

Johnson County Public Library
Special Board Meeting: JCPL Facility Project
Board Meeting Minutes
August 22, 2022

Present: Reagan Eisele, Alvin Mason, Heather Patton, James Ritchie, Misty Hawkins, Kathy Jones, Judy Weaver, Tina Sharps, Korri Schuster, and Clay Austin.

Call to Order:

Heather Patton called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

New Business:

Tom Waggoner, Managing Director at Syntex, presented a plan to revitalize First Presbyterian Church with the Johnson County Public Library as a Community Media Center. Waggoner envisions this building to provide traditional library services, computer and internet access, a community learning center, a regional event center, innovation hub, a kitchen, community radio and TV, and offices. To fund this venture, Waggoner discussed historical preservation tax credits, new market tax credits, Library O&M funds, which would total \$3,400,000 of direct sources of cash. Then, through support sources of cash would include donations, Johnson County, City of Clarksville, prepaid office rent, prepaid restaurant for a total of \$4,800,000. With the direct and support sources of cash, Waggoner proposed that the total potential funds would include \$8,200,000.

After his presentation, Patton asked if Waggoner intended to buy the church. He said his company couldn't buy the church, but for the interested parties to form a NGO, more like a chamber of commerce. Then, Patton said that the library doesn't pay taxes, and asked who would be getting tax credits. Waggoner said these would be outside investors. Patton asked if the library would be the anchor to this project, and Waggoner said yes. Then, Patton asked if the library would have to pay rent to whoever owned the facility. Waggoner expressed that the library and other interested parties would form an NGO or community development cooperation, not a 5013c or charity. It's an entity that is taxable, but it doesn't have to be a for-profit entity. Mason asked how the NGO would be able to take tax credits. Waggoner said the NGO would sell the tax credits to the investors, where the investors become partners in the NGO. An audience member, Tina Sharps, asked if there is a library in the state of Arkansas who has done something similar to this plan. Waggoner's partner said Columbia County Library in Magnolia, Arkansas did this with a church facility with a fundraiser and tax credits. Then, he said Berryville are in a middle of a fundraising campaign to build a new library. Then, Waggoner provided an example where the University of the Ozarks did something similar to build their new science

center. Patton asked if Waggoner is pitching this plan to other groups, and Waggoner responded with no. Weaver, another audience member, asked for clarification on how the city would be involved with \$500,000. Waggoner said he would ask the city to provide that amount, and if they couldn't, he would propose that they would provide \$500,000 in exchange for property that they had and aren't earning anything on. Patton asked about parking, and do they address the parking issues with their plan. Waggoner expressed they don't think that's a difficult problem to address. Austin, an audience member, asked about the house that is slated to be moved, and are they including that house in their plans. Waggoner said they don't put any value on it or utilization for that space. Sharps asked if he has talked with anyone has spoken with City Hall with this plan. He said they have talked to various elders in the community about their hopes for the space, but they have not presented this plan to anyone else. Mason asked what Waggoner gets out of this, and he responded with satisfaction, to see the community attract people they want in their management slots. Waggoner is not seeking a profit with this plan, but they are willing to put some of their own money towards this plan.

Patton, the Board, James Ritchie, and Kathy Jones thanked Tom Waggoner for his presentation. Ritchie ended the zoom session with Waggoner. Patton asked if they needed to have any further discussion on this proposal. The Board did not see any need to have further discussion on this matter.

Old Business:

Patton asked Jones to update the Board on her presentation to Quorum Court about the JCPL Facility Project. Jones said it went well, and that Quorum Court is open to helping the library with their facility project and to come back when we have a plan. Jones said there were many favorable comments about her presentation. Reagan asked if she discussed the Presbyterian Church at Quorum Court, and she said that she did not. Patton asked if she is still working on the expansion plan, and Jones said that she is waiting for the Board's direction. Patton asked where we are at with the expansion plan. Jones said she has talked to the property owners, but nothing is concrete, and they have not negotiated. Ritchie asked for a cost analysis report on the First Presbyterian Church with the expansion plan, and Mason said he would like to know more the First Presbyterian Church Plan. Jones said that she has been involved with the Presbyterian Church project for a long time, and that she doesn't see any way the library can go in the direction of the library relocating to the church, as they want the library to be the anchor. In a financial standpoint, she doesn't think the church plan is feasible. Jones and Patton both expressed that they would love to save the church, but they don't see the library as a way to save it.

Patton said the Board agreed that they liked the idea of building on to the current facility, and the idea of growth in this area. Mason asked if Waggoner was the same person with the original

plan with the church, and Jones said this is a new group, but they have been in contact with the architect with the original plan. Jones stated that the library shouldn't be the anchor in this potential plan, and Hawkins said it's because the library is a consistent form of revenue, even though the revenue goes back to the library and library services. Weaver, an audience member, said the dollars and cents of this Church plan doesn't make sense when it comes to the City coming up with \$500,000, especially when the owners paid \$150,000 for the building and tried to sell it to the city for \$400,000. Ritchie said there are too many "what ifs" with this plan. Jones said that these investors and previous investors never showed any tangible money. Only talk. Ritchie said instead of reaching out to just us, they need to bring this plan to the table with the other entities (City, County, University) that they discussed. Jones said the University never participated with any talks when it came to the church.

Patton suggested that Kathy work up some numbers on the properties the library would like to obtain for the expansion plan and see if we can purchase the properties, since the Board wanted to move forward in that direction.

Before adjournment, Patton and the Board would like to set the next special meeting for the facility project in September.

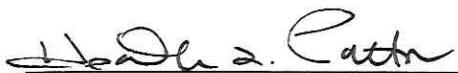
Adjournment:

Reagan made a motion to adjourn. Mason seconded. Heather Patton adjourned the meeting at 6:31 p.m.



ARKANSAS RIVER VALLEY
REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM

Respectfully submitted,
Alicia Merritt, Secretary



President

Oct. 20, 2022

Date