

Director's Report

Prepared by Donita Ward: January 28, 2022

Attachments:

- Statistics and Digital Statistics
- Balance Sheet
- Profit and Loss Report
- Draft Minutes from December meeting
- Updated Circulation and Collection Policy

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

- none for this meeting

Budget Adjustment Requests:

- none at this time

Finance & Administration

Sales Tax income is very strong. Back in 2020, I created a sheet to track pre-pandemic and post-pandemic incomes and averages by month, thinking we could be facing a serious drop in revenue. The January 2022 deposit was significantly higher than expected, so we are going to pull an audit report to see if this deposit included any back collections that were unanticipated. If a business is miscoded to the library and the comptroller collects and distributes to us, they can correct that years down the road and charge us the back collections. The last time this happened, it was over \$300K and very surprising.

	2022	2021	2020	Pre-pandemic average 2017-2019
January	\$157,291.88	103634.16	107967.75	100186.38
February		125779.41	131566.56	104331.77
March		101013.08	119135.50	91926.87
April		84993.11	107048.84	103655.18
May		142,748.49	111115.18	110300.02
June		\$126,990.28	99068.19	96109.74
July		131,162.19	104166.85	111179.35
August		196,537.67	134130.91	117250.15
September		138,673.52	110325.75	126110.13
October		146,584.42	112674.51	122268.76
November		160,712.58	127303.24	113012.78
December		166,186.41	112553.89	125652.38
		1625015.32	1379077.17	1321983.51

Each year, the district is required by law to have an independent Audit performed. We are contracted and work will begin in February. I do not anticipate any issues or complications.

There are a number of administrative tasks and reports to complete each year, including Annual Report, Comptroller Debt Transparency Report and quarterly sales tax reports. We are up to date with debt transparency and sales tax. The annual report window opened last week and is due in March.

Operations

Currently, we are offering all regular library access hours and most services. The document station and computers are up and working. Collection browsing is available and seating is back in situ. We have maintained some limitations for pandemic safety. Those include:

- Only alternate computers are available to accommodate social distancing.
- Public study seating is spaced.
- Programs are outside, weather permitting. When we need to move them indoors, we are using the large room instead of the storytime room for increased space and airflow. Masks are absolutely required for anyone old enough to manage, no exceptions, for indoor programs.
- The family place open play area for ages under 4 is not available.
- We are following health department and CDC recommendations for masking and hand sanitizing.
- Food and drink are not permitted in public areas.

Circulation climbed steadily through the fall of 2021, though we are nowhere near our pre-pandemic numbers. Monthly average circulation in 2021 was 6114 compared to 5351 in 2020, so we are on the right course. Dial-A-Story participation has fallen considerably since we reopened. Digital circulation remains higher than it was pre-pandemic, but not as high as 2020. Computer use is also rising each month, despite the limited machines available. There have been a handful of moments that there was not a computer ready and waiting for someone who came in.

We were able to complete the removal of old fines from all accounts. All said, we forgave 3051 members a total of \$76955.37.

In 2021, patrons saved \$747K by borrowing 73368 physical materials from the library. They also borrowed 27576 digital items. If you assume an average cost of \$8 per, that's another \$220K that stayed in the pockets of our friends and neighbors. Total amount saved for 2021 was up 9% from 2020, but our usage rates are still only a fraction of the 2019 circulation numbers.

Our first quarterly inventory since closing in March 2020 was Thursday, January 27th. We checked and scanned the media collection which includes DVDs, audiobooks, music, kits, technology and the library of things. This was the first time for the DVDs to be inventoried since they were rearranged to be alphabetical instead of numerical by

date of acquisition, so the system and process was completely new. We were also without volunteers and extra personnel. All said, we were able to complete the inventory tasks by end of day, but did not do any extra closure activities like training, technology updates, or staff meeting. The staff were scanning and searching right up until 8pm.

Internal Affairs

CPR in-person training and testing was completed for all staff but one. We have an hour of EAP training due to the district that is scheduled for March 6th at 8am. Kaitlyn is taking some Family Place online training and Kristin has registered for some cataloging tips workshops. I completed a webinar about Legal Resources and distributed pertinent information to reference staff.

There are a number of library conferences that we have not attended for years due to pandemic safety concerns. Next month is the Public Library Association conference in Portland. In April is the Texas Library Association conference in Fort Worth. The ARSL convention is in September in Tennessee. There are others, but these are the three most applicable and I try to give managers the option to attend one per year. In years that Texas Library Association is in Austin, I try to get as many employees downtown at least for a day as possible.

I do not know how comfortable anyone is with flying to Oregon next month. We generally ask folks to share accommodations when travelling (with obvious exceptions), but I do not feel comfortable suggesting that if there is still a pandemic raging as people can wear a mask for travel or meetings, but not reasonably when sleeping.

Volunteers have taken a sharp plunge in hours as the Omicron Variant infection numbers spiked. We were in a very good place with a full contingent of shelveers in December and a dozen teens at the Teen Library Council meeting. Those attendance numbers have dropped significantly, but we are hopeful that interested persons will return in the coming months as infection rates come under control (fingers crossed).

Technology

The staff printer and copier in the workroom has outlived its expected lifespan by quite a few years and both machines have become curmudgeonly of late. We ordered a single unit to replace both and it arrived damaged. The rather exhaustive refund process is now complete and another device will be ordered next week.

All public patron computers are scheduled for replacement in 2022. We plan to accomplish this in August by extending the inventory day closure to two days. August is historically slow. Staff and peripheral machines will be replaced as they reach the 5 to 7-year mark, but will not require library closure to deploy.

A full technology audit and inventory is in process. We hope to have this complete in May. Specifically time consuming is the process of determining which machines are running which version of each software and collecting license numbers. We need this information for replacement licensing and purchases.

Facilities

Broken windows have been quite a task to replace, but we do finally have new materials ordered. The great remodel was complete in September with stacks moved and carpet and workstations demoed and replaced. In their new placement, the steel shelf ends looked less polished and we ordered wood replacements to complete the look. Those have been installed.

The parking lot book drop is loved. In fact, people love it so much that it was broken in January when a delivery tried to shove a large box through a not-as-large opening. Fortunately, the manufacturer has agreed to replace the damaged piece.

Replacement fixtures for lighting in foyer were installed during the January inventory. The emergency lighting in the back hall was replaced the following day. All lighting is working properly now.

It would seem that a permanent sunshade over the front yard is not to be. The most recent information from the district engineer who would need to sign off is that we would need to apply for a full site development permit from the city and from the county. Since we would exceed the max allotment for impervious cover, we would also have to take more water quality and detention measures.

Programs & Outreach

We brought most programs back to live-in-person at the end of last year. We are doing as many as we can outside for better air ventilation, but bring them in for weather (rain or under fifty degrees). Some programs, like a concert with humidity sensitive instruments or a DIY requiring equipment, are also necessarily indoors. Attendance is limited by restricted registration. That said, we have a full calendar of upcoming offerings and many are proving to be quite popular.

December saw the return of some beloved favorites. There were 98 people at the Polar Express Pajama Party this year. We brought in a caroling troupe from the local high school to entertain families while they waited to take pictures with Santa. The program was incredible. We also had a family craft night in December with various activities for ages 8+. Winter reading for this year had decreased participation from last year. Anecdotally, some patrons have reported that virtual options have run the course of their interest.

The library is hosting monthly vaccine events with Walgreens through Vax Together Austin. On the first Monday afternoon of each month, there are free shots and boosters available. Registration is online and some walk-ups are usually available.

In January, we resumed a regular programming schedule that more closely represents our pre-pandemic offerings. We have something for the little kids every morning (except Sunday), afterschool and evening offerings, weekly DIY for adults, monthly art for older kids, and regular special programming. First Fridays are lined up for several months in advance. We have restarted the Thursday evening and Saturday

afternoon adult programming as well with a variety that includes a range from nail art to google suite and Medicare to disaster pieces.

Mark your calendars

Weekly Programs:

Monday: 10:30am - Baby Signs Storytime, 11:00am - Storytime

Tuesday: 10:30am - Bilingual Storytime, 11:00am - Spanish Circle Time, 3:15pm & 4:15pm- LEGO Lab

Wednesday: 10:30am - Circle Time, 6pm DIY for Adults

Thursday: 10:30am – Storytime, 11:00am – Storytime, 5:00pm - Story & Play

Friday: 10:30am - Alphabuddies

Saturday: 10:30am - Story & Play

Special programming:

Passive/Remote Programming:

- Black History Month Reading Challenge (all of February, all ages)
- Traveling Tea (subscription box style program with tea, snack and a book based on a theme)
- Spring Break Scavenger Hunt March 12-19

First Fridays:

- A Day in Africa Feb 4
- Korean Dance March 4

Try it Adult Crafting:

- Valentines Day Card Feb 5 & 10
- Felt Flower Wreath March 4 & 10

Self Care:

- Yoga Feb 24 & March 31
- Meditation Feb 9 and March 9

Dragon Dance Performance: Feb 5 rescheduling to Feb 26 for weather

Google Suite Workshop Feb 3 & 6

Nail Stamping Feb 12

Young Rembrandts art classes for ages 6-12- Feb 2 & 28

Word 101 March 3 & 19

Lego Fun Day March 15

Bad Art Night March 12 (create a disaster piece)

Medicare 101 March 24

Ways to reach out to the community beyond in-house and email surveys

At the December meeting, all trustees were tasked with the development of two or three ideas to reach into the community, both library users and nonusers, to get input for potential expansion and long range planning.

MUD Outreach:

1. I have asked the MUD about putting a mailer of sorts into everyone's water bills. I think this could be successful, but I do not have firm cost information yet. In speaking with the MUD, we would have to send a file to their local printer. Then that printer would produce our flyer along with their marketing info and send it all along to Crossroads in Houston for processing, envelope stuffing, and mailing. This would be a rather complicated process and would require an MOU and an amendment to the land lease agreement.
2. If we wanted to include a digital file into the electronic water bills, we could do that at no cost. It would only reach the users who get digital water bills, though, which is less than 30%.
3. We can include a couple of sentences and QR code into the printed WBWord newsletter that goes into water bills at no cost. This would be concise, but would reach everyone who gets a water bill. For the end of March billing cycle, they would need our piece by the end of February.

USPS direct mailing. This we can do ourselves without having to involve another entity. The USPS has a service called EDDM (every door direct mailing). We select which postal routes we want to target and use one of the approved printers to develop a mailing, which the postal carrier then receives and delivers to every mailbox in the area. Our district covers routes R074, R220, R042, R037, R051, R136, R026, R053 and R057 for a grand total of 8135 delivery addresses. We can get 8258 glossy 6x9 postcards printed for \$3588.26 and delivered for \$1627. That's a total cost of ~\$5215. If we include a QR code on the postcard for people to answer a survey, we could get quite a bit of input for that money.

Broad dissemination of a simple survey using links and QR Code Distribution. This is an inexpensive option. We can easily create a QR code to a survey and post it to various venues. We would likely get cooperation from the Neighborhood Association and local groups like Wells Branch Parents on Facebook or possibly even the Buy Nothing group. Local businesses could be asked to have the QR code posted somewhere for people standing in line. We could ask to put it up in the recreation centers or business offices of the apartment complexes in the neighborhood as well.

In any of these cases, we need to determine exactly what we are asking people. We can put out suggestions of ideas we've entertained with an option to input alternate text. We must be very careful to only ask about things we're prepared to act upon. We would also need to set up a means to collect and manage the responses. Bribery is a very

effective marketing tool. I would suggest that we include the chance to win a \$100 amazon gift card for every survey respondent.

How best to maximize ROI for the Friends of the Library

The FoL is inadequately staffed for big projects like the Garage Sale. Membership is quite small and communication is minimal. The library's funding stream is stable, so fundraising is not a major concern. As such, the FoL seems to have been floundering for membership and purpose.

One possibility is to fold FoL under Board of Trustees management.

I feel the better plan is to encourage the FoL to continue without the funding mission and work as library ambassadors. This would maintain the separate 501c3 in case it's needed, but remove the onus for membership dues or labor intensive events like the garage sale.

If the FoL were willing, they could be an excellent distribution arm for community input surveys.

Library managers have asked about FoL working as a volunteer unit for special programming. We can create signup genius events for big performances.

They could also be outreach specialists in approaching local businesses for support.

I think it is very important that FoL not embark upon any outreach or marketing initiative without input and adequate training from library management. Bad information going out is much worse than no information going out. Library services and programs are necessarily fluid, especially with a pandemic in play, and the possibility of outdated or incomplete marketing is a very real concern.