

Brownell Library Trustees Meeting Minutes 03/19/2024

Brownell Trustees in attendance: Dottie Bergendahl, Beth Custer, Helen Donahey, Jeanne Grant (online), Karen Hergesheimer, Linda Costello, Andy Kolovos, Christine Packard, Sheila Porter, Gabby Stevenson (Teen Trustee), Lily (Teen Trustee), Ann Wadsworth.

Brownell Staff in Attendance: Wendy Hysko, River W.

Other Attendees: Elaine Haney (City Councilor)

Meeting called to order at/by: 7:00PM/Christine

1. Agenda Changes/Deletions

None

2. Public to be Heard

Elaine Haney introduced herself, discussed budget process and how City Council would like to move forward between the City Council and Trustees. Clarification from Christine that Trustees have a direct line of communication to City Councilors which is different than city employees/departments who need to communicate through the City Manager and their department heads.

Ann thanked Elaine for coming to the meeting and her comments this evening.

Dottie thanked Elaine for her middle line approach to the budget discussions.

Linda offered to tell stories to children at the library – River will call Linda to set something up.

3. Announcements

Christine reminded everyone of Library Trustees on the ballot in the coming election.

Beth Custer didn't get her petition in on time and needs 30 write-in votes to get elected.

Christine discussed the Open meeting law webinar for committees being held on Wed. April 17 from 10-11:30am – in person at Lincoln Hall or online but you need to RSVP by 3/29 to attend. The email did not state it would be recorded.

Wendy reminded everyone about the movie *The Public* on 3/20/24 with a discussion following.

Sheila shared a conversation with Harlan over February school break at Maple Street Park. Harlan asked about an unhoused person at Brownell last summer who didn't get no trespassed, but an individual recently got no trespassed and he wanted to get clarity on the differences. Sheila gave him the explanation that one was following the rules of the library, and the other person was not. Public library rules should be followed and library patrons' discomfort of someone's appearance is not one of the rules that would cause a no trespass. There was discussion to get rid of the couches to keep people from sleeping in the library but there are not funds currently to replace furniture. "Snuggling teens" has also been an issue that staff has had to work with regarding appropriate behavior in the library.

4. Minutes of Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Corrections:

Dottie requested the following changes to the February 20, 2024 minutes:

Current language:

“Dottie reported on a discussion regarding storage of extra food for the Library food pantry in light of the upcoming renovations to Lincoln Hall.”

Change to:

“Dottie reported on a discussion regarding storage of extra food for the Teen Center food pantry in light of the upcoming renovations to Lincoln Hall.”

Dottie moved approval of the minutes and Sheila seconded.

Trustees voted unanimously to approve the minutes as revised.

5. Financial Report

Ann reported that the checking account is at \$1,986.78 interest of \$10.54 was added for this period.

Dottie clarified that the budget overview printed on 12th of month is through the end of the month prior.

Dottie discussed on the BL Library Budget Update_Feb24 – several of the account line items (such as Technical Services, Tech: Equip/Hardware, and Machinery & Equipment) have very low spends so far and asked if there were plans to spend the rest of it. Wendy stated it took a while to get the tax-exempt form in but the computers have now been ordered.

Dottie noted on the BL Buildings Budget Update_Feb24 - Contracted services (Wendy clarified this account line item used to have cleaning in it) is overspent already but everything else is low for spending to date. Wendy clarified that library staff is working with the City to get aligned on what expenditures go in which accounts. An example she gave was R&M Buildings & Grounds has some expenditures that were put into Contracted Services by the City staff. When things break now, they are going into Contracted Services. Cleaning is a new line item that has been added. Wendy is tracking expenditures to help with getting records aligned between City staff and Brownell staff.

Sheila moved acceptance of the financial report. Linda seconded, and the Trustees voted unanimously to approve financial report.

6. Reports

Library Director and Staff Report (enc)

Dottie presented the following questions to the Trustees:

When do we start planning for the Brownell Library 100-year anniversary (May 2026). Response was next fiscal year.

What is the status of Brownell eclipse opening? Christine indicated it was on the Old Business portion of the agenda and would be discussed further there.

When is the Multicultural event indicated on Page 6 of the Staff and Directors Report February 2024? Response from River that it was around May 6 (and would confirm the date with Trustees) and River has some staff lined up to work this event to have a staff presence and share resources. This sounds more like a celebration. Christine offered to have the Trustees help with this rather than using staff resources and River will get the details, date, and bring it back to the group.

Lily is on the environmental club at the high school and reported they put in a pollinator garden with Rotary club at the high school. Lily invited the library to visit the pollinator garden. River will pass this information on to Sarah to get in touch about arranging a trip over.

Ann stated the chess club is a great offering. River is working on getting this more consistently scheduled.

Page 11 of the Staff and Directors Report February 2024 monthly visitors – GA4 (formerly called Google Analytics) is still troubling staff. Karen offered to help with this.

Ann asked why adult programs had 94 support hours and fewer events, while there were more youth programs but fewer support hours. Wendy and Hannah clarified this was due to adult programs having more volunteer support, example of AARP tax services and this is causing a lot of the support hours to increase during the reporting period. Wendy also mentioned that Trustee meeting hours should be counted as support hours which they have not been to date but will be going forward.

7. Committee Reports

No committees

8. Foundation Report

Dottie discussed the following:

Memorial Day (last Sat of May) book sale – do we want to do this? Trustees unanimously agreed that they would like to.

The Foundation voted to approve the book sale, and collect funds from Memorial day until June 15th and give the proceeds to the Trustees. The Foundation would reinstitute the Buck a Bag from June 15th on. June 15 is a donation day for the Foundation.

The Foundation sometimes takes books to 5 colleges book sale in Lebanon but they decided not to do it this year.

The Foundation is looking into the Discovery program – a program for books recycling with a blue bin and someone comes to collect them. They are looking into what this program involvement looks like. Williston has a similar program.

The Book sale money not making as much as it used to so donations to the library may not be as large in the future.

The Foundation is not accepting donations in July and August 2024.

April 20th is the next donation day (3rd Saturday of month)

The Foundation is requesting more information to be able to establish accountability for the money it donates to the library. Line items in the Foundation financial statement need tracking – gifts (large print books and Dorothy Bergendahl) and the Foundation wants to know why the \$5000 being spent all at once? The Foundation would like an invoice with the breakdown of what is being ordered/purchased. Wendy mentioned all the requested data is on a Google spreadsheet that the Foundation has access to. Wendy and staff would help reconnect the correct people to get this information to the Foundation.

The Foundation and Friends used to put a bookplate in every book donated, this has fallen away since they merged. Discussed purchasing a stamp to show their purchases on items they donate.

9. Old Business

Budget hearing follow up – waiting on the vote in 3 weeks.

Elaine stated the City Budget being presented has a 6.6% increase and added that the school budget is being voted on in addition to the City budget. The Informational meeting is April 1 in the evening and will be entirely online/by phone; questions will be taken and moderated.

Christine provided an update on the Right to Read Movie:

April 1, 5:45pm 80 min long with panel discussion after the movie. Presented by EWSD at the high school. The library will be tabling at this event. The 1000 books before Kindergarten program will be advertised and River will provide information on plans for the event. A Request for donations slip will be offered at the table to help provide funding for increasing the decodable reader section at Brownell Library. When the question of average cost per reader was asked, Christine offered to provide this once it is looked into further. Rather than accepting cash donations, River is hoping people donate the actual book and plans to coordinate the purchase with donors. Trustee tabling volunteers are welcome. Tabling is only needed at the beginning of the event before the movie (around 5pm). Please register for the movie if you want to attend or table.

Solar eclipse update by Christine:

Trustees sent their letter to the City Manager to recommend closing the library on April 8 (eclipse day). The response back was that it was not the Trustees place to put this motion forward. Noted that during the Pandemic, Trustees set hours (Policy) and now Trustees are being told they cannot set policy under guidance of the new City Manager. Jeanne stated Regina said this is a city manager decision. We are not a unique municipality, and other municipalities will be open. Christine, Jeanne, Regina, and the City Council plan to meet and go over boundaries and responsibilities. Andy requested boundaries be set so it's clear to Trustees going forward. Also, input on new members of the Brownell Trustee board is another area that Trustees agreed needed to be covered as well in that meeting.

Dottie stated events have changed, schools are now closed, and liability is still a primary concern. Helen echoed this concern of liability, and that the Library Director is not being respected/heard by City management. Discussion of what to go back to Regina with since all options have been refuted by Regina so far.

Elaine added her perspective that this issue has not been shared with City Council. Trustees requested Wendy report back after her meeting with Regina.

Andy exited the meeting at 8:32pm

Roof/door renovation grant update Lincoln renovation update:

Wendy applied for a grant to cover this. The grant was for approximately \$838k including work to reconfigure the location of the front door and create an ADA compliant entry way. The grant is for access to technology, there is \$16 million to distribute with at least one per county to be awarded. Brownell should hear in a couple months. If the grant is not awarded, the roofs will be replaced/fixed, but the front door would not be moved.

Wendy informed Trustees that the Lincoln Hall renovation is starting around August 1. The Senior Center is getting shut down at the end of April. Brownell has offered 2 mornings a week to help with the Teen Center activities. The Teen Center is having trouble finding time after school locations. River mentioned that requests to use space at Brownell has increased significantly lately.

10. New Business

Future Library Trustee appointment brainstorm is being held until the next meeting and will also be discussed during the MOU meeting with the City Manager.

Strategic plan: Jeanne is getting everyone organized to start on this. River, Wendy, and Hannah need to decide the first meeting date and send out information to the committee. It is due July 2025, and is currently lacking community members. Dottie suggested putting a sign by the checkout desks with contact information for people who are interested.

11. Adjournment

Dottie moved to adjourn. Sheila seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:56PM

Minutes submitted by: Karen Hergesheimer