

Salt Lake County Library Board of Directors
September 25, 2023
Approved by the Board on November 2, 2023

Board Attendees:

Suzanne Harrison
Anastasia Morgan
Steven Sokol
Kaati Tarr

William (Bill) Scarber, Chair
Hollie Pettersson, Vice Chair
Nancy Thorne

Members on Webex:

Spencer Romney

Excused Board Member(s):

Sandra Osborn

Other Attendees:

Jim Cooper
Melissa Haslam
Russ Snow
Nyssa Fleig
Jennifer Fay

Emily Bullough
Matt McLain
Pamela Park
Christa Warren
Megan Smith

Robin Chalhoub
Joey McNamee
Sara Neal
Sarah Brinkerhoff
Steve & Elizabeth Van Maren

Other Attendees on Webex:

Leslie Schow
Melissa Wayman
Maggie Mills
Erin Rigby
Katie Wegner

Ann Marie Barrett
Kathy Christiansen
Camie Clark
Kim Bryant Welch

Alli Parker
Rachel Richardson
Trudy Jorgensen-Price
Shaun Dimick

Bill Scarber, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:33 pm.

Welcome - Jim Cooper, Library Director

Welcome everyone to the September board meeting and to the Draper branch. This wonderful building opened about 20 years ago and it is one of the first library buildings that Jim Cooper, as the Library Director helped build from the ground up in the 21st century. Jim acknowledged that a few mistakes were made during the design and construction; that it was one of the first LEED certified buildings ever built in the County, and that it has provided the foundation for future projects and a great learning opportunity. Jim commented that in the end, the Draper branch is a delightful building and a wonderful community space that the public loves.

Approve Minutes from the August 28, 2023 Board Meeting

Hollie Pettersson made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 28, 2023 Library Board Meeting. Kaati Tarr seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Suzanne Harrison – aye
Anastasia Morgan – aye
Sandra Osborn – N/A
Hollie Pettersson – aye
Spencer Romney - aye
Bill Scarber - aye
Steven Sokol – aye
Kaati Tarr - aye
Nancy Thorne – aye

Public comments:

Library patron, Steve Van Maren, looked up the [Library Board](#) information on the library [website](#). The website says “Library Services” as part of our name. Historically it was Salt Lake County Library Services and then it changed to the County Library. The library has changed names multiple times and websites and other corrections may take several months. The proposed bylaws are correct with county ordinance.

Correspondence - Jim Cooper, Library Director

Jim Cooper has received a few inquiries about availability of jobs in the library system and he has referred those inquiries to the Library’s HR team. In addition, the QR code survey being conducted at branches and on-line which has provided a few comments. That information will be presented later in the meeting. Otherwise there has been no other public correspondence that requires the attention of the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

Introduction and Welcome to the Draper Branch – Sarah Brinkerhoff, Draper Manager

Sarah Brinkerhoff introduced herself and reported to the Board on the current conditions at the Draper branch. Sarah has been the Draper branch manager for five years and is excited about all the things happening at the branch. Draper is the second highest circulating branch in the system. Half of their circulation is for children’s materials. The branch puts a strong emphasis on early learning by hosting programs for that age group four to five times a week with a healthy attendance. A puppet show at Draper will draw an attendance of 70 – 100 patrons.

Sarah highlighted the Tiny Hands Art Class, a newly popular program for early learning started by Draper Youth Services Librarian Ellie Arnold. The program focuses on the process of art as opposed to the outcome. It can be a messy sensory experience, but perfect for parents who want their child engaged in this type of experience - and would rather not clean up at-home art projects. A variety of mediums are used, include potatoes, dough, marbles, and other fun ideas. The program is so popular that it has been divided into two sessions.

Sarah also started an All Ability Program at the Draper branch in 2018. The idea came from a Public Library Association (PLA) Conference presentation. The monthly program is to help those with sensory and intellectual disabilities form community connections. Around 80 people typically attend and several individuals ride TRAX from outside the area to participate. As an example, the last program focused on healthy eating.

Sarah stated that programs and activities can be a great way to stimulate conversation in the community. As such, one of Draper’s branch goals for 2023 is to provide a way engage the community in local, know your neighbor type of activities. The branch has employed various “Getting to Know Our Patrons” activity and last year they prompted a conversation using “Where were you born?” This year the theme is “When were you born?” Sarah reported that many people participated and it is very gratifying to see how it starts people talking. Other community connection events include voting for the tiny art show and a kindness display. The kindness display received around 900 entries and focused on highlighting how patrons have been shown kindness.

The library has hosted a Senior Center book club for years. During Covid, the participation actually went up. They were so eager connect and used a virtual platform to learn and participate. The book club has seen people participate from various locations, including India.

Board Chair Bill Scarber thanked Sarah and asked about the gate count at the branch relative to circulation, size and location. Sarah suggested that although the Draper branch is smaller, and the gate count is about average for their size, it has a very high circulation. Jim Cooper pointed out that gate count is an interesting, but incomplete statistic. While it may indicate the number of people that visit, it fails to show how long a patron actually stays at the branch, the activity or the outcome of their visit. Sarah pointed to West Jordan, which has a high gate count, which in part may be attributed to the proximity of the park and that families often include a branch visit as part of their outing. Libraries are changing overall from transactions to transformational and people seem to spend much more time in the branches as opposed to just a quick stop to pick up a book. It is actually a wonderful testament to how libraries are serving the public.

Councilmember, Suzanne Harrison, mentioned how her children study at the Draper location and how they love the branch.

STAFF REPORTS

Statistical Report – Jim Cooper, Library Director

In the statistical board report, Jim pointed to gate count, or the number of visits for the system and suggested dividing the total number of visitors (240,180) during the month by the total number of hours all County libraries are for the month (270), and that this simple calculation shows that an average of 890 visitors are entering a County library every hour that we are open. Jim commented that this speaks to the relevance of public libraries in Salt Lake County and is actually a pretty incredible utilization rate. Obviously county residents use and enjoy their local library.

Jim also offered that while the gate count is actually quite high overall, many patrons may have discovered electronic platforms available from the library or elsewhere and are much more comfortable using the library on-line. Further, although some patrons may not have fully returned to in-person visits since the pandemic; that the circulation of physical books is still very high averaging around 73% for the system. Dealing with physical books including; check-outs, check-ins, delivery, pulling holds, shelving, etc., require substantial manpower and represent a significant workload for the staff.

Board Chair Bill Scarber asked a question about the utilization and capacity of the public computers. Jennifer Fay, Associate Director of Public Services, commented the library evaluates statistics which are gathered for every public computer in the system. Obviously there are busy times and less busy times of the day, and occasionally all computers at a branch are occupied or in-use, but that our evaluation has lead the library to aim to have overall computer capacity around 35%. This generally allows for a computer to be available at a branch when a patron needs one. Understanding that each branch is unique, with their own computer needs and usage is also important. This information is tracked to ensure an individual branch is allowing for peak hours. In addition, the library strives to provide adequate bandwidth for personal devices, this also helps ensure county funds are only paying for enough computers and upkeep to cover demand.

Marketing Update – Sara Neal, Marketing & Communications Manager

The QR Code surveys are going well. The library maintains a high Net Promoter score of 93. The library also received overwhelmingly positive comments to open ended questions. Sara did report one dissatisfied patron based on their observation of excessive noise levels at one branch during their visit. Sara pointed out that the library does offer quiet study rooms or calmer corners for patrons. The library is a place we want all individuals to enjoy. The comment was from the Millcreek branch, which as we learned from a recent board meeting visit, has unique issues as it shares a space with the recreation center and the senior center.

Sara Neal explained the difference between a satisfaction score and a Net Promoter Score. The Net Promoter scale ranges between -100 to 100. The score is obtained by taking the percentage of people who are satisfied, which is all the 8, 9, and 10 responses, and subtracting the number who are not satisfied, which is the range from 0 to 5. The percentage is a Net Promoter Score. A score of 60-70 is considered good. Sara reported that 96% of people said they would recommend the service to a friend. The Net Promoter score is generally considered a measure of a higher standard of service.

Another comment suggested that when a patron contacts the library, they would like the phone tree structure to provide the option to contact a specific person. The IT department is reviewing the structure to include the branch names as an option, but not specific individuals.

ABC4 and City Journals attended Tosho Con, which was a two day event with around 1,700 – 1,800 teens attending. The library also had media coverage at two other recent events. Sara provided the Board with information on the Mid-Autumn Festival, celebrated by many Asian countries, which will be held at the Taylorsville branch. Get Curious is a hands on experience for children age five and under. At the event, they have fun activities, such as playing with balls, manipulating water, seeing how air correlates with tubes, and more.

Board member, Anastasia Morgan, commented on the great Instagram content.

Finance & Operations Update – Russ Snow, Fiscal Manager

The library YTD is looking good. The 2024 budget was presented to the mayor's office and there were no big concerns from that presentation.

A few capital projects are happening before the end of the year. These closures will create variations in the gate count and key indicator reports.

- Magna is receiving new carpet
 - Reopening in mid-October
- Herriman will have an LED lighting upgrade
 - Oct 9 – Nov 17 closure
- South Jordan will receive newly constructed checkout and reference desks
 - October 16 – November 20 closure

During a branch closure, the staff will be hosted at other locations. They help with increased patron demand at regionally close branches and with other special projects.

Facilities maintains a replacement schedule for items such as the carpet. The carpet schedule averages ten years, but may be replaced sooner depending on the gate count at that location. Regular maintenance to clean spills and other issues takes place between carpet replacement schedules.

Personnel Report – Pamela Park, Human Resource Manager

40-Hour Merit Staff: 278
30-Hour Merit Staff: 76
20-Hour Merit Staff: 108
Substitute Staff: 92
Current Vacancies: 64

The library's Human Resources department will be processing around 15 retirements by the end of the year.

Director, Jim Cooper, then took a personal moment to read the following letter to announce his retirement to the Library Board.

Dear Salt Lake County Library Board and Library Staff,

As only the fourth Salt Lake County Library Director in our history, and after almost 30 years of service filled with friendships, memories, challenges and some of the best times of my life, I have decided it is time to retire as Library Director, effective January 16, 2024.

It has been an honor and a privilege to have been a part of this amazing organization. During my career at the County Library, I am fortunate to have had the pleasure of working with more than 1,000 dedicated library co-workers, serving under 2 different forms of county government, 5 County Commissioners, 4 County Mayors, dozens of County Council members, 10 Department Directors, and more than 50 Library Board members.

I am so proud of the work that we have done to make our library system a vibrant, sustainable, and valued resource for our community. Maya Angelou once said "Information helps you to see that you're not alone. That there's somebody in Mississippi and somebody in Tokyo who all have wept, who've all longed and lost, who've all been happy. So the library helps you to see, not only that you are not alone, but that you're not really any different from everyone else."

I have never been alone on this journey. Together we have sustained operations through unprecedented population growth and municipality expansions. Together we have weathered a pandemic and an earthquake. Together we grew circulation from a few million to become one of the highest circulating libraries in North America. Together we have improved and cultivated library services across the valley, successfully completing 11 new library construction projects. Together we have

expanded our collections, undertaken numerous library renovations, and improved the lives of our residents by delivering robust programs and outreach services. We have helped build community, focused on early learning, connected with schools, provided service to jails and health clinics, served our unsheltered populations, and assisted with memory care.

Our library is deeply rooted in a tradition of service to all and is built for the future. Let us be guided by Dwight D. Eisenhower, who cautioned: “Don’t join the book burners. Don’t think you’re going to conceal faults by concealing evidence that they ever existed. Don’t be afraid to go in your library and read every book...”

Thank you to Mayor Wilson, County Council members and the Library’s Board of Directors for their guidance and leadership. They have helped the County Library be recognized as one of the great library systems in the nation for our responsive, innovative and creative approaches to library service. Please continue to support and sustain this precious resource for the benefit of all the citizens of Salt Lake County.

Although I am looking forward to retirement and spending more time with family and friends, I plan to remain engaged, volunteer in my community and will continue to advocate for the importance of libraries. Together, I am confident the Salt Lake County Library will continue to make a positive difference for our residents for many years to come!

Sincerely,

Jim

Council Member, Suzanne Harrison, thanked Jim for his service and for being an incredible leader. Chair, Bill Scarber, commented on his gratefulness to the foundation Jim has created for the library system. Jim’s life work will continue on through his library legacy.

Jim commented on the great capabilities of the Leadership Team and Library Board. And thanked Mayor Wilson for her support. Jim reported that the library is in great shape in regards to financing, organizational health and culture. There are many opportunities in the future, including multiple building projects to entice a new great leader.

OLD BUSINESS

Board Bylaws – Bylaw Subcommittee: Bill Scarber, Board Chair, Anastasia Morgan, Spencer Romney. Advisor, Megan Smith

The Bylaw Subcommittee is moving the bylaw proposal to a future meeting. They will be looking at the sections regarding replacing a director. The bylaw committee has a few recommended changes they will be looking into. They want to address any complications that may arise.

Anastasia Morgan made a motion to move forward with reviewing the Library Board Bylaws. Nancy Thorne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Suzanne Harrison – aye
Anastasia Morgan – aye
Sandra Osborn – N/A
Hollie Pettersson – aye
Spencer Romney - aye
Bill Scarber - aye
Steven Sokol – aye
Kaati Tarr - aye
Nancy Thorne - aye

Display & Reconsideration Policies – Bill Scarber, Jim Cooper, Christa Warren

The Bylaw Subcommittee will also continue reviewing the Display and Reconsideration Policies.

Nancy Thorne made a motion to move forward with reviewing the Display Policy and the Reconsideration Policy. Kaati Tarr seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Suzanne Harrison – aye
Anastasia Morgan – aye
Sandra Osborn – N/A
Hollie Pettersson – aye
Spencer Romney - aye
Bill Scarber - aye
Steven Sokol – aye
Kaati Tarr - aye
Nancy Thorne - aye

Summer Reading Update – Nyssa Fleig, Lifelong Learning Manager & Sara Neal, Marketing and Communications Manager

The Summer Reading 2023 theme was All Together Now. The program runs from June 1 through the end of July.

Mission: To promote a love of reading and learning for all ages, and to help mitigate potential reading and learning loss during the summer.

Goals:

- Participants are:
 - Motivated to read
 - Have a goal to aspire to
 - Are encouraged & have positive reinforcement from staff at all levels

Statistics show 51,253 patrons signed up with the help of staff and teen volunteers. Adults make up the largest number of signups, with children a close second. It is not quite to pre-pandemic

levels, but it is getting close. Library visits from June to July totaled 468,813. This equates to 7,000 – 8,000 people in the library in any given day.

Summer Reading kickoffs happened at three locations--Daybreak, Granite, and West Jordan--with 2,573 attendees at those events. Marketing put together wonderful graphics and designs. Surveys were also created to query patrons on any impact from the program. A 2018 Student DIBELS Z-Scores report states students who participate in Summer Reading do better in school and have higher test scores.

While the library wants reading to be its own reward, a few prizes and awards are given to help reluctant readers. Many participants say prizes motivate their continued reading.

“I like how we got to do fun things (reading, playing, etc.) while getting a prize for it. I think getting a prize makes me want to do those things (reading, playing) more often.”

The library hosts programs for all age groups, including those with many of our community partners. ZAP partners included Bad Dog Art, Chitrakaavya Dance, and Wasatch Theater Company. Tracy Aviary, Natural History Museum of Utah, and Clark Planetarium also provided popular programs. Diagon Alley was changed to Magic and Mayhem to avoid intellectual property issues and allow for broader themes and inclusion.

The One-Cent pilot program will be discussed later in the meeting. However, every year the library gives a five-dollar fine waiver to those who sign up for Summer Reading. Other benefits of Summer Reading include a free book for all finishers, with the potential to get an additional book in a bonus round. Additionally, the Natural History Museum hosts library days free to program finishers.

“This program was SO well done! My kids reminded me it was time to read instead of the other way around. They tried new things and we all read together! Thank You!”

“Thank you for providing such excellent services to the community. Librarians have been so helpful to us in finding materials, especially when my son became interested in soccer. I appreciate all the work behind the scenes that go into the events for kids. You have helped develop my children’s love of learning!”

Summer Reading is the library’s largest program. It takes multiple departments and most of the staff to create and employ. This large labor of love really affects the community.

One-Cent Fine Update – Matt McLain, Associate Director of Community Engagement

As a review from previous meetings, Matt reminded the Board that a request was received from certain County Council members to eliminate fines on children materials. Some results were shared in the August meeting. Matt reported that during the evaluation period hold times on books have actually decreased by a half-day, and that hold lists were shorter overall. Program attendance increased by 26% and youth Summer Reading participants increased overall. Door count for the branches increased by 8%.

A survey of the pilot program ended at the beginning of September. A highlight of the survey responses include:

- 88% stated they checked out children or teen material during the summer
 - 65% said they check out *more* of those materials
- 55% said they visited the library more often
- 44% said they attended more programs during the summer
- 94.6% had a positive reaction to the pilot program.

The financial impact was an astonishing \$42,389.07 to the benefit of the community. The library submitted a request to remove late fees on children and teen materials in the 2024 budget. The following letter was provided to the Council in response to their request.

Dear Councilmembers Granato and Stringham,

I am responding to your letter dated April 14, 2023, requesting the County Library initiate a pilot to suspend overdue fees on children's materials during the Summer Reading program. On May 22, 2023, the Library Board voted to enact such a pilot, which is now complete. We are pleased to report that for the three-month period from June to August 2023, we eliminated \$42,482.18 in charges on materials for youth. Further, an astounding 94.6% of patrons responding to the library's one-cent fine survey indicated they viewed their experience positively.

Specific to your questions in the letter, library program attendance increased by 26% in the three month time period, compared to 2022; and the library experienced an almost 8% increase in visits, in that same time period. While these increases cannot be completely attributed to the one-cent late fee pilot, the Library Board believes it was certainly a contributing factor.

Most importantly, library patrons responding to a survey conducted throughout the month of August were overwhelmingly positive to the pilot program. Many people noted that their summers were less stressful because of the pilot, and that the reduction in the late fees motivated them to check out more materials. One example read,

“Truly loved this program – it made it so much easier for me to say YES to all the books, DVDs etc. that my daughter wanted.... Reduced my anxiety about the need to be right on top of returning, as summer seems to have moments of MORE things going on and less structure! Thanks!”

The Library Board is also happy to report that the reduction in late fees did not impact the timely return of library materials. In fact, waitlist fill time actually improved by a half-day over the three-month time frame! Anecdotally, library staff believe that patrons returned materials checked out prior to the summer at higher rates as well.

The success of this pilot spurred Library Administration to submit a revenue reduction with their 2024 budget request so that the County Library can permanently eliminate late fees on materials for youth.

I want to thank you both for your request and for opening the door to make this important impact on our community!

Sincerely,

Bill Scarber

Salt Lake County Library Board Chair

Bill also commented on what a great opportunity it is to work with all of the individuals involved in last year's request for additional revenue and the first request for a tax increase in 10 years. Bill noted that it can be a contentious issue with different views, but it is important to give back to the community. A return to the citizens by the removal of certain fines is an excellent way to give back. Bill acknowledged that many library departments and staff members made this one-cent fine pilot program possible and thanked the council members for the suggestion. We ultimately want to do the right thing for the community.

Bill Scarber, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 1:37 pm.

Sarah Brinkerhoff gave a tour to interested individuals.