



**SCAPPOOSE PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT  
Budget Committee Meeting  
April 18, 2024, 6:30p.m.  
Scappoose Public Library  
52469 SE Second St., Scappoose, Oregon  
In person and Via Zoom Meeting**

**Minutes**

**1.0 Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance**

Linda called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM. She led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Attending the meeting were Board President Linda Vermillion, Vice-President Jolene Jonas, Library Director Jeff Weiss, and Board Members Johanna Myers, Elaine Nussbaum, and Lisa Lewis. The citizens on the Budget Committee also attended: Sandra Wiggins, Linda Gittings, Marsha Holbrook, Christine Everett, and alternate Karen Kessi. Lisa Miyamoto was unable to attend. The committee members introduced themselves. Linda called for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Jolene made a motion to approve the agenda. Lisa seconded. Motion passes unanimously

**2.0 Reconfirm Citizen Budget Committee Members and budget officer by Library Board.**

Linda asked for a motion to reconfirm the Budget Committee and Budget Officer because Karen Kessi was substituting for Lisa Miyamoto. Johanna made a motion to reconfirm the Budget Committee and Budget Officer. Lisa seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**3.0 Public Input**

There was no public attendance or input.

**4.0 Elect Committee Chair**

Linda asked for nominations for Budget Committee Chair. Lisa nominated Linda as chair. Elaine seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**5.0 Presentation of Budget Message**

Director Weiss presented the budget message which is attached to these notes and had been sent to the committee members prior to the meeting. Estimated tax collections are a little over \$394,000, a 2% increase, but the effects of the Cascade Tissue lawsuit requesting a reduction in taxes already paid are unknown. Cascade has sued to retrieve 1.4 million dollars in paid taxes, of which the libraries portion is about \$7500. This issue could carry over into the next budget year. Weiss said he had done some cash analysis since he prepared the budget documents and he estimates that the library will have around \$265,000 in cash carryover July 1. Jeff said that if that he recommends placing any extra carryover cash into contingency or the unspendable categories of the budget.

General Fund: Jeff said the main difference in the total proposed budget and this year's budget is the cost of the citywide events the library has been asked to produce. In the current year budget the large June event was not budgeted because the city had not asked the library to take the event over until a council meeting halfway through the current budget year. The increase in the New Programs/Children's Programs portion of the budget is for that event. That event is paid for by grants and sponsorships, so if we do not produce an event next year, we will neither collect those sponsorships nor spend most of that category in the general fund. Other budget lines have not been increased except where Jeff estimates a larger than normal inflation figure for fixed costs (insurance, bank charges, postage).

Personnel Services: The library is proposing a 4% increase for hourly Associate staff (2% + 2% step) and a 5% increase for hourly Technician staff (3% + 2% step). The director will get no raise this year. Last year, the budget committee decided to stagger the larger wage increases between the two categories. This year, the Technician staff category gets a slightly higher raise. Education level specifies the difference between the two classes as the Technician requires a college degree. Jeff has proposed an increase of \$15,000 to cover the hourly raises. The library has three 32 hour Technician positions and one 24 hour Technician position. The library has one 24 hour Associate position and one 20 hour Associate. Taxes and PERS add 25% to each wage paid. No staff, including the director gets health insurance through the library. The committee asked about the note in the message about not having a janitor. Jeff said the library contract janitor quit at the end of November. He tried to find a replacement starting with the Oregon Forward providers for Columbia County. None of those providers (Relay Resources and TVW, Inc.) would provide a cost estimate or return inquiries. Jeff said that when he learned of the Cascades Tissue lawsuit, he decided to do the janitorial work himself to save money. In Oregon, janitors for public buildings are required to have a state license, so finding one in a rural county is difficult. Jolene asked about getting volunteers to do the janitorial work.

Christine said she the report said that the library wages were low in comparison to other libraries. She asked about where the benchmark is and where it should be. Jeff said that in Columbia County, the only public data available is for St Helens where the scale for Clerks, which we call Associates, is \$18 to \$22 per hour. The proposed scale for Scappoose is \$14.90 to \$17.46. The St Helen's scale for full time library staff in 2022 was \$59,000 to \$69,000 per year and the Director's pay scale is \$90,000 to \$115,000. Clatskanie paid their director a little over \$70,000 last year. All the full time jobs have full benefits. Linda said that St Helens Library is a city department, so they have more money than Scappoose. Jeff said that Scappoose Library is 15<sup>th</sup> from the bottom in per capita funding for the 138 libraries in Oregon. For FY 2024-25, St Helens Library is proposing a \$636,000 budget for salaries and benefits. Christine asked why Jeff is not proposing a raise for himself. Jeff said it is because he is concerned about the library finances and being able to maintain the cash balance the library has built up.

Karen asked about the cash balance and if the library was required to carry it. Jeff said there was no requirement, but the library does need a cash balance to fund services and payroll through November. Jeff said that when he was hired in July 2017, the library did not have a cash balance large enough to fund full operations and he had to cut his own pay and hours and cut staff and services in order to keep the library open and he does not want to have that happen again. Jeff was asked why the city doesn't support the library. Jeff said that the city had shifted the library from a city department to an independent agency in 1986 and he didn't know the history of that decision. The new group fund raised and built the current facility in 1995-96.

Jolene asked what the permanent tax rate is for the library. Jeff said it is .2526 or about a quarter for every \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Jeff said he had run some preliminary figures on what providing full time employment with benefits for the three 32 hour technicians at a \$40,000/year pay range and it would cost about \$70,000 additional each

year including a basic health plan. Karen said we should at least consider hiring a janitor to clean the building.

Linda asked for a motion to accept the budget message. Jeff said he wanted to hold that because they had not discussed Materials and Services. Jeff said he was concerned about inflation in the coming fiscal year because there had been surprise rate increases this year. The library is considered an industrial building, so our base utility rates increased much more than the original estimates. The library insurance increased 18% and our agent has told us to expect at least a 15% increase. Jolene asked if I knew what the school district paid. Jeff said he did not, but the library paid over \$9,000 for insurance through Special Districts this calendar year. Jeff said he had bid the package out, but it is hard to find insurance like we have because several professional services the library uses as well as the ability to get grants from Special Districts of Oregon are bundled in that payment. Our policy has some cyber insurance and things like free background checks and legal advice that other policies don't have.

## **6.0 Review of Budget and Discussion**

### **6.1 Resources**

Jeff talked about the estimated tax collection sheets from the county assessor. The library is estimated to get a 2% increase. Jeff said if the committee looks at the county taxes, it appears that the county areas are in tax compression. It has not affected the library yet, but it could in the future because those areas with negative figures have taxes reduced because of compression. Part of the library district lies outside of the city limits.

Jeff presented the LB-20 form with lists estimated income. The first two columns are what the library actually received. The third column is this year's budget. Jeff said that the library needs to maintain a minimum of \$200,000 to function until mid-November when the tax draws start getting deposited. Jeff said the biggest Christine increases in library income for the past few years are in grants and donations. Lisa asked about the increases in the program budget. Jeff said that the library had done Movies in the Park for several years and that was included in all the presented figures. Earth Day was added in the current budget. The Scappoose summer event was not in the budget this year, but he has budgeted for it in the next fiscal year. Jeff said Earth Day typically is profitable and that profit is used for other library programs. Jolene asked if the outdoor festival was a large part of the program budget increase this year. Jeff said it was. The city wide events are about \$20,000 of that budget. Jeff asked for questions about the resources report.

Christine asked If there were things that the library wanted to spend more on, what would those be and what could be some options for getting more income for the library. Jeff said the only income that would make a substantial difference would be an increase in the library levy. A \$.10 per thousand levy increase would bring in a little under \$150,000. Jeff said everything else just pokes around the edges of the underfunding. Christine asked if the library had considered a capital campaign and that it was mentioned in the library strategic plan. Jeff said it had not been attempted. He said that he does not have the expertise or experience to do that, but also, the library needs a stable source of income Karen asked about forming a library foundation to fundraise and then use the interest on the foundation's investments for additional income. Jeff said that the way that is typically done is that a 501c3 foundation is set up to raise and invest library gifts and donations. He said the Friends of the Scappoose Library are a 501c3, but they are not the same as a foundation. Jeff said currently the library's investments earn 5% and all cash except current expenses are invested in that account. Jeff said that the two outstanding items in the strategic plan are both income related. One is to solicit annual donations, the other is to investigate and pursue a 5 year levy. Jolene asked what would happen if the library got the 5 year levy and then at the end of the 5 years,

the levy was not renewed. Jeff said that then the library would have to return to funding at the current levels. He said that it is rare for an existing library levy renewal to get rejected. He said that the only levy that he was aware of that had failed was the Josephine county levy that was attempted after the lumber taxes left the area. Even though it was defeated on the first ballot attempt, eventually taxes were approved and library service returned.

Karen asked if the library had ever attempted a levy. Jeff said that the only levy was the original permanent levy of .2426 per thousand from 1986 when the library district was created. There was some discussion of when the levy was initially imposed. Jeff said that whenever the levy was imposed, Scappoose was a much smaller town then. Jeff asked if there were any other questions. There were none.

## **6.2 Personnel**

This was discussed after 6.3 Detailed Expenditures. Jeff introduced the forms used for this part of the budget. Jeff said that the step scale proposed was a 2% step plus a 3% raise for technicians and a 2% step plus a 2% raise for associates. Karen asked why there was a 1% difference between the raises for associates versus technicians. Jeff said the COLA increases were staggered between the two classes of positions because last year's budget committee decided to give one class a slightly larger raise in this current budget year and to give the other class a slightly larger raise in the next year. It was based on having to give a substantial raise to the associates last year to bring the starting wage above Oregon minimum wage. The library could not afford to give both job classes the same wage increase. Lisa said this type of raise was her experience at her job before she retired. There was discussion about retention of staff. Jeff said the customers really like the staff.

Karen asked why the director was not getting a raise. Jolene said it was not a performance issue, but there was not enough income to give the director a raise. Jeff said that he had received a raise every year until now and that he had asked for no raise. Linda said the board might reconsider this at the end of the budget year. Christine said that the board and committee need to consider building into the budget a plan for paying the director market wages because it may become difficult for the library to fill the job for the salary paid. Jeff said he thought the library needs to pursue a 5 year levy in order to bring up staff salaries to some version of equity with what other area libraries pay. Trying to find good staff with what Scappoose Library pays is challenging and the library has been lucky so far. Jeff was asked about increasing the permanent rate. He said it was risky because that dissolves the current permanent rate and if the voters reject the new rate, the library would be out of business. Christine said having benchmarked salaries and health insurance are important for staff recruitment and Scappoose Public Library has neither of those.

Jeff said that another thing to consider is long term building costs. Eventually the systems will need to be replaced and the library does not have a fund for replacing expensive systems like the elevator. There was some discussion about the difference between a capital bond and an operating levy. Karen asked if there could be a way for a library foundation or similar group to fund this. Karen also asked about the lack of a library janitor and asked if there was a way for volunteers to do that work. Jeff said the library averages 70 volunteer hours a month. Jeff said about half those hours are from Friends of the Library prepping for and holding book sales. Another few hours are for the food giveaway. The rest are from volunteer shelveers and material preparation. Jeff said the library couldn't keep up with some basic tasks. Jeff was asked about hiring an intern. Jeff said that having an intern comes with a commitment to teach the intern about library work, so there is a time quotient to training and mentoring the intern. The library tends to give volunteers simple tasks. Jolene asked if the committee could pass a resolution to have the library investigate a levy. Jeff said that would be a board decision and the board would need to pass the resolution. Lisa asked Jeff if the 5 year levy was part of

the library strategic plan. Jeff said it was. Jeff was asked if any library in the county had pursued a 5 year levy in the past. Jeff said he had been told there was an attempt at passing a levy for county wide library service, but he did not know any details about it beyond that it failed.

### **6.3 Detailed Expenditures**

The committee moved on to the general fund before discussing personnel. Jeff noted some reductions. The book budget will be slightly reduced to pay for the projected insurance rate increase. The election line is zeroed because usually the county does not bill for May elections until the next budget year. The biggest increases are in the programs budget. Christine asked if the increase was because of demand. Jeff said the increase is mostly driven by producing the city events, but program demand has also increased. The library has daily children and adult programs and we expect summer reading to also be increasing because at this point, St Helens Library does not have a children's librarian and the job has not been posted. Karen asked how many children participated in summer reading last year. Jeff said it was over 800. Lisa asked if the library had applied for a teen intern grant this year. Jeff said he asked the staff and they did not want the intern this year. Christine was unhappy that the book budget was getting cut. Jeff said that some of materials the library has traditionally purchased are getting phased out. Magazines are in steep decline. Many publishers that Amazon has purchased have withdrawn books on CDs for their publications starting in late summer in favor of a downloadable model. Jeff said he thought the \$1,300 reduction would be absorbed by formats that no longer exist. Lisa mentioned that the library does get donations and keeps the best for the collection. Jeff said the library adds between 300 and 400 books a month. Jeff said other accounts have had minor reductions based on actual spend through February. Someone asked if the elevator had gotten fixed. Jeff said that had gotten fixed long ago. Lisa asked about workshops. Jeff said that sending people to conferences is a staffing issue. The library did not send anyone to the Oregon conference this year, because of needing staff in the library. Karen asked about the large increase in programming. Jeff said that was to budget for the Outdoor Festival for 2025. She asked if that had an impact on services paid by taxes. Jeff said no because those city events are paid by grants, sponsorships and donations, but those expenses still need to be in the published budget so the money can be legally spent. There was a question about the capital improvements budget. Jeff said that the library plans on replacing the hot water heater and some furniture upstairs. Jeff said that there was more money budgeted this year but we have not spent it. We did get a grant to replace the library server, so we may spend some from that budget before the end of the year. Jeff asked if there were further questions about the general fund for services. There were none.

### **6.4 Overall**

Jeff presented the LB-30 form which is the summary of expenditures. He said that he generally puts in the bare minimum in the cash carryover line and the library always beats that estimate. Lisa asked about how to make motions to pass the budget. Jeff said they needed to discuss if the committee wanted to move money within the budget first. The committee discussed adding money for a janitor service. Jolene asked what the library paid the previous janitor. Jeff said it was \$450 per month for two cleanings a week. He didn't know if they library could find someone now for that cost. Christine said that if we budgeted \$500 a month that would be \$6000 a year. She asked if the money could be taken from the carryover and asked what the minimum carry over the library needs is. Jeff said the library needed a minimum of \$200,000. Christine said she thought it would be better for the library to hire a service rather than having the director be the janitor. Jeff said they could increase the cash carryover because he was certain it would

be more than \$245,000. Jeff was asked why the janitor pay was taken from service contracts. Jeff said he had intended it to come from cleaning, but the bookkeeper had been taking the cost from service contracts, so in the past couple of years, he had just moved money for the janitor to service contracts from cleaning. The committee decided to add \$6,000 to the cash carryover, changing that from \$245,000 to \$251,000 and increase service contracts by \$6,000 to pay for janitorial services. This also increased the overall budget by \$6,000.

Karen asked about the levy and if that was pursued, would the money go to salaries. Jeff said most of it would go to salaries and benefits, but the library would also retain some money to build a capital improvements fund. Karen said regardless of if a levy was pursued, staff salaries were something the board needed to be mindful of and plan for the future. Christine asked if the library could get the money through a foundation or through donations. Jeff said that would be difficult because of the amount needed. The library would need several million dollars of investments to gain enough interest to bring salaries and benefits up to a benchmark. Likewise, getting enough annual donations to fund salaries is also difficult in a small town and donations are not assured. The group discussed what is considered full time work in Oregon and the state required benefits that go with full time work. Christine said the library needs to make it challenges more public to gain public support. She also thought the library should work with the high school system to get regular volunteers

Jolene made a motion to for the committee to accept the budget with the changes noted above adding \$6,000 to carryover and \$6,000 to the professional services in the General Fund – Detailed Expenditures. Lisa seconded. Motion passed

Yea: 10

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

## **7.0 Adjourn**

Jeff explained the remainder of the budget approval process. The library board will have a budget hearing in June. At that hearing, members of the public can appear and request changes to the budget. The board can also make changes. Some figures in the budget, like the carryover, can get adjusted to reflect year end realities.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.