

Present: Curt Fewkes, Carol Fisher, Richard Kilbride, Terry Obteshka, Allen O'Neal, Wyma Rogers, Carol Ruggeri; Jennifer Keirans as note-taker.

Ruggeri called the meeting to order at 5:20.

The notes from November's meeting were read and approved as written.

Librarian's Report

Rogers described renovations to the Library's air flow system. Both the louvers and the ducts were badly damaged by rust and must be replaced. This was not something that was budgeted for, so we are grateful that the city granted permission to make the repairs. Rogers said that the changes should cut the heating bill.

Rogers said that the regular programs continued at the library. Circulation and internet use were down a bit.

She described the City Administration Team Retreat for City department heads. At the retreat, they discussed how department heads should be evaluated, and by whom. The city manager, Allen O'Neal, challenged the group with this question: "What would it take for Newport to become a world-class city?" The department heads discussed what makes a world-class city, what would need to be done in Newport to make it a world-class city, and what the role of the department heads would be in those changes. Rogers specifically asked the Board to think about the question: What is a world-class library?

The department heads came up with a list of values: Accountability, accessibility, fairness, forgiveness, professionalism, humor, efficient use of resources.

Rogers went on to describe a meeting on employee privacy attended by library staff Sheryl Eldridge, Kay Eldon, and Rebecca Cohen.

City Manager's Library Vision

O'Neal began by praising the Library's staff and director. He went on to speak at length, saying that he strongly approves of the Library's plan to expand, although he cautioned the Board that there is no money in the City's budget for the project right now. He described how the library in his home town was not just a good library but was housed in a building that is handsome and gracious. He admires cities that put an effort into making their public buildings beautiful, and said, "It is not a waste of money to make an architectural statement."

Specifically, O'Neal suggested that any new design might incorporate a large, open reading room. (The Library's reading areas are currently integrated with stacks and public computer banks.) He would like to see a big, quiet, dignified space devoted to reading. Such a room could sometimes be transformed into another kind of space – for small readings, concerts, or events, for instance.

He advised the Board to get advice from architects experienced with libraries, since this kind of building faces different demands than, say, an office building.

Facility Assessment

Rogers said that a Facility Assessment was the last item in the Strategic Plan. This will be a project to survey both users and non-users of the Library to extract a vision of service; from there, we can plan on how the facility – the building – should meet that vision.

The OLA has minimum standards for a library of our size, which we already meet. But as technology changes, service needs will change, and so too must the library change to accommodate these needs. There was some discussion of a “Library of the Future” video (not seen by me) in which a library used flexible space and created a culture of innovation. One idea raised was to “Dismiss the book as the library brand.” This led to discussion of what the role of a library is.

As we get closer to the actual building project, Rogers asked the group to consider what the Foundation’s role will be in this project.

Privacy

Rogers described a patron complaint regarding his privacy, and the group discussed whether the current policy – which was followed in the complainant’s case – is sufficient. Fisher suggested that we make a greater effort to let people know about the policy.

Final thoughts

Fisher showed an Oregonian article about free downloadable movies from the Multnomah County Library. Wyma said that our library should be able to offer that service next year through the consortium that provides the audiobooks through our catalog.

Meeting was adjourned at 7 p.m.