

Board of Trustees , Washington Public Library

March 27, 2023

The meeting was called to order by President Diane Lick, who led the Pledge. Members present included: Diane Lick, Doug Holdmeyer, Susan Wehmueller, Leanne Gisburne. Mike Couter, Katie Schonaerts, Lynn Hart and Carolyn Witt. Also in attendance was Ethan Colbert of the Missourian.

Sue moved that the agenda be approved. Motion seconded by Leanne and the motion carried. Mike moved that the minutes be approved, seconded by Leanne. Motion carried.

Friends of the Library Report: The Friends and the Washington Library continue to sponsor the library's reading programs and has allocated gift certificate money for the summer reading program. No lobby book sale during the month of April, due to ongoing HVAC construction.

Library Director's Report:

Statistics and Collections: February 2023 statistics are attached. The YA section was closed all of February and many parts of the adult section as well. Despite those limitations, it was a good month for circulations! Nelson brought attention to the continuing high numbers of passport applications, which is an often overlooked (though modest) revenue stream for the library. The staff who process and are so helpful to the public in this work are to be highly commended! This may reflect on our continued high numbers as word of mouth is very positive.

Facilities: Veregy has been very helpful with communication, due to a project manager on site (Josh) to manage the entire installation. Recurring meeting every two weeks. Emails weekly. Lots of conversations happen in the library. Work remains on schedule (!) to finish at the beginning of May. Nelson does regular walk through for safety and other issues that may arise.

Construction work reality changes often, sometimes in our favor, sometimes not. Nelson's mantra remains : The Library will do what it needs to keep construction on schedule. Flexibility the key and a continuing challenge to both staff and public. The awesome staff is highly commended for everyone working together to develop alternate operations workflow while office area is closed. The back half of the meeting room space is currently an office/sorting area for now.

Zone 2 is completing this week and next. As this happens, the office area and adult fiction will be re-opened. Adult fiction and non-fiction is open, but 70% of NF is still in boxes. The YA area will open soon, at which point the entire 2nd floor will be complete!!

We (Fire Department, Building Maintenance, City Emergency Manager and Nelson) decided to take advantage of financial support due to this project and install a new fire alarm system that is consistent with the Fire Department's strategy for the City of Washington. This work means the library must be

closed for TWO days. The library will open for the city election, but will close the following two days (4/5-6).

When the library opens April 7, we anticipate that we will be starting Zone 3 work: children's area, downstairs hallways and meeting rooms. Most of the floor will be closed to patrons. Patrons will be able to use the main entrance and the elevator to access the second floor. Full time staff have many options, from using personal leave, trainings/work from home/ to altering their schedules for the week. Nelson was working with them individually.

Storytimes will be held in the City Council Chambers in April. (Library Board Meeting) No access to Friends Book Sale area.

Budget/Staffing: Budgeting for 2023-24 starts soon, when Finance is ready.

Technology/Communications: The library is going to move to a library-specific email/marketing program called LibraryAware. It costs more than using some generic online tools, but you get what you pay for. In this case, we get a much more useful product. The library can take a huge leap forward in email communications, effective signage, reader's advisory, social media presence and website...all with vendor support. The Friends will support the 1st year.

Legislative Session: Proposed House Budget \$4.5 million cuts to Missouri Library State Aid. WPL was awarded \$6,301.41 in State Aid this year. In addition we received \$7,548.59 in A&E funds. (These not currently affected.) Nelson had three comments:

*This will be devastating to rural libraries, where the State Aid can be a significant percentage of their budgets. These cutbacks will be felt first and foremost in the rural areas of the State. Some of these libraries are part of the Missouri Evergreen consortium and we want Missouri to have effectively-funded libraries throughout the State.

*Missouri needs to demonstrate a "Maintenance of Effort" commitment to support the State's libraries. The Feds evaluate this effort and this plays a role in Federal funding decisions. Zeroing-out of State aid can jeopardize future funding for Missouri libraries. The State Library receives Federal funds to disperse as grants. WPL has used these grants to fund Hotspots, computers and laptops, a self-checkout station, STEAM Kits, Author events, staff professional development, access to online databases and other purposes.

*There is a narrative building that the library is doing bad things. Counter-messaging that is difficult. I am concerned that this is sending a message that Missouri doesn't support its libraries. There is potential for this to damage Missouri libraries for years in the future. Libraries are part of the economic development of this State. Business and companies look for strong library systems when they make decisions about where to locate or re-locate.

HB 986 – The bill requires any public library or public library district to use the proceeds from any tax, fine, fee or borrowed funds for inventory for lending to the public, as specified in the bill. It specifies that the class of items lent by a public library must be cataloged by the Library of Congress. A public library or public library district may lend an item prohibited by the bill as long as the item is donated or otherwise purchased using donated funds...or otherwise acquired as no cost to the public library/library district.

*This may affect a libraries ability to lend hotspots, games, STEAM kits, pots and pans, fishing poles or other items. Or it might not. Again, this affects rural libraries the most, who will have more struggles raising funds to purchase materials.

*The State Government is proposing they are responsible for prohibiting categories of things that libraries offer in their collections. Libraries offer special, non-traditional collections as a response to community needs. Lending materials is our core service. I don't think we want the State prohibiting what materials libraries can offer.

HB 1159 and HB 1238 have both been read a second time (no status change from last Board meeting).

Programs:

Re-cap: Family Reading Night, March 3 at WMS; I Spy with my little Eye Train Display, March 1-31; Tim Grove, Telling History's Stories, March 7th; Financial Planning Seminar for Seniors, March 9th; Kick Off of Community Read, March 11th (Walking with Petey); Ed Wheatley, Sports Memories March 16th; Yoga with Sara (Community Read), March 22; WPL Night at the Big Blue Observatory in New Haven, March 25th; Franklin CO Humane Society (Community Read) March 28th.

Upcoming: Purina Dog Show, April 1@2 pm at the Fair Grounds; The Power of a Plant, April 2@4 pm; Community Read wrap-up event, Thursday 4/13 @ Union Library...Author lecture; Community Reads wrap-up event, Friday 4/14 @ Washington West Elementary, cooking demonstration and food (!)/health/plant vendors; Patrick Murphy: Prayer, 4/20@6:30 pm@ Council Chambers.

Leanne moved that the Librarian's Report be approved. Lynn seconded the motion, which passed.

Unfinished Business: See HVAC above.

New Business: None

There being no further business, Lynn moved that the meeting be adjourned. Katie seconded the motion, which carried.

Next Meeting: April 23, 2023 (No May meeting)