

Cuyahoga County Public Library
Policy, Planning & External Relations Committee Meeting
Minutes
September 11, 2018
5:00 p.m.
Maple Heights Branch – Large Meeting Room

Call to Order

Board Chairperson Hajar called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. In attendance were Board President Shlonsky, and Trustee Leonard. Also in attendance were Executive Director Feldman; Deputy Director Strobel; Operations Director and Fiscal Officer Morgan; Communications & External Relations Director Rich, Technical Services Director Barden; Literacy and Learning Division Director Jankowski; Assistant Marketing & Communications Director Rua, Assistant Development Director Marnecheck and other interested observers

The minutes of the June 6, 2018 Policy, Planning & External Relations Committee (PPER) Meeting were approved as presented.

Organizational Goals

Executive Director Feldman stated the Library has had a periodic practice of looking at the overall goals of the Library that have traditionally derived from the mission and the priorities. That mission was derived from a form of strategic planning process that happened at CCPL and had been completed when she arrived in 2003. It was not the mission necessarily of this strategic planning process, but it was derived from that mission, vision and a set of priorities. Director Rich will speak more on what we have done two times and how to engage the community and we will then have some discussion on what we should be doing on the next iteration of this to help us to form a process in 2019 and beyond. She stated in her self-evaluation she has used what have been our priority and have been the major work of the Executive Team to set the unit goals for our Executive Team, but we want to hear from the Board on how they want that process to happen in the future.

Director Rich stated in 2012 the organization undertook a fairly substantial community engagement process to check in on the organizational priorities to ensure what we had determined as a system were still the important priorities to the community. There were 36 focus group sessions held at the branches across the system.

Executive Director Feldman stated it has been ten years since we have done major work. We set a mission and six priorities from the strategic planning process from 2003. We then focused on the capital program over the next four or five years and the new financial strategy and were looking again at the programmatic strategy.

Director Rich stated in 2012 the capital program was underway, at this point we were testing broad organizational objectives and priorities. Focus group sessions, online survey, and hard copies were available to branches, we had 8,730 participants in that process. We tested if our six priorities still resonated with the community.

1. Reconnect with reading
2. Ensure every child starts school ready to learn
3. Help youth meet their potential
4. Put Cuyahoga County back to work
5. Keep seniors healthy, happy and independent
6. Connect with new Americans

Director Rich stated while there was support across the board for the six priorities, the main take away from the focus groups and survey were people wanted to see strategic priorities they could see themselves in. Example, if I am not a senior or have a senior member living at home that priority would not be relevant. The overall, feedback was to get to broader objectives that anyone could see themselves fitting into.

Director Rich stated CCPL strategic plan priorities are still aligned with the three areas of our mission:

Reading

Lifelong Learning

Civic Engagement

Director Rich stated after the surveys and focus group feedback we conducted a telephone poll to validate this is what we heard through these sessions zeroed in on our mission. Through those three areas of strategic focus they all are in support of three broad objectives: foster a community of enthusiastic readers; strengthen the economic vitality of our region; be recognized as an essential local community asset and innovative library industry leader. That was the meat of our strategic plan. Director Rich stated Executive Director Feldman goals aligned with the elements of the plan and across the divisions of the organization each group comes up with their own plan/objectives that they want to accomplish all tying back to the broad strategic plan for the organization.

Director Rich stated in 2016 we did not want to undertake another massive community engagement process. We focused in on a telephone survey and tested questions on customer satisfaction; awareness and use and satisfaction with CCPL's digital collection, and measure awareness of and satisfaction with building program. We also built into that survey some questions about the building program because in 2016 we concluded the Facilities Master Plan.

Director Rich stated we did ask questions about why people do or do not use the library and based on the feedback we received through the telephone survey we were testing to see if the three broad areas of strategic focus still made sense as priorities for our community and all three were validated as being the important objectives that we as an organization need to focus on. It didn't change our strategic plan or focus, we tested to make sure we were still on the right track.

Director Rich stated as part of the survey we asked why do customers use or do not use the library? The primary reason people site coming to the library less frequently is they now have access to technology at home.

Director Rich stated when we asked about the building program 2/3 of respondents were familiar with the new buildings; of those familiar with the new buildings 81% are very satisfied and 11% are somewhat satisfied.

Director Rich stated there was a strong agreement with the statement: "CCPL makes a positive difference in my community" jumped from 56% in 2012 to 84% in 2016. This is an important marker to watch over time and track because this is the kind of sentiment that correlates to support more levy campaigns into the future and seeing such a positive increase after a major investment is the type of growth we want to see.

Director Rich stated in early 2019 we want to develop a schedule for branch outreach conversations, surveys and telephone polling to test the attitudes toward CCPL and our key community priorities. We would again use that feedback to refine/update our goals and strategies. She stated we are looking for ways to identify opportunities to move beyond customer satisfaction to drive customer loyalty. In 2019 we also want to factor into our planning integrating the ten leadership competencies that we have identified into our overall plan and finding a way to ensure the elements of our new values statement are built into the goals.

Executive Director Feldman asked Director Rich what are you thinking about the branch outreach with Galen Schuerlein?

Director Rich stated just prior to this meeting they met with CCPL Branch Managers and Galen Schuerlein, of Roetzel. Ms. Schuerlein conducted a session on how to get the Branch Managers to start thinking about connecting with our communities and that we need to engage with key influencers and organizations in our local communities, so the library remains visible and an active participant in the community. One of the key areas of focus is that Branch Managers need to get out in the community and get on the agendas for local Chamber of Commerce or Kiwanis meetings helping to tell our story. With these touch points with these key community groups we want to think about two or three questions we would ask Branch Managers to ask of those groups and illicit feedback we could then integrate into a planning process.

Fine Free Discussion

Deputy Strobel stated several large library systems across the country are opting to eliminate daily overdue fines in an effort to reduce the financial barrier to accessing library materials and services. Libraries that have eliminated fines have also reduced the stress and negativity associated with conversations about fines.

Deputy Strobel stated assessing a daily overdue fine has long been considered a way to teach accountability and enforce responsibility. Those who oppose the elimination of fines argue that it is one of the best methods to teach children the importance of responsible borrowing. When reviewing online media regarding the elimination of fines, in every case there are negative comments and opinions one being that library fines are a source of income for libraries. Eliminating fines may give the impression that the library is “flush with money” and may derail future attempts to succeed at the polls.

Deputy Strobel stated CCPL has a focus on popular materials and it becomes difficult to predict wait times for items on hold because there is a tendency for customers to keep items longer. One study did conclude that items are returned on average 7.8 days later than when there were daily overdue fines. This delay in return will have a negative impact on those waiting for popular items and trigger the library to purchase more popular items to better serve waiting customers, which would have a negative impact on our budget.

Deputy Strobel shared a few peer libraries that have gone fine free, eliminating the ten cents daily overdue fine are:

Columbus Metropolitan Library
Salt Lake City Public Library
Stark County District Library
District of Columbia Public Library

Deputy Strobel commented Cleveland Public Library and Rochester Public Library among many libraries do not charge daily overdue fines for children's materials. Most libraries including CCPL do not charge daily overdue fines to seniors.

Deputy Strobel commented the trend is there are large library systems that are eliminating daily overdue fines. There are pros and cons and a lot to consider.

Deputy Strobel stated in 2017 CCPL fine income totaled \$445,634.00, .7% of our 2017 annual revenue and January thru July 2018 totals \$232,149.00.

Deputy Strobel stated CCPL have not eliminated daily overdue fines, but we do provide several amnesty opportunities; Food for Fines annually in conjunction with, Harvest for Hunger where people donate the super six items and get their fines removed. Library Card Sign Up month where every student can get a pass from school to bring into the library and have their daily fines eliminated gives them a fresh start to the school year. New building openings we always do a week of fine and fee waiving to give people a fresh start in the new building. If a customer has fines between \$10.00 and \$99.99 they will be eligible for the Opportunity Card that would allow them to check-out three physical items, access digital resources and public computer stations.

Deputy Strobel stated there are certain programs that get their fines and fees waived such as the Kindergarten Club and the Key College Prep Academy. These are ongoing programs that are encouraging families to come in to use the libraries.

Auto Renewal Update

Deputy Strobel stated CCPL automatic renewing customer checkouts began on April 9th, 2018. Auto-renewal is a feature that identifies checked out items that do not have holds for other customers. These items are renewed one time automatically as a customer convenience. This essentially extends the loan period from three weeks to six weeks on items that other customers are not waiting for. After the first auto-renewal, the customer can return the item or manually renew if they want to keep it.

Deputy Strobel commented the benefits of autorenewal are offering a convenience to our customers who want to keep items longer, provides additional space for more items in our facilities because less popular items stay check out longer, and allows for an equitable comparison to the many large public library systems that are doing this including Columbus and Cincinnati.

Deputy Strobel stated as of April 9, we have automatically renewed 622,000 items. Renewals and initial checkouts are both counted in our circulation statistics, and we have seen a small increase in monthly circulation systemwide. Through August we have seen a 23% increase in renewals, and with the 13% increase in digital collection circulation, are the major factors converting a 10% decrease in physical branch circulation to a 1% increase in circulation overall.

Bay Village Update

Director Rich stated we will be initiating our first Community Engagement process on September 12 in Bay Village at the Dwyer Center facilitated by Sally Parker of Time Zero Enterprises. We have worked with Mayor Koomar and appointed Council Members to both agree on the process and together to hear the feedback directly from residents. The sessions will be structured by polarity mapping where we will be getting at the tension we saw manifest through the comments around a desire for a historic, tradition, and a desire for innovation and a more contemporary look and feel. The need to have that conversation be the best we can on both ends so the library is delivering on the needs of the community as it relates to service and what they want from an aesthetic prospective.

Director Rich stated there will be four sessions the first starting on tomorrow, two in October and one will be dedicated to students to talk about what's important to them in their library, and the fourth session will be a capstone session for participants in the previous groups to come forward and share what their conversations yielded.

Director Rich stated all sessions will be at 6:30p.m. except for the student session which will be held after school at 4:30p.m.

HB-312 Policy Changes

Director Morgan stated the legislature passed and the Governor have signed a new policy that will go into effect February 1, 2019. This has to do with the way public entities and subdivisions use credit cards. We have had a long-standing policy in place that was first adopted by CCPL Board in 2008 and the new law will require us to make some changes, but nothing significant.

Director Morgan stated we have never had any issues using our credit cards. This has to do with a lot of subdivisions in the State that had issues with using credit cards.

Director Morgan stated we will bring the policy to the Board once we get closer to having adopted those changes.

The Committee recommended that the HB-312 Policy Changes be considered by the full Board with the approved changes.

Establish Display Cases and Exhibition Spaces Policy

Deputy Strobel stated we do not have an established policy on display cases, and it would be a good idea for us to have one. Many libraries do have a display case policy and CCPL policy is derived from research around that. She stated none of the new or renovated branches have display cases. In the branches where we still have display cases, we would only use them for those branches that have display cases we would use them only for the purpose of promoting library materials for branch and services. Community organizations can book space in the display cases to promote their own interest or events. We recently, received a complaint regarding a display promoting a paganism parade at our Southeast Branch, and we didn't have a policy. This has prompted us to change our current practice and establish a policy.

Deputy Strobel stated we have also decided to establish a policy for exhibits for community art displays. We do this this in many of our meeting rooms displaying art. The decision to accept, as well as the duration of, and location for an exhibit rests with the Branch Manager, or their designee. The Library assumes no liability in the event of damage, destruction or theft of a display. Items are exhibited at the owner's risk. If an exhibit exceeds its allocated display duration, Library staff may remove it and the exhibit owner must retrieve it from the branch library.

The Committee recommended that the Resolution to Establish Display Cases and Exhibition Spaces Policy be considered by the full Board with the approved changes.

Adjourn

Seeing no additional business before the Policy, Planning and External Relations Committee, Trustee and Committee Chairperson Hjar adjourned the meeting at 6:05 p.m.