

**Sparta Free Library
Regular meeting of the Board of Trustees
February 7, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by President Laura Koll at 5:00 PM.

Members participating: Paul Lenz, Amy Bernath, Bruce Humphrey, Sandie Perry, and Terry Putman. Reinhard Mueller attended virtually. Also participating were Library Director Michelle Tryggestad, Adult Services Coordinator Nicole Wallace, Interim Youth Services Coordinator Kim Wegner and (representing the Friends of the Sparta Free Library) Doctor John (Skip) & Nancy Frazee, John LaCourse & Sherri LaCourse and John Winkleman (Chair of the Mayor's Library Expansion Blue Ribbon Committee).

Approval of Minutes: The January minutes were presented. **Putman, seconded by Lenz, moved to approve the minutes. Motion carried.**

Trustee Perry, seconded by Humphrey, moved to amend the agenda, moving item 5b (Expansion Committee Update) to directly after item 2 (Public Input). Motion carried.

Public Input: None.

Expansion Committee Update: Kevin Eipperle and Christy Monk, representing FEH Design, made a virtual presentation of the schematic design proposal. (Unfortunately, the quality of both the audio and video connections were less than optimum.) Several changes to the plan were proposed and discussed. Several Board members expressed their concern that the plan's timeline indicated that the Board was to approve the plan that night, as they had only just seen the plan. Several of the Friends group expressed their concern that no public input had been solicited. President Koll advised Director Tryggestad to postpone approval of the plan and to coordinate opportunities for acquiring input from the Board and the Friends group.

Finances: A printed report reflecting January expenditures and income was distributed. **Bernath, seconded by Humphrey, moved to approve the bills. Motion carried.**

Bernath, seconded by Humphrey, moved to adjourn and convene in closed session under the exemption set out in Wisconsin Statutes 19.85 (1)(e) and 19.85 (1)(c) to consider conducting competitive or bargaining issues and to consider staff compensation. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried. Regular meeting adjourned at 5:53 PM.

Closed meeting adjourned at 6:11 PM. The regular meeting was immediately reconvened.

Bernath, seconded by Perry, moved to temporarily increase the salary of Kim Wegner to that of the Youth Services Coordinator for duration of her time serving as the Interim Coordinator. Motion carried. Director Tryggestad will submit the necessary paperwork to the City Treasurer.

Directors Report:

Programming: Due to county and statewide pandemic numbers increasing, overall programming has converted to virtual or in-house; we will revisit on a bi-weekly basis with hopes to resume in March.

January Programming Highlights:

- **Adult Services:** We kicked off the new year with 67 Spice Club kits filled with thyme. Seven Needlecraft participants learned how to loom knit hats with Donna H. Myron Daubert, from the Job Center of Wisconsin, offered job services for the first time since 2020, meeting with one patron the first day. He will return on a Feb. 10th . Coffee & Chat Book Club, with co-host Kristin S., pivoted to a hybrid of virtual and in-person participation and gathered in the Fireplace/Carnegie Room of the Sparta Free Library. We had 1 virtual and 6 in-person participants as we discussed *The Lions of Fifth Avenue*. Color Me Happy learned about mandalas and used a variety of coloring supplies to create their own artwork with Lori E. For our Needlecraft Bring Your Own Project Day we had 3 people join us—2 of whom were new to the activity. Lori and Kimmy taught loom knitting and led relaxing conversation. TR-I-N-G-O was a great way to finish off the month with 21 participants joining us virtually for mocktails and trivia fun!

- **Youth Services:** We have adapted to staffing needs by having Kimmy Wegner, Youth & Administrative Library Assistant, temporarily take on various duties and responsibilities as Interim Youth Services Coordinator in addition to her current duties. Youth Services was excited to kick off the new year with a Winter Bingo program, organized by Kristin S. which ran from January 3rd to 31st and had 35 participants completing fun, family and literacy focused winter activities. This month Kimmy W. restarted WIN Visits to Sparta area schools, which had been on hiatus due to district policies since March 2020. We had 52 participants who enjoyed a Storytime or chapter book read aloud and crafting activity. Also, Kristin S. reorganized shelving locations in Youth Services to allow further growth of our popular Graphic Novel Collection, higher visibility of New Chapter Books and additional options for library displays. Other January programs included: Open Play Day (12 attendees), Board in the Library (9 attendees), and Lego Club (21 attendees).

Upcoming Programming:

Adult Services

- Snow Place Like Home Reading Challenge – February 1 through March 31
- Virtual Women's Wellness Workshop (Nutrition) – February 2
- Needlecraft Club Learning Day (Embroidered greeting cards) – February 4
- Spice Club Za'atar (Middle Eastern)– February 7
- Job Services for Patrons (Job Center of Wisconsin) – February 10
- Coffee & Chat Book Club (*Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds) – February 15
- Color Me Happy (Hearts & Flowers) – February 16
- Needlecraft Club BYO Project – February 18
- Virtual TR-I-N-G-O (& 'Tails) – February 28

Youth Services

- Snuggly Stories - Spring Mondays, starting Jan. 31
- Where's Waldo in the Library? – All February • Virtual WIN Visits – February 2, 9, and 16
- Library Storytime - Spring Thursdays, starting Feb. 3
- Open Play Day – February 5
- Lego Club – February 12
- Hearts & Crafts Day – February 14
- Board in the Library – February 22

Operations:

- 2021 Budget Final Figures: Funds carried to Contingency Fund for ongoing roof & sewer repairs, as well as conversion to Lynxx phone system.
- COVID Closure: Staff member tested positive; proactive Personal Leave Time on her part enabled little exposure and ability to remain open all but two days; two Leadership worked 2/3 their normal schedule and three other staff worked half of scheduled hours on those two days while remaining separate.
- Staffing wages: ongoing concern for several years; ability to hire and maintain quality staff is severely affected; cannot expect professional level staff to relocate and/or stay at paraprofessional wages, similarly paraprofessionals at high school range
 - WRLS advisement: budget needs an overhaul, Director should be more in the \$65,000 range, with YS and AS Coordinators in the \$48-50,000 range (reflective of 2020 data); paraprofessionals 4-6% increase with starting wage of \$12/ hr. minimum
 - Proposal sent to the City Treasurer with input & updated proposal; Finance Committee consideration Wed. Feb. 9th, 6pm; full Council consideration Wed. Feb. 16th, 6pm
 - In addition to operational funding, most municipalities, state and nationwide, fully cover the wages and benefits of library department staff annually to maintain quality trained staff; cannot control county funding, which should only be utilized for a portion of materials, programs, etc.
- Youth Services Coordinator position: Minimal response; wages not competitive with WRLS or statewide; increase to \$45,000 should promote interest; posted 2nd round with additional sites: MN Libraries and IA Libraries job sites, individual Library studies colleges & newspaper ad; reposting third time & expanding to add IL and MI Libraries and sites
- Adult Services Coordinator position: Posting immediately on same fourteen locations as YS Coordinator
- Part-time positions: Stephanie C. will begin an alternate Wednesday A.M./ Saturday schedule on Feb. 2nd at 4.5 hours per week in addition to general substitute hours; Deb F. will begin alternate Saturday schedule on Feb. 5th at 4.5 hours as well as general substitute hours; both increased wage to \$11 per hr. as of Feb. 1st; both are filling in while we are short-staffed, as will Donna F. when she recuperates; posting for Substitute at 3 hours/ week average.
- ALA Grant Completion: Finalized all requirements of 2021 Libraries Transforming Communities: Small & Rural Libraries grant included sharing numerous social media posts, posters, handouts and news articles; also wrote informational letter to Senator Tammy Baldwin acknowledging continued support, inviting her to recommend info sessions and visit; received response from Senator's scheduler they will keep the library in mind for future.

Building & Grounds:

- Roof: Interstate made two trips; had to wait for thaw; found it was a plumbing issue; Sure Plumbing prompt repair & it should be good; however we are keeping bucket under until first major thaw
- Site Tests (Expansion): completed Wednesday; parking blocked for Monday, but city hadn't marked one area

2021 Final Budget Report

- City figures (\$13,629.81 carried); reconciling with Library figures (\$13,037.98); this was due to the \$15,896.15 donation in 10/21
- Revenue down over \$25,000 since 2018
- Drastically cut line-item budgets for the past two years to maintain cost of living for staff
 - Cut eight line-item budgets in 2021 namely custodial, operating, technology, programming, books, magazines/newspapers and audiobooks
 - All budget line-items for 2022 have been cut: Further cut those same eight line-items from 2021 plus the remaining eight line-items to allow for 2% increase for staff Annual Report

Old Business:

- Blue Ribbon Committee: Met on Jan. 5th with FEH and Campaign Committee members present. Much discussion regarding funding (in hand and projected). Focus on contract with FEH for design. City Finance Committee Jan. 5th. Concern with overall cost and funding; stressed the current focus is on design contract. Contract with FEH for design recommended for general council approval. City General Council Jan. 5th. Similar concerns as Finance Committee. Contract with FEH for design approved.
- Campaign Committee Update: Contacted Jodi Sweeney to update; shared the total raised to date & info on in-kind donation. Two-three months left on her contract - utilize or she can just advise. Possible focus on 50 Businesses fundraising after tax season, then School effort in May, followed by Families during Summer Program time. Next steps – meeting with Sweeney Group & FOSFL
- Holiday Policy: Tabled until next month.

New Business: Annual Report form opened online Jan. 24th. Will email completed to the Board by Feb. 14th; contact L. Koll or Director immediately with any concerns, as will sign and forward to WRLS on Feb. 16th

Items for Future Consideration:

- Revision of Holiday Procedure
- Building project

The next meeting will be held on Monday, March 7, 2022, 5 PM.

Humphrey seconded by Perry, moved to adjourn the regular meeting. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 6:24 PM.