

Salt Lake County Library Board of Directors
September 26, 2022
Approved by the Library Board on October 24, 2022

Attending: Kristin Covili, Chair; Nancy Thorne, Vice Chair; Hollie Pettersson, Richard Snelgrove, Kaati Tarr

Excused: Sandra Osborn

Others: Jim Cooper, Jen Fay, Nyssa Fleig, Matt McLain, Melissa Haslam, Susanne Jones, Sara Neal, Pamela Park, Russ Snow, Stephanie Tilt, Christa Warren, Robin Chalhoub, Grace Hanley, Joey McNamee, Megan Smith, Riverton Mayor Trent Staggs, Steve Van Maren (member of the public)

By Webex: Chelsea Lindbeck, William (Bill) Scarber, Ann-Marie Barrett (Brigham Creek Branch Manager), Maggie Mills (Whitmore Branch Manager), Trudy Jorgensen-Price (Holladay Branch Manager), Erin Rigby (South Jordan Branch Manager)

Kristin Covili called the meeting to order at 12:34 PM.

Welcome - Jim Cooper, Library Director

Approve Minutes from the August 22, 2022 Board Meeting

Kaati Tarr made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 22, 2022 Library Board Meeting. Hollie Pettersson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Kristin Covili – aye
Nancy Thorne – aye
Chelsea Lindbeck - aye
Hollie Pettersson - aye
William Scarber - aye
Richard Snelgrove - aye
Kaati Tarr – aye

Public comments –

Sandy patron, Steve Van Maren, noticed the budget adjustment received approval for \$10 million over the next two years in ARPA funds to supplement the proposed property tax adjustment. Steve would have liked it to be shared with the board before it went out to the public.

Jim Cooper, Library Director, replied that the budget adjustment was shared in generalities with the board. The board does not approve the budget, which is why it was not necessary to present it in full beforehand. We will be talking about this later in the meeting.

Correspondence -

We sent emails to most of our patrons (those who are opted in total about 111,000). They received a link to our tax increase FAQs located on the library website. We received 10

comments back. Five are supportive of the tax increase, four are not supportive and one complained about the Sprague Branch (a City Library branch).

NEW BUSINESS

Board Elections – Kristin Covili, Board Chair

Kristin Covili has served for three years as the chair. It is time to appoint another member.

Kaati Tarr made a motion to nominate William (Bill) Scarber as the new Library Board Chair. Hollie Pettersson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Kristin Covili – aye
Nancy Thorne – aye
Chelsea Lindbeck - aye
Hollie Pettersson - aye
William Scarber - aye
Richard Snelgrove - aye
Kaati Tarr – aye

We also need a new Vice Chair.

Nancy Thorne made a motion to nominate Hollie Pettersson as the new Library Board Vice Chair. Kaati Tarr seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Kristin Covili – aye
Nancy Thorne – aye
Chelsea Lindbeck - aye
Hollie Pettersson - aye
William Scarber - aye
Richard Snelgrove - aye
Kaati Tarr – aye

Riverton Branch Information – Stephanie Tilt, Riverton Branch Manager and Jennifer Fay, Associate Director of Public Services

Jennifer started in 2003 and did storytime in this very room.

Stephanie has been the branch manager for four years. She is very grateful for the community and staff.

- Circulation & Patrons:
 - Riverton is one of the smallest branches in terms of square footage, but they have a high circulation rate for their size. They circulate about 56,000 items per month, which is almost twice as much as other branches of a similar size.
 - Relative to other branches, Riverton gets a lot of out of county patrons, (approximately 5% of the circulation is to out of county patrons). This is likely based on their close proximity to Utah County.

- Although Riverton has a relatively high physical circulation, residents check out approximately 56% of their materials virtually or from other branches in the county – primarily South Jordan and Herriman branches.
- Programs:
 - Early Learning
 - Storytimes are well attended. Just recently eighty people showed up for storytime held in the “largest” room in the building – having a capacity of forty. A puppet show brought in about 150 patrons.
 - Teens
 - Teen programming is held twice a month; the teens are coming back slowly after the pandemic.
 - Trivia for teens is a regular program and well attended. We received feedback from a parent that said their 12-year-old loves coming to the library for trivia because they feel welcome and included.
 - Adults
 - Take and Makes crafts have tripled for adults.
 - Patrons register for kits such as Solar Lights and an Elf Hat Garland. The staff has received a lot of positive feedback for this program.
 - Family Art Night is another program that was recently started and seems to be very popular.
 - Family
 - The Great Reads book club for children and their guardians has returned after the pandemic. The program was well attended and very successful for the first session.
 - Scavenger Hunts are a staple and are extremely popular over the summer.
- Challenges
 - The Riverton branch has a high circulation rate and a small programming space. The meeting room has a capacity of 40 and located next to the bathrooms, which is not soundproof and transmits a lot of noise.
 - Staff are asked about study rooms on a daily basis, but they do not have any space to accommodate this need. There are study tables in the back, but sometimes the library can get noisy, especially during programming.
 - The public computers were recently reduced from ten computers down to three. That space was repurposed as a librarian office to meet the programming needs of the branch. There have been a few complaints about the missing public computers and staff continue to analyze the data to provide the appropriate number.
 - The building size is small and the parking lot is overflowing. People park haphazardly sometimes creating their own parking space, which is potentially dangerous.
 - Some patrons use the Wi-Fi outside the building, but the accessibility in the parking lot is limited. Most patrons come inside the building.
 - Per library policy based upon police request, the Wi-Fi is only available when the library is open.
 - The Riverton branch has 16 FTE with 21 employees.
 - The library system employs about 100 substitutes help across the system and avoid critical staffing levels to keep the branches open.

- In spite of its space needs and many challenges, overall, it is a great library and the patrons love the branch.

Riverton Mayor Staggs joined the meeting.

Jim Cooper showed slides about the branch, which was provided to all of the board members.

- The Library's Key Indicator reports show the circulation and statistics that were mentioned earlier.
 - The Riverton branch door count averages about 50-60 people per hour and 300-600 people per day. As mentioned earlier, there is also high rate of eMaterial usage and use by Riverton residents of other branches in the system.
- Due to space limitations, the physical collection size at the branch is limited to approximately 100,000 items, however, the Riverton branch users have access to the system's entire 2,000,000 items.
- The staff must manually handle every item checked out and in, where some other branches have a machine sorter (automated material handling systems that checks-in and sorts the items electronically). Staff at the branch have had stress injuries because of the manual labor.
- Jim presented branch statistics based on the Riverton zip code. It represents most of Riverton and some of Bluffdale city.
- Mayor Staggs asked about Utah County residents and whether they pay an out of county fee to use the Salt Lake County Library system.
 - Jim responded that they do pay a fee based on the current fines and fees policy, currently \$80 per person per year. Jim then reported that the average Salt Lake County residents pays less than \$50 per capita.
 - Jim also mentioned that unlike Salt Lake County, Utah County does not have a county system and library service is provided by each respective city. Utah County does not have reciprocal borrowing agreements and citizens of a specific municipality are generally not able to use another city's library.
 - If Salt Lake County did not have a county-wide system, Riverton residents could only use the library and collection that is physically located in Riverton. Riverton residents could not use Herriman, South Jordan, any other county library nor the large physical collection and virtual collection, or any other system resource – where 56% of Riverton's library service is provided.

Taxes & Revenue – Leslie Webster, Fiscal Manager and Jim Cooper, Library Director

Jim Cooper showed slides related to taxes and the library budget.

- Around 90% of our revenue comes from Property Tax revenue. Some motor vehicle, some small grants, rent from Viridian events, and some jail reimbursement.
- General Allocation of Revenue
 - Staff within the branch takes around 63% of the budget.
 - Collections and Technology is the next largest amount. We have two million items total. We order about 30,000-50,000 items every month. Older items are deleted from the system. About 20% of our circulation is eMaterial, which is a higher cost than physical items and have less circulation before they need to be replaced.
 - Debt is about 10% and 4% is for County Overhead including positions such as attorneys, council members, and treasurer.

- Full Cost Branch Budget
 - CountyStat is an internal tool for budget information. They are only the direct branch costs, such as operations and utilities.
 - We have project codes that tell us which cost goes to which branch. Some costs relate to the system as a whole and do not break down to a smaller level.
 - We have a cross-allocation that provide services to other departments. An example is administration providing services to facilities and vice versa.
 - Next is a tiered method. We start with administration and work our way down to the lowest level of allocation to each individual branch. Examples include:
 - Branch FTE
 - Software costs for technology
 - Building square footage for facilities
 - Circulation for materials
 - Participants for programming
 - A question was asked about a central depository. Books are primarily selected, purchased and processed by our Technical Services department. Then they are allocated and assigned to the branches. Delivery moves the books from branch to branch. A small percentage of the collection are floating collections, such as audiovisual, which means an individual item stays at the location it was checked-in. We deliver about 9 tons of material every day throughout the system. There is a whole formula for how a hold gets filled. Jim indicated we could talk about that at a subsequent meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Budget Update – Leslie Webster, Fiscal Manager and Jim Cooper, Library Director

A handout was provided by Leslie Webster to show the 2023 library budget request. Additional documents show the June 2022 adjusted budget and the year to date expenses.

- For 2023 are planning on requesting a flat budget. All of the budget items still need to be approved by the county council.
- Personnel Costs
 - As custodians are retiring, we are using a custodial service to decrease FTE and increases the operating budget. We recently had two custodians retire.
 - We increased FTE by one project manager. We are hoping to replace the West Valley branch. This was originally approved by the council in 2016, but we have had delays because of location problems.
- Operating Costs
 - We had some grants that ended, so the budget was down. We moved money between capital and operating to compensate.
- Capital Project Requests
 - We had to cut out all capital maintenance to balance the budget from the lack of a resources during the past few years. We try to balance what is regular maintenance and what is the end of life/safety issues.
 - Council is looking at approving \$5 million in ARPA funds as part of the budget for this year and next year. These funds would help with some of our deferred maintenance issues.

Truth in Taxation Proposal – Jim Cooper, Library Director

Jim Cooper presented slides. Much of the information came from the County Assessor's presentation to the county council.

Truth in taxation means, as property values rise, the certified rate must go down, so you are collecting the same amount of revenue as you collected in the previous year. In order to receive any benefit of inflation or additional revenue, other than new growth, you have to go through the truth in taxation process, notify the public, and hold a hearing and then county council votes on the proposal.

The certified rate is based on the property tax revenue what we received in the previous year. As an example, for a house valued at \$200k with a 1% tax rate, \$2,000 would be collected for that year. If the home increased by 10% in value, the average county-wide increase in value for the year, the tax rate would be lowered to 10% in order to collect the same \$2,000 tax.

There are multiple reasons why an individual property may show a small tax increase in spite of not having a truth in taxation hearing. Individual tax may change slightly as property increases above the average rate and vice versa. Another reason is a change in centrally assessed properties, economic development causing a shift between residential and commercial taxes, and legislative changes.

For the County Library, a property tax is assessed on homes within the entire county, except for Salt Lake City and Murray – which tax their citizens separately and have their own library.

The last property tax adjustment for the County Library was adopted by the county council in 2012, effective in 2013. The statutory maximum that can be charged for library services is 0.001. In 2012 the county council approved adjusting the County Library's certified rate to 0.000755. The certified rate has decreased every year during the last decade in order to collect the same amount of taxes per household that we collected in the prior year.

In 2013 the average home value was \$270K, and our certified rate then was .000755 which resulted in the average home paying about \$112 for the Library. Over the past nine years, although home values and other prices have risen due to inflation, the property tax collected has stayed the same at \$112 per average household. In 2022, the average home value was reported to be \$560,000, and our tax rate was adjust down to .000386. However, due to certain shifts from business and industrial values, in order to keep our property tax revenue the same, the average home will pay a property tax of approximately \$118 for the Library.

Jim then reminded the Board that since 2013, we have built seven new branches, added a library in the Oxbow Jail, remodeled four branches, and opened a new Operations/Facilities Center. We improved our materials selection, technology, literacy services, hosted all kinds of programs, including virtual services and managed through a pandemic. All of this while coping with inflationary increases, changing demands by the public and without a property tax increase.

Over the past decade, we have seen a 30% increase in inflation. As a result have seen cost increases to deliver services – the majority of that going to cost of living salary adjustments and the cost of the collection. Fortunately, the County Library has managed to implement a number of efficiencies and made appropriate cuts to services, capital improvements and deferred maintenance, and has been able absorb inflationary increase during the last decade without a

tax increase. In comparison, to absorb inflationary increases The City Library and other entities throughout the county have increased property taxes every 3-4 years.

Unfortunately, we are now at a time when we must increase our tax rate, and are asking for a rate adjustment from .000386 to .000483, to be included in the 2023 budget. This increase is well below what state statute allows and, in fact below the inflationary increases we have experienced.

Our highest priority for our budget consist of paying off debt obligations which we have incurred to build and remodel infrastructure. This is essential to ensure our good bond rating and allows for low interest rates. We also need revenue to cover the approved salary increases passed by the county council, pay county overhead, support current operations, and catch up on deferred maintenance.

Jim met with the Utah Tax Payer Association to go over the tax increase proposal and budget. At this time, they said they have no concerns and the proposed tax increase seems reasonable. The president of the association said that it is a good practice to recapture inflation by considering a tax increase every 5-8 years. Again, the Library hasn't had an adjustment in a decade.

A question was asked about how our tax rate compared to libraries of similar size. Jim commented that it is difficult to compare tax rates to libraries of similar size due to the variety of ways libraries are funded nationwide. Establishing peer libraries is also somewhat problematic and we can look at population size, circulation, gate counts, and other metrics, but out of 9,700 library systems in the United States we are #13 in terms of circulation – a typical measure of workload or “busyness”. We are always in the top 5% in the nation in how we deliver services. Because we are an individual taxing entity and taxes collected for the County Library can only be used for library purposes, we are therefore prohibited from receiving any resources from the County's General Fund, including sales tax, other property tax or any other support. Therefore the way we assess tax, pay expenses, provide service, pay debt etc. is not always equal to other library systems. Perhaps one way to compare is to look at cost of service per capita. Although this is also not entirely apples to apples, the cost of our services are generally about 60-70% less than other similar systems on a per capita basis.

Jim then reminded the Board that to avoid double taxation, the County Library can only use its specific library tax for library purposes – and can use no other county-wide resources. While the Murray Library and the City Library also have a certified tax rate, they may rely on, and benefit from other specific municipality funding streams, including the city's general fund or other city resources.

Reconsideration Policy – Christa Warren, Senior Manager of Collections

The policy is for patrons to request a review of materials they deem questionable. Two changes were made from the document presented in August. One-change states how long the reconsideration requests will stay on file, and the other explains how to repeal a reconsideration denial.

Hollie Pettersson made a motion to approve the Reconsideration Policy. Kaati Tarr seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Kristin Covili – aye
Nancy Thorne – aye
Chelsea Lindbeck - aye
Hollie Pettersson - aye
William Scarber - aye
Richard Snelgrove - aye
Kaati Tarr – aye

Smith Library Status and Recommendation – Action Item, Robin Chaloub, Community Services Department Director

The old Smith branch has been decommissioned as a library and the county has accepted the Board’s recommendation to transfer the property to the General Fund for property or assets of approximately equivalent value.

In February, the board approved to exchange the Smith property for an asset of approximate equivalent value. The mayor has accepted the exchange and the Smith location is part of the county portfolio in the general fund. The appraised value is about \$1.5 million. The library will be receiving property or assets of equal compensation by July 2023. The library is no longer liable or has any fiscal obligation for the location.

The county will use the old Smith branch property and building to support the temporarily housing of unsheltered individuals during the winter. This will start in October and will house about 100 individuals. They will be bused in at night and out again in the morning. No services, such as food or showers, will be provided at the location. It will be operated by Switchpoint.

In the last public meeting Jim attended, Millcreek was thanked for taking this project on and how this may actually benefit the neighborhood, as it will increase patrols and security in the area. With the money the city will receive from the state, they are able to increase community services and provide for a better environment.

Robin Chaloub thanked Jim for his time for making constant trips to meet the representatives and facilitates to lock and unlock the building.

No Action Required.

Programming Update – Nyssa Fleig, Program Manager

Nyssa provided slides highlighting Summer Reading, O.W.L. Camp, ToshoCON, Reading Buddies with United Way, and Let’s be Neighbors. Surveys are given at the end of a program to see if the programs reach their expected goals.

The Summer Reading program is designed to provide health in multiple forms, including reading. We collaborated with the Granite School District for surveys involving Summer Reading feedback. We learned that student scores increased for students who participated in the library program. Those who took the survey specifically said they were not doing anything other than the Summer Reading program to increase student scores.

Our circulation during the summer was over two million checkouts. That is the same as our entire library collection. Additionally, we saw increased participation for vulnerable groups.

The library has a relationship with all of the local school districts through our School Liaison. We are using PeachJar to communicate with students and their guardians. We provide after school programming and offer free food through Kid's Café at qualifying branches.

Patrons were excited to see O.W.L. Camp back in person this year. Our goals were education, STEAM, and social & emotional health. The library received patron feedback that the program was indeed helping them achieve a higher level of mental health.

ToschoCON brought in 2,000 teens during the two day 10th anniversary celebration. This program is unique as the library staff creates the outline, but the teens come up with the content. This is also one of the few programs where vendors (mostly teens) are allowed to sell their creations. An onboarding program is given in advance to teach vendors how to run a booth and what it means to run their own business.

We were able to collaborate with United Way during Kid's Café to help patrons with DYAD reading. This is a side-by-side reading program where a stronger reader helps another obtain a higher reading level. We learned of a patron who was bringing their own children as well as refugees they were housing. By the end of the summer, all of the learners felt more comfortable and safe in their community and in their reading skills. Kaati shared a story of a friend who attended this program and loved it.

The last round of Let's Be Neighbors focused on civic engagement. Take & Makes geared to adults allow them to create something and learn more about various topics in the community. The program hosts two to three experts in the given topic, which is recorded for later viewing. Previous content centered on water conservation, housing & security, as well as focusing on veterans. Earlier this year, fleece was given out with patterns to create a scarf, hat and gloves. The patron was allowed to keep the items, or donate them back to the library to be sent to those in need.

Winter Reading will be coming up at the beginning of the year. It is in conjunction with the NBA All-Star game, which will be held in Salt Lake City in February.

Richard Snelgrove left @ 2:10 PM

STAFF REPORTS

Statistical Report – Jim Cooper, Library Director

Jim covered this previously in the meeting.

Personnel Report - Pamela Park, Human Resource Manager

Full-Time Merit Staff – 283

Part-Time (30 hour) Merit Staff – 78

Part-Time (20 hour) Merit Staff – 114

Substitutes Staff - 85

We currently have 43 vacancies that are in the process of recruiting, being re-classed, or are on hold for approval to fill.

Finance & Operations Update – Leslie Webster, Administration & Fiscal Manager

Leslie covered this previously in the meeting.

Megan Smith indicated that there is no need for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 2:15 PM for a tour of the Riverton Branch.