

CHATTANOOGA PUBLIC LIBRARY
1001 BROAD STREET
CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

MINUTES
BOARD MEETING-JANUARY 18, 2023
12:00 p.m.

The Board of Directors of the Chattanooga Public Library met on January 18, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. with Acting Board Chair, Dionne Jenkins, presiding.

Ms. Anna Taylor called the roll. The following members were present:

Dionne Jenkins
Erik Broeren
Jess Friedowitz
Tom Griscom
Anna Taylor

Also present: Richard Beeland, Deputy Executive Director; Jason Sullivan, Chief Administrative Officer; Sheldon Owens, Operations Manager; Richard Groves, Assistant Director of Technology; Natalie Phillips, Finance Manager; Michael Watson, Development Director; Christina Sacco, Public Relations Coordinator; Lee Hope, Head of Children's Services; Carol Green, Head of Collections Services; Edward Hawkins, Library Services Specialist; Valerie Malueg, City Attorney; and Aamna Fazlic, member of the public.

Ms. Dionne Jenkins, Action Board Chair, called the meeting to order. There was not a quorum for this board meeting therefore motions and minutes were unable to be approved. Ms. Jenkins noted that the October 18, 2022 meeting minutes will be approved at the February 15, 2023 board meeting.

Ms. Jenkins brought forth topics to discuss and vote in at the February 15, 2023 board meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Ms. Natalie Phillips, Finance Manager, reported:

RECEIPTS: 51% remaining of the operating budget to be received for the fiscal year 2022-2023

EXPENDITURES: 55% remaining of the operating budget to be expended for the fiscal year 2022-2023

Items of note: We received the first of two biannual distributions for endowments from Noone and Kemmer:

- We received \$36,966.18 from Noone
- We received \$479.65 from Kemmer

FOUNDATION REPORT:

Mr. Michael Watson, Development Director, made the Foundation Report on behalf of Meg Beene. The Foundation held its annual meeting on December 1, 2022, followed by two days of a Sip & Shop, a new event for them to raise money. They raised a little over \$1,000 at the Sip & Shop, and they plan to do more events like this on a quarterly basis in 2023.

To date, the Foundation has received \$92,500 to support the Americans and the Holocaust exhibit. We are hosting our special preview on January 26 at 6 pm, and we would love everyone to attend.

Tom Griscom asked if we will be recording the events and sharing the videos on our website. Christina Sacco, Public Relations Coordinator, said that we will record at all events and share those videos on YouTube, as well as have a crew from WTCI-PBS to record interviews with people coming out of the exhibit on our special preview night. WTCI also plans to feature the footage in a documentary about the Chattanooga area.

COMMITTEE REPORT:

Finance Committee

Natalie will send this

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Beeland, Interim Executive Director, began his report by letting the board know that we are promoting *Americans and the Holocaust* and the special event with an Instagram Live at noon the next day (January 19) with our guest speaker, Dr. Peter Hayes, and Alison Lebovitz with WTCI.

Mr. Beeland said on Monday, January 23, the executive staff will give a presentation on our current stats to the Mayor's cabinet. Stats are discussed every Monday, but once a month we are invited to give a presentation as well. Mr. Beeland shared the slides that will be presented.

As you can see, our target for circulation this year is 1.2 million, and we are currently at 584,797 right now. If you look above that, the current year-to date-total 89,234 is listed, as well as the YTD totals for the previous month and the same month last year. We are where we need to be right now, so if things continue as they are, we will meet our target.

We also provide programming information that shows we are growing attendance and the number of programs, and then we report out the net promoter score. As you know, we use comment cards and surveys, and we usually rate 80% or above. But, the Mayor's interested in the net promoter score which is a how many people would recommend your business or service to someone else. So, we are now reporting that by calculating a total percentage based on both good and bad scores. No other department is really doing this, but none are as public facing as we are.

Ms. Jenkins interjected to ask if everyone had a chance to tour the Library branches. She said, "It is really important to hear for yourself from both the staff and the public. It is engaging and uplifting to see the work we are supporting first hand."

Mr. Beeland continued to present the next slide, regarding the impact of programming, and he thanked Richard Groves for helping to create a simple way of reporting. It is important that what we give people is easy to understand. Here is what we are reporting, and these are just from our 2nd quarter:

- 1,200: The number of adult cardholders has increased by over 1,200
- 60%: Juvenile items account for 60% of physical circulation
- 49: Staff have done 49 outreach events at schools, community fairs, and other events
- 112: The Library has hosted 112 STEAM events
- 474: The Library has held 474 storytimes, toddler times, and baby bounces

Executive Director Search

We have posted the open position on Friday, January 13, 2023, and it will be up for 30 days. It is on the City's website, and we are utilizing the City's HR department to do this search. It is also being promoted through the American Library Association, Public Library Association, Tennessee Library Association, and the Georgia one as well. I also know the City has posted it on Indeed and other sites like that.

After the 30 days are up, our HR Business Partner Michelle Fisher will go through all the applications and select the ones that meet the minimum qualifications, and those applications will be sent individually to the search committee. The committee is made up of five board members, City Councilman Ledford, and a representative from the Mayor's office. Each will go through and rank the applicants in their order, and send them back to HR. HR will then pick a number of those to set up with virtual interviews. The committee will do the interviews and rank those candidates again, in the order of preference. From that list, we will shake out 2-3 candidates to have come for an in-person interview. The person chosen from those will be the one the committee recommends to the board for hire.

Another component we have thought about is to allow the candidates to meet our staff. Interact somehow, maybe virtually, and field some questions.

Ms. Jenkins asked if there is a link to the City's website and whether we are sharing it on social media. Ms. Sacco replied that while we do not have a LinkedIn presence, we will be posting it on all our other social accounts. She also added that the City will most likely run ads on social media. Ms. Jenkins said she encourages everyone on the board to help get the word out so we can find the best candidates.

Mr. Beeland added that you can find the posting on the City's website through the career services tab.

Tom Griscom asked if there would be someone from the CPL Foundation serving on the committee. Richard Beeland replied that yes and apologized for overlooking that earlier.

We have one item we would like to vote on for the next meeting, when we have a quorum. As you know we give students at Hamilton County Schools a free Library card, but we do not offer one for teachers. This is something that has come up many times. The majority of those teachers most likely live in the city and have access to a card, so this would not be the same way we give them to kids where we bring them to the schools. It would just be something we would make

available to them. If they want one, it is free no matter where they live. That is what we want to vote on at our next meeting.

Mr. Griscom pointed out that if we are going to do this program for teachers, we need to do it before the end of the school year. We cannot wait until, say, April. Is there any way that the staff, with support from the Mayor, can do this without waiting for a meeting where we can vote on it?

Valerie Malueg, City Attorney, said that the statute is pretty clear that the Board is in charge of making all decisions for the Library, and Richard Beeland, unfortunately, cannot make that decision unilaterally.

Mr. Griscom then asked, outside of a regular meeting, does the law allow us to bring a question to the board electronically?

Ms. Jenkins replied no.

Mr. Beeland then said, this brings up an important topic – I know the board wants to look into and have deeper conversations about our issue reaching a quorum.

Ms. Malueg asked, does the board bylaws have something about members attending a certain number of meetings? Mr. Beeland replied, yes.

Mr. Griscom then asked if we are able to have a one-time only meeting electronically.

Ms. Malueg said that that question was looked into many years ago, and they discovered that the statute that affects us only applies to state boards, not county or municipal boards. So we cannot, say, have a proxy attend to make a quorum or have it electronically. That is the way the law is written currently. All board members have to be physically present and have a quorum to make a decision.

Mr. Beeland moved on to address another thing we will be talking about through the year is that the Library and City are going into a new budget season, and we are expecting a flat budget, not just for the Library but across the city. Because of this, there are many things we will need to adjust to meet that. One would be a change in operating hours, such as when we adjust Sunday hours, but if we have to make adjustments, we will have to bring that to the board.

Another thing we need to address is the number of times we meet. Sometimes we do not need to meet for a while, but when you do, you need to meet that month. But, we can figure something out – bimonthly, quarterly, and as need. Boards across the city do it a variety of

ways. Ms. Malueg said that one board she works with went to quarterly and experienced a much easier time maintaining a quorum.

Mr. Beeland then moved on to talk about the employee engagement surveys that were conducted citywide. Once we reviewed the results, we had the employees come back in and tell us how we could be doing things better. They formed committees on different topics, and are now meeting to discuss and report back to us. We will have a meeting this Friday (January 20, 2023) to present these findings. Topics range from compensation to communication and security. Our hope is to address all these things on a monthly basis.

Anna Taylor asked, if this is something the City requested and if so, what is their role to helping achieve results?

Mr. Beeland, well when it comes to compensation, the City has talked about doing 3 things:

1. Create a step plan for pay increases,
2. An annual cost of living increase
3. More responsibility regarding how managers approve PTO, such as if an employee turns in a request 2 weeks ahead of time, supervisors will have 24 hours to approve or talk to you about it.

Overall, the City has been very supportive of us meeting with employees to find ways that will address concerns.

The last item we have today is a presentation. We decided to use each meeting to explore a continuing education type topic. Anna Taylor made a suggestion that we start with a presentation on the Lifecycle of a Book. The next one we will do is a presentation about programming, and for that one, Richard and Lee will talk about the standards we use at the Library.

Presenting today is Jason Sullivan, Edward Hawkins and Carol Green.

Mr. Sullivan began. A Library where nobody wanted the books on the shelves and no one could find anything when they looked for a book, is not a successful Library. The Chattanooga Public Library does not have that problem.

The team that receives everything in the Library – from googly eyes and glitter to chainsaws and books – is the Collection Services team, located in our basement. That team is made up of Carol and Edward here, and Elizabeth Lawrence.

Ms. Green followed by saying, we do what is called Evidence Based Purchasing. What that means is that we look at statistics, what's hot, and circulation statistics to help find gaps in the collection, such as new hobbies. We also use our patron request program, where patrons contact us asking for specific titles.

Once items come in, they go to Edward Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins introduced himself. He and Elizabeth receive items, check to make sure the invoices are correct, and then we check to make sure IP records in the system are correct. After that, items get sent to our page Kim Foster, who then scans items in and distributes them to locations.

Mr. Sullivan said these are the steps we take that help our circulation numbers. Another thing that is also very important to remove books from shelves. We do not want people come in and find moldy or damaged books on the shelves. This is called Weeding, removing books from the collection that no one wants, are damaged, etc. Every time we do a big weeding project, we see at least a 10% increase in circulation.

Ms. Green said weeding is actually as deliberate as purchasing. When we go in to look at weeding, we look at a few things. Such as, the average lifespan of a book is 50-60 circulations. Once it reaches 100, the book starts falling apart. Then there is the occasional dog toy and natural disasters, like the tornadoes that hit East Brainerd a few years ago. We also then look at the accuracy of the information, new scientific discoveries for example. We want to make sure a book remains accurate. And then there are the books that were hot that become not so hot. We will order a number of them when the book is hot, but when the popularity goes down over time, we remove those extra copies if they have not already fallen apart.

As you can see, our weeding is taken just as seriously as our purchasing.

Ms. Jenkins asked if when books are taken out of circulation, is that when the books go to the CPL Foundation? Ms. Green said yes, if they are in good shape, we send them to the Foundation. If they are not, we remove the cover and recycle the pages.

Michael Watson, Development Director, clarified what happens with the books that go to the Foundation. He said there are hundreds of thousands of books in the basement. When books first come in and get processed, the titles are first run through a website to see if the book has good online sales. If they do, we will list them online, but if they do not, they will get boxed for a book sale.

Ms. Taylor, asked Ms. Green whether she was in charge of the digital items. Ms. Green replied yes. Ms. Taylor followed by asking, why is there a limit of 5 on digital items when the circulation is quite high?

Ms. Green said it comes down to budgeting. For example, when we first got hoopla, our budget was running over \$300,000 a year. So we had to cap the number of downloads to 5 and an overall budget under \$299,000. We are now experiencing similar issues with OverDrive. Example, we currently have 115 digital audio copies of the new Prince Harry book, and those are \$47.50 each. When you have to deal with that many copies, you have to limit how much you can spend. We are now looking at what we can do to bring that budget under control as we move forward.

Also, a lot of our visually impaired patrons are using our digital collection more and more. Instead of using large print, which were heavy bulky books, they can now use the digital version for ease of reading.

Mr. Beeland pointed out that our digital collection is so heavily used, it is now really its own Library branch. He also said that tearing covers off books for recycling is labor-intensive.

Ms. Jenkins asked if volunteers could be used to help with recycling. Ms. Green said they have found in the past that volunteers often have a hard time tearing up books, and many want to save everything.

Mr. Sullivan wrapped up his presentation by pointing out that the Collection Services team processed 22,000 items last fiscal year. There is no one else doing that job, so we really appreciate them.

Mr. Beeland said that concludes the Director's Report.

Mr. Erik Broeren asked if we could have a meeting next week instead of waiting a month to vote on items. Ms. Malueg pointed out that we have to post a notice about our meeting in the paper, and since the paper only prints on Sundays now, we have to send our notices over 10-11 days beforehand, which means we need more time to post a meeting notice.

Ms. Jenkins asked about old business and new business to address. No one had any to bring up. Ms. Jenkins said that she has one item to bring up.

When she takes over as Board Chair later this year, she will need a new incoming chair nominated. We will need a nominating committee for that, so if you are interested in serving on that, please let her know. She asked Ms. Malueg if that could be done via email, and Ms. Malueg said she encourages phone calls instead as a precaution.

Without a quorum and no more items to adjust, Ms. Jenkins called the meeting to adjourn.

Ms. Dionne Jenkins, Acting Board Chair, adjourned the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

Mr. William Sundquist, Board Chair