

Johnson County Public Library
Board Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2022

Present: Reagan Eisele, Alvin Mason, Heather Patton, Alicia Merritt, James Ritchie, Kathy Jones, County Judge Herman Houston, Greg Donaldson, and Margot McLeod.

Call to Order:

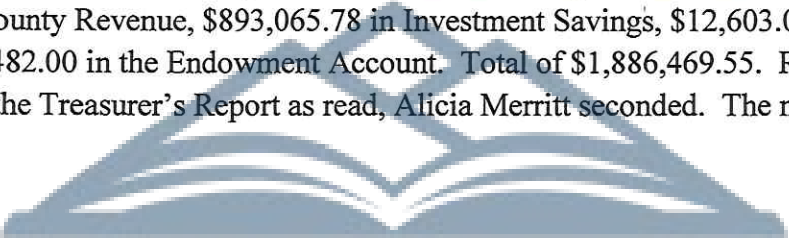
Heather Patton called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and Alicia Merritt made a motion to accept the minutes and Reagan Eisele seconded. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report:

Alvin Mason gave the Treasurer's report with a balance of \$14,607.62 in the Checking Account, \$963,711.13 in County Revenue, \$893,065.78 in Investment Savings, \$12,603.02 in 501c3 Account, and \$2,482.00 in the Endowment Account. Total of \$1,886,469.55. Reagan made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as read, Alicia Merritt seconded. The motion passed.

Library Report:

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- A) With staffing, the library has two positions available: Outreach and Programming Librarian and User Services Coordinator. The User Services Coordinator used to be Head of Circulation, but Ritchie changed the title to focus more on the people instead of library materials.
 - B) Facility Maintenance - David Wyle's repaired the ceiling damage in the children's area for \$950.00 and an A/C unit was replaced.
 - C) Ritchie purchased a new AWE learning computer, a literacy station with over 85 programs, for \$3,808.96. Eventually, the bilingual learning computer will be replaced with an updated literacy station.
 - D) The Summer Reading Program was a big hit with over 210 children signed up to participate. We had 10 events with a total of 950-1,000 participants. For the month of June, there were 2,301 patrons who came to the library. Patron traffic and circulation are still increasing.
 - E) Summer Programs - The library is hosting a visiting author series with a variety of authors. So far, three authors have participated, and we have three more lined up for the upcoming months; Jennifer Cadgwith, Bill Eakin, and Ginny Sain. Ginny Sain is a popular young adult author, and the library is hoping to have more young adult involvement.

- F) Tech Tuesday and Workforce Wednesday are still occurring.
- G) Ritchie started a 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Program. Once a child completes a 1,000 books, they will receive a certificate and a prize.
- H) The library has a StoryWalk planned for community outreach, which will be taken to Oark, Lamar, Coal Hill, and other townships in Johnson County.
- I) When the library has a new Outreach and Programming Librarian, they will join our community resource coordinator with the region and visit the other townships in Johnson County for community outreach.
- J) Circulation Report – As of the end of June, JCPL had 1,480 active library card users. With overall circulation with Overdrive, we had 5,726 and 13,794 checkouts with a total of 19,520 checkouts, which has exceeded last year's circulation numbers.
- K) The library will have a Back to School Bash on August 9th with the Museum of Discovery with their Awesome Science presentation.
- L) Ritchie has been working with Joseph Cruz to start a library program at the detention center with their inmates.

Heather Patton commented on the positive response the library has received regarding library programming. Despite spacing for these programs, Ritchie said they do their best to accommodate large groups of people. In addition, the library partnered with the First Methodist Church to use their Family Life Center for the summer reading program. Alicia Merritt asked about Tech Tuesdays. Ritchie said it is a hit or miss, with patrons coming in whenever during the week for their tech needs. The library was contacted by the housing authority to help their clients obtain their proof of income, so their clients will be taking advantage of Tech Tuesday. Then, Houston discussed how he is proud of the library's future, especially for the community. Ritchie said that he hopes to turn the library into more of a community center.

Regional Report:

Misty Hawkins reported that the region and other branches are dealing with staffing difficulties. They hired a new branch manager in Franklin County, and they also have a vacancy for a full-time position. Also, the region's part-time delivery driver is resigning for a new job with FedEx. Hawkins believes this is a good opportunity to evaluate salaries, benefits, and really target people who will stay long term. In addition, the region has hired Brain Kendall as the new community resource coordinator in April. He travels to various locales in the region's four counties that don't necessarily have branches. Programs like Tech Tuesdays and Workforce Wednesdays translate well for this kind of community outreach, as the outreach vehicle as the technology (TV screen, laptops, printer) to take these programs on the road. Due to the staffing issues in the region, the regional staff have been assisting the other branches until they are no longer needed.

The Region met with the Arkansas Natural Sky Association. They wrote a grant on behalf of the region, and now each branch has a telescope for programming. We are 1 of 83 libraries in the state of Arkansas that has such telescopes.

Old Business:

- On July 8, 2022 the Board of Trustees voted to approve an emergency ordinance for a new full-time employee at the library, which was also approved by Quorum Court on July 14, 2022. Once Ritchie has hired the new Outreach and Programming Librarian and User Services Coordinator, he'll start the hiring process for the new position.
- Kathy Jones, the consultant for the JCPL Facility Project, presented a variety of options for a new library location, which included the property at 310-312 W Main St, Clarksville, AR 72830, the empty lot between Family Dollar and Harps on Crawford Street, the Family Dollar on Crawford, First Presbyterian Church, Corner of Walmart property off of Market Street, property owned by George Reece, Ashley Auto Sales property, the Fred's Building, and the library's current location. With each location, Jones provided a list of advantages and disadvantages. Jones recommended the library remain at its current location and acquire surrounding property (Pratt Property, Ken Stall Duplexes, and Lingar apartment complex in front of the library) to expand the library and rebuild a better parking lot. In the long term, Jones imagines that the library slowly purchases properties up to West Sevier Street, giving the library great potential for growth and the green space.
- Patton expressed her like for the last option. County Judge Houston brought up that the downtown area of Clarksville is currently experiencing a lot of growth, and it would be great to be a part of that. Jones said we would still have to figure out how to purchase the property, as library money can only be spent on maintenance and operations. According to Jones, there is an attorney general's opinion that says nothing can preclude the county from submitting to the voters a proposal that all or part of the millage be devoted for capital improvement projects or construction instead of maintained and operations. Or, the county can have an election have part of the maintenance and operations moved to capital improvement projects. Patton brought up that White County Quorum Court voted to take out the money and the library would pay rent to the county. County Judge Houston said the county would sign for the money, and then the library is legal to pay that payment back every month. Under maintenance and operations, the library can rent or lease, which Hawkins says that's how Franklin County renovated their two locations. County Judge Houston asked Greg Donaldson, a Johnson County Quorum Court member, what he thought about this plan. Donaldson said he has great support for the library, and that he loves the idea of the library growing at its current location, especially

if a road can be put in behind the library. Hawkins said this plan is an investment in the community. Then, the board discussed how, if renovations and expansion does happen, they do not want the library to close. Then, the Board expressed their interest in how the green space would wonderful for downtown. Last of all, the board discussed the Fred's building, the First Presbyterian Church, and the expansion plan to come up with a short list of which plans they wanted to pursue.

- Finally, Patton recommended that The Board and Jones pursue the expansion plan. In the next steps, the Board wants Jones to find out if Pratt wants to sell her property, if the city wants to sell their two acres behind the library and build a road behind the library, and work with a realtor or appraiser to find out the appraisal price for the properties surrounding the library. In addition, County Judge Houston suggested that Jones do her presentation in front of Quorum Court.
- Last of all, the Board discussed how they want to meet after the Quorum Court presentation for a special meeting on August 22nd, 2022.

New Business:

For the last two years, no money has been allocated to the Library Investment Savings Account because of the pandemic. Patton asked where our Investment Savings are located, and Ritchie and Kathy said that it's through the county, and Leta Willis, The County Treasurer, finds the best interest rates for us. Then, Patton asked if it is time to move money, and Kathy said when she was manager she tried to move money to it once a year. Jones recommended putting in a substantial amount. Reagan Eisele made a motion to move \$500,000 from the County Library Fund to Library Investment Checking. Alvin Mason seconded. The motion carried.

Adjournment:

Reagan made a motion to adjourn. Alicia Merritt seconded. Heather Patton adjourned the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alicia Merritt, Secretary



President

Oct. 20, 2022
Date