

## **Director's Report**

**Prepared by Donita Ward: August 17, 2022**

### **Attachments: posted to meeting page of website for review**

- Statistics and Digital Statistics
- Balance Sheet
- Profit and Loss Report
- Draft Minutes from June meeting
- Draft outline with updated mission statement for 2023-2027 Long Range Plan
- Draft update for Conduct Policy, rolling in virus control and 1<sup>st</sup> amendment information
- Notes from the Architectural Enhancement and Improvement Committee (included at the bottom of this report)

### **The following item(s) up for review can be found on the library website.**

- Conduct Policy
- Virus Control Policy

### **Budget Adjustment Requests and Financial Items for Approval:**

#### **Finance & Administration**

Sales Tax income is still quite strong. Following the trend, if there are not any big audit adjustments, we will bring in substantially more than expected this year. That seems to follow with consumer costs increasing. The price for performers has gone up dramatically. Supplies and utilities are higher, but not unreasonably so. I am watching staffing cost trends in other libraries. The other districts in the Austin area seem to be starting their front line staff at \$18 per hour, but they are not employing students for that position and we do. The city of Austin is considering moving all employees to a minimum starting wage of \$22 per hour, but that is only a possibility.

2022 General Election plans are going well. We currently have no applicants. Preliminary ballot language, the election agreement, the contract with Travis County, and the boundary and voting roll verifications have all been completed. The Order Calling an Election and the Notice of Filing Deadlines were posted on time.

#### **Operations**

People love no fines on books. The number of nonconformance forms for late fees is dramatically lower than our pre-pandemic numbers.

Circulation numbers are rising steadily. Total circulation monthly average is over 12,000, up from 6000 in 2021 and 5300 in 2020. Before the pandemic closure, we were averaging over 17000 circulations per month. Library visits are nearing 5000 per month, we were close to 9000 per month in 2019. Digital circulation is right back at 2019 numbers.

Pronunciator still not being used as much as I'd like, but the usage numbers for July are up from previous months. In any case, I am looking at Mango for 2023 as it had better patron response. Another possibility for 2023 is the ERead Texas and SimplyE programs through the state library. There is no cost to add these options to our catalog, but there would be a significant training need for staff (and patrons). Other databases and digital offerings are rising slowly but steadily.

We are going through and re-writing ALL procedures for library tasks. There have always been periodic changes to processes stemming from new service, updates, and software changes. Throughout the pandemic, there were multiple changes for how things were done and even changes to what things were done. That led to many versions of procedures with conflicting information. As they were updated, random outdated copies were saved in random places and that has caused confusion. At this time, we are purging the old versions and consolidating current information.

### **Internal Affairs**

Sexual Harassment training is one of those things we have to do each year. I secured a resource called easyllama that has a good online training for us. They also offer some diversity trainings that may be worthwhile, depending on the response I get for the assigned training.

Quarterly Reviews for ALL staff are being completed this month. The entry level employees and assistant managers check in monthly with librarians, but only have formal meetings with me three times per year. At these meetings, we go through all the general discussions and goal review, but I also spoke to each person about 1<sup>st</sup> amendment audits, patrons who object to an item in the collection, and open carry in libraries. These have been hot topics on some list serves in recent months and I wanted to be sure each employee had the opportunity to talk about any concerns they may have in handling a situation like that.

Annual Assembly was a disappointment. The meeting was mostly administrative for the TxLA councils and conference planning, so I only attended a few hours of the meetings. Fortunately, the assembly was in Austin, so I was able to come back to the office easily and resume more meaningful tasks without sacrificing any travel costs. I was hoping for some expert advice on renovations from the exhibitor hall, and there was not anyone there who fit our needs.

I have high hopes for the Association of Rural and Small Libraries Conference next month. The schedule of workshops has been distributed and the days look full of useful information. Among the offerings I want to attend are Library Redesigns, Meeting Efficiency, Marketing, Censorship and Challenges, Services to Marginalized Communities, Diversity Planning, Responding to Crises, Successful Building Projects, and Succession and Change.

We have a full volunteer roster and the program is running well. We do not yet need as many hours as we had before the pandemic closure and the hours we do need are being filled. Volunteer Appreciation is scheduled for September with goats and ice

cream. In June we had 153 hours and in July we had 130. As the school year resumes, we will again be hosting the RRISD high school student outreach group, Community Access, for help sanitizing our toys.

Our two recent hires started work on July 9 and are through their base training. Both go back to school this month, so we shall see how schedules balance out. We are hiring one more entry level assistant and the posting will go live this week. I decided to wait on this posting until school was ready to start as we got a number of applications last month for people wanting to work over the summer.

Intuit has discontinued the system we were using for payroll and moved us into quickbooks payroll processing. It looks like the cost will be lower. Once we run a payroll and see how reports are constructed, I will know more about the new service.

## **Technology**

New staff machines are up and running. The new patron machines will be installed later in the month. We are having an issue with some of our software licensing, but it should be sorted in time for patrons to have a smooth transition. We also came due for our filtering router to be renewed and our mobile beacon hotspot subscriptions, so it's been a technology expensive season. The contract with Technology for Education (TFE) is up for renewal as well. I've compared the proposal with other districts and what we are getting, while it seems like an outrageous amount of money for the service, is competitive with what other library districts are paying.

We are almost ready for the new machines to attach during inventory this month. Each device has been taken into the tech room to have software and drivers installed and get updated for Windows. On the day, they will need to be attached to the server and management software and given all of that information.

## **Facilities**

New grass and trees look great! We have had some problems with the doors into the kids' area and the auto opener on the front door, but those have been fixed. Right now, we are trying to schedule some power washing for the sidewalks and a good window cleaning, inside and out. We will also get the building exterior sprayed if it can be done without using too much water.

We have one large program space right now and it is in high demand. If we were to start offering Open LAB hours as planned, that significantly reduces the number of programs we can offer. To combat this, I'd like to move the LAB cabinets into the smaller room, which is rarely used. Open LAB hours would be in that smaller room, allowing for concerts or yoga or any number of offerings to continue in the larger room. I think we can move the cabinets ourselves, but I need to find more of the wall cover as it does not currently extend behind them.

I've begun asking around for a general contractor to create the glass wall enclosure for the YA area. We really need some architectural plans before going

forward, though, as my graph paper drawings are not adequate for construction bids and planning.

## **Programs & Outreach**

Summer Reading for kids was back to live programs and was very successful this year. There were over 350 people at the kick-off party to start. 610 kids came in for weekly prizes, averaging 68 per week. Big programs for the season were the Austin Zoo presentations (175 attendees), a bilingual concert (40 attendees) 3 special art programs (20+ attendees each), Lucan Miller the Singing Zoologist (88 attendees), a Make and Take Slime program from Mad Science (100+ attendees) and Mr Will Concert (22 attendees). Our patrons like critters and they like to make things. Recurring programs averaged about 17 people per program over the summer and we were offering fourteen kids programs each week.

Adult programs have really taken off. Art style workshops are the most successful, with at least 16 people averaging at each program. Adults also like the critter visits; 34 people came to Hoppy Hour and 30 came to learn about Hummingbirds. Trivia is drawing a decent crowd and both Yoga and Meditation are bringing up their numbers.

Adults were more active in summer reading this year with 131 earning the water bottle, 107 earning the coffee mug, and 57 completing the entire program for a free book. What isn't bringing folks in are the book clubs and computer classes. Those are traditional library programs, but we seem to find ourselves in a nontraditional community for programming.

LAB programs are picking up again. There is steady attendance at the weekly DIY workshops and we're starting to get regular requests for Open LAB. Assuming we can move the cabinets as planned, and that we get enough staff hired and trained, we will be able to start offering limited Open LAB hours before the holidays.

Teen programs have started to take off as well. While there have been numerous TLC (Teen Library Council) sponsored offerings, we are also trying to put non-TLC programs into the mix. The Library After Dark has been especially popular. TLC is having at least 10 kids at each meeting, which is great. There were 14 attendees at their Octopus Games event and 18 people completed the passive Harry Potter Scavenger Hunt in the YA area that ran throughout July.

All ages programs are going well. First Fridays in particular are usually well attended. There were hundreds (literally) at the June Steel Drum Concert as part of the Summer Reading KickOff. There were 43 people at the Ukulele Concert in July. Upcoming First Fridays are a Family Craft Night in September, Jingle Dancers in October, an Owl program in November and Terrence Taps in December. We also have our ever popular Polar Express in December and some other fun holiday events in the works.

Outreach events and tabling are coming back into the regular rotation. Lauren was at FourthFest handing out marketing items and she'll be at National Night Out in October. She has been making regular trips to the Conservatory to deliver to the homebound group. She will be going to Affinity for a Library Card Signup event this weekend to launch services there. If there is adequate interest, she will add residents from Affinity to the homebound delivery circuit.

### **Architectural Enhancement and Improvement Committee**

Despite planning, schedules for some committee members shifted and we were not able to meet all at once. Instead, I met with each person individually.

Currently, the hope is to move forward this year or next to get the glass enclosure around the YA section. That is phase 1. We do not have architect drawings or construction bids, and I do not know how long we would need to be closed. However, this does not involve and structural changes or shelf movement, so I imagine the work could be done with a closure of 1-2 weeks. There is already HVAC in the space and there are no changes to ceiling height, but the overhead lighting fixtures would need to be changed, for example.

Phase 2 would be to create a large programming room from the director's office, quiet reading room, and the hallway created between those spaces and the teen area. This would potentially happen in 2024/2025. A project of this scope would require several steps, including moving the director's office into another space and closing the library for at least a couple of weeks.

Phases beyond those two would go into the next 5 year plan. Before creating a 5 year plan, we should do another full image audit and customer survey. There are several expansion possibilities for 2028-2032. Those include:

- Push out the Teen/YA area to enclose and capture the porch space and make the YA area larger.
- Enclose the breezeway to make additional work areas, private conference offices, and community spaces.
- By attaching the two buildings, we could increase hours of access to the LAB and program spaces as well.