

**Ames Public Library Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
September 24, 2009**

The Ames Public Library (APL) Board of Trustees met in regular session on Thursday, September 24, 2009, in the City Hall Council Chambers with Bradley, Budd, Campbell, Lockett, Meier, Schill, Seagrave, and Warnick in attendance. Stow was not present, but participated in the first part of the meeting via speaker phone. Library Director Weeks and Assistant Director Carey were also present.

**Call to Order:** President Seagrave called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and noted that Kevin Stow was listening and speaking by telephone from a remote location.

**Adoption of Agenda:** Moved by Campbell, seconded by Bradley, to approve the agenda as presented. Approved by general consent.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting of August 20, 2009, were approved by consent as presented.

**Consent Agenda:** Meier moved and Lockett seconded adoption of a resolution approving the consent agenda.

1) Claims report: August 1, 2009 – August 31, 2009

2) Gifts:

- a) From Elaine Kushkowski in honor of her birthday ..... \$20.00
- b) From John and Jerelyn Adams in memory of June Barnes ..... \$10.00
- c) From Anonymous in memory of June Barnes ..... \$20.00
- d) From Charles and Marcella Fritz in memory of June Barnes ..... \$25.00
- e) From Linda and A. Severin Johnson in memory of June Barnes ..... \$50.00
- f) From Virginia Quay in memory of June Barnes ..... \$100.00
- g) From Louise Speers and George Speers in memory of June Barnes ..... \$30.00
- h) From Steven and Dorothy Prater in memory of Lisa Elbert..... \$20.00
- i) From Lynne Van Valin in memory of Lisa Elbert..... \$25.00
- j) From Vaughn and Mary Speer in memory of Virgil S. Lagomarcino ..... \$20.00
- k) From Vikki Morain in memory of Katie Finn Milleman ..... \$20.00
- l) From Jean Peterson in memory of Dorcas Speer ..... \$25.00
- m) From Philip and Cheryl Toms in memory of Margaret Toms..... \$20.00

3) Financial Reports:

- a) Monthly Expense Report Summary through 8/31/09
- b) Year-to-date Expense Summary through 8/31/09
- c) Year-to-date Donations Report through 8/31/09
- d) Library Bequest Interest Earnings Report through 8/31/09

Vote on Motion: 8-0. Motion passed unanimously.

**Communications:** Letters concerning the library expansion site from Mark Engelbrecht, Ames Smart Growth Alliance, the Ames Police Chief and City Traffic Engineer, Jo Rod, Peggy Baer, and Thomas Niehof were received as information.

**Library Building Expansion Committee Report:** Library Director Weeks stated that the citizens' committee had met the previous Wednesday. He said that two members spoke in support of Option B across from City Hall, but most were in favor of Option A. Library staff and

board members who were present did not state a preference. Written communication in favor of Option B had also been received from Gary Botine, but there was no formal input from others who were absent.

Board member Campbell asked if the committee had now retired. Weeks replied in the affirmative, but said the members may continue to participate in public forums. Seagrave thanked the committee, on behalf of the entire Board, for its efforts over the last 21 months.

Moved by Campbell, seconded by Luckett, to receive the report as information, with thanks to the committee members. Motion approved by consent.

### **Public Forum:**

Tom Niehof, 3624 Ontario Street, said he was in favor of a freshly-designed and newly-built library to be constructed in the lot east of City Hall. He said that the cost, energy, and staff time needed to move the library to a temporary location, rent the location, and move a second time would be saved by building a new library. Niehof also noted that a number of citizens had commented on their pleasant memories of the existing library, but said he would like the next generation to have pleasant memories of a library built to meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century needs and with a 21<sup>st</sup> Century audience in mind.

Holly Fuchs, 806 Brookridge Avenue, said she hoped the present site would be chosen. She said Option A offers a better sense of place and connection to history; it allows for cooperation with the Methodist Church and for expansion to the east as properties come up for sale; it saves City Hall as an important building in its own right and leaves open the opportunity for expansion. She said that under Option A construction could be staged, a smaller building could be built, and construction of a parking lot could be delayed. Fuchs also expressed concern that there was no public input to Mr. Dahlgren's report (on space needs), that flawed population figures may have been used, that inconsistent numbers were used on the number of borrowers, and that the total size of the Iowa City library (to which Ames has been compared) had been misreported in the newspaper. Fuchs said a 94,000- square-foot building may not actually be needed and feels the estimates of size should be revisited.

Sue Ravenscroft, 4005 Westwood, also said it was unfortunate that the public was not involved in the Space Needs Study. She said she supports Option A, but was present to ask that the bond vote be taken in November because money would be saved by not holding a special election in August. A November vote would also offer the broadest mandate possible because more people would be in town.

Cheryl Binzen, 707 Burnett, said she understands the need for changes, but is not in favor of a new building on Clark Avenue. She likes seeing blue skies and green trees and believes the building proposed on Clark would be large and not fit in well. She also feels that moving the library would tip the activity toward one end and reduce the possibility of strong business development at the east end of Main Street. She acknowledged that moving the book inventory twice would be costly and labor intensive, but feels it is simply part of the process; when the process is over, the building will remain, and she would like it to remain where it is.

### **Unfinished Business:**

Selection of Site for Library Expansion: Board President Seagrave stated that the trustees had not had an opportunity to discuss the matter together. He invited them to express their feelings and take the opportunity to ask questions of Jeff Scherer, the library architect, who was in attendance.

Board member Lockett asked if it were correct that the cost of a new building would be two million dollars less than remodeling the old one. Scherer said his firm's estimate was that the total cost of the new library (Option B) would be \$1.9 million less than Option A, but it was dependent on a variety of factors.

Board member Bradley inquired about the estimated cost of relocating for two years. Scherer said that the proposed budget included a placeholder of about \$1 million to cover the rental of 45,000 square feet for two years at \$12 per square foot, including a pro-rated amount for fitting the rental space to accept the library. He said there were lots of choices that could be made – some communities have been able to get temporary space at no cost, while others spend more because they rent for a longer period. He said his estimates also included about \$50,000 for each move.

Seagrave remarked that one advantage of Option B is that it requires only having to move once. He asked whether the library could continue to operate if Option A were chosen and the reconstruction was extensive. Scherer replied that the library should not stay in the building in any form during the construction period, as there would be too many risks and too little residual square footage available. It would also be too dangerous for the public.

Scherer went on to say that there are all kinds of possibilities for managing the moves. Stillwater, Minnesota, for example, had library check-out days, where everyone checked out as many books as they could, then checked them back in over a sequence of weeks. In effect, they stored the materials at home. He emphasized that the placeholder for costs represents a worst-case scenario because, along with all the possibilities, the real estate market is changeable.

Weeks said that, given Ames's volume of materials, it is likely there will still be a need to hire an experienced commercial library mover, who can keep things in shelf order. At one level, however, community involvement might overshadow cost savings. Scherer acknowledged that Stillwater had a much smaller collection than Ames does.

Board member Meier asked what happened while the 1984 addition was being constructed. Carey stated that the library remained in the old part of the building, then moved into a portion of the new part while renovations took place in the old part. Materials were moved by a book brigade of about 1000 volunteers. Scherer stated that it would be important to look into liability issues on this; some communities don't allow volunteers to risk hurting themselves.

Lockett remarked that he did not think a long-run decision should be based on temporary situations.

Campbell said he was very impressed with both options and felt that, regardless of the option they preferred, everyone supported the architect and believed he would do an exceptional job. He asked Mr. Scherer to comment on parking.

Scherer pointed out three issues: (1) Option A offers 200 spaces, whereas Option B offers 150; (2) there is very little competition for the use of the spaces in Option A, whereas Option B eliminates 87 spaces, which means only 63 new ones will be constructed for the library; and (3) the parking garage in Option B is more expensive because it is multi-story. Option A simply adds one story above an existing lot and incorporates new property across Douglas Avenue. That said, Scherer expressed his belief that a global perspective of how to provide a parking resource for a lively downtown should transcend the issue of simply providing for the library.

Board member Stow said the issues uppermost in his mind were: considerations of the next generation and a desire to think 30-plus years ahead; the option of repurposing the current building; wanting to provide the best technology for both library staff and patrons who use the facility; and getting support to finance the project. He said he had heard lots of public comments in favor of Option A, but he was discouraged that more people had not been involved. He also expressed trust that the architect would offer a fitting, aesthetically-pleasing library in either location.

Seagrave said that supporters of Option B like the idea of starting afresh. He asked Scherer if there was a significant difference in how he could design Option A, if the Board chose it and asked him to tear everything down except for minimum amount that was required as an historical gesture.

Scherer said that if one did not consider the 14,000 to 17,000 square feet of the historical part of the building – it if were just considered historical and not functional -- the new piece to the south would be equivalent to Option B. That would not be the case, though, where he has to work around the three different levels and the antiquated systems, and tries to feed technology through the maze of buildings that have been worked on at five different times. He said he would lay out the historical part of Option A so that it could contribute to the new part, but the space in the atrium does not lend itself to use for library purposes. Scherer suggested that one possibility would be to explore whether or not the historical piece could be disconnected from the functional aspect of the library, but still be renovated and used for other non-profit purposes. It is still important to look at the gross amount of library space, and said he would start laying out spaces and looking at efficiencies. Scherer added that the other difference was that in Option B persons would park closer to the front door. In Option A, a street has to be crossed so it is less safe for parents with young children and for the handicapped.

Weeks suggested that instead of measuring the size of the library based on population, one should look at the activity level. The circulation of the Ames library is closer to that of towns with populations of 150,000. Scherer added that space is not only required for storage; it is also needed for back-of-house processing and re-shelving. He said the Hennepin County Library circulates 1.2 million items annually, its circulation work room is five times larger than Ames's, and they consider it too small. He said people should realize that libraries are materials handling factories and an amazing amount of labor goes into making them work well.

Budd said the situation would be different in his mind if a new library could be built on the existing site, but trying to preserve the historic nature of Option A poses problems. There has been no agreement on which elements should be saved, reconstructed, or removed, and some people have even talked about wanting the original entrance on Douglas reinstalled. A second factor on his mind is the move – not only having to do it twice, but also the interruption of activities. He said the library staff plans fun and interesting activities that bring people in – and when they are there, people find things of interest and take them when they leave. Budd said that during his career in working with large projects, he learned that uncertainty and interruptions invariably lead to delays and increased costs.

Campbell said he found this decision quite perplexing. He understands the attachment to the historic aspect and the legacy involved with the Carnegie library, and he enjoys the aesthetics of building in its location. He also acknowledged that this is a difficult economic time in which we are being challenged and pushed in more than one direction. Yet, he said that during challenging times, we need to be bold about what we should be doing and we should think about the future. He asked whether we could better address the future by retrofitting the current location or by providing a brand new site that is well-planned and designed to meet future

needs. Campbell said he believes Option B is in our best interest as a city, and based on increases in circulation and visitors. He anticipates that the library will see even more increases as the times become more challenging and he wants it to be ready to engage 21<sup>st</sup> Century interests.

Board member Warnick referred to Budd's comments about uncertainties leading to delay and confusion; she said she believes the biggest uncertainty is what will happen to the existing site if library leaves it. She said it was hard to imagine any group in town coming in to use the building, as disjointed as it is, and felt that it would be incumbent on the Board to look for a tenant. That, too, will add to delays and confusion. Warnick stated that she feels the downtown functions as a mall, in which City Hall and the Library serve as the anchors that draw people to both ends. She said the Douglas Avenue site offers greater opportunities for synergy with Ames's cultural entities and parking is also better there. She is not thrilled about the idea of a parking structure and using an elevator with a stroller. Finally, Warnick said she believes people will be more supportive of the project if we stay at current site.

Meier stated that she has always been in favor of a new building, but wondered if there was any guarantee that the City Council will let the library take the parking lot on Clark Avenue. She said she felt it was hard to go forward without that assurance; she was also concerned about leaving the present library building sitting empty.

Weeks said that the City Council has been silent on the issue of the parking lot site, but he thought it was waiting on a signal from the Library Board and perhaps feels that taking a position on it would be inappropriate because the State of Iowa gives autonomy to the Library Board that other City departments don't have.

Seagrave stated that one of the guidelines the Board had been working under was to consider sites that did not take property off the tax rolls. That left only city-owned or perhaps church- or school-owned land, so while it had not been written in black and white, the Board was encouraged to consider city-owned sites.

Seagrave said he agreed that it was important to think about the future. In order to get to the future, however, he said we need financial support from City government, from library users or customers, from our cultural partners, and from the downtown business community. He said he had not detected a lot of enthusiasm from users or the business community for Option B, so he wanted to harness enthusiasm and support from those who have attended the public meetings. He said he believed that the likelihood of passing a bond issue and gaining philanthropic support was better at Site A. Furthermore, if one is looking to the future, the inconvenience to staff of a temporary location is not a major consideration. Finally, Seagrave said he had a lot of confidence in the architect to design an equivalent facility in whichever location he was told to put it. From his point of view, the key issue to keep in mind is how to get there.

Luckett thanked everyone for acquainting themselves with this issue. He said the pros and cons had been spelled out many times and he found compelling reasons for building across from City Hall. He said he could not bring himself to tear down the perfectly good 1985 addition to the library, when there would certainly be someone who could use it. Second, building on Site B would cost less than remodeling. Third, he said he understands the desire for preservation of the historic building, but does not understand why it has to be a library. Luckett said he does not doubt another purpose can be found for that building. A new building on Clark could be state-of-the-art in terms of library services and energy efficiency. While we have no idea what the design will look like, Luckett said that when and if we see the design, we will realize that we can have two downtown buildings to be proud of.

Bradley said she had grown up in Ames and her first instinct was to protect the original library location and stay put. Now she senses an obligation to the future. The current library building has been involved in five construction projects and she feels it is at a point where it can't deliver what is needed in the future. She also feels having to move books and people elsewhere for two years would be disruptive to the community. She admitted having concerns about abandoning the site and worries that the building will become vacant, but she has seen Ames turn her high school into a beautiful building and she believes the library would be suitable for a number of other uses. She said parking is a concern with Option B, but she feels City leaders need to consider the larger issue of downtown parking, not just library parking. She thinks library staff deserves a state-of-the-art building and she has determined that Site B will best serve Ames's current needs and those 30 years into the future.

Schill stated that he works downtown, as do others in his family, and he sees a need for a library with more efficiency. He said the staff is excellent and many people feel the library is the most successful and widely-used public space in the community. He feels there is no better place to showcase that than across from City Hall and he supports Option B.

Luckett remarked that it had been suggested that the library be built in stages, and asked Scherer to comment on that possibility. Scherer stated that the 1984 addition was built based on a dollar amount, so it was undersized when the library moved in and has been severely undersized for at least the last 10 years. He said that he could size another library for 2010, but it would start being too crowded immediately. While this is not an uncommon problem, because economics often trump needs, the result is that the problem simply gets passed on to the next generation. He said he believes Dahlgren's estimates of the size requirements are close.

Weeks added that the history of putting on additions piecemeal has resulted in the multi-level, disjointed library building we now have. He said that all the stairs and hallways that go into separate rooms are hard to supervise and staff deals with behavior problems as a result. He said that better layout and better site lines are needed so staff can help patrons better and observe behaviors. He added that energy conservation features and a smart layout in either option would mitigate an increase in operational costs.

Moved by Luckett, seconded by Campbell, to adopt a resolution that the proposed library expansion take place at the SE corner of Sixth Street and Clark Avenue (Option B).

Moved by Budd, second by Meier, to hold a roll call vote.  
Vote on motion: 8-0. Motion carried unanimously.

Seagrave clarified the main motion, stating that those in favor of Option B should vote yes; those in favor of Option A should vote no.

Roll Call Vote: 6-2. (Voting aye: Bradley, Budd, Campbell, Luckett, Schill, and Stow; Voting nay: Meier and Warnick.) Motion carried.

Recess: 8:23 p.m. Stow (participating from a remote location by telephone) left the meeting.

Reconvene: 8:30 p.m.

### **Policy Review:**

Sex Offender Policy: Weeks said a new law had gone into effect in July that restricted persons convicted of sex offenses against minors from being present at the library in most

circumstances; it also empowered the director to entertain appeals. Weeks said the proposed policy attempts to describe how the law will be adhered to in Ames. It also outlines an appeal process and states that applicants for employment and volunteers will be properly screened. Weeks said that contractors employed at the library would also fall under the screening requirement.

Moved by Budd, seconded by Bradley, to approve a resolution adopting the Sex Offender Policy as presented/amended.

It was noted that the policy is silent with respect to the bookmobile. Weeks said that the City Attorney advised him that it is clear that the state law refers only to the library's real property. Weeks said that he, Carey, and a committee of library employees had looked at options and developed this policy, but also explained that members of the Iowa Urban Public Library Association have been working on this issue, and several cities have similar policies.

Budd noted that school property is already off limits to those convicted of sexual offenses against minors, but bookmobile stops at Fareway or other unrestricted sites could be used. Weeks said that was correct and that he would also allow a third party to check out books for offenders.

Campbell said he appreciated the attempt that had been made to allow access, but still had an issue with a blanket policy that did not address levels of offense. He said that American Library Association (ALA) guidelines, which have been adopted by the APL Board, stress that freedom the freedom to read and having access to materials is one of the fundamental premises of democracy. He also pointed out that the Iowa Library Association (ILA) was presenting a panel discussion on the new law in October and suggested the Board consider tabling this for now.

Luckett wondered why discussion was even required, since this issue was a matter of state law. Weeks said that the law allows a library administrator to use discretion in limiting or allowing access, but there are no guidelines – how the law is applied is up to the Board – and he was already dealing with an appeal. Under the circumstances, Warnick said she felt the Board should either pass or reject the proposed policy and revisit it after the ILA conference if there are changes that anyone feels should be made. Weeks said they could either make a decision or direct him to delay his response.

Campbell moved to table action on the policy. The motion died for lack of a second.

Vote on motion to approve the policy as presented: 6-0-1. (Bradley, Budd, Luckett, Meier, Schill, and Warnick voting aye; Campbell abstaining.) Motion carried.

Campbell commented that the ALA encourages library board members to fight rules that restrict access. He also pointed out that if the offender had shot or murdered the child, rather than assaulted him, he could enter the library the day he got out of jail.

### **New Business:**

Memorandum of Understanding between the Ames Public Library Board of Trustees and the Ames Public Library Foundation: Warnick moved and Schill seconded approval of a resolution adopting the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ames Public Library Board of Trustees and the Ames Public Library Foundation as presented/amended.

Weeks stated that the Foundation had approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) but took out the third bullet point under the section on records retention. The Foundation board members felt that records pertaining to bequests and pledges should be retained longer, so they could look back to see who donors were and so they could answer questions that might come up later about bequests. Weeks said that under IRS regulations and Iowa law, contestation of bequests must take place within three years; the five year time frame allows the Foundation to keep materials indefinitely. Five years also tends to be the benchmark for most financial records held by the City of Ames. He said he recommended amending the two other bullet points to indicate more specifically which materials were being referred to.

Luckett inquired why all records weren't kept in an electronic format, as there is minimal cost. Weeks said the Foundation was planning to keep paper copies because electronic methods change so frequently. If everything were to be kept indefinitely, the requirement to reformat the old records might become an imposition.

An important aspect of the MOU, Weeks said, is that the Library Board acknowledges that the Foundation needs library staff and resources to conduct its business and will, in exchange, accept \$17,000 that will direct it to a library activity of its choosing. Warnick expressed concern about the appearance that the Foundation is spending more than half its earnings on "overhead." She said she realizes the money goes back to the library anyway, so maybe it doesn't matter, but the proportion of expense (\$17,000) to donations (about \$30,000 this year) and the obligation to the library seem too high.

Carey said that the money would not go into the operating budget of the library; rather, it acknowledges the work that staff does with compensation (money) that goes back into support of library projects, as directed by the Board. There was discussion about the timing of payments, estimations of costs, and accounting in general. It was noted that while the university, for example, might consider grant income as a salary savings, the City receives this payment as a revenue which is not necessarily tied to reduction of a specific expense.

Vote on motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding as presented by staff: 7-0.  
Motion carried unanimously.

**APL Friends Liaisons' Report:** Bradley reported that the Friends had met on August 31. The May, June, and July financial reports and the 2010 budget were accepted. She said annual income was anticipated to be \$50,950 and operating expenses \$13,200. The remaining \$37,750 will be applied to programs. Other news:

- Marsha Miller was elected Vice President, following the resignation of Norma Sissons;
- A Friends of the Library Week membership reception will be held on October 19, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., in the Community Room;
- The fall book sale begins at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, October 9, and will continue on the 10th and 11th.
- Work is underway on a Memorandum of Understanding between the Library and the Friends organization; it should be ready for review by the Board of Trustees in November.
- Budd said that Colin Ogilvie reported on teen activities at the library; the Friends were very happy to learn that 60 teens attended the last event.

**APL Foundation Liaisons' Report:** Meier stated that there was nothing to report, apart from the Memorandum of Understanding.

**Administrative Staff Report:** Weeks highlighted the written report, adding that proposals from firms interested in working on the Fundraising Feasibility Study come in with wide range of prices. The committee will examine them and offer a recommendation to the Board in October.

Weeks reminded the Trustees that two propositions about the library will be on the election ballot in November; if approved, one will change the trustees' terms of office (making them consistent with those of other City board and commissions) and the other allows the trustees to delegate authority to the director to implement certain policies. Weeks said the matters were probably not controversial, but he intends to make some information available to citizens when they check out so that they are not taken by surprise at the voting booth.

**Trustee Comments:**

Warnick – no comments.

Schill – no comments.

Meier – no comments.

Luckett – no comments.

Campbell said he was pleased that there was fantastic turnout for the meeting, lots of energy, lots of passion, and he was very proud to be an Ames citizen.

Budd – no comments.

Bradley – no comments.

Seagrave stated that he was proud of the discussion the Board had had on the expansion issue. He felt it was comprehensive and well-done. It was obvious that everyone had thought the matter out and he felt they had made a courageous, forward-looking decision.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.