

**North Central Washington Libraries****October 19, 2023****I. Call to Order**

Nancy Churchill called to order the October meeting of the NCW Libraries Board of Trustees at 1:00 p.m. October 19, 2023. The meeting was held in person at the NCW Libraries Board Room with an option to attend virtually.

**II. Attendees**

Attending Board members included Nancy Churchill, Kathleen Allstot, Denise Sorom, Nancy Spurgeon and Jill Sheley (attending virtually). Also in attendance were Barbara Walters, Executive Director; Kim Neher, Deputy Director; Sheila Callihan, HR Director, Aaron Floyd, Director of IT Services; Summer Hayes, Associate Director of Programs and Services, Mike Githens, Interim Director of Finance (attending virtually); Tim Dillman, Executive Assistant.

Guest attendees- Summer Hess, Sage Step Consulting. NCW Libraries Service Managers Abby Osborn, Jessica Lynch, Ash Kunz, Alicia O'dell, and Claudia Bovee attended later in the meeting.

**III. Consent Agenda Items**

- a. October Meeting Agenda (amended)
- b. Minutes of the September 21, 2023 Board meeting
- c. Payroll & vouchers
  - i. September payroll for \$638,842.43 and Benefits for \$220,881.25
  - ii. September Accounts Payable for \$411,556.49
  - iii. Staff Reports

Nancy Churchill recommended a slight correction to the September meeting minutes.

**Kathleen moved to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.**

**Nancy S. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**IV. Financial Report**

Mike reviewed the September revenue with the board. Mike shared that the district should see the second tranche of property tax revenue realized in October. Mike pointed out that the district is still seeing positive investment interest. The district has realized 58% of the 2023 revenue at this point in the fiscal year.

Under the expenses, wages are at 71.34% of budget. Benefits are slightly underspent for the year. Overall, personnel expenses are on track with the budget at 69.2% at the end of September.

Mike pointed out that the Administration Professional Services is higher than budgeted and may require a budget amendment before year end. Organization of Materials is almost overspend due in part to how OCLC charges the district.

Under Facilities, Mike mentioned that the district is preparing to make contributions to cities for partial reimbursement of maintenance expenses. These payments will be approved at the November board meeting.

Overall expenses are at 66.4% of budget for the year.

Mike reviewed fund 647-Reimagining Spaces fund. This fund is also seeing better than anticipated interest revenue returns. Now that work has begun on several branches, expenses for the projects are starting to be realized. The ending fund balanced in September was \$12,126,749.

Mike pointed out to the board that a market analysis report was included in the board packet to give greater context to the state of the economy.

## **V. 2024 Budget Presentation**

Mike gave the board a preliminary look at how the 2024 budget is developing. The current budget is accounting for a 1% levy increase. This would translate to \$152,033.78 in additional property tax revenue. Currently the budget shows an additional \$256,937.09 for new construction. Nancy C. asked for some more detail on how new construction revenue works. Mike explained that the state gives taxing districts a valuation for all new construction in their district. These properties are not yet fully on the property tax roles but the state gives a portion of funds to allow the district to get ready to provide service to these properties. Nancy asked if it is normal for new construction revenue to exceed the property tax revenue increase. Mike said this is typical when there is a robust economy for new building.

Mike drew attention to a few miscellaneous areas. Currently the 2024 budget brings investment interest down to regular levels. The district also will not realize a \$100,000 in gifts for Moses Lake so the budget shows this decrease. All told, revenue for 2024 is expected to be 2.48% more than 2023.

Under expenses, personnel represents 67.5% of the 2024 budget. Supplies are budgeted to be 18% less in 2024 due to focused expense management by several departments. The library materials budget has been cut 12%. This expense represents 9.95% of the overall budgeted expenses. Summer Hayes added that the cuts to library materials represent a thoughtful approach to how to right size branch collections and intentional effort at determining what collection goes where to improve circulation.

Aaron Floyd mentioned that the IT department has made reductions wherever possible without reducing service. Several software costs are rising, but the department is able to realize reductions in expense due to cost savings from moving away from Google and changing the copier provider.

Mike mentioned that liability insurance costs will increase significantly. The expenses for the Moses Lake shelving project which will be realized in 2024 will get carried forward in the 2024 budget. The current budget shows a transfer out to the Capital Reserve Fund for major systems replacements at WPL and the Distribution Center, as well as a transfer out to the an Election Reserve Fund.

Mike finished the presentation stressing that the budget balances 2024 expenses with 2024 revenue.

## **VI. Resolution 23-09: Adopting a Library Branch Siting Policy**

Barbara explained to the board that this policy was modeled after other district policies and provided direction for when and how the board elects to open branches, relocate branches, or close branches. This was important work to do in conjunction with renewing Building Use and Maintenance Agreements.

Nancy C. asked if the action anticipated in the policy would be triggered at the local level or by the district. Kim clarified that it could be either. The policy gives the board authority to accept a move to a new location, or determine that closing a location was necessary. Nancy C. asked if the administrative guidelines are drafted yet, and Kim said they are close to being complete. Kathleen asked if this policy would have prevented NCW Libraries from accepting the move of the Cashmere branch to the Riverside Center, and Kim said it would not have.

**Kathleen motioned to approve Resolution 23-09 Adopting a Library Branch Siting Policy.**

**Nancy S. Seconded. The motion passed.**

## **VII. Executive Director Report**

Barbara let the board know that the updated Building Use and Maintenance Agreement was sent out to cities. A separate agreement is being considered for locations where a Friends of the Library group owns or leases a building.

Barbara gave some brief comments on her time with other library directors at Public Libraries of Washington meeting, held at the Spokane Valley Library District.

## **VIII. Strategic Plan Update**

Summer Hess from Sage Step Consulting reviewed a presentation on the progress of the Strategic Plan with the board. A broad outline of the draft 2024-2026 strategic plan was presented for trustee consideration and high-level feedback.

Nancy C. asked what “celebrating our holidays meant.” Barbara clarified that it is about setting the metrics the district wants to hit and then celebrating when they are achieved. Denise asked that Summer elaborate on a statement that was made about there being a component that would not be made public. Summer clarified that right now there is a hesitancy in getting really concrete on goals. Barbara is proposing that the plan focus more on strategic directions. Kathleen asked for clarity around to whom the board would be sending a letter. Summer mentioned that this was meant to be a letter from the board within the strategic plan, following the model of the previous plan.

Jill asked for clarity on bullet 2A. Barbara said this speaks to upskilling the staff and the desire for every library guest to have a positive, welcoming experience. Jill said she would recommend simplifying this a lot. Nancy C echoed this and added that the paragraph under 2A is really foggy.

Jill asked if the district was having an issue with public safety as it relates to section 3B. Barbara said that safety is always on the administration’s mind, and Kim added that the district has seen an across the board increase in incident reports. Jill commented that it seems that it is more than just an issue of technology improvements. It should be about staff training, partnerships, etc. Kathleen added that she is confused by the coupling of public safety and fiscal stewardship in 3B. Denise agreed that she would take fiscal management out of 3B and added that as the district is looking at the new strategic plan in light of a potential levy lid lift, the idea of reporting back to taxpayers the value of our work and the impact we’re making will be critical to do at the strategic level.

Jill made a final comment that the draft includes a lot of comments about Covid. This doesn’t feel strategic but more reactive.

## **IX. Reimagining Space Report**

Kim shared that the bid opening for the WPL phase 2 project was held on Wednesday, October 18th. The bids came in higher than expected but Amanda Lawson, Kim, and Mike are working on a plan for completing the work.

The Brewster Library refresh is well underway. The Reimagining Spaces team is anticipating a reopening of the branch in early December. Design work on Peshastin is progressing well. The team anticipates completion of the refresh at that branch before a scheduled bridge closure in June 2024.

## **X. Summer Library Report**

Summer Hess introduced the five service managers who attended the meeting. Summer spoke to the overarching goals of the 2023-2025 Summer Library Program and spoke to internal goals that were set for this summer.

Ash Kunz spoke to the first outcome for SLP-Community Partnerships. 59% of libraries established new community partnerships as a result of this year’s summer program.

Abby Osborn said that over 5600 people participated in the summer library program. ¼ of survey respondents identified as first time participants. This year represented the first time that youth materials were broken into 0-5 year olds and 6-11 year olds. Participants really appreciated this change.

Jessica Lynch shared that the teen pack was designed in a way to increase appeal to all different learner and personality types and provide flexibility. The team received 171 survey responses from teens! A lot of the survey respondents said how much fun they had and mentioned that the program increased their reading.

Alicia O'dell said that the team made an effort to simplify the program for adults but try to make it more accessible. There were 3 categories of participation-Read, Act, Discover. They received great feed back from across the system. Some highlights were that 306 adults registered to participate at the Leavenworth branch, and 68 % of all survey respondents said they discovered something new.

Claudia shared that having materials available in both English and Spanish provided opportunities for homes and families to foster communication. One of the intentional goals of this year's program was to invite Latinx community members into the program by incorporating Latinx programs and materials. The district saw a large increase in the usage of Spanish materials. Claudia shared some anecdotes from the Mariachi Noroeste performances that happened at 10 branches over the course of the summer. Claudia mentioned that 11 branches hosted Spanish and/or bilingual programs this summer.

The board expressed gratitude for the amazing work the Service Managers did and the successes of the program.

#### **XI. IT Report**

Aaron shared that the IT team has been very busy this month preparing for the Microsoft migration which is set to happen in early November. The conversion to new copiers in all the branches and at the DC will also be a big lift over the next two months. Aaron reported that the IT department has received 58 tickets so far for the month of October which is about double what is typical.

Aaron also announced the hiring and start of IT Support Technician Roger Garnica.

*\*Jill Sheley left the meeting at approximately 2:50pm*

Aaron shared that a Sharepoint training was held for all staff and was well received. The IT department is busy deploying camera installation at branches, as approved by the board. Aaron gave an example of the level of efficiency the new cameras provide when footage is requested.

In an effort to improve cybersecurity and improve employee experience, the IT department was able to set up Koha (the district's ILS) with single sign-on.

#### **XII. General Discussion**

Nancy C. brought up the question of safety and security at branches and relayed a story about a Friends of the Library member being attacked by dogs at the Curlew branch. A staff member had to chase the dogs off. This led to discussion on the merits of training staff for how to handle potential wildlife encounters.

Nancy S. mentioned that she was in a meeting early in the day with the librarian at the Wenatchee Valley College and the librarian mentioned that she would like to work more closely with NCW Libraries.

**Kathleen motioned to adjourn.**

**Denise seconded. The motion passed.**

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Nancy Churchill, Chair

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Jill Sheley, Secretary