

**Ames Public Library Board of Trustees  
Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
January 16, 2025**

The Ames Public Library (APL) Board of Trustees met in regular session on Thursday, January 16, 2025, in the Dale H. Ross Board Room with Gibson, Gordillo, Johnson, Mitchell-Conway, Rearick, Reger, Reynolds, and Thorbs-Weber in attendance. Myers was excused. Director Schofer was also in attendance.

**Call to Order:** President Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**Oath of Office:** Gordillo took the Oath of Office

**Consent Agenda:**

**Moved by Reynolds, seconded by Mitchell-Conway, to approve the consent agenda as follows:**

1. Resolution approving donations:
  - a. Sidney Nichols (credit refund 10/17/24).....\$22.76
  - b. Mary Jurenka (credit refund 11/15/24) .....\$9.79
  - c. Kelli Jens (credit refund 12/10/24) .....\$5.99
  - d. M.D. Ashland .....\$44.39
  - e. Story County Master Gardeners Association ..... four youth titles
2. Motion approving minutes of the regular meeting December 19, 2024
3. Motion approving payment of claims 12/1/24 – 12/31/24

**Vote on Motion: 7-0 (Johnson abstained; Myers excused). Approved unanimously. Resolution No. 2025-L001 adopted.**

**Public Forum:** None

**Activity Reports:**

Administrative Staff Report: Schofer gave a report to the Board.

- The carpet replacement project is going well. We have cameras installed to create a time-lapse video when they are finished. Patrons are coming in to use the space and browse available collections. The holds list has more than doubled, which started just before the project began. The contractors are great to work with which enables staff pull holds at various times and allows them to keep up with the demand.
- We did reach out to the Ames Area Economic Alliance (AKA the Ames Chamber) to schedule a ribbon cutting to highlight the new carpet. The ribbon cutting is scheduled at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, April 9.
- The Library Building Maintenance Supervisor, Duckett, is taking advantage of the floor closures to do a few things. She has changed the light kits and painted the Youth bathrooms to brighten the spaces. She will be installing a new changing table in a safer location in the bathroom too. (New Strategic Plan already starting!) She also took advantage of being able to access areas in the ceiling, usually blocked by shelves, and was able to clean dust off the chiller beams and grates which should improve efficiency.

- Speaking of efficiency, the City signed a contract to do energy audits in City buildings. The Library is a newer, efficient building. We went through an audit about eight years ago and do regular tweaks with our vendors to improve efficiency. We look forward to hearing their recommendations to further our efficiency.
- On January 2<sup>nd</sup> we transitioned from providing individual use bus tickets to checking out monthly bus passes. Staff got the word out to our regular requesters to put their names in the hold queue. Fifty passes will be available each month.
- Tax season is gearing up. Forms are available in the lobby. The United Way of Story County will schedule all appointments for the VITA tax volunteers again this year. Appointments should start in February.
- Schofer is working with Ocken to create an ad at the North Grand Mall. Thorbs-Weber had suggested the mall as an option for marketing a few months ago.
- Mitchell-Conway wants it on record that she would like an actual warming center in the City of Ames. There has not been an increase of those experiencing homelessness spending days at the Library. Schofer had spoken with Food at First and the Romero house prior to the carpet project to make sure there were options available if seating at the Library became limited. The City has hired a consultant who will begin analyzing data, contacting key staff and local organizations, and having community conversations to propose a longer-term solution.

Ames Public Library Friends Foundation (APLFF) Report: Gibson gave a report to the Board.

- Luze continues to work on rebranding efforts. She will be meeting next week with Ripke to discuss website design.
- The APLFF Board discussed the possibility of hiring an intern from Iowa State University to assist with the website and social media updates.
- Luze will be sending a solicitation to Ames area businesses. She expects a modest response, but the priority is to make connections.
- The holiday solicitation has been going well.
- The booksale and sales at Literary Grounds continue to do well.
- There will not be meetings in February or April.

Budget and Finance Committee: Rearick/Reger gave a report to the Board.

- Reger couldn't attend the meeting but came in and reviewed the financial reports. He does not have any concerns. There is a slight decrease in the collection budget for fiscal year 2026 to cover the unavoidable increases in areas such as benefits, ongoing contracts, and subscription.
- Rearick also doesn't have any concerns. At the end of December we should be approximately 50% spent. The report shows our overall spending at 49.63%. Library collections are intentionally above the 50% spent. Internal services will be billed around April so that remains underspent. Several of the contracts are paid at the beginning of the fiscal year, so that is also showing overspent, but it is anticipated.

**Moved by Gibson, seconded by Thorbs-Weber, to approve the financial report as presented.**

**Vote on Motion: 7-0 (Johnson abstained; Myers excused). Approved unanimously.**

**Board education:**

Schofer discussed professional development. The Library has Niche which we use for both employee and patron education opportunities. Recently the Library purchased the Ryan Dowd training on homelessness and de-escalation which is on Niche. We also use Niche for new employee onboarding, Person in Charge (PIC) training, and a variety of other topics. The City of Ames provides EDC (Employee Development Center) Classes on topics such as Mental Health First Aid, Excel, and Customer Service Excellence. The State Library of Iowa provides live courses, recorded and self-paced courses including things like the Pop YS conferences that our Youth Staff attend each year. The Iowa Library Association (ILA) is a professional organization that provides a wide range of resources, training, and support specifically to libraries in Iowa just as most professions have professional organizations. The annual ILA conference provides a variety of sessions. Some sessions from the past conference included Promoting Community Ties Through Library Events and Services, Practical Solutions for Combating Burnout in Library Staff, Sensory Storytime, and Public Libraries Catalysts for Civic Renewal (taken from last conference schedule). ILA provides advocacy tools including legislative talking points and a bill tracker. They host an annual Capitol Day, a reception at the State Capitol's Law Library with legislators present which provides an opportunity to discuss library relevant issues and legislation that impacts library funding. The American Library Association (ALA) is another professional organization that is geared towards all libraries. ALA offers divisions such as Public Library Association (PLA), Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), and Association for Library Services (ALSC) that provide more in-depth training specifically for staff working in specific areas. Like ILA, there is a variety of training topics, conferences, and resources for members to access. Some staff hold individual memberships to ILA and/or ALA and have served on committees, attended leadership conferences, and presented at conferences. While attending conferences is employee development, work on various committees is not part of a staff person's work at the Ames Public Library. This past October Schofer and Klein-Hewett tabled at ILA as the Iowa Center for the Book. Conferences also provide the ability to network with colleges and potential vendors.

**Policy Review:**

Programs: This policy was brought to the Board last month for discussion and reviewed by staff. Recommended changes include fixing the semicolon in the first sentence, removing the word "approaches" from the second sentence under "Programming Partnership", changing the beginning of the sentence under "Evaluation" from "Programs will be evaluated based on" to "Program evaluation is informed by alignment with the Library's strategic priorities and" and by adding a link to the "Expression of Concerns policy" under "References". The Board discussed the policy.

**Moved by Reger, seconded by Gordillo, to approve the changes to the Programs Policy as indicated.**

**Vote on Motion: 7-0 (Johnson abstained; Myers excused). Approved unanimously. Resolution No. 2025-L002 adopted.**

Records Retention: Schofer introduced the policy. This policy was brought to the Board for discussion at the October 17, 2024 meeting. During the review process it was learned that the City of Ames would be adopting an updated retention schedule. The decision was made to hold this policy for review until after a new City policy was adopted. The City of Ames Records Retention Schedule was adopted by Resolution No. 24-671 on December 17, 2024. As a result of the review, there are multiple changes recommended. The Board discussed the policy. This policy will be brought back next month for action. Thorbs-Weber recommended changing “Members of staff” to “Staff.”

**New Business:**

Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Proposed Budget: Schofer introduced the budget summary.

The City Manager requested city departments to submit adjustments to the current year’s budget (fiscal year 2024/25 or FY25) and initial requests for next year (FY26) by November 13, 2024. Schofer, Dornink, and Johannes met with the City Budget Manager, Assistant City Manager, and Lehman on Monday, November 18, to review the initial entries and make adjustments per their recommendations. January 9, 2025 Schofer, Dornink, and Johannes met with the City Manager, City Finance Director, and Lehman to review budget requests.

Notes:

- The Library Administration budget reflects salary and benefit increases. Building and service contract costs have also increased. To offset these increases, reductions were made to other areas like conference attendance and professional services.
- The Library has received a \$25,000 grant through the Friends Foundation to offer additional checkouts of hotspots and tablets, as well as provide digital literacy programming.
- The demand for downloadable electronic books and audio outpaces the increasing costs of providing these services. To keep expenses manageable, the Library eliminated some online databases, restricted access to downloadable platforms, and reduced funding for physical collections.
- The Resources Services team is reviewing current vendor options for cataloging records and interlibrary loan services to identify potential cost savings.
- Youth Services personal service costs have a lower-than-expected increase in FY 2025/26 due to staff turnover and changes in selected insurance plans. Conference attendance was reduced to FY 2025/26 to help offset increases in areas of the budget.
- The Youth Services Manager works closely with the Ames Public Library Friends Foundation Development Director to identify grant opportunities to support youth initiatives such as STEM Programming and Summer Meals.
- In the FY 2025/26 budget, benefits increased due to staff turnover and insurance coverage selection. Conference attendance was reduced to help offset increases.
- Ames Public Library Friends Foundation funds will support a furniture refresh in the adult area.
- The Customer Accounts Services budget reflects permanent staff salary and benefit increases as well as an increase in postage costs. To offset these increases, reductions were made to the temporary salary budget line and conference costs

were reduced.

**Moved by Reynolds, seconded by Mitchell-Conway, to approve the FY25 budget amendments and FY26 request as presented.**

**Vote on Motion: 7-0 (Johnson abstained; Myers excused). Approved unanimously. Resolution No. 2025-L003 adopted.**

Strategic Plan: Schofer reviewed the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan that was briefly covered in the Board Education last month. The strategic plan was constructed after feedback was received from almost six hundred survey responses, five stakeholder groups, four public input sessions, and multiple staff, Board, and volunteer input opportunities. The three main priorities emerged being Connecting Ames, Serving Ames, and a Place for Ames. Connecting Ames includes creating opportunities for the community to engage and connect. Serving Ames includes providing access to resources that serve diverse needs. A Place for Ames includes enhancing the physical library building, property, and Bookmobile to create an accessible, welcome, and safe space for all users. Three main goals surfaced: Core, Build, and Reach. Core includes the things we do on a regular basis. Build includes things that we have done work on, but would like to do more. Reach includes things that are more expensive or time intensive.

**Moved by Mitchell-Conway, seconded by Reger, to approve the priorities and goals of the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan as presented.**

**Vote on Motion: 7-0 (Johnson abstained; Myers excused). Approved unanimously. Resolution No. 2025-L004 adopted.**

February meeting date: The Board discussed the February Ames Public Library Board meeting date which annually conflicts with the NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. The Board discussed setting the meeting dates for the following year in December of each year to allow the flexibility to attend this and other important events.

**Moved by Reynolds, seconded by Gordillo, to move the February 2025 meeting from February 20, 2025 to February 13, 2025.**

**Vote on Motion: 7-0 (Johnson abstained; Myers excused). Approved unanimously.**

**Trustee Comments:**

- Reger – great meeting. It's nice that everyone gets along well even with differences in opinions. There are good discussions. Great work again to Schofer, Johannes, and the rest of the staff.
- Thorbs-Weber – welcomed Gordillo. She thinks Gordillo will enjoy being here.
- Mitchell-Conway – good job team.
- Rearick – thanked everyone for the discussions and all the work.
- Gordillo – excited to be part of the Board. It is very enlightening and welcome. It looks like a good strategic plan.

- Reynolds - is excited to see the strategic plan come together. She thanked everyone for the kind words sent from last month.
- Gibson – with more than a year of conversations with a large staff, various teams, all the feedback, and brainstorming, she is impressed with the strategic plan. What an amazing job, please tell all the staff she appreciates it. She also took a moment to acknowledge Richard Deyo's passing. There was something about the Library that felt safe for him. The Library allows everyone to come in and feel comfortable. It's an atmosphere that is provided for all people and it is amazing.
- Johnson - thanks everyone and happy New Year!

**Adjournment:**

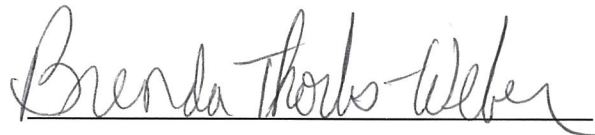
**Moved by Mitchell-Conway, seconded by Thorbs-Weber, to adjourn at 8:48 p.m.**

**Vote on Motion: 7-0 (Johnson abstained; Myers excused). Approved unanimously.**

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Dale H. Ross Board Room.



Melissa Johannes, Library Secretary



Brenda Thorbs-Weber, Board Secretary