

**CITY OF BOULDER
BOULDER, COLORADO
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS MEETING
MINUTES**

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| Name of Board/ Commission: Library Commission | |
| Date of Meeting: October 4, 2017 at the George Reynolds Branch, 3595 Table Mesa Dr. | |
| Contact information preparing summary: Maureen Malone, 303-441-3106 | |
| Commission members present: Joni Teter, Juana Gomez, Joel Koenig, Tim O'Shea Commission members absent: Alicia Gibb | |
| Library staff present: David Farnan, Director of Library & Arts Jennifer Phares, Deputy Library Director Maureen Malone, Administrative Specialist II Members of the public present: None | |
| Type of Meeting: Regular | |
| Agenda Item 1: Call to order and approval of agenda The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. Gomez moved to approve the agenda, and Koenig seconded. All in favor. | [6:01 p.m., 0:00:00 Audio min.] |
| Agenda Item 2: Public comment None | [6:02 p.m., 0:00:32 Audio min.] |
| Agenda Item 3: Consent agenda Item 3A, Approval of September 6, 2017 Meeting Minutes Teter emailed a suggested edit to the minutes ahead of the meeting (see handouts). Gomez moved to approve the minutes with the recommended change, and Teter seconded. Vote 3-0, unanimous (O'Shea was not yet present to vote). | [6:02 p.m., 0:00:38 Audio min.] |
| Agenda Item 4: Master Plan project update a. Summary of community input from first two draft goal check ins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teter suggested that commission discuss the teen advisory group's proposal to eliminate fines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Farnan explained that this has been a trending issue over the last 2 years; a number of large metropolitan libraries decided this year to do away with fines. Denver Public Library is considering an amnesty for all past fines and then doing away with fines all together in 2019-2020. ○ While he doesn't have the exact numbers, Farnan suspects that the expenses associated with collecting fines are probably around the same as the revenue from fines the library is able to collect. ○ Farnan stated that other libraries take the stance that fines are a barrier to service and disproportionately affect low-income families. Currently approximately 19,000 Boulder cardholders have suspended borrowing privileges for exceeding the \$10 fine limit; how many of those 19,000 people are truly impacted (are still in Boulder, had any real intent to pay the fines) is not known. ○ Teter recommended that staff keep a list of policy issues such as this one that are not necessarily master plan dependent and develop a schedule to address those issues; the rest of commission agreed. Staff will bring back some more information early in the second quarter of 2018. • Gomez referenced what she found to be an interesting observation received through the online comment form: "I noticed the word "book" does not appear in the presentation. That pretty well says it all." Phares replied that staff uses the word "materials" to cover everything, including books. Teter suggested defining "materials" in the master plan. Farnan stated that books will be stressed more in the master plan; however, he always says that "books are our brand, but not our business"; the library's business is literacy. b. Update on and discussion of plan for the Nov. 28 City Council study session Teter sent some comments on the draft outline ahead of the meeting (see handouts). | [6:02 p.m., 0:01:00 Audio min.] |

- Teter flagged what she anticipates council will see as three radical ideas in the funding options the library is proposing (p.16 of [packet](#), No. 5) to make commission aware of obstacles the library may face when meeting with City Council:
 - The library is proposing to earmark funds informally in the first option and formally in the second and third options. This is a difficult case to make, particularly in Boulder, because so much of revenues are already earmarked to specific purposes. The community has earmarked certain revenue streams in perpetuity to certain sources. As a community's needs change over time, you want the flexibility to be able to change funding to match needs, and Boulder is limited in that. Programs in the general fund continually get squeezed as big problems arise and take funding from the general fund.
 - Farnan clarified that scenario one is not asking the city to earmark money for the library, but asking them to raise the contribution from the general fund to the library – how they decide to do that is entirely up to them. There is currently a 0.0333 property tax revenue earmarked for the library; the revenue goes into the general fund and is transferred to the library. However, as property taxes goes up, the library receives a decreasing contribution from the general fund.
 - In the second and third options, the library is proposing that people who do not live within city limits of Boulder have their taxes raised to pay for city services. People outside of city limits use city services and are currently being subsidized by Boulder citizens.
 - Farnan explained that the neatest solution to creating a regional taxing authority is to only tax those areas in unincorporated Boulder County wherein people use the library but aren't currently paying a percentage of their property taxes to the city for city services; however, the library would then be subject to some extent to two governing entities who would decide how the library spends its money.
 - In the second and third options, the library is proposing that the city reduce its control and decision-making authority around library programs and services and facilities.
 - Farnan added that in the case of a library district, City Council would relinquish governance in all respects except for appointing the board; if the district was larger than the city of Boulder, council would also appoint a non-resident member or two to the board.
 - Teter shared that there was a previous attempt to form a library district around 2004-2005 that did not go well because the case wasn't very clearly made. Farnan stated that it wasn't so much controversial, but confusing; there was a lack of understanding of what a library district really is, and the city thought that they were being asked to continue to contribute the same amount of funds.
 - Gomez wondered whether relinquishing control would lighten the city's list of things to worry about. Farnan replied that they city has chosen to exert little control over the library over the last four years, aside from budgetary decisions.
 - Teter pointed out that while there are some aspects of being part of the city that are beneficial due to the economy of scale, some savings in operating costs could be realized by separating from the city, particularly around computer equipment and facilities. Farnan agreed that there could be cost savings in those areas, but added that as a district, the library would have to assume certain other costs, such as insurance, human resources, legal services, finance.
 - Gomez wondered if options two and three are like divorce or secession. Farnan replied that close to 70% of libraries in Colorado have separated in some way from their municipality; staff does not want to separate unless it is amicable and beneficial to all constituents. Teter reminded commission that the goal is to make sure that the library is fiscally sustainable, in whatever form that may be.
- Farnan stated that to him, the single most salient point is the heavy regional use of the library; if you compare the 143,000 registered users to Boulder's population, it changes the equation used by all other libraries in the state. If Boulder's funding levels were equivalent to Denver's on a per user basis, our budget would be close to \$4.5M higher than it is currently – a 33% increase. Farnan shared that his second argument is the history of the way in which the city has funded the library; as priorities rise up before council, the general fund gets pinched and the city has less funding to contribute to the library.
- Phares shared that the Library Commission urged staff to have a study session with City Council in 2010 (this meeting [packet](#) is linked under the resource section on the master plan webpage); staff discussed these same three funding options with council, and at that time, there was not support for the library to pursue investigating any of them.
- Farnan stated that staff will primarily be presenting the facts with council; he encouraged commission members to attend the study session and share some of the talking points that Teter mentioned in her comments (see [handouts](#)). Teter commented that there is a high emphasis on being a team player within the city. Budget decisions are made internally by senior staff after negotiation and discussion and everyone is expected to support that; council never sees the budget recommendations that advisory boards make with department heads, and the trade-offs being made get lost. Farnan questioned whether City Council is

completely aware of how the priorities they come up with squeeze the general fund budget, and the library budget in particular.

- Gomez wondered what portion of patrons served are county residents. Farnan replied that around 35-40% of users are not city of Boulder residents; staff is working on getting data for the last 12 months. Staff has maps of where users are: the disproportionate number in the near area are in Gunbarrel, Niwot and Cherryvale. Teter added that these areas are within the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan's planning area, and only the City of Boulder can provide services within that area because of the way the plan is written.
- O'Shea wondered what options aren't listed. Farnan replied that in the 2007 plan, it was standard practice to list fiscally restrained scenarios; he is not inclined to do that, but to simply lay out what staff has heard from the community, tell the city what it costs, and leave it to City Council to decide how to pay for it.
- With the expected passage of the 2M & 2N ballot initiatives, which include funding for a North Boulder branch, O'Shea expressed concern about the new council members hesitating to give the library more money on top of the \$5M for the new branch. Farnan replied that back when council was deciding whether or not to include it on the ballot, staff provided council with a dollar amount that would be needed for operating costs to run a North Boulder branch. Farnan added that whether or not the November ballot passes, staff will be including a North Boulder branch in the master plan.
- O'Shea questioned whether a \$1-1.5M increase for ongoing operations to carry out the master plan goals (expansion of community library services and access, north Boulder, Gunbarrel, north building of Main Library) is enough; staff is asking for more in order to continue, but the library has already been operating at a deficit for some time. Farnan responded that he is a realist and believes in being fiscally conservative; he doesn't want to ask for more than is needed. Teter agreed with O'Shea and wondered whether staff should prepare more than one scenario: the minimum needed to run the library (\$1-1.5M/year) and a vision scenario that allows the library to be comfortable, have a little padding, and achieve some of the longer-term goals. O'Shea suggested that staff go to council with the ideal dollar amount needed to accomplish their goals and come prepared to present comparisons to other city departments or other libraries, if needed.

Agenda Item 5: Finalize Library Commissioner recruitment application [7:20 p.m., 1:19:00 Audio min.]

Koenig sent some proposed questions for the application ahead of the meeting (see [handouts](#)).

Commission discussion, questions, and comments included:

- In response to the questions proposed by Koenig, Teter wondered whether commission thinks it's important for people who want to serve on the commission to be knowledgeable about libraries and have familiarity with Boulder Public Library. Koenig replied that his questions aim to find someone who has done more to demonstrate their interest in the position than simply fill out an application. Farnan added that the general rule for boards is that members are volunteers, advocates and, as a body, to a certain extent determine policy.
- Commission agreed to strike question 1 (p. 18 of [packet](#)) and replace it with a version of Koenig's suggestion: 'Have you participated in community organizations? Please describe. If not, why have you selected the Library Commission as your initial foray into community service?'
- Commission agreed to strike question 3 (p. 18 of [packet](#)) and replace it with a version of Koenig's suggestion: 'Have you reviewed commission minutes? If so, what are your thoughts about recent decisions?', and include a reference to the master plan.
- Commission agreed to strike question 6 (p. 19 of [packet](#)) and replace it with a question asking applicants how they would address the issue of security and safety as an ongoing concern for some patrons.
- Staff will rewrite the questions based on the direction given by commission and submit the changes to the City Clerk's office before the Oct. 15 deadline.

Agenda Item 6: Library Commission Update

[7:46 p.m., 1:44:30 Audio min.]

a. Matters from the Commission

b. Boulder Library Foundation update

Farnan stated that at their last meeting, the foundation board voted to support the capital improvement tax renewal ballot measures 2M and 2N, and have so far contributed \$500 to the campaign supporting the measures.

O'Shea shared that the board approved a new mission and vision statement for the Boulder Library Foundation at their last meeting.

c. City project representative update

i. EcoDistricts

- d. Responses to patron emails from the Library Commission

Agenda Item 7: Library and Arts Director's Report

[7:56 p.m., 1:55:11 Audio min.]

- a. Jaipur Literature Festival summary
Farnan commented that the library foundation will have two main questions to consider when deciding whether or not to contribute to the festival again in 2018:
 - 1. Is the festival having the desired community impact?
 - 2. Is the festival worth the investment?

Staff has asked Teamwork Arts to confirm by November that Zee is willing to be a corporate sponsor again in 2018, and to confirm that they have a second corporate sponsor by February.
- b. Update on 2018 City Budget
City Council approved the first reading of the 2018 budget last night. There were no questions from council about the \$60k proposed for materials for BLDG 61.
- c. Proposed 2018 Library Commission meeting schedule
Commission saw no issues with the proposed schedule.
- d. Update on patron emails to staff and commission
Youth Services has completed their research on the history of the songs that Showing up for Racial Justice (SURJ) has requested be removed from storytime. Staff will provide a full report and recommendation on how to proceed at the November meeting.

Agenda Item 8: Adjournment

[8:06 p.m., 2:05:11 Audio min.]

There being no further business to come before the commission at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Date, time, and location of next meeting:

The next Library Commission meeting will be at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, in the Canyon Meeting Room at the Main Library, 1001 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80302.

Commissioner Gibb approved these minutes on November 21, 2017; and Maureen Malone attested to it.

An audio recording of the full meeting for which these minutes are a summary, is available on the Library Commission web page at <http://boulderlibrary.org/about/commission.html>