

Minutes of the James River Valley Library System Board of Directors
Library Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 14, 2021

Board members present were Jay Nitschke, Char Freeberg, Pam Phillips, Joan Morris (via phone), Carolgene Wolf, Emaline Roorda, and Gail Martin. Absent was City Ex-Officio David Schloegel. Also present were Library Director Joe Rector and Assistant Director Jill Pfaff.

Jay called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

MINUTES

Char made a motion to approve the June 9 minutes, seconded by Carolgene. Unanimous aye. Motion carried.

2019 AUDIT REPORT FROM LINDA MOHN

Linda Mohn reviewed the 2020 audit report with the library board.

Pam made a motion to approve the 2020 audit report as presented to the board by Linda Mohn, seconded by Emmy. Roll call vote showed 7 ayes, 0 nays. 0 absent. Motion carried.

FINANCIALS

Joe gave the financial report for the month of June.

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

Char made a motion to approve the bills to be paid, the payroll as paid, and auto pay as paid, seconded by Pam. Roll call vote showed 7 ayes, 0 nays. 0 absent. Motion carried.

BUILDING FUND DEPOSIT

Joe requested \$100,00 be deposited into the building fund.

Gail: "Have we already been through the budget process for 2022 with the City and the County and been approved for everything that you've asked for? I mean, has that all been taken care of?"

Joe: "That will come up in our couple items business from now."

Gail: "Until I know that same amount is coming in, I don't know that I want to, you know what I mean? I'm more of a hey throw \$25,000 in there for now until I find out what the City and County are going to do. To get it back is so cumbersome."

Joe: "I understand what you're saying."

Gail: "And what's the rush to put it there, is my other question?"....

Joe: "We have reserve money from previous years, we've saved \$180,000 from 2019, so we have money sitting available that will end up in CDs once the interest rates go higher. But right now, we're earning more money having it sit in our checking account. I think it's important we keep moving this process forward, I think the board is committed to moving forward in trying to purchase some property, and in order to do that we need to be faithful in yearly setting aside money. Our 2022 budget calls for \$77,000

in savings and that \$77,000 would be targeted toward the building fund, depending on the decision of the library board, at the end of this year.”

Gail: “So, did my question get answered? Is the City and the County giving us the same amount that we asked for?”

Joe: “The City is. I don’t know about the County.”

Gail: “Joan, when are those decisions made?”

Joan: “I’m not sure when the budget meetings are scheduled, but they should be shortly, because I think we should be all done by the 16th of August.”

Gail: “I’m not comfortable until the City and the County say, yep, that’s what you’re getting next year, but you guys go ahead. Because there is a possibility that a City or County government at some point can go, hey, library, no, we’re not giving you that much.”

Emmy: “Because they’re going to keep it for themselves.”

Gail: “Or other agencies need it. I’m hearing other agencies are having fundraisers and other government entities and stuff. I just think we need to be careful and not keep assuming we’re always going to get everything we want.”....

Gail: “My point is, what if we need it for operating? What if something else comes up? What I’m saying is, what if the County and the City don’t give us as much money? Because they can pull the mills back, they can do whatever, and all of a sudden we need that money for operating. We’ve put it in the building fund and we can’t get it out for anything but building. We’re assuming that the County is going to give us what we’re asking for, and I don’t know that we can make.... Joan, can we make that assumption?”

Joan: “I can’t speak for the County at this time, because we’re still pulling together the budget.”

Gail: “I just feel like, what would be the harm in either pulling back the dollar amount, or just putting it on the agenda for next month, until you find out exactly what the County is going to give you?”

Joe: “If the County cuts our budget, I think we would make corresponding cuts in the services that we’re offering the County. So there would be a reevaluation of what we’re planning to spend on the County Library, because we really do need to move forward with this. Because the people of Jamestown and Stutsman County really do need a new facility at some point, this facility, you know my beliefs about it, and I’m a strong supporter of it, but I also recognize that this is not going to be our only library for the next 100 years. So we have to make plans for the future, I think that we need to set aside this money, and make a practice of setting aside this money.”

Jay: “We can’t keep planning for the future and just chit-chat about it. You have to put some money in.”

Gail: “I don’t disagree with any of that, I just wanted approval from both government entities of what we’re going to get before we make a decision on how much money goes into the building fund. If you’re

ready to put \$100,000 in, I'm not going to stop you. I might say I told you so later on but that's fine. I'm more of a get those two things lined up then make your building fund decision. But do what you want."

Carolgene made a motion to approve a deposit of \$100,000 into the building fund, seconded by Char. Roll call vote showed 6 ayes, 1 nay (Gail). 0 absent. Motion carried.

SPACE NEEDS STUDY UPDATE

Joe reported that Lee Dobrinz with JLG Architects did a really nice job of putting together the feedback from those who were able to attend. Attendees included library staff, Friends members, library board members, and library building committee members. Once the space needs study is completed, it will need to be approved by the board, and it will determine what type of space and how much space is needed for the future. Lee would like to have some general public input, so a community meeting will be scheduled in the near future.

STUTSMAN COUNTY LIBRARY BUDGET

Joe said that he emailed Interim Auditor Jessica Alonge and asked if they were envisioning cutting the library budget and when the budget hearings would take place. Jessica said the budget hearings haven't been scheduled yet. She didn't respond to the question of whether they envision cutting the library budget. Joe is concerned, so that is why he is bringing it to the board.

Joe: "Joan do you have anything to share about that? Because you're our liaison. It would be nice to know that there is, hopefully, no looking toward cutting our budget."

Joan: "She probably didn't respond because she doesn't know yet, because we are still in the process of pulling together budget information. So this is her first year there, so actually tomorrow, if I feel well, I'm going to go down there to roll everything together. So I think she didn't respond because she doesn't know, because we still haven't rolled the budget yet."

Joe: "So do you think that our budget should be cut?"

Joan: "I don't know. I mean that's a really good question. I think I have to look at, overall, what's going on in the County. You know there's a lot of stuff going on as far as ADM is coming in, but we gave them some tax incentives for that, for some jobs and stuff. So again, we're just trying to roll the budget over and roll it up and just see where we are for revenue less expenses and what we're doing. So right now, I'm in no position to say one way or the other."

Joe: "As soon as you know, can you email Jay and me and let us know if any cuts are envisioned?"

Joan: "I can't speak for the whole County Commission, so I can't make that call one way or the other."

Joe: "But you're working with Jessica tomorrow, hopefully, on those things."

Joan: "Yes, but I'm rolling up the whole budget and stuff. The County Commission makes the decision. First of all, we got to determine if we're going to have a surplus or a deficit and then if we have a deficit, which I'm kind of thinking that we are, because we have some folks that want to increase some mill levies. So then the question is, ok, then you put on the table as far as how much of a pay increase do the employees want? They've already told us they want a 4% increase. Well then, how much is a 4%

increase? So we have a lot of stuff we got to wade through in order to figure out where exactly we are. I'm in no position now to say one way or the other."

Joe: "But you're not sure we should retain the money we were told we could ask for, which was \$227,000? We were told we could ask for the same amount as we received this year, and we did request that."

Joan: "Yes, so that's the number that's going to be dialed into the preliminary budget, hopefully, tomorrow. Then we can take a peek at it."

Joe: "My problem is that you are our liaison to the County Commission, so we rely on our liaison, we've always had one. We've always been able to rely on that liaison to give us that information and to advocate for the library. But I'm not hearing that you're going to give us that information."

Joan: "I don't know what information you want from me to be honest, because right now, I have no way of knowing how that budget is going to roll together. So I'm not sure what information you want from me."

Joe: "Information I'd like is an email to Jay and me confirming we will be able to receive the amount we request, or that it looks like our budget is going to be cut. If the budget looks like it is going to be cut, then we'll be getting together Friends of the Library and so on and letting people know about that. So that we'll be able to speak to that. I'm not hearing from you that you'll be willing to communicate."

Joan: "I can't speak for the whole commission, as far as, what is going to be cut, if anything, I have no idea."

Jay: "What do you want?"

Joan: "What do I want? I want to have a balanced budget. I want to be able to give our employees a pay increase and I want all of our agencies to be happy with the amounts that they're going to get. Now are they going to get that? I don't know. Because I'm in a position where I'm looking at some of them are asking for large mill increases, so when you go through and you look at that, first of all, make sure that the budget balances, and if the budget doesn't balance, then you're in a deficit, then the question is, do you raise taxes or do you look at programs and decide what should happen, and right now I don't think we're in any position. We might roll things together and turn out that we're good."

Pam: "She's not going to know until the County Commission meets. She's not going to know at all. She's one vote, and we don't know how these other guys are going to roll."

Gail: "This is my point, we don't know what's going to happen."

Joe: "Anyway, I'd just like to have a heads up if those preliminary numbers come out and they're not good for the library. But I'm not hearing that we'll receive a heads up."

Joan: "Well, I don't know, I mean the preliminary numbers come out, everybody is going to be in the same boat. If we can't have the budget tie out, I mean ideally we would not want to have a tax increase because, you know, you go along everybody [unintelligible] and I'm one of them, pay the taxes or whatever. So ideally, in a perfect world, we would be able to have it so that we keep everybody happy

and still not do a tax increase. And how you would do that is we're going to have the valuation increase of the homes and the farmland that might be enough, hopefully, to cover all the increases that are being requested. But we got some people coming out of the woodwork. You know, for example, Central Valley Health, they need an increase in their mills, and I think everyone understands, you know, what's going on with that. So you know its priorities and stuff like that, and as of this point and time, I don't have a clue. We don't know yet-we're behind the game."

Joe: "Ok, well thank you. That gets us as far as we can."

Joan: "One issue that I have, and I don't want to keep bringing it up, and you guys got to help me out here. I'm trying to figure out why the Stutsman County Library is open. What is it that they do that Alfred Dickey Library doesn't do? You guys gotta give me some ammunition."

Char: "In the County, you're responsible to the County, the schools depend on the bookmobile."

Joan: "Ok, but I'm not talking about the bookmobile. I totally get that. I totally understand the outreach that it does and I really appreciate the outreach that it does. But I'm talking about physically having the library open. Why? Tell me."

Char: "One thing, you need to have the storage of the books. We cannot have the number of books that the County Library has in this library [Alfred Dickey Public Library]."

Joan: "But you don't need the library open to have storage."

Char: "Where are you going to find that storage if you don't have the library?"

Joan: "Well, you have the building, but you don't have it open to the public."

Char: "Ok, well where are you going? You can't have the bookmobile outside being loaded in the middle of winter with the staff."

Joan: "Ok, but I'm not talking about the bookmobile."

Char: "But that's part of the County Library."

Joan: "Well, they're going to have [unintelligible] at the County Library to load the bookmobile. I mean, I get questions all the time, why is there the County Library, and I'm kinda like frozen in my tracks. I need some ammunition that would make sense to the general taxpayer that I can use."

Emmy: "But also both libraries are busy. People us both libraries. People go to Stutsman County. They both got patrons going."

Joan: "Yes, but I'm talking 40 people a day that can easily be handled by Alfred Dickey."

Jill: "Where would you put the books, though?"

Joan: "That's what I'm saying, you don't need to have the books. You can keep the building and just have it as storage."

Jill: "Ok, but if those 40 people that want to get those books that are at Stutsman County, where are we going? Are we going to run over there and get 'em or..."

Gail: "They just have to come here and..."

Jill: "But the books won't be here."

Joan: "They have one library that is, whatever you call it, like it is now."

Jill: "But then they also use the computers over there..."

Joan: "The only reason I'm asking these questions is I'm playing devil's advocate. But I'm kinda tap dancing now when people ask me, and it's like I need ammunition. That's what I'm asking you for, ammunition."

Gail: "That's what I'm talking about since I've been on the board. I voted 11 years ago or whatever it was, to consolidate. I assumed there was one library. I had no idea that two were still fully functioning. A lot of the taxpayers don't know that."

Jill: "I'm not even from here, and I knew that, and I didn't work here."

Gail: "Yes, but there's a lot of people that are angry that in a town this size that has two libraries."

Jill: "But there are towns that are smaller than this that have multiple branches."

Joan: "All I'm saying is give me some ammunition."

Jay: "Well there is also people that are thrilled that we have the two libraries."

Emmy: "The ammunition is that there are people that use that, there are programs that are at that library that are not at this library. And the ammunition is that they're providing a service to this community."

Joan: "If I sit here and do the calculations on the cost of keeping Stutsman County Library open and functioning on a per patron dollar vs Alfred Dickey, it's by far there's no contest."

Jill: "But if you include the bookmobile with that because that needs to be..."

Joan: "I'm not talking about the bookmobile."

Jill: "I realize that but that is part of it. That's what I'm saying. You still need to include that."

Joan: "No it's not. That bookmobile right now is stored over there, I get that."

Jill: "But the books that are there and..."

Joan: "I understand that you need to have a functioning library."

Emmy: "Yes, but it is a functioning library. The books that are at Stutsman County are switched out of the bookmobile and put in the Stutsman County Library. The bookmobile books are not at Alfred Dickey. They are..."

Joan: "Well, they could be."

Emmy: "No, they could not be because there's no room."

Joe: "No, they couldn't be."

Jay: "We don't have room."

Joan: "Then you have the bookmobile books be stored over in a library that's just a storage area for the bookmobile."

Jill: "Then you're eliminating services that the library actually offers as well."

Joan: "Then tell me what services that Alfred Dickey doesn't."

Jill: "Computers, Wi-Fi, photocopier..."

Joan: "They have that all at Alfred Dickey."

Jill: "Right, but we need that in addition. There are times when we have our computers are full at Alfred Dickey and we send them over to Stutsman County and that happens regularly."

Gail: "Well, and Joan I don't disagree with you and I don't disagree with you people, but I think Covid has changed everything. I think that the people that used to have to come down to the library all the time for computers, they probably have access elsewhere."

Jill: "We have a significant amount of people that don't even have computers in their home and so they... That was a travesty during Covid."

Gail: "During Covid, ok. But like I said, this is an issue. It's a huge issue for the taxpayers."

Jay: "But it's not an issue that can be solved at this meeting."

Gail: "No, but again what I'm saying is we just got to be careful. I mean like budgeting and throwing money into the building fund and there's a lot of departments that are struggling big time and looking for mill increases, and as a taxpayer, and I see the library running two facilities with a million dollars in savings and these other places are wanting mills, and I'm going, oh my God..."

Joe: "A million dollars in savings?"

Gail: "Well, a million dollar budget. We do got to be careful."

Carolgene: "I think we are as careful as we can be."

Joan: "I don't know if we're going to solve this today. Hopefully, you understand where I'm coming from."

Pam: "The public meeting that's coming up we better be prepared to answer those questions. Because if Joan's got those questions, other people are going to have them, too, and we got to be able to answer that."

Emmy: "And we need to be able to show the difference between the two and why there's two right now. And why we need to change it."

Char: "But then, Joan, let me say, go over to the public library and go to Stutsman County Library, go in there and look at the bookmobile, walk through the bookmobile, ask the employees there how many times they change out those books, how many boxes of books they take to the county schools and county senior citizens centers. I don't know if you have those numbers and then when someone asks you, you can give them a list of the things that they do at Stutsman County."

Joan: "Right."

Char: "Right now you don't know that and you're kinda... the way it sounds to me, and I apologize if I'm wrong, but you don't... You seem to be not real impressed with the idea that we want to build a building or buildings or whatever it is going to be, but you need to know when you're on this board and representative of the County what we're doing for the County and the City. I know you don't know what's going on."

Joan: "I have no opinion as far as that-to me is a decision that somebody else is going to make as far as what you do with the building or whatever. But what I am talking about is when my training is such that I go in and I look at this and I see a duplication of service, and then I wonder why."

Emmy: "But it really isn't. Have you been...."

Joan: "And don't throw the bookmobile in there because I get it. I totally get the bookmobile. I am talking about the library itself. "

Emmy: "Have you been in the library?"

Gail: "Yes, at the last meeting."

Joan: "I have been in the library, I understand the library. It's just you gotta look at where I'm coming from, and I have questions."

Jay: "Thank you for your input. We've got to move on."

BANKING UPDATES

Carolgene made a motion to remove Lynn Krueger, Ilana Xinos, and Ramone Gumke from all library accounts at Unison Bank; and add Joan Morris and Pam Phillips; and continue requiring two signatures for library accounts; and establish a safe deposit box at Unison Bank with Joe Rector and Jill Pfaff having

authorization to access the box, one signature required, and auto-paid yearly, seconded by Gail. Joan and Gail requested to be removed from the motion.

Pam moved to amend the motion to eliminate Joan Morris and Gail Martin from being added to all library accounts at Unison Bank, seconded by Gail. Roll call vote showed 7 ayes, 0 nays. 0 absent. Motion carried.

Roll call vote for the original motion showed 7 ayes, 0 nays. 0 absent. Motion carried.

POLICY REVISION FOR JUNETEENTH HOLIDAY

Char made a motion to add the Juneteenth holiday to the policy manual, seconded by Carolgene. Roll call vote showed 7 ayes, 0 nays. 0 absent. Motion carried.

RELAXING COVID RESTRICTIONS

Gail made a motion to relax COVID restrictions by granting two 30-minute sessions for adult computers, remove one-hour COVID time limit, and remove quarantine for returned items; seconded by Emmy. Roll call vote showed 7 ayes, 0 nays. 0 absent. Motion carried.

REPORT OF THE BUILDING COMMITTEE

Joe and Char reported that at the last Building Committee meeting they discussed the space needs study, possible locations of a new library, and the pros and cons of different ideas. The next Building Committee will be July 28.

REPORT OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Joe reported that the Friends appeal letter has raised \$15,350 and money is still coming in.

REPORT OF THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

- Joe presented the statistics for the month of June
- Staff meeting discussions
 - Discussion on outreach and programming plan draft
 - Discussion on space needs study
- Library visits to other libraries in the area are coming
- Bookmobile outreach efforts
 - Stutsman County fair with face painting and bookmobile survey
 - Little Free Libraries will be installed in Cleveland, Ypsilanti, and Pingree; bookshelves will be placed at Kensal café and Woodworth café
 - Joe and bookmobile staff will be going door to door in some of the smaller rural communities to share what the library and bookmobile have to offer
- Joe shared the bookmobile survey from the County Fair
- Staff are requesting donations to the Friends for a staff event to be held this summer. We thank those who have already donated.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next board meeting is Wednesday, August 11, 2021, 3:30 pm, ADPL.

ADJOURNMENT

Jay adjourned the meeting at 4:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Pfaff