

**Wasco County Library Service District**  
**Board meeting**  
**April 18, 2023**  
**Location: Maupin, and via Zoom**

**Board members attending:** Mary Beechler, Tina Coleman, Corliss Marsh, Rita Rathkey

**Library staff attending:** Jeff Wavrunek, Valerie Stephenson, Sarah Tierney

**Meeting called to order:** 4:35 pm

**Minutes:** No changes. Mary Beechler moved to approve and Corliss Marsh seconded

**Visitors and interested parties:** Christine Wolf, City Recorder for City of Maupin; Matthew Klebes, City Manager for City of The Dalles; Kevin Lewis, City Manager for City of Maupin; Carol Beatty, Mayor of Maupin; Phil Brady, County Commissioner

**Director's Reports:**

**Dufur:** Sarah gave her March statistics. Adult fiction 3 books, biographies 3 books, DVDs 39, Easy Readers 345, fiction 250, non-fiction 206, and pre-K and board books 46. There were 4 adult programs, averaging 27 in attendance; 4 Potlatch programs, averaging 26 in attendance, 5 daycare programs with an average of 6 in attendance; 4 preschool storytimes with an average of 11 in attendance; and 4 other preschool storytimes with 15 in attendance; and 27 grade school programs with an average of 20 in attendance. March was spent getting ready for Library Week in April. Micah has been busy getting books for Potlatch. She's been getting a lot of different requests and has been doing some Interlibrary Loans. I'm excited with how that's working out for Micah. A new cart has been ordered for her. We took ideas from Kristen when she does courier. Most of the summer reading plans are finalized, just need to work on how to track it. Just had a meeting with Valerie about this. Teen Take Over plans are in the works, it's going to be an 8- or 9-week program. In the library we do tutoring after school. That is why Sarah hasn't been attending board meetings. The days for that have changed and they will now only be on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

**Maupin:** There has been a 26 percent increase in library usage during the month of April from last year. The Alex Zerbe program was very popular, there were 47 attending; the adults loved it as much as the kids. April is National Poetry month, so we always do a lot of poetry related stuff. We had a Blackout Poetry event. Donna Henderson did a two-part creative writing workshop, the first one was about what makes a poem a poem; the second part will be this weekend and will be about memoirs and story writing. Dr. Ruth Miller did a program on "What's Going on in the World." It had originally been scheduled at the Balch (hotel in Dufur), but due to a scheduling conflict, Maupin was asked to host it instead. Had a very good turnout. She will come back on April 27<sup>th</sup>. On April 1<sup>st</sup> we partnered with the City of Maupin, the Maupin Dig and Garden Club, Oregon State Extension, and created our first annual South Wasco Garden Expo. There were about 100 people who showed up. It was very successful. There were a lot of vendors and gardening experts. Valerie has been asked to partner with the South Wasco County School District for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Grant. Valerie is attending the Oregon Library Association conference tomorrow. In May she will have a May the Fourth be With You day. The Oregon Poet Laureate, Anis Mojgani, is coming on May 9<sup>th</sup>, to make a connection with the high school English class.

**The Dalles:** We've been having a Hobbit Community Read event during March and April. It's been quite popular, it has increased our door count by 2,000 for the past month. It has also helped

circulation, which is also up about 2,000. It's getting back to pre-COVID levels. A lot of our programming is Hobbit related. In March participants made a Bag End Wreath; there was an afterhours Hobbit-style Nerf battle for teens; a Hobbit book cover, a Fellowship Silhouette canvas; and clay Hobbit door pendant. Not Hobbit related, the preschool kids made spring rainbow mobiles. There is a six-week novel writing workshop that has just started, they are meeting every Monday. Jeff recently sent out an email about the Story Dispensers. A short story author came up to the front desk just today wanting to submit some short stories to be published on the dispensers. There was a well-attended *Hobbit* trivia contest called Riddles in the Dark. Staff members dressed up. Stocking Bilbo's Pantry, a pressure canning class with the OSU Extension office showed you can twist most anything to go with the *Hobbit*. About half the staff is going to OLA tomorrow.

**Old Business:** The City Manager for The Dalles, Matthew Klebes, introduced himself. A facilities supervisory position has been created to oversee city maintenance staff.

He is learning about the IGA between Wasco County, Library Service District, and the City of The Dalles. The IGA details some of the roles and responsibilities the different entities have. The IGA indicates some of the authorities Wasco County has given to the Library Board in overseeing some of the day-to-day operations of the different libraries in Wasco County, providing some oversight and recommendations for the City and Wasco County. When it was first created in 2010, it really detailed some of the items that needed to be addressed as the district was first forming. There's been a couple amendments to the IGA over the years. We're on the third amendment since 2010.

Library Board members expressed concern with maintenance of the library building, even though it seems to be clear in the IGA as to who is responsible. How do they make sure the IGA is followed?

Another concern is that administrative costs according to the IGA are supposed to be negotiated annually. There has been no negotiation and just recently it was stated in an email from the City that "we're going to have to charge this much this year for the administration fee." That doesn't feel like a negotiation. How do we get to negotiation on the administrative fee? The Board does not want to go through another fiscal year without hammering out some of these IGA details. They also think that the County needs to step up and support the Board.

Matthew said that he has some of those same concerns. It is his understanding that there has been dialog in the past regarding the administrative fee in keeping it flat, and that certain fees such as legal, would not be charged unless used. Board members were quick to point out that this was just last year because they really pushed it. There was minimal dialog before. Matthew hopes to have continuing dialog moving forward.

Board members are frustrated by the fact that they have no idea how the City arrives at these fees; what formula is used, or an explanation of why certain fees have increased so much. It just seems like the fees keep going up each year; having increased by about 300% since the district was first formed, while CPI has only increased 38% during that same time. The Board hopes there is more transparency in the future. Matthew pointed out that the budget report and methodology used is public information and can be obtained through the City's website. Mary said that she looked at that, but couldn't understand it. Mary then said that the city has the formulas used, but the IGA says "negotiable." How do we do that? Matthew said that the review of the IGA will be an important part of the process. The City does have certain costs for payroll and services to the district through the library in The Dalles. Mary pointed out that the district does not pay these same fees for Dufur and Maupin, and this doesn't feel equitable across the county. Tina said that they aren't arguing that the district shouldn't pay these fees, but the fact that the City is saying they're spending all this money on the library, but we don't see it. If there was documentation to backup the increase in fees, we'd all feel better. It's that we just keep seeing these fees jumping. We're questioning that you increased the fees twice as much this year, as

last year. Matthew pointed out that it might not wholly be an increase in the cost of services, but maybe it costs more to provide the same level of service, such as payroll, which saw a big jump. The Board would like to see things like this in writing, so that they know why there is an increase and where the money is going.

Matthew handed out copies of the summary page as to how administrative transfers are calculated and broken out into different funds. The bulk of the administration charges allocated to the library come from Finance and Human Resources. In the Finance Department we're looking at payroll, accounts payable, and accounts receivable. In Human Resources we're looking at recruitment, union negotiation, employee grievances and mediation, position researching and updating.

Rita Rathkey, asked for clarification. Were these fees only for services in The Dalles? The response was "yes" with Corliss pointing out that the agreement was to run the city library. Mary, responded that the agreement was to run the county district and none of these fees are being paid to the City of Maupin or Dufur. Corliss reiterated that the contract with the City of The Dalles is to run the city library. It was pointed out that this is not a contract, per se. It's captured within the IGA. The fact that it's a city building with city employees makes it a complicated topic.

It was asked where the percentages came from and Matthew said he had not printed out the entire packet, but that he could provide that, and it will show the methodology used (which is on page 41 of the upcoming budget packet). He will send out an email that shows the different methodologies used.

Tina brought up the point that this is another issue, The Dalles Library is billed as if it's a department of the City of The Dalles, but it's not. The library is not an entity of the City of The Dalles. The concern is that this same formula should not be used for the library since it is not a department of the City. It is something completely separate, guided by an IGA that doesn't work. Mathew responded that it was sort of a gray area, as it is a City facility staffed by City employees. So, saying that it is a separate entity is not wholly correct. Tina agreed that this makes it very gray.

Mary, again brought up the point about equity of the Library District not paying for these services at the other two libraries in the county, but paying for them in The Dalles. Would that be something in the IGA between those government bodies?

Mary, also asked how the county sends funds to the three libraries. Jeff explained that the county sends the money to each of the libraries in four different payments each year. It is based on the Library District budget. Jeff determines the amount, using the same formula used by the previous library director, and each year the libraries get an increase of 3%. Two years ago, Maupin and Dufur wanted to increase staffing, so they were given an increase of 25%. The county directly sends the money to Maupin, Dufur, and The Dalles four times a year. Jeff also clarified that not all of the money goes out to the libraries, there is a portion that stays within the district to build its reserve fund to enable the district to withstand economic downturns. Mary wondered if a more equitable distribution formula could be worked out. After some discussion, it was pointed out that while this is an interesting discussion, it is a different subject, and could the discussion be brought back to the IGA.

Corliss gave a brief history of why the Service District was formed; how the libraries were having to cut hours due to lack of funding. Forming the district would give the libraries stable funding. So why can't each of the City's provide help with funding their library? There was again a discussion of whether this was equitable between the three libraries. Tina said that the three libraries are providing an amazing service with Maupin and Dufur providing money for their libraries, but the City of The Dalles is not providing any for their library. In Dufur, the school is paying for the librarian, while the district is paying for the assistant librarian. These other libraries are providing money to support their libraries, while it looks like the City of The Dalles is just looking at this as a way to get money.

Matthew, was quick to point out that The Dalles provided \$240,000 of service. The library, in the initial transfer, contributed \$140,000, so the City of The Dalles contributed \$100,000 of services to the library in The Dalles. Mary stated that the District had given over \$200,000 for building upkeep. Building and grounds was \$47,900, HVAC \$10,000, camera, carpet, etc., - \$54, 000. Put it all together and the district is paying money for a building it doesn't own. This all ties back into the IGA. How do we start the conversations and why does the city go forward with the budget? Matthew explained that the city had to submit a proposed budget, which is why he sent an email stating the expected amount the City will charge the district in administrative fees. But, it is not final yet and will not go into effect until July 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Board would like to see a plan, going forward, for the negotiation of yearly fees. Mary Beechler, suggested that in the current negotiations, the Board could agree to pay the City the same fee as last year, and then if that amount changes during the negotiations, the budget could be amended to reflect the change. Matthew said that what he conveyed in his email is where he would like to start for next fiscal year. This conversation could be continued while adjusting going forward.

The Board said that they haven't had time yet to analyze the numbers Matthew sent. Last year the administrative fee was \$140,000, and this year the fee the City is proposing is \$183,000; with the condition that legal services, which are \$34,000, would only be charged if used.

The Board is concerned that administrative fees have more than doubled in just two budget cycles. In 2021-2022 it was \$100,000, and for 2023-2024 the City is proposing \$240,000. Matthew stated that it had been his understanding that the administrative fee had been flat, or nearly frozen for a number of years. Board members were quick to contradict this. They commented on how much the fees have risen since 2010, when the fees were first charged. Matthew, said that this is the reality of how much it costs to provide these services. The Board is concerned with the amount it has jumped from last year, about \$43,000, while they have seen no justification for the increase. Matthew, explained that this is the cost to provide those services, and to narrow the gap between the true cost and what the District has been paying. The Board wants to see proof of that, and the methodology.

Matthew thought the next steps would be redlining, or creating a new IGA that addresses some of these issues and proposals, then providing them to the Library District for feedback and discussion. Make additional changes, repeating the process as often as necessary to reach an IGA that all are comfortable with. Then recommend it to the County Commission. Tina said that they really need to go into this with the understanding that there is a current IGA already in place and it needs to be a negotiation. It cannot just be the city coming to us with their redlined IGA. Matthew explained that he had been under the impression that the Board wanted the City to make the first move. After some discussion it was agreed that both sides need to look at the IGA, redlining areas of concern, and then come together to discuss and negotiate. There was further discussion about the involvement of Dufur and Maupin.

There was talk about the wonderful services the libraries offer; but is it sustainable? For clarification, Jeff explained that The Dalles gets a larger portion of the district's money. The Dalles Library is paying for the library van and its staffing. This money is also paying for Dufur and Maupin's books, Sage consortium membership. Courier, IT/technology, and the website is also in The Dalles budget for all county libraries. So is continuing education, such as the upcoming Oregon Library Association conference, as well as travel and motel costs.

It was suggested that the Board and the City each redline their proposed changes to the IGA, then submit it to the other, prior to June 1<sup>st</sup>. A meeting will take place at The Dalles Public Library at 3:30 on Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, to start negotiating the changes. In further discussion regarding the administrative fee, the Board restated their view that they cannot agree to the increase without the proof Matthew has agreed to provide regarding the methodology used to determine the administration fee. Documentation is needed of actual costs, not just budgeted numbers for the past year.

In other questions for Matthew, Tina brought up concerns that the Board has had about improvements to the building. Why would we put money into a building the library doesn't own? Matthew, compared it to being a landlord, when rent is collected, some of that money might be used for maintenance and upkeep. Because the City is not collecting rent for the library building, some of the cost must be passed on (or shared) with the library. Some of this is already in the IGA, but it needs to be more explicit.

After Matthew left, there continued to be discussion regarding the division of funds between the libraries. Jeff talked about the big expense of the library van, as well as the expected expense of three interactive play equipment exhibits that will circulate between the three libraries. After the upcoming fiscal year, no other big expenses are anticipated. Consequently, in FY24/25 each library could receive more than a 3% increase, perhaps 10-20%, etc. A comment was made that it should be taken into consideration that Dufur is different in that it is also a school library. It doesn't have the same expenses as the other two libraries. Do we need a special formula for Dufur? Maupin? Corliss and Mary said that when the district was formed, both the State Librarian and the consultant who helped formulate the district, stated that the organizational library district plan was bad and would never work, don't do it. A comment was made that maybe this is the first step of looking at a different governance model.

Phil Brady suggested that the Board might want Tyler Stone (from the county) to get involved.

**New Business:** Nothing at this time

**Financial Review:** The Board recommended that Jeff increase spending before the end of the fiscal year.

**Other:** The Board will hold a work session at 4:30 on Thursday, May 11, 2023 at The Dalles to work on the IGA. Corliss will invite Tyler Stone.

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 on Tuesday, May 23, 2023 in Dufur.

Meeting adjourned at:

WASCO COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICE  
DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Corliss Marsh, Chairman

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Mary Beechler, Vice Chairman

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Rita Rathkey, Board Member

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Tina Coleman, Board Member

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Vicki Thomas, Board Member