

Johnson County Public Library
Board Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2022

Present: Reagan Eisele, Alvin Mason, Heather Patton, Sterling Penix, James Ritchie, Kathy Jones, County Judge Herman Houston, and Rusty Hardgrave.

Call to Order:

Heather Patton called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

Minutes from previous meetings were reviewed and Penix made a motion to approve the minutes, and Reagan Eisele seconded. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report:

Alvin Mason gave the Treasurer's report with a balance of \$15,214.20 in the checking account, \$399,213.17 in County Revenue, \$1,394,286.09 in Investment Savings, \$12,603.02 in 501c3 account, and \$3,049.01 in the Endowment Account. Total of \$1,824,365.49. Reagan made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as read, Sterling Penix seconded. The motion passed.

Library Report:

- A) Regarding circulation, there were 21,146 checkouts for 2021. For 2022, there were 21,755 checkouts. With Overdrive, the total number of checkouts included 30,888. In addition, the library has 1,782 active card holders. Staff are calling expired card holders if they would like to renew their card over the phone.
- B) By the beginning of the year, outdated materials will be weeded from our juvenile non-fiction collection and our large-print fiction collection will be moved to the front of the building, taking the place of the adult non-fiction collection.
- C) Finally, the library is fully staffed with one salary employee, three full-time staff members, and two part-time staff members.
- D) With building maintenance, tree limbs need to be trimmed at the front of the building. Then, our oldest HVAC unit will need replaced by next year.
- E) All staff members are taking part in trainings to better serve our community. All full-time staff members participated in the Arkansas Library Association's Conference in Fort Smith, which provided library specific training.
- F) Regarding programs, our Back to School Bash with the Museum of Discovery's Awesome Science Presentation had 65 participants. Under our Outreach and Programming Librarian's direction, we are still offering story time, Tech Tuesdays, Workforce Wednesdays, and our Visiting Author Series. In addition, we will soon be

offering a Lego club, a D&D club, and a STEAM club for youth in our community. We also hosted a Literacy Festival for the Arkansas River Valley Virtual Academy and partnered with the Clarksville Theatre Troupe for Dramatic Readings. For October, we are participating in Lamar's Fall Fest, Clarksville School Carnival, Clarksville's Safe Treat, Taco and Treats, and Scraton's Trunk or Treat. Then, we will also be doing a Spooky Story Walk the last week of October.

- G) With outreach, we participated at all Open Houses for Back to School, except for West Side. We had a booth at the Freshman Orientation day for the University of the Ozarks. We did an outreach program at the Fair, Family Fun Day, Kid Fest. We also spoke to about 429 students at the Clarksville Junior High. We participated in a Banned Book Discussion with the Robson Library. We are hosting space for two different Home School groups. For November, we will do a Food Drive to provide the Blessing Boxes with food, and we will participate in the Holiday Market. In December, we plan on participating in the Christmas Parade.
- H) For 2022, we partnered with the schools, Arkansas River Valley Virtual Academy, Russellville Staffmark, Clarksville Theatre Troop, Johnson County 4-H, Dr. Stanley Lombardo, Lake Dardanelle State Park, Johnson County Home School Group, White Oak Wonders, and the University of the Ozarks.
- I) Last of all, Ritchie is working with Joseph Cruz, a Peer Recovery Support Specialist, by having classes at the Detention Center. We've had lessons on Library Resources, Resume Building, Job Searching, and Interview Tips. Ultimately, Joseph is working on a program to help inmates break the cycle of incarceration.
- J) Additionally, the library's Facebook Page was hacked. It's now under control to someone in Vietnam. The County Attorney wrote a letter to Facebook. Ritchie and Hawkins have both made reports to Facebook, and we've had no response about getting our page back under our control. Due to this incident, Ritchie created a new page for the library. Hawkins said that she has gotten in contact with Government Social Media Association. This association have contacts with these organizations, but so far they haven't been able to help us with this issue.
- K) With these tech issues, Patton asked if we've come up with a solution to a replacement for more secure emails instead of using Gmail. Ritchie is working with Hawkins to get our library emails under the domain with the region, which is also through Google.

Regional Report:

Book lockers- Misty Hawkins reported that the regional book lockers will hopefully be put out by the end of January. Book lockers for Johnson County will be at the Oark General Store, Lamar Food Mart, and the Coal Hill Pharmacy. Each of those locations will have a pick-up locker and a drop off locker. These lockers will help the library have better reach with other areas in our community. After some questions, Hawkins explained that they have A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each of these locations, to make sure that this

process is seamless. All of these was supported with the CARES ACT money, which had to be spent by the end of 2021.

Interlocal Agreement- Introducing the agreement, Hawkins explained that this is a contract developed and created to replace the 1978 agreement between the County library branches with the regional library system. Due to our services and libraries changing since that time, this document has been in the work for the past two years to reflect how we currently operate as a library system. This new document contract is based off the Carroll and Madison Library System's, and the County Attorney with Franklin County, Tom Tatum, has worked with Heather Patton to create this new contract. Also, this document has been approved by the Attorney General's Office. With this new contract, Hawkins is asking permission from the library boards, quorum courts and the County Judges, so that there is an official agreement between the Arkansas River Valley Regional Library System and each of the Counties.

Wage Study- Hawkins reported that they library system has also conducted a wage study with The Johanson Group. They did the study based off of job titles, job descriptions, existing salary or hourly rate and compared it to regional statistics, which included Crawford County Library System, Scott Sebastian Library System, and Carroll and Madison Library System. Fort Smith and Pope County declined to provide information for this wage study. Then, they compared these findings with the Bureau of Labor Statics, Northwest Arkansas, and other organizations. On average, the branch managers' positons where on par. However, staff members in all counties are under paid. However, Johnson County Library employees are the best paid compared to the other library employees in our library system, at \$11.00 dollars per hour. Then, Herman explained how Johnson County is determining pay based off of their own study with The Johanson Group. Basically, Hawkins explained that she hopes other counties will follow what Johnson County has done with wages, and Patton discussed how she would like to see the Outreach and Programming Librarian position grow into more of an Assistant Manager position and should be better compensated with pay. After discussion on wages with the County, the Library Board agreed that it is important for the library to work with the County.

Old Business:

- Investment Savings- Ritchie provided an update that Leta Willis, County Treasurer, transferred \$500,000 from Library County Revenue to Library Investment Savings due to the Board vote at the last Quarterly Board Meeting.
- JCPL Facility Project Update- Jones discussed that Allison & Partners did a simple cost analysis comparison, finding that renovation prices have been reported between \$200 - \$250 per square foot while new construction has been \$300 - \$400 per square foot. If we added 5,000 square feet, it would be \$3,250,000 +/- . If we renovated the Fred's location, it would be \$4,320,000 +/- . Jones said this is why we are moving in the current direction of staying at our current location. After discussion with Jones, Houston, and the Board on the County purchasing property for the library, Houston recommended that when construction starts, the library needs someone like West Central Arkansas Planning and

Development. Jones also added that there is a way to finance everything up front through West Central Arkansas.

- Appraisals- Jones updated that the appraisals for the properties had been completed. Ken Stall's duplexes appraised for \$363,000. Wayne Lingar's apartment complex, in front of the library, appraised for \$252,000. Fern Pratt's little house appraised for \$58,000. The second house owned by Pratt came in at \$44,000. Pratt's big house came in at \$72,000. The properties appraised close to what we thought, but Pratt's big house was a little high. Jones said that the appraiser, Michael Hodges, said he struggled with Pratt's three properties, but that house is structurally sound and the lot is bigger. Hardgrave added that you can't look at the value of the houses, especially if they will be torn down. It's more about the ground. Jones said that Ken Stall wanted \$400,000 for his duplexes, and he wants what he can get from inside the structures. With the difference between the appraisal and Stall's asking price, there could be a tax write off that benefits Stall. Jones added that the County Attorney said that if it is more than the appraised value, it's up to the County to decide if they want to pay the asking price. With the future expansion, Houston said that the property is worth it to the library. Due to Stall changing his requests for money per day we went past closing, Houston did not sign an option contract with Stall for 90 days. Patton asked for clarification on the involvement of West Central Arkansas Planning and Development company and, Jones said that the County is going to have to purchase the property, and the library will have to pay the county through a lease, but when it comes to building, then we need to go to West Central Arkansas Planning and Development to see what they can offer. With purchasing the property, Houston asked how long the lease payments would be, and Jones replied that it depends on how the lease is set up. After discussion, Jones recommended that the Board should tie up Stall's property, and then go after the other properties before Stall changes his mind, while negotiating with the other property owners. Discussing the details of the County purchasing the property, Jones reiterated that the appraisal is through First Security so that there would only be one appraisal, and that there would not be another appraisal. Then, there was discussion about what it would take to tear down the properties for the expansion plans. Patton then moved the discussion towards a motion. Houston said that yes, you need to move on and make a motion so he can take it to Quorum Court.
- Mason made a motion for Kathy Jones to contract with Ken Stall in the purchase of the Ken Stall properties that have been appraised, with the understanding that the appraisal is at \$363,000, and Jones will negotiate a price of not more than \$400,000, with any addition closing cost and attempt to work at a tax credit for the difference of the appraisal and the \$400,000. Sterling seconded. Motion passed.
- Moving on, Jones and Hardgrave will negotiate a purchasing price for Lingar's properties.
- In addition, Hardgrave will tell Pratt her properties appraised a little lower than what she wanted and that the Board is working on the other two properties, and once we get those decided, we will move on to hers.

- Hardgrave left the meeting after Old Business wrapped up.

New Business:

Alvin Mason and James Ritchie presented the budget for 2023. After discussion, Sterling made a motion to accept the budget as presented. Eisele seconded. Motion passed.

The Board will review the Interlocal Agreement and vote on it at the next board meeting.

Adjournment:

Sterling made a motion to adjourn. Eisele seconded. Patton adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alicia Merritt, Secretary

President

Date

