

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

A regular meeting of the Brown County Library Board was held on **November 21, 2019 at 5:15 p.m.** at the **Brown County Kress Family Branch Library, 333 N. Broadway, De Pere, WI**

PRESENT: JOHN VAN DYCK, ANNETTE AUBINGER, KAYLA JACOBSON, KATHY PLETCHER, HECTOR RODRIGUEZ (arrived at 6:15 pm), DAVID RUNNING, and JOHN VANDER LEEST

EXCUSED: MARISSA MELI

ALSO PRESENT: Sarah Sugden, Linda Chosa, Sue Lagerman, Emily Rogers, Curt Beyler, and Molly Senechal (staff). Charlotte Goska, Sobiexsi and H. James Smet, Green Bay (COVO); and Brian Anderson, Ashwaubenon.

CALL TO ORDER President Van Dyck called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m.

APPROVE/MODIFY AGENDA AND MINUTES. Motion by Vander Leest, seconded by Pletcher, to approve the agenda and minutes. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OPEN FORUM FOR THE PUBLIC

Presentation by Molly Senechal, Manager – Kress Family and Wrightstown Branches Molly shared a story of a new customer, named the staff and their roles; described programs, library card initiatives, and why people come to the library. Van Dyck asked about the downward trend in Wrightstown usage. He asked how Senechal sees turning that around and what the future holds. She hasn't spent much time there and plans to work one day a week in the New Year and build relationships with businesses and residents. Kaukauna Library has had an impact on the people count. Senechal has worked at the library for 18 years most recently as a Youth Services Librarian at Central.

Also present: Brian Anderson an attorney with The Everson Law Firm. He is a candidate for appointment to the Library Board. Charlotte Goska and H. James Smet - co-leaders of COVO (Coalition of Voting Organizations of Brown County, a volunteer group that aims to educate voters and help people navigate the voter registration process. They were present to answer COVO-related questions from the Board. Also in attendance was Earl Jordan, a student at Menominee Tribal College, who is doing research on Boards and is attending a variety of public meetings.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECONSIDERATION – VOTER REGISTRATION EVENTS AND COVO A Library Board vote in September recommended the discontinuance of partnership with COVO and other similar organizations in regards to voter registration. In October, a reconsideration was requested. As a government entity, the proper procedure for this possible action would be to vote to reconsider action that took place followed by a subsequent re-vote. Motions have to be made by someone present during the originating action. Rodriguez took exception and feels that COVO was singled out in September. Motion by Pletcher, seconded by Running, to open the floor. Motion carried.

Goska distributed a newsletter that describes the work COVO does at schools, businesses and includes voter registration, volunteer training, and simulation voting events for first-time voters. She stated that they are the only non-partisan voter registration group in the area and are complete, accurate and thorough – they are also non-funded. COVO volunteers assist people with many questions. They work with local clerks and keep up to date on the law. She continued that libraries are perfect partners since people come to the library for information. Smet indicated another service is getting people the right ID. They stressed they are just about sharing information. Running asked if there is an issue of bias with COVO. They do not engage in talking politics and are willing to train any volunteers. Rodriguez had asked for facts. Jacobson commented their partners include VoteRiders and the League of Women Voters and they are partisan. Goska replied that VoteRiders is a national nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization and the LWV is a 501(c)4 civic organization. Rodriguez commented, that one has to be careful about 'group-think' and encouraged to analyze information individually. One can easily be kidnapped by conspiracy theories. Jacobson replied that his stance was honorable but is only a single opinion – the opinion of Board in September was that the group was biased.

Goska further explained that COVO volunteers are trained not to give opinion - only to help people register to vote. The Democratic Party likes their Facebook page and that is where the perception turns to reality for many. Social media shares and likes are not in their control. They do not have a budget for a website.

Aubinger commented that voting is political and suggested to them to use the library's meeting rooms but don't use the library's name. Many other libraries in Wisconsin have voter registration events. Jacobson asked why the library is a venue. People are transient and new residents come to the library for assistance and information. Van Dyck questioned how the Board would address another

non-partisan organization that wants to do the same thing. Goska replied that there are no other organizations but the Board should provide equal opportunity. Van Dyck reiterated that a political decision was not made by the board. There was concern about COVO's affiliates and online endorsers. Vander Leest asked if COVO has made donation to a political party to which the response was, "No," but Jacobson disagreed per information found online.

The Board previously had COVO's brochure and information from their Facebook page. Van Dyck, speaking for Meli, said she spent a lot of time looking at the subjects and issues of affiliates and some were of concern. Van Dyck stated that if COVO could show that the listed organization's link led nowhere then reconsideration of the Board vote might be possible. COVO's social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. It was suggested COVO try to address these concerns and come back to the Board in December to give an update. COVO is willing to address concerns as they enjoy the partnership with the library. Having a presence in the lobby creates good visibility and they feel it is much better than being in a meeting room.

Vander Leest commented that every group has a political opinion and the Library Board wants to stay out of politics. It is his belief that COVO is affiliated with the Democratic Party and he is not aware of any Republicans who are part of the organization. Smet replied that a 2020 initiative is to reach out to all parties to offer training and reiterated that they will train anyone. Aubinger suggested that the Board may have erred by not having this discussion before voting. Events are scheduled on different days and different times throughout the community. Running commends efforts and believe in their cause. Van Dyck is concerned about the extreme sensitivity that exists in the community. It was suggested that COVO reach out to Republican Party and look for volunteers.

Pletcher suggested revisiting this topic in December. The Board agrees as this would give COVO a chance to address some ideas discussed. **Motion by** Jacobson, seconded by Rodriguez, to hold until December. **Motion carried.**

LIBRARY BUSINESS

FINANCIAL MANAGER UPDATE

APPROVE FINANCIAL, AND GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATION REPORTS

Financial reports were included in the Board packet. Chosa reported that donations are up over last year; personnel costs are under budget and the savings will carry over into the Fund Balance. Staff will present projects using the fund balance at a future meeting. The books, periodicals and magazines budget is slightly under but that will carry over also.

Motion by Vander Leest, seconded by Running, to receive and place on file the financial report and October 2019 Gifts, Grants and Donation report as follows:

Brown County Library Gifts, Grants & Donations Report October 2019					
Gifts & Donations					
10/03/19	Coco's Urban Cottage			8.24	General
10/07/19	M. Whipple			50.00	Memorial M. Kirchman
10/16/19	Artist Alley			160.00	Comic Con
10/17/19	Norsetter Family Foundation			400.00	Every Child Ready to Read
10/18/19	Brown County Community Women's Club. Inc.			17.59	Memorial B. Noble
10/24/19	Friends of the Brown County Library			374.47	Constant Cont., Mailings
10/24/19	E. Rogers			25.00	Memorial M. Truckey
10/24/19	J. Masticola			50.00	Memorial J. Fiddelke
10/24/19	L. Kananen			500.00	Value Line
10/24/19	L. Schilke			15.00	Memorial J. Fiddelke
10/24/19	L. Moreland			25.00	Memorial J. Fiddelke
10/24/19	D. Smith			50.00	General
10/24/19	J. Copeland			50.00	LGH
10/24/19	L. Chosa			10.00	CW General
10/1/2019'	Ashwaubenon			59.00	Donation Box
10/1/2019'	Bookmobile			3.00	Donation Box
10/1/2019'	East			23.54	Donation Box
10/1/2019'	Denmark				Donation Box
10/1/2019'	Weyers/Hilliard			48.00	Donation Box
10/1/2019'	Customer Service			45.80	Donation Box
10/1/2019'	Kress			16.27	Donation Box
10/1/2019'	Pulaski			20.30	Donation Box
10/1/2019'	Southwest			7.50	Donation Box
10/1/2019'	Wrightstown				Donation Box
	Total Donations			\$ 1,958.71	
Federal & State Grants					
10/1/2019	Nicolet Federated Library System			\$ 6,562.50	
	Total Grants			\$ 6,562.50	

Motion carried.

The 2020 budget was passed with a \$5000 levy increase for the library.

FACILITIES UPDATE Beyer reported that there were no major facilities updates. Staff is getting ready for winter. The new tractor is being used and is demonstrating efficiency and savings in staff time. They are tracking how it is being used and the time it is saving: ex. 1 hour vs 15 minutes. Cordless vacuums were purchased and staff is really enjoying the convenience and flexibility of them. The County signed a contract for bulk natural gas. **Motion** by Vander Leest, seconded by Pletcher, to receive and place on file. **Motion carried.**

PERSONNEL UPDATE Rogers reported that the library is partnering with NFLS to offer regional trainings. Rogers is doing a program with Giraldez on de-escalating problem situations. Staff update: Hired Central Manager – Sandy Kallunki; Denmark Associate; Adult Services Librarian; Ashwaubenon Clerk; Clerk in Technical Services; LTE Cataloging Associate and Youth Services Librarian. The Safety Officer, part-time Maintenance Worker, and three clerk searches are underway. Open positions include a Denmark Associate, Youth Services Manager, Southwest Associate, and Youth Services Librarian.

COMMUNICATIONS/PROGRAMMING UPDATE Lagerman reported that the Local History Series closed October with programs on the Belgians and the Packers - both popular topics in Green Bay! Another program of interest was a premiere screening of Wisconsin Public Television's (now PBS Wisconsin), new documentary, "Where I Come From," featuring author, humorist and musician Michael Perry. It airs on December 2 at 7:00 pm on PBS WI. Michael led a Q&A with the audience and signed books sold by Lion's Mouth Bookstore.

The East Branch held its annual Dia de Los Muertos Celebration on Friday, November 1. This Day of the Dead is a Mexican holiday that honors and remembers loved ones that passed away. The evening event featured traditional crafts, sugar skulls, pan de muerto (a traditional sweet bread) and face painting.

The Friends Give-A-Kid-A-Book (GAKAB) campaign kicked off in early November and is doing very well. It is receiving good media attention and several events have taken or are taking place to promote it including a recent book fair at Barnes & Noble, Festival of Trees at the National Railroad Museum (the FBCL have a book tree on display), and the Holiday Parade this Saturday in downtown Green Bay. Two Packer coaches' wives and Lagerman, will speak at the Green Bay Area Retired Men's Club holiday gathering. A pass the hat collection is matched by the Club to support GAKAB. Additionally, a donation of 500 new books from Pi Beta Phi, a fraternity for women, whose philanthropic focus of, Read > Lead > Achieve, works to improve children's literacy rates. They are hoping to open a new chapter at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay and wanted to do some philanthropic work in the Green Bay community so they chose to support GAKAB.

The next calendar of events, December – February, is currently at the printer but events are available online at the library's website.

Other projects in the works include partnering with the Press-Times newspaper for regular library content; Literacy Link – a partnership with Extension Brown County and BC Jail to connect children and their incarcerated parents. This is a program of UW-Madison Extension, it is currently operating in eight counties. Four more counties will be brought on in the first quarter of 2020. The library was a partner in a RFP submitted to Bader Philanthropies. The scope is to reduce isolation among seniors in rural communities through the use of technology. Collaborating service providers are Curative Connections, Options for Independent Living, Goodwill NCW/Neighborhood Partners, and the library. Proposals will be considered and awarded in January 2020.

Motion by Vander Leest, seconded by Pletcher to receive and place on file. **Motion carried.**

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – STATE DEBT COLLECTION Chosa spoke with Weininger and he agreed to a designated hard drive installed in Admin to transfer social security numbers. A ticket was submitted to DoTS to get this started. Informational handouts were distributed including a sample letter, comparison chart.

"The State Debt Collection (SDC) program is a state-administered program that partners with state and local agencies to collect debt. In considering a potential partnership between the Library and the Wisconsin State Debt, the Library Administration recommends the following action, provided all conditions of data storage are met:

- Engage the services of the State Debt Collection program to collect outstanding debt owed by BCL patrons
- Refer accounts that are currently in "collections returned" status for final collection attempt. If accounts are still unfindable after SDC attempt, those accounts will be considered uncollectable and be removed from the library's database
- To encourage the return of materials (the goal of this initiative) and provide a positive, proactive approach to this shift, the BCL will offer a period of amnesty prior to beginning SDC collection services. During this period of amnesty, any patron who returns overdue items would pay no overdue fees for those items.

- Once the BCL has engaged SDC services, Library Administration would oversee the implementation and execution of this service on behalf of the organization.”

Jacobson suggested that the Library Board have oversight of implementation and execution of the service. Vander Leest noted that the materials/collections budget has always been contentious. The money collected from SDC could go back into the budget. Taxpayers pay for the books. The Board is trying to be responsible for the collection of debt and he is concerned about the number of lost items. Tax interception collects a large portion of fees owed.

Accounts that are currently in a "collections returned" status will also be referred to SDC for final attempt. If accounts are still unfindable, those accounts will be considered uncollectable and be removed from the library's database. Based on information from SDC, it would cost about \$8000 to send those accounts to SDC (based on \$2 per account).

The library cannot move forward on this until a designated hard drive for this information (located at BC Admin), is in place. In the meantime, staff could work with Corp Counsel on a contract and get things started.

Van Dyck noted that the library already places people with accounts in arrears in collection and this is just about changing to a new agency that will be more effective. He would rather start the service and then offer a window of 30 days for amnesty. **Motion** by Vander Leest, seconded by Running, to contract with SDC for past due collections no later than January 1, 2020 and implement collection methods of voluntary payment, tax interception (TRIP), and wage attachment (voluntary or involuntary). **Motion carried unanimously.**

Review Breakdown of Fines, Fees, and Charges of Existing Collection Accounts A patron account analysis shows that 68% of bills are paid. Most of the outstanding balance are overdue fees (52%); and lost fees (42%). The balance is a combination of referral and damage fees. The top 10 outstanding accounts were presented. Four have gone to collection and returned as uncollectible.

APPROVE PAY FOR PERFORMANCE STRUCTURE The summary was distributed to the Board. The structure is the same as last year. County approved a 2.07% increase. The staff rankings were totaled as follows and each designation, with the exception of Needs Improvement will receive an increase: Need Improvement – 1; Developing – 2; Meets Expectations – 43; Occasionally Exceeds Expectations – 27; and Exceeds Expectation – 14. There were 23 ineligible employees. Sugden's performance review will take place in December. Van Dyck is concerned with the sustainability of increases if they rely on those ineligible and wondered if everyone should get a flat amount. Funds will max out at some point. Rogers suggested that a change will be made for 2020. Sugden noted that this current structure may not be the right solution. Marketability should also be a factor. Pletcher suggested discretionary compensation adjustments as an alternative to a base wage increase.

Motion by Running, seconded by Pletcher, to approve the 2020 Pay for Performance Structure. **Motion carried.**

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – MEETING ROOM RENTAL RATES Per the request of an Ed & Rec request a comparison of library and museum rates was conducted. Sugden indicated the library is comfortable with our fees for meeting rooms and usage. Spaces are important to community organization as evidence in shared comments. A regular review (every two years) will be done to make sure the library is staying competitive. **Motion** by Vander Leest, seconded by Running, to receive and place on file. **Motion carried.**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT Van Dyck reported on a recent meeting with the B.C.L. Foundation Board. They agreed to fund architectural fees for drawings. Sugden to reach out to HGA (Milwaukee). The focus will be on the East Branch – the building and estimated costs depending on variables of departments included. There is ample land available on East side but a design is needed first. The Pulaski group is really anxious to get something going – may need to address sooner than later. Regarding Ashwaubenon, a couple buildings were presented as options. Van Dyck is invited to a meeting at the University regarding a MBA program in downtown. Pletcher offered to attend with him.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT In addition to the written report, Sugden shared that the staff four-week timeline project is ending. The projected outcome is good information to make data-driven decisions to best employ resources. Staff is sorting through files and records and making determinations of information to keep. Motion by Vander Leest, seconded by Pletcher, to receive and place on file. **Motion carried.**

OTHER BUSINESS None.

SUCH OTHER MATTERS AS ARE AUTHORIZED BY LAW None.

ADJOURNMENT **Motion** by Pletcher, seconded by Vander Leest, to adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 pm.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

December 19, 2019

5:15 p.m.

Central Library

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Lagerman
Recording Secretary