

RIVER FOREST PUBLIC LIBRARY
TRUSTEES MEETING

<http://www.rflib.org/>

OCTOBER 20, 2015

Barbara Smith, Observer

Trustees present: Claudette Zobel, Thomas Smedinghoff, Kevin Crowell, Alice Calabrese-Berry, Joan O'Connor, and Katherine Bevan.

Library Officials present: Sue Welch, Beth Kirchenberg.

Visitors: Joe Huberty of Engberg Anderson, an architecture and design firm; and Kristin Coe, resident.

The Trustees of the River Forest Public Library met at their regularly scheduled time (on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 P.m.) and location in the library conference room at 735 Lathrop Ave., River Forest.

Mr. Huberty made a detailed presentation of optional plan designs and budgets for improvements to the lobby and circulation area of the library. He described the mission as improving the traffic flow and creating a more welcoming space in the now-dated lobby. The lobby improvement would also promote adult services and take advantage of the space with displays, seating and improved lighting.

Studies of other libraries in the area showed that about 75% of respondents used the library for leisure. About 50% of users come in order to use and borrow books, and about 20% use audio/visual materials. Patrons browse 7 to 9 items each visit. About two-thirds of patrons do not have a specific item in mind when they visit the library. He pointed out that Barrington found a marked increase in the use of its existing collections solely on the basis of its updated access and displays.

In terms of optional plan designs, Mr. Huberty displayed three options of designs, with cost estimates for each one. Option One is the least expensive. It would include face-out displays, movable displays that adjust to various heights, with displays linked to seating, and a power wall for electronics and modern lighting. This option would require compressing of the director's office as well as the staff work-room. Wooden panels that are consistent with the current décor would cover the new walls and the beams. Flooring would lead patrons visually toward the stairs to the upstairs reading room. The total cost would be \$288,400 (consisting of \$284,400 for construction and \$40,000 for furnishings).

Option Two would provide greater public space and a bay for seating, along with mobile displays. It would be twice as deep as Option 1. This option would provide a better buffer of the noise and traffic in the lobby. The displays, power wall and wooden panels would be similar, but more extensive. However, it would also require relocation of the director's office, most likely to a place upstairs, behind the fiction section, and moving of the technical service space. Option Two would cost a total of \$385,900 (consisting of \$322,900 for construction and \$63,000 for furnishings).

Option Three offers an intermediate choice that would provide for retaining the technical services function on the first floor. An additional meeting space was added to the Option 3 design, but that space could be used for retaining the director's office near the entrance. Work spaces would be hidden from view, open book carts would no longer sit in the path of entrants, and slots would be

available for return. A reader adviser or circulation librarian would be stationed to interact with patrons. Option Two would cost a total of \$305,600 (consisting of \$248,600 for construction and \$57,000 for furnishings). The trustees will study the options presented.

Mr. Crowell asked why the Option One pricing of about \$400 per square foot was about 35% higher than Option Two. Mr. Huberty explained that this would be due to up-front costs. He also explained that he recommends a construction management model, instead of using a general contractor, in order to maintain costs and control of quality. The fee would be \$20,000 for any of the options.

Beth Kirchenberg, a staff librarian who manages the young adult service, reported that the library offers about 34 programs, with about 25 students each. She described the various programs, and efforts to engage teens.

Visitor Kristin Coe addressed the group in order to invite trustees to attend meetings of the Service Club for the River Forest community. The Service Club discusses matters of interest throughout the community, and it meets every third Thursday of the month, with a reception at 7 p.m. and meeting at 7:30 p.m.

The trustee also considered the Treasurer's report. Mr Crowell asked for more information on internet charges, which include additional line for high-use periods. Ms. Welch stated that the uses will be reported separately with description. Trustees also questioned the payment of Rotary dues and ALA meeting costs. Mr. Smedinghoff requested that the staff designate in its report whether the individual payments are annual, quarterly or monthly. The expense report showed that expenses were under the target previously set.

Ms. Welch commented on the Director's report because the Director was absent due to illness. She noted that key performance indicators had been met, and that there was now a question of extending the strategic plan. She reported that the library's relationship with the River Forest Township is moving toward new programs / services for seniors. Trustees requested that additional information on the library's Foundation be included on the website, <http://www.rflib.org>. The trustees then went into executive session.