will handle.

Policy Review:

Exhibit Spaces Policy – Action Item: Anderson moved and Campbell seconded the motion to approve the Exhibit Spaces Policy as presented/amended. Weeks stated there were no significant changes; the “Expression of Concern” section was formatted to match other library policies for the sake of consistency. Anderson said the policy reads much better than it did before and complimented staff on the improvements. LeGates requested that a comma be added after the words “accept” and “reject” in the last sentence of the paragraph entitled “Content.”

Budd remarked that it would make sense to make “Expressions of Concern” a stand-alone policy so that when it was amended it would not have to be changed in multiple places. The Trustees concurred and Weeks said it would be added to the list of policies to be introduced.

Motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: None

Trustee Comments:

Warnick noted that three APL Board members (Anderson, LeGates, and Ross) would complete their terms in March and wondered if there were new applications on file. Weeks stated that some people had mentioned it to him, but the applications are filed with the Mayor. Ross said he would contact Mayor Campbell.

Luckett said he would be out of the country from March 13 through 24 and would not be able to attend several meetings.

Anderson said that he would encourage anyone who had the opportunity to visit the beautiful library in Alexandria, Egypt.

LeGates had no comment.

Campbell had no comment.

Meier had no comment.

Budd had no comment.

Ross stated that he would be attending the Iowa Library Association meeting being held at the Polk County Convention Center from October 21 through 23 in Des Moines. Some events for library trustees will be held in the new Des Moines Library.

Adjournment:

LeGates moved and Warnick seconded a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.