

Director's Report

Prepared by Donita Ward: August 21, 2023

If you want to learn more about Library Districts, how they're created and managed, rules, regulations, legislation, etc, you can visit the amazing website Westbank Library put together. [Library Districts – Westbank Libraries \(westbanklibrary.com\)](https://westbanklibrary.com)

Attachments: posted to meeting page of website for review

- Statistics and Digital Statistics
- Balance Sheet
- Profit and Loss Report
- Minutes from June meeting
- Results from the Idea Boards voting events
- Draft Trustee Orientation packet
- Available on website, no major changes needed:
 - WBCLD ByLaws
 - Trustee Ethics
 - Services Policy

Budget Adjustment Requests and Financial Items for Approval:

- Move \$1000 from 553 Tech Maintenance to 552 Webhost and Subscriptions to fund Little Pim
- Move \$1000 from 573 Repairs and Maintenance to 564 Security to accommodate increased cost of monitoring.
- Move \$5000 from 573 Repairs and Maintenance to 565 Landscape Maintenance to cover sprinkler system repairs
- Move \$1500 from 523 adult media to 525 subscriptions to fund Press Reader.
- Pull \$18000 from 420 interest to 510 employee wages to fund 9 pay periods of increased hours for two employees and a rate correction for entry level staff to match Austin and Round Rock Libraries' entry level pay.
- Pull \$1000 from 420 interest to 532 adult programs.
- Pull \$1000 from 420 interest to 5421 printer supplies.
- Pull \$5000 from 420 interest to 568 special improvements to purchase additional front yard toys

Finance & Administration

Sales Tax income remains strong. We are set to exceed budgeted income in 2023. Those funds, combined with retained income from years past, put us in a strong position for renovations.

This year we will have a contested election again. The Notice of Deadline to Submit was approved in June. The Joint Election Agreement and the Election Services Agreement have been signed and submitted to Travis County. The Boundary Jurisdiction Report is complete and approved by Travis County GIS Dept. The Order Calling Election and Preliminary Ballot Language have been approved in both English and Spanish for posting at the County. There will be a ballot order drawing on August 22 for final ballot order.

I contacted our lawyer about SB1893 which immediately banned TikTok use on any government owned devices. This is a concern as we do not currently filter our WiFi in any way and that router is owned by the district, and we do not currently block specific sites. At current legal understanding, we are covered by having appropriate wording in the computer use agreement requiring users to follow all applicable laws. That could change when (if) the Department of Information Resources and the Department of Public Safety identify risks and publish requirements for specific steps to be taken. Right now, according to legal counsel, we are compliant. We are also compliant with applicable laws and ordinances as far as updates to the ByLaws.

Operations

Circulation statistics continue to climb. In 2023, we are averaging 13,251 circs per month. That's up from 12,243 in 2022 and 6,114 in 2021. We are getting 144 new patrons each month and there are 458 people using the WiFi. We are steadily and quickly approaching pre-pandemic numbers for gate count and circulation. When digital circulation is factored into the equation, we're even closer. Total program attendance is higher than it's ever been. What is not coming back up as quickly is volunteer hours and computer use.

CREW weeding is well underway. The shelves are looking much neater and more current. It turns out that we didn't need to contract with any resellers or removal companies for our discarded titles. Almost everything is being taken by members of the community, which is perfect since they were purchased with public funds to serve those exact people.

Inventory this month will be the youth collections on Thursday, August 24. We are planning to set up a staff workstation in the study room off the children's library to make the Library of Things cabinets more accessible and give employees more space to do projects. If the theft rate of JDVD is low enough, we will also start the rather tedious process of putting the adult, Foreign Language, and TV Series DVDs back into their boxes instead of behind the counter at the desk. There will be a full staff meeting during inventory, along with several facility projects and employee check-ins. It's going to be a very busy day.

Temporary cards are available and staff have all been trained to distribute them. I've also created an appropriate attire document. Employees who started this year have been assigned the Sexual Harassment awareness training to maintain compliance.

Internal Affairs

The library is fully staffed and that staff is all trained at this time. I have included in budget requests the suggestion that we increase hours for two of our current employees to help cover the increase in foot traffic and program attendance we've enjoyed. I also want to bump our entry level up to meet the standard set by City of Austin and Round Rock, as those are our most relevant comparison points. If we do that, we will also need to bump the mid-level starting pay range to maintain a difference between them.

The Annual Texas Library Association Governance Conference was in Austin last month (UT Pickle Campus) and I attended 2 sessions of General Council representing both the Small Community Library Round Table and District 3 (Central Texas). I also co-hosted the Semiannual meeting of the Library Districts Discussion Group in August online where we had a presentation from the newly formed National Special Districts Coalition as well as idea sharing with other Library Districts in Texas.

There are several upcoming trainings that may be worthwhile. Right here in Austin, the National Special District Coalition will be meeting at APL on September 28th. This could be a meaningful group to join, both for the director and for a trustee, as there will be talk of MOUs and legislation and such. There is no cost to attend and they are possibly going to validate parking and include lunch.

ARSL (Association of Rural and Small Libraries) is usually a very relevant conference as all workshops are for specifically single building small facilities. This year, however, we have different priorities and flying to Kansas seems like a large cost. That said, there is a preconference specifically for Library Building and Space Planning. I estimate it would cost ~\$1600 for me to attend with pre-conferences, including registration/hotel/flights. The conference is in Wichita Sept 20-23.

Everything else seems to be in the Fort Worth area this fall. There is a TML (Texas Municipal League) Conference in Frisco Oct 4-6, which includes the TMLDA (Texas Municipal Library Director Association) meeting on the afternoon of 10/5 & the PLAN (formerly CTLS) annual membership meeting on the afternoon of 10/6. That would cost ~\$1000 for registration, mileage, and hotel.

The staff is due for First Aid/ CPR/ AED training in the fourth quarter this year. I am trying to get is scheduled for the October inventory date. We will once again do the majority of the coursework online in advance and then have the skills test in person when the library is closed.

Technology

I spent some time on a trial of the MyLibro app for library card services. That is the one most frequently used by area libraries. There is a cost of ~\$2500/year for the app. It looks reasonably simple for us to set up and maintain. Unfortunately, it does not seem to offer anything better than our website on a mobile platform with the exception of the potential to scan a library card from the app. Managers were not impressed.

Instead, I spent some time rearranging the portlets on our website to make it more mobile friendly.

This month, we finally had to replace my desktop, as it could not update Windows (or run adobe). We are also going to replace the smart TV over the office windows that we use as advertising. It will no longer communicate with the web.

Facilities

Additional shelving is in place JGN and YA. We also got more bookends and backstops for the shelving. We have shifted some GN onto the higher shelving in Biography to make space. Board Books have been moved to the toy area for little ones and we added more shelving for Spanish and bilingual storybooks.

Sprinkler repairs seem to be on the increase this year, as we have needed to do several head replacements. The system is getting older. We have not had any major AC issues, though, which makes us all very happy.

Many improvements are on hold as we await remodel plans, but we can go ahead and add outside equipment. Nick and I have been looking at potential items to make our front yard more attractive but do not involve climbing as that would require we add soft landing spaces and insurance adjustments. We found a butterfly chime wall, rain wheel, plinko game, and rotating tic tac toe.

I want to find a way to put one-way glass on interior windows that separate staff areas from public areas, but it is not easy. Anything we can purchase from home depot or amazon will only work if there is a significant light difference between the spaces, which there is not. We have privacy covers on the glass now, which works in preventing patrons from seeing what is on the desks, but staff cannot easily see out to monitor what is happening on the floor. I have asked Karen to find a glass company to quote something and we are waiting to hear.

Programs & Outreach

In 2023 we hosted a very successful Summer Reading incentive program. For adults, there were 190 participants. Of those, 112 completed 2 books and reviews to earn a cutlery set and 98 completed 4 books and reviews to take home a lunchbox. There were 382 youth participants this year. Fifty teens participated, 21 of whom got level 1 prizes and 16 earned final completion prizes. The other 332 participants were kids. Of those, 167 read all 20 books for final prizes, 182 got through 15 books, 203 finished 10 and 238 recorded at least 5 books.

Summer Reading had some crazy popular programs with 106 people at Joe McDermott and 85 at Cowboy Ken. We also saw 60 budding scientists at Mad Science and again at the Chemistry RoadShow. There were 80 people here for the Austin Reptile Show and 84 for Lucas Miller the Singing Zoologist. That larger program space needs to be a priority when we renovate.

We have rebranded our Open Crafting Space hours in hopes of increasing usage, but the numbers are still not good. The cost per user is well over what we would want it to be. However, the tween/teen program that launched over the summer had such positive response we will make it a monthly offering through the school year. Teen program attendance is on the rise across the board with 12 at Octopus Games and 25 at the Mario Kart challenge. This is an amazing turnout for this age group.

Adult programs continue to follow established trends. Most popular are our recurring crafts like painting signs or Bad Art Night. Special classes also enjoy great turn out. We had 26 at Japanese Calligraphy and 23 at Beeswax. Nothing compares to cuddly critters, though, proven by 39 adults at Hoppy Hour. Book clubs, passive programs, and wellness programs have steady attendance. Computer programs just don't get much interest and attendance is abysmal.

Storytimes are getting even more crowded in August, regularly exceeding fire code for the room, partly due to other area libraries taking extended breaks from programming. July numbers saw averages of 22 to 33 attendees at each program for 0-5. In September, we are adding an extra weekly program called Wiggle Worms for this age group that is more focused on movement than reading.

Older kids' programs had 13-22 average. Young Rembrandts is experiencing lower turnout, but that could be due to a change in teacher. We are working to get a better person in place. The summer Choose Your Own Adventure club had a final meeting in August and will transition to a Worlds of Stories program in September. Family games fizzled out, but the Block Party and STEAM lab are being combined for the fall in place of Lego Lab.

Homebound services is down to one participant despite a number of people filling out the paperwork and expressing interest. Lauren is in the process of reaching out to the Lodge at Merriltown, the Conservatory, and Affinity to see if they would like to host another library card sign up event where we can feature the service.

We were at Fourth Fest where we saw hundreds of people, many of whom participated in our voting program for renovation ideas. We had more voting at the library on July 30 and again at our Birthday Party. Results are posted on the website. Our next tabling event is National Night Out in October.

The library celebrated its 25th birthday this month with a party on site. We had yard games, a balloon artist, cupcakes, artisans in lacemaking and blacksmithing doing demonstrations, and the opportunity for people to talk to us about renovation ideas and vote on their priorities. Unfortunately, it has been unreasonably (dangerously) hot outside and that limited enjoyment of field day style games and activities.