



LIBRARY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
Minutes of Meeting  
Wednesday, March 16, 2022

**Present:** Gale Batsimm, Sally Blanchard, Megan Butterfield (call in), Allie Cashel, Jonathan Chapple-Sokol, Emily Copeland (call in), Mary Danko, Chol Dhoor (call in), Patrick Halladay (call in), Cate MacLachlan (call in), Amy Mellencamp (call in), Jessica Nordhaus (call in), Ailsa Oneil-Dunne (call in), Mona Tolba (call in).

**Approval of Minutes:** From January 19. Cate moved, Patrick seconded. Approved.

**Approve Agenda:** Patrick moved, Sally seconded. Approved.

**Public Forum:** No public in attendance.

**Friends Report:** Jonathan reported that the Friends held a very successful indoor book sale, the first in two plus years. Sally asked about book dealers--in the past dealers would line up on the first sale day with boxes. The Friends want to have dealers come in on a regular basis. The Friends anticipate doing more sales, indoor and outdoor, beginning in May when the Courage to Remember exhibit finishes. Friends are moving forward with finding an attorney to draft an MoU with the City for Capital Campaign.

**Director's Report:** The library is getting busier; many are opting to wear masks and people are now staying longer. The tech center has 10 computers open without waiting lines. The Courage to Remember exhibit opens March 21 and opening reception is March 24 at 6:30 pm with keynote address by Ambassador Madeleine May Kunin. This exhibit aligns with all the book challenges, such as with the graphic novel *Maus*, and that will be one of the book discussions. FFL will also have a virtual reality set up of Anne Frank's House, the annex where her family hid. We will be moving lots of things around to fit 40 informational panels. Seeing these primary source materials on this huge scale is powerful. Mona asked about other horrific events like in Bosnia. Mary noted that this exhibit is about the rise in authoritarianism and how that is seen throughout the world, even what is happening in Russia and Ukraine today. The library encourages people to learn from history, discuss history. Hopefully people will see similarities and learn about the spread of disinformation that filters through society. Mary said we do want to be diverse and welcome future opportunities for other exhibits and discussions and will talk with Barbara. In fall of 2021 FFL had 2 exhibits: Hostile Terrain 94 about the migration at the southern border and the return of the 1619 exhibit on the arrival of the first Africans. Patrick noted that one of the important things that comes out of the Holocaust is the importance of remembrance so that we don't repeat those things. We need to be careful not to say one group's suffering is more profound than another's. Holocaust remembrance as a jumping off point to say where these things happening today is essential. Mary said we look for how the library's role intersects, in many of these cases it is where information is shut down and the library tries to provide access to correct information and push against fascist regimes. We hope the exhibit provokes conversation and becomes aspirational and a call to action. It is through these conversations that we become better at understanding. Chol said he is proud of library for hosting exhibit and recommends highlighting special display collections.

**Michelle Lee, Circulation:** Michelle began as Circulation Manager in the fall of 2019. She noted that circulation is one of three FFL service desks, but the most visible. She emphasized the importance of customer service and relationships. FFL has 191 staff hours per week at that desk. Circ has 2 full time and 5 part time staff, with half holding an MLS degree. On a current average day 470 books are checked out. Each book is handled by staff 3 to 6 times. Circ creates 3-4 new displays per month, this month there is a local display of maple, another for international women's history month, and a display on Ukraine. Circ helps the Friends, making their books available. Circ receives 20-40 calls and 20 emails per day as well as lots of foot traffic. The team also supports book clubs and the kit keeper program, with 410 book club kits that go around state to support other libraries. We have museum passes. Circ must know seven different platforms. Circ serves as the concierge service for room bookings. They operate lost and found, working with police to have them pick up some items. They monitor behaviors and those interactions take time. FFL is one of largest lenders and borrowers of Inter-Library Loan (ILL) in state. One of staff is now a volunteer coordinator, with 23 volunteers she interviewed, trained and manages. Patrick inquired about volume, Mary noted physical materials are down 30%, but electronic is up by 50%. Staff also provides tech help, answers many questions, and does a lot of social work, helping people find housing and other things that people don't normally see. Chol asked about a survey focusing on circulation to find out what is working for people, learn about their check-out experiences. Mary will look into this. FFL does get data about what types of books are checked out, privately, to help selectors make choices.

**Subcommittees: There are 3 subcommittees: Capital Campaign, Policy Planning, Strategic Planning. Please reach out to Gale and Amy if you are not yet serving on one.** The Policy Committee looked at Meeting Policy, lowering the age of people who could sign up for room (13-18 but adult would reserve room), using simple English (Allie recommended Hemenway app to make language more accessible), and having a room usage fine if a reservation goes past end of the day (can be appealed, it serves as a tool without being punitive). Chol asked about removing the word disability, the reason was to normalize requesting accommodations. Allie explained that someone might need accommodations in a certain moment regardless of disability status. Megan asked if an adult needs to be in room with lowered age groups; the answer is no. Jessica asked what kind of burden it puts on staff to intervene. FFL already has child accompaniment in the ordinance, for under 9, so this age group is already unsupervised. The age limit change resulted after a climate change middle school group wanted meeting space. At that time an adult had to be there. Emily noted the lack of agency for young people was written into the old policy which felt counter to mission of the library. Mary noted we can revisit policies and adjust if needed. The committee used the racial equity tool kit to look at the policy. The commission voted to send it to the City Attorney for review. **Motion to approve policy Jessica/Cate. Approved**

Next month Amy will start working on director assessment. **Amy will send email asking for input for this year from Commission.**

**Spring Breakfast:** Tentative: Monday, April 11 for spring breakfast with legislators, city council and Friends.

**Meeting adjourned:** Cate moved, Jessica seconded. Approved.

**Next Meeting:** May 18 at 7:45 am