**Director’s Report**

**Prepared by Donita Ward:  May 10, 2022**

**Attachments:**

* Statistics and Digital Statistics
* Balance Sheet
* Profit and Loss Report
* Draft Minutes from February meeting

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

* None at this time

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

At the previous meeting, I mentioned that the Cost of Living increase for 2022 over 2021 was 7.5% according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This number was released in February 2022. In addition, since that report, inflation has continued to rise at the rate of another 0.8% in February and 1.2% in March.

For 2022, there was a base wage increase of 3% across the board (not taking into account readjustments). To make current paychecks retain the value they had six months ago, we would need to put in additional funding. To pass a 4% increase across the board for all employees would cost an additional $10,077.95 for 2022. That would bring our entry-level wage from $15 per hour to $15.60 per hour with assistant managers starting at $19.76 and librarians starting at $31.20. If we did 5%, it would cost $13,223.15 for the second half of 2022 and bring entry level to $15.75, assistant managers to $19.95 and librarians to $31.50 base rate. Another option would be to increase all wages by a flat dollar. That would put entry level at $16, assistant managers at $20, and librarians and $31 to start. That would cost $19,916 for the remainder of 2022.

As programs come back into rotation on the schedule, we have determined that renaming the budget lines would make things simpler for those managing the budgets and those balancing them. We currently have $17K budgeted for programs. That breaks down to $4000 for summer programs, $500 for teen programs, $4000 for recurring children’s programs, $3000 for adult programs, $1500 for the LAB programs, and $4000 for special family programs. We would like to change the breakdown to make it easier to determine which programs fall into which categories. Specifically problematic to define have been Special Family Programs and Summer Programs. I want to reduce Summer Programs to include only the reading incentive, which is ~$1500. Keep LAB at $1500. Then that leaves $14000 for all other programming. If we divide it into 30% each for adults, kids, and all ages with 10% to teens, we can better track and focus our efforts. That means $4200 for kids, $4200 for adults, $4200 for families, and $1400 for teens.

There was a sewage issue in our piping that was corrected as an emergency repair. We now need to reconstruct the landscaping in the front yard. I would like to add two large shade trees to the area when they have trucks on site and the fence down anyway for bringing in the topsoil for leveling and the new sod. Quote is attached for $15040. This will require additional budget for landscaping to be balances with retained income.

**Finance & Administration**

Sales Tax income remains quite strong. We pulled the full comptroller report last month and Karen was able to determine that the majority of extra payments were coming from construction projects in the area, so that money is almost certainly ours to keep. We are financially very strong. We are also up to date on reporting requirements.

Early summer is the time to call an election. The first dates to watch are June 23rd (deadline to post the candidate filing deadline), July 23rd (first date to file for a place on the general election ballot) and August 22nd (deadline to file for a place on the general election ballot). The first day to cancel an election will be August 29th, which is the first business day after the last day to file a declaration of write in candidacy for local political subdivisions. I will have a more detailed calendar of dates and deadlines as soon as Travis County finalizes it, but these dates are set by the Secretary of State.

**Operations**

Services are running smoothly. We reintroduced fines and fees at the new regular rates without incident. There have been a few hiccups for patrons not understanding, but nothing serious.

Circulation in April was lower than March, likely due to the Spring Break spike. It is still up dramatically from the monthly averages in 2020 and 2021.

April inventory was completed with good results. Without volunteers, we were not able to do as many projects as we have in years past, but the scanning and searching were complete. We decided to scan the YA collections with adult fiction this year instead of with children’s materials to better balance the workload. All said, we scanned in 15897 items and were unable to find 33.

**Internal Affairs**

Trustee replacement is, hopefully, in process. To date, I have received no applications and no contact from any potential replacements. In a worst-case scenario, we can operate with a vacant position. However, we need at least three trustees to be a quorum or take any action. Between now and the time that 2022 elected trustees take office, we will be passing a budget, developing a new Long Range Plan based on results from the community development survey, and reviewing the Services Policy and Conduct Policy.

I was the only employee to attend TLA (Texas Library Association) this year in Fort Worth. The offerings were decent, but not as robust as years’ past. Our hope is that TLA in Austin next year (2023) will be back to full strength with the variety of workshops we’ve come to expect from the largest state library association conference in the country. In any case, we plan to have all librarians and assistant managers attend for a day and, if possible, all staff can at least get a floor pass for the exhibits. ARSL (Association of Rural and Small Libraries) will be in Chattanooga this year; Kristin and I plan to attend dependent upon coverage support and safety.

Volunteers are transitioning from a winter schedule to the busier summer season. Our first volunteer appreciation event since the pandemic closure was a visit from Tiny Tails on April 30th and met with many smiles. The Teen Library Council is getting quite active and planning a number of events including an After Dark program, a visit from the petting zoo, and Octopus Games (a nonviolent tribute to the popular series Squid Games).

We have been operating at reduced levels for more than two years. As library use builds back up, we want to reopen the LAB for drop in hours. To do that would require adding a front line employee for 12 hours per week to balance the time our LAB trained staff are unavailable. That would cost an additional $5K in the wages and salaries budget. If we hire soon, that gives us an extra person on hand through the summer and that person will be fully trained by August when we want to reintroduce the open LAB hours.

Reimagined LAB hours would include drop in tech assistance for things like the digital library and databases, which hasn’t been part of the program in the past. By combining the offerings, I hope to attract enough use to make it worthwhile.

**Technology**

All the public computers (14) are due for replacement this year. We have that tentatively scheduled for during the August inventory. To prevent immediate obsolescence, we plan to purchase machines operating Windows 11. We do not have anything running Windows 11 at this time, so staff is not in a good place to help our users with this. To get ahead of that curve, we have decided to replace the three older staff machines at the public desks in June with Windows 11 computers. That way, all public service staff (which means everyone) will be using Windows 11 before the patron machines make the change.

Other technology projects are moving along at standard pace. Several of the patron circulating Hotspots were replaced. We were also able to safely dispose of all the old machines in the server room.

**Facilities**

The sewage issue was resolved. We ended up needing to trench all the way to the main line junction instead of the 3-6 feet originally planned. That said, it’s better to do it all at once while the machinery was in place and we already had a substantial ditch. Now we need to get the landscaping reinstalled. We cannot level the ground entirely because the street is higher than the building and we need that little depression to keep waterflow from going directly into the foundation. We can level it a little, and might as well since we will be having topsoil and sod delivered and installed. I’ve also asked to get two large shade trees put in. Shade in that area is a real need, especially as families want to play and picnic outside. The bid I have is for ~$15K for purchase, delivery and installation of 11 pallets of Bermuda grass, topsoil, adjusting the irrigation system and heads as needed, and two 100 gallon Box Burr Oak trees for shade.

The new janitorial service is set to start in June and we have a transition plan in place. ABC Home and Pest came out for the regular mosquito, rodent, and small insect treatments and placed bait per usual. We have some trees touching the building that will need to be trimmed back and I’ve requested the work from our landscapers. Fire extinguisher inspection was satisfactory and other maintenance is up to date.

**Programs & Outreach**

Kids programs are picking up. Average attendance per program in January was 6, in February it went to 8, 13 in March and 16 in April. There were 45 people Reading with Goats, a full class for Young Rembrandts, and 75 people at Tiny Tails. Everybody loves Tiny Tails. Programs for kids have mostly moved back into the storytime room and patrons are loving it.

Adult program attendance numbers have been wildly varied since we re-launched most live offerings in January. Computer classes and other digital literacy workshops are often requested, but attendance is abysmal. Pinterest style art programs, especially wreaths and Bad Art night, have been quite popular. A Silent Book Club was launched this month for folks to just come read quietly, then talk about their book, without the homework of assigned reading. Traveling Tea has had maximum participation each month. DIY Wednesdays is not getting the response it used to, so we are looking at rebranding to better represent what we have in that series.

SRC plans are ready for our Kickoff Party with steel drum concert, Kona Ice, and Balloon Art on June 3rd. We have incentive programs for kids, teens and adults running from June 1 to July 31. Those programs will include participation raffles each week instead of grand prizes at program end. We’ll also have completion prizes for everyone who meets their summer reading goal (self-prescribed). For the summer, we are adding Wacky Science for older kids back into the weekly program offerings.

Special summer programs in June will include paint pouring and Hoppy Hour for adults, a visit from the Austin Zoo, the Chemistry Roadshow, and a Sue Young concert for kids, and a bike clinic and Pajama Party for families. We’ll also have oil pastel programs for kids and adults (separately) and Octopus Games for Teens. July will have a ukulele concert, Lucas Miller the Singing Zoologist, Cody Fischer Magic, Mad Science Slime Lab, MakerGirl 3D printing trailer, and Mr Will in Concert. Adult summer programs will include bird workshops and themed trivia events as well as Bad Art, Silent Book Club, and other recurring programs.

Lauren has been tabling at events in the neighborhood. She spoke to people at EcoFair, Pioneer Fest and Spring Fest. Having distributed most of our logoed balls and Frisbees, I ordered some sunscreen sticks and sunglasses with the library logo for summer outreach events. She is reaching out to Wanda Holcombe about a library card drive with Affinity where residents could get registered for a library card. Also on the program for after summer reading is some kind of open house or tour for new library users to find out about the library. We’re thinking of something outside library hours to include libations and treats with a librarian. Perhaps once a month we could do a morning and once a month an evening. We’re still working on details. In years past, we did an afterhours catered Open House over the holidays for stakeholders, but this would be a different concept. We had hoped to host a grand reopening celebration, but circumstances have not been conducive.

**Big Survey**

**We got 195 total responses to our community survey. My report is attached. I’m pleased to inform that there were no big surprises and that our original thinking is still in line with patron needs and desires.**

**There were, of course, some outliers. There was the person who thinks we should be requiring N95 for everyone on premises and the person who is still angry that we asked them to wear a mask last year. There are quite a few requests for things that we already offer, for things that are not within the realm of possibility (join with APL), and for things that are just really out there.**

**The projects to get over 60 votes were additional outdoor seating/toys and separated teen space with resources. That’s nice to hear since the teen space was next on our development plan originally. Most people find out about services and programs through the neighborhood newsletter, constant contact, and the website. Circulation is the biggest reported use, followed by program attendance.**

**The biggest roadblock for patrons seems to be timing, followed by pandemic safety concerns. People are out of time and they’re tired. The most frequent write in responses were concerning social issues.**

**People seem to want quiet spaces, programs for older children (specifically crafts and tutoring), programs later in the day, more animals, language practice, and LAB programs with home improvement themes.**