

DRAFT MINUTES

Fitchburg Public Library

Wednesday, March 18, 2015, 5:30 pm

Present: Nancy Kieraldo Pauli Nikolay BT Thomas
Karen Julesberg Eric Vincent Swami Swaminathan

Also present: Tony Roach Wendy Rawson Kate Liu

Absent: Dan Carpenter

1. **Call to Order – 5:30 pm**

2. **Public Appearances – Non-Agenda Items**

3. **Approval of Minutes**

a. January 21, 2015

Kieraldo moved and Nikolay seconded to approve the minutes as written. This passed by voice vote.

4. **Treasurer Report**

Registers were given for both January and February, as we did not meet in February. Rawson drew attention to the accrual in January in salaries and wages due to the split year paycheck which occurs at the end of every year. The expense in 240 (unexpected repairs) was a sprinkler test. Swaminathan asked about the large spend in 387 (collection) in January- Rawson explained that December ordering slows down, and many selectors have carts waiting. January is a catch-up month. The elevator contract was paid in February. New testing for elevators has been added by the state which we will pay in March from account 240, this will be a regular expense starting next year and will be paid out of 290 (contracts.) Miscellaneous revenue is all adjacent county payments. Julesberg moved approval of the treasurer's report and Thomas seconded, this passed by voice vote.

Item 6a was moved to this point in the meeting to accommodate Tony Roach, city admin.

6. **New Business**

a. City Council Resolution for Full Implementation of New Pay Plan

Roach detailed that city spent time with consultants last year to review the pay plan for the entire city, with the exception of police and fire. All positions were evaluated with respect to pay for comparable cities; this was last done 5-6 years ago. Consultant returned a new pay structure for the city, and the council adopted the structure. Many employees moved up in the pay plan; no pay was cut for any employee, and everyone was placed at the closest spot on the pay scale. However, this created a problem for many staff in being placed at a pay level below their years of service. This could not be fully addressed in the fall with other budget uncertainty. At the start of 2015, the city realized it would have significant savings in its fuel account, which will allow the city to fully implement the pay plan, including placing people on the scale that corresponds with their years of service. However, this requires a budget amendment for the city. For the library, which is outside of the city's general fund, there are no gasoline savings to draw on to do this. The suggestion is to take this out of fund balance for 2015. Going forwards, however, the 2016 levy will be increased by the amount of money needed to fund the pay plan in 2015, and this increase will carry forward from that point. The total amount of funds involved is \$27,012 and covers 9 library employees.

A long discussion ensued.

- Appreciation was expressed to the city for suggesting a plan with did not rely on ongoing use of fund balance.
- Inquiry was made about how other city departments without gas savings were handling this situation. Roach explained that departments within the city general fund are being covered by the city's overall gas savings; departments like the library and Factv which are not part of the city general fund have to find funding elsewhere.
- The board expressed some discomfort with the fact that some departments without gas savings were being covered by the city when the library was not, and some sentiment was expressed that the city should cover all or part of this extra expense. The library board did not initiate this change, yet is compelled to make the change.

- Concern was expressed over the use of fund balance, which is essentially “rainy day” funds, accumulated by careful and prudent stewardship by the library board, for an operating expense.
- Board members want to ensure that the library staff receive the appropriate compensation and feel they deserve to receive these increases; however there is concern over how this is to be accomplished.
- Discussion covered the possibility of moving the library’s CIP into the city’s CIP levy, freeing up some library operating money for the salary increase; Roach explained that the library’s levy is meant to include the library CIP and that the library should have the responsibility to replace its own computers and equipment. Capital Improvement Projects the library is responsible for were clarified to be furniture, fixtures, and equipment, not building items, so when the library needs a new building item (such as new furnace,) this comes out of the city’s CIP.
- A question was raised about what would occur if the library had a surplus in their budget at the end of the year, as happened in 2014. Roach responded that if we did end up with a surplus, we would not be required to use the fund balance.
- Board members noted that there was no language in the resolution to ensure that the library levy would be adjusted to accommodate this change in future budgets.

An amendment to the resolution was crafted by Swaminathan and Roach, to read as follows: *“... be it further resolved that the library budget will be amended with the understanding that the 2016 levy for the library will be increased by the same amount when determining the allowable increases for 2016 and beyond.”*

A general discussion of fund balance – who it belongs to, who can use it, and who governs access to that money – ensued. Roach noted that the library can add a line to their expense budget every year for contingencies, but must still fall within a balanced budget.

Roach left at this time, 6:40pm.

Swaminathan expressed some disappointment that the city would not support some of this expense for the library; but was happy with the assurance that we could amend the resolution to have the change to the levy in writing.

Liu re-read the amendment, Thomas moved and Nikolay seconded, to accept the pay plan implementation as amended. This passed unanimously by voice vote.

Julesberg expressed appreciation for working with all of the board members, and praised collegiality and professionalism of board members; that the previous discussion concerning the pay plan implementation was representative of the board’s good working relationships. She then thanked Rawson for all of her assistance and knowledge, and Liu for attention to detail. Swaminathan thanked Rawson for preparing for the meeting concerning the pay plan with the city staff. Vincent stated that the amended motion was better; best too have Roach present to answer our questions. Rawson’s leadership was praised for doing the homework on this ahead of time to prepare board members.

Julesberg moved and Vincent seconded to move back to item 5 in the agenda; this passed by voice vote.

5. **Old Business**

a. Review Annual State Report

In January it was agreed that Swaminathan and Rawson would review the annual report and Swaminathan would sign it on behalf of the board because the board would not be meeting in February. Rawson walked the board through the report, Numbers for certain items are different in the city and state reports because the state records certain things differently. We loan out far more items than we bring in with the hold system, which shows that we are building a good desirable collection. Circulation overall in the whole system is down; Fitchburg is down as well, but by a smaller percentage than most libraries showed. Rawson noted that we met the standards, and also mentioned that the standards may be reviewed and revised soon.

Nikolay moved and Julesberg seconded to approve the state report, this passed by voice vote.

6. **New Business**

a. City Council Resolution for Full Implementation of New Pay Plan (covered above.)

b. Choose nominating committee

The board needs to choose a nominating committee. Kieraldo and Julesberg cannot serve since their terms are up in May. Thomas will continue to serve on the board, but would like to move out of treasurer role. Swaminathan asked Thomas to serve on the nominating committee, with Carpenter (Swaminathan will ask Carpenter as he is not present at the meeting,) and Vincent. Vincent will chair. Slate of officers will be presented at the May meeting. Possible new board members were discussed.

7. **President Report**

No report.

8. **Library Director Report - Rawson**

Rawson reported about the COW meeting from February concerning the transit study and costs and benefits of various possibilities. Fixed bus routes, flexible bus routes, and shared ride taxi were all discussed. Space needs was the other part of the COW meeting. The police are out of space completely now; the library is in good shape now but what about in 2035? The addition of a branch library of ten to twelve thousand square feet was discussed.

Books and Brews planning going well; this event is coming up July 11th at 6:30.

Biking to the library: signs on the bike route are not just up to city; some trails governed by the county or the state. Bike rodeo coming up, and Tim Powers is involved in the planning committee. The rodeo will feature a ride to the library. There are plans to put a map on the website for biking to the library.

Signage project has been approved by Fitchburg Center. Project moves slowly, but is moving along.

Last month was Library Legislative day; Rawson met with 2 legislators to talk about library budgets and also discussed the state statute that affects some libraries that use collection agencies.

Rawson reminded board about the Pancake Breakfast at the Senior Center coming on this Sunday.

9. **Committee Reports**

a. Strategic Planning

Julesberg and Rawson met with the mayor to show him the strategic planning calendar. This was a very positive meeting, lots of questions asked and thanks given to Julesberg and Rawson and the board for their efforts.

The core team has updated the bookmarks that go with the strategic planning brochure. The core team was also tasked with coming up with the tagline for the library, which they did, pulling words from survey data and the mission and vision statements. The tagline is Connect ❖ Discover ❖ Enjoy. The tagline will be placed in the north vestibule in the library, and the bookmarks will be distributed in several places around the city campus.

Action team news: Team 5 has been working on a brand and style guide to cover logo use, color guide, font choices, email signature. Team 4 has been working on acknowledging partners, and is planning to attend the Books and Brews event to thank partners. Team 3 noted work on the bike rodeo, and 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, which will be launched in late April. Bookstart will also start soon – this involves a volunteer going to daycare centers to promote literacy activities. Team 2 has been preparing the emergency procedure manuals, these are now at all the service desks. Circulation statistics are being reviewed. They are also working with Factiva to do a program every month about the library; a schedule of topics has been set, and they are beginning to work on preparing those clips. Board members suggested the idea of working with the community to create some of these clips, possibly drawing from action team members. Team 1 has been working on a Giving to the Library brochure, outlining the three options of giving to the general fund, giving to the endowment, or donating to the Friends. The brochure will feature a tear off sheet. This information will also be on the website. This will require a small update to the gift policy.

Nikolay raised the question about whether the new board members will step into action teams. This will depend on their fit, but it is assumed they will participate in some way.

b. Personnel

Nikolay sent assignments to all board members to participate in the process of evaluating the director. Please be thorough and include a lot of illustrative examples. Nikolay will be done with collating data by April 15, and the board will evaluate the director during closed session in the April meeting. They will meet with Rawson after the evaluation is complete, then with Roach after that.

c. Facilities

Thomas noted that the committee met and is working on establishing what will need to be replaced and what its lifespan is. Rawson will update the committee with further information from the finance director. There is some question about whether computers are truly part of CIP, as each individual item is far less than \$10,000.

10. **Announcements**

a. Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, April 15, 2015, at 5:30 p.m.

Swaminathan expressed his thanks for Julesberg's service to the community, especially for strategic planning, but for multiple other commitments as well. This will be Julesberg's last board meeting.

11. **Adjournment**

Nikolay moved and Julesberg seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 pm, this passed by voice vote.

Full unedited text from discussion-

- Julesberg expressed appreciation for Roach's suggestion to use fund balance only once and not in an ongoing manner. Vincent asked if there were other depts Like us without gas savings. Roach resp that this is a whole city gen fund issue – for example gas savings out of police and into administration. Roach noted that there was not enough gas savings to cover the library as a department, Factiv also has this situation. Kie asked what our fund bal was, Raws resp 305K approx.. Swaminathan noted that we have fund balance for the future, yet we do not want our employees to be left out. We should not make a temporary solution, need to have a policy for how we do this. How do we protect ourselves and our fund balance, which we very prudently accumulated? Why can't the city absorb this as a one-time thing? BT noted that this expense is the core of an operating budget; the levy we have is the mandate from the city for how we operate the library. Thomas expressed appreciation for same as Julesberg. Other departments are being helped even without gas savings. We are faced with the poss that council will not increase our levy – there is nothing in the resolution that assures us that the council will increase our levy – we are relying on only the goodwill of the council. Could the city amend to take on our CIP onto their cip so that we would not have to pay that out of our general fund? Roach responded that it is appropriate that the library supports its own computer replacement – all still paid out of levy. The library could create its own capital levy within its levy. Discussion of the CIP levy process ensued. Swaminathan asked if there were any way for the city to share the expense with the library, because we did not initiate the changes that have occurred that are causing us to have to dip into fund balance. Nik emphasized that the resolution not reflecting the plan to change the levy is what is of greatest concern. Roach suggested adding a line to the resolution to clarify this. Roach noted that a budget must be balanced; we can't have a deficit budget. Raws asked what happens if we end up with a surplus, we will not end up using the \$27K. Roach pointed out that we can put in a "contingency" line in the budget, funded out of regular revenue.