

Minutes of the James River Valley Library System Board of Directors
Library Board Meeting
Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Board members present were Jay Nitschke, Char Freeberg, Pam Phillips, Joan Morris, Carolgene Wolf, Emaline Roorda, and Gail Martin. Absent was City Ex-Officio David Schloegel. Also present were Library Director Joe Rector, Assistant Director Jill Pfaff, and bookmobile drivers Cammie Trumble and Jessica Haugo.

Jay called the meeting to order at 3:29 pm.

MINUTES

Carolgene made a motion to approve the April 10 minutes, seconded by Char. Unanimous aye. Motion carried.

FINANCIALS

Joe reviewed the April financials.

BILLS TO BE PAID, PAYROLL AS PAID AND AUTO PAY AS PAID

Roll call vote to approve the bills to be paid, the payroll as paid, and auto pay as paid; showed 7 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried

BUILDING FUND POLICY

Pam made a motion to adopt the building fund policy, seconded by Carolgene. Roll call vote showed 7 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried. The Building Fund policy now reads as follows: Funds will be set aside in the City of Jamestown's Library Building Fund for the purpose of construction, addition, alteration, purchasing land, or purchasing a building to be used as a public library. If the Board of Directors so determines that the funds should be moved into the Library's general fund, the Board will pass a resolution directing the City to transfer the funds.

PROGRESS OF BUILDING FUND REQUEST

Joe reported to the board that he attended the last City Council meeting where the City moved the building fund request on to a public hearing on June 7. Joe also spoke at the last County Commission meeting where they also moved the request through to a public hearing set for May 18.

REQUEST FROM BOOKMOBILE STAFF TO ALLOW PATRONS ON THE BOOKMOBILE

Bookmobile drivers Cammie and Jessica said that they are looking forward to getting back out into the community and being able to connect with the patrons. They both feel comfortable enough to be around people coming on the bookmobile. They also noted that it is a really good time to reopen to the public with a new summer schedule beginning in June. They plan on 6 different books for their Story Stroll and offering STEM programming throughout the summer. Guidelines for bookmobile access were submitted.

Char made a motion to allow patrons on the bookmobile, seconded by Gail. Roll call vote showed 7 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY UPDATE: SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Carolgene made a motion to adopt the following Equal Opportunity policy update: JRVLS is an equal opportunity employer, and all applicants, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual

orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, or mental or physical disability will be given equal consideration based on qualifications; seconded by Pam. Roll call vote showed 7 ayes, 0 nays. Motion carried.

Joan questioned if there should be a similar policy in place for library patrons. Joe said that there is an anti-discrimination statement, but it is not separated out as it is in this new policy. Joan felt like it should be the same for patrons as it is for employees.

REPORT OF THE BUILDING COMMITTEE

Char reported that the Building Committee meeting went well and that a lot was accomplished. She said that there was discussion from some members that they would prefer that the library be in one building instead of two. The next meeting will be May 26th.

Joan noted the 2008 vote for consolidation and asked, "Why hasn't the library consolidated?"

Char noted that there is not enough room for all the books we have now. She also mentioned the need for parking space and safety for kids. "We will look at one building or two, but so many people support ADPL and want it to stay."

Joan asked if the consolidation is done.

Joe said, "We have two libraries, one director, that's all we've managed to do because the vote did not supply funding or authorization to do anything else."

Gail noted that she believes most voters from 2008 wanted one library facility. "For us to go into this whole building thing with this, we must keep Alfred Dickey open, we must keep Alfred Dickey open is not the frame of mind I want us to be in. I want us to be wide open to a variety of things.... I know a lot of you have heard this. We talked about US Bank building being a possible location for the library in 2014. The place is built like a concrete fortress.... The drive-up would have been a great garage for the bookmobile. It was downtown and had parking. Nobody came over other than the realtor and you, Joe. No architect came over and said 'Hey, for three million dollars you could get this thing up and running.' And as a taxpayer, I would have been interested in that. Another building I think is kind of cool: Wells Fargo. I want us to be open-minded and not just hit the road with keep Alfred Dickey open.... This could always become something. But let's do some brainstorming and stop going into this with, I would say, library prejudice. 'Cause then you have to staff both places. I want as a taxpayer, I want one spot, consolidated, and stop ordering a bunch of different books for the County Library, then, because then you're going to keep saying, we don't have room, we don't have room. Well, it's because you keep ordering stuff down there and there's no room.... I want input from the public.... And I feel at times when we're asking the City and the County to set aside a building fund, that's fine. I don't think we're ready. We don't know what we want, we don't know what we need, we don't [unintelligible]."

Char: "I think that's why we've got a building committee now that is [unintelligible]. There are younger people on it, there are older people.... Some people want one building, some people want both buildings. Some people want this building to just be a space for plays and stuff like that. But we have to think about it."

Gail: "There's a lot of creative juices that I want input from around the community, but for some reason we've got this leg iron around us to keep this. And I want us to just be open. The community maybe

wants this, and again that's changed.... People are doing library different than they used to. People that never downloaded books are now downloading books....

Joan: "I'm going to focus this financially, and I think a lot of people in the community look at this like there are two libraries.... Fifteen to sixteen years after that vote.... We've consolidated under one manager. And then the question is, when we look at that library is there, you know they have too much stuff. Well, part of it is, like Gail said, we're ordering a lot of duplicate stuff.

Jill: "We do have to have extra books for the bookmobile that we would normally circulate here and at Stutsman County, but it has to go on the bookmobile as well. So there's a lot of duplicates for that reason."

Joan: "There's a lot of different ways as far as looking at the alternatives, you know, one of them is that this is the book place; the other is more of an open area type thing where more of the programs are offered and that type of thing."

Gail: "I'm surprised somebody hasn't held this board to task years ago. We voted to consolidate. What are they doing?"

Joe: "They didn't vote the money."

Joan: "When you do a consolidation, that's why you do it. The basic reason you're doing it is to save money. Take a look at what's going on there. You have two locations, you have heating, you have utility costs, you have all of that going on.... You have staffing at two different locations. The question is, how many people actually go to Stutsman County Library?"

Joe: "About 30 per day."

Joan: "That's 4 people an hour."

Joe: "Yeah, but the primary service of that collection is the bookmobile going out. You guys have talked quite a bit, so I've got some things to say, and that is, that at this point and time if we do anything that limits the bookmobile, we lose our County people. That is their lifeline to our library and to library service in general. Some of those people out there don't even have Internet out there because it is just not available. A lot of schools that we serve have very old collections.... So it is a huge, massive need. We get over 90% of the people on the bookmobile, and this is an estimate of mine, but over 90% are kids, children. These are our readers of the future. Some of them are from daycares in Jamestown but the majority are from kids in the County who are drawn to reading because of those books on the bookmobile. So whatever you talk about, if you're talking about, you know, somehow getting rid of Stutsman County Library and get rid of the bookmobile and I don't want to put words in your mouth, but if you are, you are costing us the support in the County. Then, if you are talking about getting rid of Alfred Dickey Library, you are costing us the support in the City, because there are some people, yes like you, who might say the library could and should, should've a long time ago moved out of Alfred Dickey Library and Stutsman County Library, consolidated in some new building somewhere. Ok, but if you do that you cost us the majority of our support in Jamestown. So be very careful how you approach this."

Gail: "I don't think we said that, but again, I'm going back to using the football field as an example, because there was a group of people that went 'Oh my God we can never get rid of Ernie Gates Field'.

That was the big thing then. Again, attitudes, thoughts have changed because you know what? Now we have a good idea, we got a good idea that makes sense for this community. That's all I'm saying here, is I want a good idea that makes sense for this community. Now if you can go to the taxpayers and say this is what we're planning on doing, it'll save us this much.... The taxpayers are gonna listen if we, if you educate them. So again, all I'm asking of you guys is to be open-minded, which I don't think anyone is right now, just let stuff absorb. Get the word out that we're looking for ideas. But you cannot ignore the taxpayers that voted to consolidate. They voted to consolidate and I think they kinda forgot the issue because they assumed it was done."

Emmy: "And it partly was but that's where not talking to the public, that's why it's failed. That's why it has to be better now. That's why it hasn't happened."

Carolgene: "And we have one, two, three people, four people here that are responsible to help get that across."

Gail: "We never said a word about the bookmobile, not a word."

Joe: "I'm glad."

Joan: "I don't understand why you would think that, why we would lose the bookmobile?"

Joe: "If you're talking about consolidating in one building, then you're talking about getting out of Stutsman County Library and quite possibly this building. So what I'm telling you is you're offending pretty much everybody while you do it."

Gail: "Here's the deal, again open-mindedness, and I looked online and I think it's Bismarck that runs four vans around. Where they just come to the library, get their books, go and deliver them, and do whatever they're going to do. So if the bookmobile got housed somewhere, stored somewhere, came here to get their books and take off. I mean other libraries do it, but...."

Jill: "It's very difficult."

Gail: "But again, we're not, we shouldn't be talking about the bookmobile right now. We should be talking about the future of the library. What's the future, post-pandemic, people's new habits, because I'm telling you things are changing. With these, with everything, life is gonna be different. Yes, books are important."

Jill: "Well, library services in general are important, it's not just books."

Gail: "Absolutely, absolutely, and we're not saying that.... I don't want to be on here as a troublemaker. All I want us to do, I want us to brainstorm, I want us to be open to ideas, 'cause I'm feeling some heels stuck in. I'm just saying, remember what the taxpayers voted for."

Joan: "When I look at it, I think that in my mind, if I was a taxpayer, and if I voted in 2008 to consolidate the library. And then it's like now they're asking me to, you know, for a new building or whatever. I would be like, well listen you didn't even do what we asked you in 2008, and so I mean I think if that's the way it is, that's going to be part of our discussion as to why, why the taxpayer thinks that it wasn't done."

Jay: "We'll have to explain there wasn't money for one thing."

Joan: "But the whole point that I'm bringing up is that when you do a consolidation, you don't need money. The consolidation in itself, the implication of that, is that you are saving money."

Joe: "Where would you consolidate then that you don't need money?"

Joan: "When you consolidate, consolidate means that you would only have one location, you would not have those utilities, you not have [unintelligible]."

Joe: "And which location would that be?"

Joan/Gail?: "Meaning what?"

Joe: "Which location would it be?"

Joan: "Well that's a decision that the board should have made."

Joe: "Well, is it going to be here or is it going to be over at the County Library?"

Joan: "I'm saying that is a decision the board should've made."

Joe: "Yeah, but which one, though?"

Carolgene: "Shoulda, woulda, coulda isn't going to do it. Now what are we going to portray from now on?"

Gail: "I will not support us vote - and again, that's too strong on my part. I question whether I would support keeping this as a library and building a new one in Jamestown, ND."

Joe: "And you don't have to support it."

Gail: "We need one location."

Char: "We looked into that because we've taken, when we had our first meeting, we talked about some people want one location. Ok, where are we going to, we need to think of safety first, we need to think of the bookmobile because that's our, more people sign out books from the bookmobile than they do from here. So you can't say you're going to lose the bookmobile."

Gail: "I never said that, why [unintelligible]."

Gail: "We've never said lose the bookmobile."

Jay: "I know this is an issue, keep our tone down, and we can discuss it."

Gail: "But we need to, we as a board need to start figuring out what we wanna do before we unleash a realtor, 'cause we don't even know what we need. We don't know how much room we're looking for, we know nothing. So if we are gonna go to one location then you will need a place to store the bookmobile and do all those kinds of things...."

Joe: "Ok, we are not going to operate with a bookmobile stored at a different location because our people work their tails off, and they deserve to be able to move books. We rotate those book on the bookmobile every 3 months. Every month there's a new rotation. We're constantly bringing book bins

onto the bookmobile that are going to the schools. So, so I think to just say well you can park the bookmobile at some off-site garage, no, no you cannot do that here in Jamestown. So that's why I keep coming back to you, you say you can consolidate, but consolidate where?"

Joan: "Ok, well I don't think that. I think that you are putting words in, especially my mouth, as far as the bookmobile goes because I'm not bringing up the bookmobile. I understand the bookmobile is critical. So to me, I am very basically talking about the fact that about location, about consolidation vote was happening, I am not saying the bookmobile should go bye bye. In fact, that isn't even in my mind. So let's get off that path, and let's talk about the consolidation vote and what we do moving forward."

Jessica: "I would like to point out, as a person who has been with consolidated libraries, that it doesn't necessarily mean only one location."

Joan: "I understand that, and I have also, you know, lived in larger cities. I've been in situations where there are multiple locations or whatever. The question I think that we need to find out in a City of 15,000 people, does it make sense to have two locations, and I can't answer that. I will say that based upon the vote in 2008, it appears that the citizens say that it doesn't make sense."

Joe: "They just need to fund it."

Cammie: "The one thing, too, is you're only counting the people in this City. You have to also consider all the people in the rural area as well."

Joan: "I think we just talked about that."

Cammie: "No, you just said that for a town of 15,000 that you don't need two locations."

Gail: "Well how many are in with the County, 26?"

Jessica: "About 5,000."

Joan: "Ok, so a City of 20,000, a County of 20,000, do you need to have two locations? I can't answer that question but I do think it should be on the table as a question."

Jay: "Any more discussion?"

Gail: "What was the purpose of this discussion?"

Joe: "You started it."

Gail: "I know I started it."

Pam: "I would like to move on, I would like to move on Gail."

Gail: "I know, but I want us to get the word out through the media."

Jay: "The purpose of the discussion, from what I can pertain, was to discuss the possibility that we do not need the two libraries. That was the purpose of the discussion, in my opinion. If somebody else has a different opinion, please speak up now."

Joan: "But I also want it on the record that in no way did we imply, or I imply, that I wanted to get rid of the bookmobile. That wasn't even on the radar."

Jay: “No, I did not say that. I said the purpose of the discussion, don’t put words in my mouth, the purpose of the discussion was to discuss whether we need two locations for the library. That was the purpose of the discussion.”

Carolgene: “And we had a good discussion.”

Jay: “And we brought all kinds of other things into the discussion, as normally happens. The thing I hope we can continue to do when we go forward, is we keep our tone down, our attitudes, we’ve all got strong opinions, but we need to keep our attitudes down so that we can have conversation, ok? And discuss, ‘cause we don’t get anywhere when we raise our voices, and we get uptight. So let’s try to keep that in our minds as we go forward. Can we do that? Everybody in agreement with that?”

Joe: “Sorry, passionate about it.”

Jay: “That’s ok. I’m not asking for apologies. Ok, is everybody in agreement that that was the purpose?”

Gail: “Right, but I mean that then should be summarized, like as far as, hey building committee, you got an open slate here. We’re trying to figure out what we want and where it would be.”

Jay: “Our building committee members, some of them, are here, and so we’ll have our minutes and it will go back to them without a doubt. Then we can move forward with the concepts and the ideas that have been presented. Fair enough? Does that meet everybody’s wishes?”

Gail: “I also want to say we were gonna get some media support for ideas.”

Keith Norman: “I’m not going to try to cover this discussion in the coverage of this meeting. I will do a separate story regarding those issues in the next few weeks.”

VISITING OTHER NORTH DAKOTA LIBRARIES

Joe informed the board that he is planning on making some trips to other libraries in North Dakota. He would like to include someone from the Library Building Committee and a Library Board member.

REPORT OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Joe reported that the Friends are currently working on the fundraising letter and he hopes that it will be completed within a month.

REPORT OF THE LBIRARY DIRECTOR

- Joe presented the statistics for the month of April
- Joe reported that in the past two months several staff members completed professional development activities:
 - Ezra Jack Keats Award: 35 Years of Making a Difference in Diversity Picture Books (Public Library Association Webinar): Cammie Trumble
 - Middle Grade Magic (School Library Journal event): Jessica Haugo & Jennifer Senger
 - EZ Proxy workshop (OCLC)—Jennifer Senger
 - Fair Use Gone Viral: Jill Pfaff
 - Connect with Your Community in a Virtual World: Jill Pfaff
 - ND Library Marketing Group: Jill Pfaff

- Joe informed the board the June 9 board meeting will include the Stutsman County Levy Request and 2022 budget

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next board meeting is Wednesday, June 9, 2021, 3:30 pm, ADPL.

ADJOURNMENT

Jay adjourned the meeting at 4:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Pfaff