

**MINUTES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
for Josephine Community Libraries
Tuesday, October 2, 2007**

MEETING LOCATION AND TIME

The Steering Committee for Josephine Community Libraries was held in Room 157 of the Josephine County courthouse. Chair Cathye Mason called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

PRESENT

Steering Committee members present were Charles Brown, Judy Christensen, Virginia Collins, Michele Gester, Bonnie Johnson, Cathye Mason, Teresa Stover, Dave Toler, and Doug Walker. About 15 guests were also present.

Steering Committee members not present were Jackie Balander, Dennis Doyle, Barbara Ketley, Dale Matthews, Linda Naydol, Nancy Smith, Cessa Vichi, and Jon Wacker.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Doug Walker moved, Virginia Collins seconded, and the motion carried that the minutes of the 9-25-07 meeting be accepted.

2. OLD BUSINESS

Public Meeting Date

Cathye Mason reported that Kevin Widdison had learned that Anne Basker Auditorium is available October 23 and October 25. The group discussed the fact that we should present our budget information at this meeting, and the Budget Committee needs more time. The group also discussed the need for more time to develop the brochure with the new logo and donation form. The week of November 5 was suggested and agreed to.

Action Item: Kevin Widdison will be asked to check whether Anne Basker Auditorium is available Tuesday November 6 or Thursday November 8.

Publicity Committee Update—Brochure Availability

Teresa Stover reported that the Publicity Committee met September 29, and is developing the logo, slogan, color scheme, and the trifold brochure layout. It will meet again October 6.

Action Item: The Publicity Committee will present recommendations for the logo, slogan, and color scheme at the October 9 Steering Committee meeting.

Budget Update

Bonnie Johnson and Judy Christensen of the Budget Committee gave their report. They are currently developing the budget based on budgets from past years.

Action Item: The Budget Committee will develop the budget options to a point where they can be presented at the general public meeting in November.

3. NEW BUSINESS

Donations Processing

Cathye Mason reported that we're already receiving donations in our new PO box. She asked for four volunteers to work one or two hours per week to help process the donations.

Action Item: Judy Christensen, Margaret Slagle, Michele Gester, and Doug Walker volunteered. Ms. Mason will train these volunteers on donations processing.

Size of Permanent Board

Cathye Mason stated that we need to think about the size of the permanent board of directors so that we can determine our level of recruitment. The board size range will be in our bylaws.

Action Item: All members of the Steering Committee are tasked to think about the ideal size of the board for discussion at the October 9 meeting.

State Librarian Visit

Oregon State Librarian Jim Schepcke thanked everyone present, and said that the level of energy he is witnessing is very encouraging. He said he had heard many good ideas in the afternoon's meetings with the fundraising, publicity, budget, and legal committees, and said this commitment are what it will take to reopen the libraries. He said that the office of the state librarian wants to do whatever it can to help. He expressed the hope that this is just the first time we talk, and encouraged us to contact him or his office whenever they can help.

Mr. Schepcke then went through the list of questions that Virginia Collins had developed.

Q1: Are there other similar efforts taking place, particularly in the Northwest?

A: No. Josephine and Jackson counties are the only Oregon counties who have closed their libraries. Douglas County has a year's worth of funding left. Mr. Schepcke stated that the other Oregon libraries are actually thriving. There might be similar efforts in Sun Valley, Idaho, and Cannon Beach, Oregon.

Q2: What are your thoughts on a regional library system?

A: This could be the best solution, especially for economies of scale. Washington has several multi-county regional libraries, and this is proving to be tremendously efficient and effective. This should be done in this state, as it's the best use of scarce resources, and scarcity is now a permanent condition. Our current thinking of having a private non-profit organization run our libraries is a good short-term solution for a few years. But the regional library system is probably a better solution for the long term. It could take five to ten years to develop the concept.

Q3: Do you have any statistical information which may assist us? Can you bring copies of any reports which would be of value?

A: Mr. Schepcke reviewed the handout he brought, which included statistics on Josephine County population, registered borrowers, revenue, expenditures, services, tax rates, governance, library districts, library worker pay rates, and LSSI information. He recommended that we use the 2006 budget (the last full year in which we had limited hours and reduced staffing) as a starting point for our budget rather than the OLA thresholds.

Q4: Are there any guidelines for library policies and procedures that you can provide?

A: Mr. Schepcke stated that the OLA standards are available on their Web site. He pointed out that his handout includes information about Oregon state library law. He discussed the advantages of being legally established, one of which makes a library eligible for state grant funding. Mr. Schepcke stated that he can be a resource in this area. However, he did not have guidelines for policies and procedures. He stated that most Oregon libraries are 100 years old, and they've each evolved to reflect the culture and needs of their individual communities. He recommended that we find and use the policies and procedures from our library, as those are the ones that have been found to work for this community. He suggested that we try to retain as much of our former library culture as possible.

Q5: Are there guidelines for the use of volunteers in the library?

A: No, the use of volunteers varies throughout Oregon. Some libraries use many volunteers, while others are more restricted. The restrictions often have to do with a union contract or access to a computer system. Mr. Schepcke recommended that we use volunteers as much as we can, and also use paid student workers, as they can be very bright and capable.

Q6: Are there suggested staffing patterns?

A: Mr. Schepcke recommended that we start with the staffing reflected in our 2006 budget. It was our last full year of operation, and it reflected limited resources.

Q7: What are the range of salaries and employee benefits paid to library employees in Oregon? Any other budget guidelines or even budgets of other similar library systems?

A: Mr. Schepcke's handout included information about costs for employee salaries and benefits.

Q8: What are the sources of grants (private and public) for libraries? Any advice in this area?

A: Mr. Schepcke said that if we become a legally established library, we could apply for an annual \$16,000 "Ready To Read" grant from the state. Other public or private foundations might require us to be legally established. He said most grantmakers are not interested in funding library operations. They're interested in capital campaigns or special projects that are innovative or that involve technology. It would be unrealistic to count on grants as a significant source of funding for operating costs.

Q9: Is there staff or a consultant that your office can provide to us during this stage of development of our library system? In the future?

A: Yes, definitely. Mr. Schepcke said that there are people on his staff that can be very helpful, and that we should just ask.

Q10: What are your thoughts on third-party contracting (both private and public entities) for library management services?

A: There's only one private entity in the U.S. that operates public libraries: LSSI based in Germantown, Maryland. Jackson County is contracting with LSSI to run its libraries. Mr. Schepcke stated that Oregon libraries are more efficient than those operated by LSSI. He recommended that we instead contract with a public entity such as a school district or community college that already has a library infrastructure in place, including human resources, finance, and other systems. In this scenario, the board of directors would be responsible for setting policy and raising funds, while the day-to-day operations would be handled by the library director of this contracted entity. This would be a partnership among the library director, the board of directors, and the County. He expressed concern about our ability as a nonprofit to create a library infrastructure from scratch, and encouraged us to explore this option.

Q11: How are membership fees structured elsewhere?

A: There are no models for this elsewhere.

Q12: Are there any other organizations involved with libraries that we should contact?

A: We at the state library are there to help you. You can contact the Oregon Library Association, but they don't do consulting work.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Various members of the public asked questions of Mr. Schepcke. City Councilman Bill Kangas stated that the City Council recently voted that libraries and public safety were two top priorities.

Action Item: Dave Toler will talk with City Council members about coordinating assistance with the county to help get a library up and operating.

Another guest stated that if 10,000 people were to give \$100, we could have the million dollars we needed. The focus of the board should be development of a solid donor base.

NEXT MEETING

Cathye Mason announced that the next meeting will be held at 7 pm on October 9, 2007, in Room 157 of the Josephine County Courthouse. Ms. Mason adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Teresa Stover, Secretary
Josephine County Team Steering Committee