

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Mount Vernon City Library Board of Trustees
November 8th, 2018**

Board members present: Hal Verrell, Frank Repplier, Margaret Redfern, Lyne Olson

Absent (or Excused Absent) Katy Armagost

Library staff present: Library Director Isaac Huffman, Library Specialist Carissa Mason

Visitors: none

A. Call to order: Mr. Verrell called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

B. Approval of minutes from the October 4th, 2018 meeting:

Ms. Redfern moved that the minutes from the October 2018 meeting be approved as amended. Mr. Repplier seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Ms. Olson said under “Bichler Endowments” to change the typo “budge” to “budget” on first page.

Ms. Redfern under “H under Senior Center” that “seniors think the jargon is suspicious” should be clarified that it was a comment by Ms. Armagost, not an umbrella statement. Change it to “she added that most seniors...”

C. Visitors: none

D. Surplus material:

E. Budget reports:

Mr. Huffman stated that the proper level of expenditure for each line item is 83.3%, reflecting that we are 10 months into the year. Mr. Huffman said that the Library is doing well with regard to budget. The only line item over is Dues and Memberships, but travel will make up for this, so he does not anticipate this to be a problem. The library is running over part-time wages based on his calculations. The Library will be the only city department that will not bank funds related to vacancy of certain staff positions during the year.

Mr. Huffman said he will talk to Chris Phillips and Doug Volesky before they do the final numbers for next year. The incorrect furniture expenditure from last month has been backed out. The big maintenance repair that is coming is a new window. Capital expenditures are in alignment. Mr. Huffman said that every year, the primary charge for the Overdrive application comes from a library consortium that our Library is part of. Due to the way the consortium has handled the negotiation and pricing allocation, the library will see 40% price jump this year and possibly 50% next. However, the library budget can tolerate this increase.

Mr. Verrell asked if it is an oversight on the side on consortium.

Mr. Huffman said there are two factors: 1. Using federal money to start project. They used the money to support operations, not to buy more materials. 2. A fundamental design fail in the consortium itself. The problem is that they spend ¼ of the money on items and ¾ of the money buying additional copy funds. Mr. Huffman said that you cannot buy everything everyone wants or you run out of money. The consortium buys another item after it has 7 holds. This rewards immediate demand, but not long term sustainable items.

Mr. Repplier asked how big the consortium was.

Mr. Huffman replied this one has 43 member libraries, but this is not indicative of size. In another way, is smaller than Sno-Isle's expenditures.

Mr. Verrell said so it is independent.

Mr. Huffman said yes, it is ran by the state library. The original idea was that Whatcom County wanted to expand resources to smaller communities that would not have the budget for more titles. However, Mr. Huffman said that there needs to be a sustainable pricing model.

Mr. Verrell asked how pricing is determined.

Mr. Huffman responded it is a three person advisory board.

With regard to revenue, Mr. Huffman said November will be the timing for the property tax.

Mr. Huffman said to note that a private grant might come to the library. The Library data equity was sponsored for the Knight Foundation. Mr. Huffman received a letter to apply for a reimbursement. \$15,000 is the facility reimbursement, so the library may receive 15,000 for having previously taught four classes.

Mr. Verrell asked when the budget is due.

Mr. Huffman said that it is done. It got approved last night. Mr. Huffman said that salary benefits and software is flat lined. The big challenge is a couple things have increased in cost. Digital collections prices will go up next year and incidental operating supplies like postage is going up. Meanwhile, the library has the same budget for digital and postage. Mr. Huffman said that the library needs to have more revenue sources. He thinks they are doing amazing stuff with the money they currently have.

Mr. Repplier said he thought the mayor talked about this over a year ago.

Mr. Huffman replied yes, they have been having this conversation as an ongoing process.

F. Monthly Statistical Reports:

Mr. Huffman said one area is new: the new Outreach Coordinator has been doing new outreach. She has seen probably 300-400 students so far. This is not accurately reflected in the stats. Fiction numbers are slightly better. DVD numbers fluctuate month to month. Youth Services has had a bigger decrease in services, mainly because they did massive book weeding. This will catch up with itself later in the year. They are approaching the holiday time. Adult programming is going well. It was a little hurt by the Skagit Reads event that was not well attended because it was a weird book and some partner things that did not work out.

G. Discussion of the Municipal Code: See Board Chair comments

H. First Read Library Card Expiration Date: Mr. Huffman wants to extend the expiration date of library cards. Currently they have cards expire every year. He wants to add in expiration dates on different types of cards. For example, a card in city limits will be valid for 3 years. Those with property ownership would last for 5 years. Business licenses will have 3 years. School district teachers will have 1 year. Permanent employees' of the City of Mount Vernon is still under consideration. They are currently considering 3 years.

Mr. Replier asked if the library gets a list of employees.

Mr. Huffman said he has an employee exit-checklist. They can add a new item to check that "library card is closed".

Mr. Huffman said the stickers on cards are a part of the inter-local agreement between Skagit county libraries. They show which cards are residence cards. He wants to stop the sticker method because amount of time putting on stickers is not equal to the value. Mr. Huffman understands that getting new cards is expensive, but an investment in the future.

I. Director's Reports:

- a. New Org Chart:** Mr. Huffman is not going to hire a new circulation position after the recent retirement of the person filling this role, but is working on reorganizing the staff chart. Reference usage is on a decline. This is not new; a 16 year decline has been happening as internet usage increases. The library will have a support service head to be filled from current staff, a new programming lead person, and will combine circulation and reference into one new department. Mr. Huffman believes Youth Service is a core service. People use it because it is always staffed Youth Service area, which is atypical. Mr. Huffman wants to create an org chart that organizes these.

- b. Resource Desk:** The library will take the help desk in reference out and move that function to the main desk so reference and circulation are one unit. Mr. Huffman is looking for a mobile desk to roll out in the reference section, but will not have it out in the late night/early morning when the help desk in reference does not get so much use.
Coming out of the budget cycle this year, the library will be coming into a harder budget discussion next year. As opposed to cut staff, Mr. Huffman will reallocate staff. The library received approval from the mayor of \$13,000 from the vacancy budget to order new furniture to replace reference furniture and children's computer carrels.

- c. Collection Shift:** Two things to note from the changes in the location of certain collection elements; 1). It intended to unify shelves into a standard visual field,

raising the bottom shelf heights in Non-Fiction. 2). trying to organize by zone more by type. For example, large print books were using a combination strategy. They were interfiling Non-Fiction and dedicated shelving fiction. They wanted one section for large print books. Most large print books were already extra copies of a novel anyway. Audio books and CD, literacy and language should be close to DVDs because closer to that genre. This shift of collection was a significant task and required a high level of effort from staff and volunteers. This shift has added shelf capacity and the Literacy and Spanish sections have more room. The section for holds has not moved yet, but it will. Having holds item behind the circulation desk was easy for staff but not for patrons. They ordered new letter holders for the new holds section, and are waiting for them to show up. They used to have laminated card stack ones that were not good.

Ms. Olson asked where the graphic novels go.

Mr. Huffman said they moved to the section that was holding phone books. The goal is to support the new building by having a consistent customer experience and present the current library in a positive way to grow outreach. They also aim to have signature programming; programming that is the library's and that benefits the community. This includes cooking introduction for kids, STEM programs, and senior class programming towards end of the year.

They must offer diverse demographics: the Mount Vernon School District, the majority is minority students at 54.3% and growing. 49.7% are Latino, with 21.8% in transitional language status. That is almost 1/5 of the school district enrollees. The growth rate is half birth rate and half migration to the city.

- d. The city is interviewing project managers for the new library/community center project. They hope to have a decision by the next City Council Meeting. The decision point is February for preliminary design. In February voters in the city will be presented with a fire station bond. This is meaningful to the library because the designated spot of the new fire station is the current library parking lot. They are having conversations about phase construction. A preliminary design will help get accurate costing for the library/senior center. Going forward, a commitment is still needed for county investment for project.. The project team has submitted a request for part of the funding to come from the governor's budget.

One other unique thing came to attention about library funding: federal opportunity zones. This was a new, one time program for federal government that designated areas for cities that people could invest in and get a capital gains credit. This highly incentivized development. It opened and closed shortly, and Mount Vernon got 3 tracks. 24 tracks were awarded to whole state. As a city, they really lucked out. Library sits in a federal opportunity zone. This may be a capital gains incentive to people who donate for charitable gains. In essence, you could pay the library and not the federal, which many people who hate taxes will enjoy. They do not fully know how this works or if it possible, and will explore this more. But this is a real game changer moving forward.

Ms. Redfern said the opportunity to have tax money go to specific project in your own city seems so much more motivating then sending it to federal government.

Mr. Replier asked who the busy person was that got three zones?

Mr. Huffman responded that this was due to the hard work and awareness of several members of city. Mr. Verrell said the foundation had a joint meeting with representatives from the Senior Center. The next foundation meeting will be at the senior center. The joint meeting is intended to be a first step in making sure that both entities, the library and the senior center feel that their requirements for the new facility are being properly considered.

J. Around the Table

Ms. Olson passed.

Ms. Redfern passed.

Mr. Replier said he went to the new YMCA walk through. It is a lot like what Mr. Huffman talked about wanting for a new building. It has a welcoming walkway, a kitchen, and a communal sitting area that can be opened and blocked off. However, the YMCA is only for members. They will fill a need, but only a tiny niche as only members can go. He thinks the new library will meet more needs. On December 8th from 1-3pm they are doing another walk through.

Ms. Olson asked when it opens.

Mr. Replier said in the spring. Ms. Redfern said she thought it was January.

Mr. Replier said they open parts of it and then will expand the opening.

Mr. Huffman said one of the project management candidate companies did work with YMCA. Mr. Replier said that in January he is going to San Diego and is excited to see their library.

K. Board Chair's Report: Mr. Verrell said that for the updated policy, Mr. Rogerson suggested the word "approve" instead of "adopted". His only comment was about the consistency in capitalization. He said there is no convention on capitalization, just do it consistently throughout

L. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 PM. The next meeting of the board of trustees will be on Thursday, December 6th at 5:30 PM at the library.

Minutes by Carissa Mason, Library Specialist