

DODGE CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Board Meeting Minutes  
October 22, 2024, 4:00 p.m.  
Lower-Level Meeting Room

Board Members Present: Nancy Vierthaler, Tonya Maier, Michelle Reid, Mayor Taylor, Kirsten Bangerter, Mary Hall, Samuel Unruh, and Patrick Lopez

Board Members Absent: None

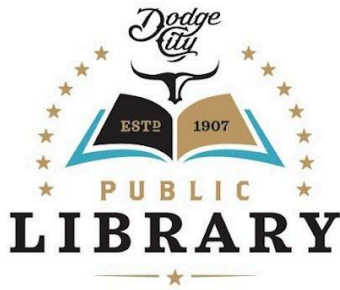
Other attendees: Carissa DeVoss-Coca, Executive Director; and April Wilson, Administrative Manager, Richard Brookman, Southwest Kansas Library Systems (SWKLS); and Steve Andrews, SWKLS

Call to Order: The monthly meeting of the Dodge City Public Library Board was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Ms. Bangerter and seconded by Mr. Unruh, motion carried unanimously.

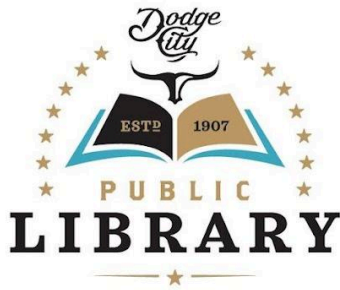
Agenda Additions and/or Approval: Mayor Taylor mentioned that he heard community served by this daycare was 2,064 not 2500. This would increase the percentage up from 3.9%. Ms. Reid and Ms. Wilson said they heard 2500. Ms. Reid said to leave it for now.

Public comment:

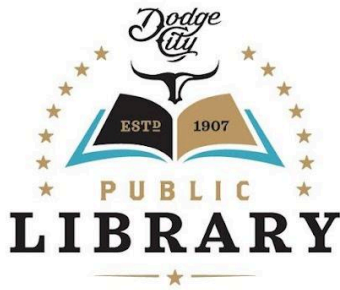
1. Clarice Hostetler: She is the President of the Board of the Friends of the Library. The Friends of the Library are opposed to the conversion of the lower level of the library into a daycare. The Friends provide services to Dodge City and its surrounding community. They offer books and DVDs in many genres, for all ages. They are the closest thing to a bookstore in Dodge City. They contribute to the story walk, the outside book drop, various programs, play equipment for the Children's Department, tutors and Summer Reading prizes. They also treat the staff to lunch during National Library week. The Lower-Level Meeting room was created to alleviate overcrowding upstairs and has been filled with patrons of all ages many times. Downstairs of the library houses a meeting room, Kansas Heritage Center (KHC), a valuable resource and history of Kansas not offered anywhere else, and Children's Department, they need room for stories, movement, movies, and family participation. It would have a negative impact on the library to lose this space. Ms. Hostetler said she read this letter to the commissioners at last night's meeting, and she gave the letter with signatures to Ms. Reid.
2. Gretchen Malone: She has a letter signed by over 150 people strongly opposing the conversion of the lower level into a daycare. The same letter was given to the



- commissioners in last night's commission meeting. The lower level provides thousands of resources and valuable programming for our children. KHC is a jewel of our community and state and contains a vast archive of Kansas history. The Lower-Level Meeting room holds meetings, presentations, summer reading, and learning opportunities and is essential to all readers in Dodge City. The Friends of the Library provides an outlet for all readers both to recycle and buy books. Friends also provides financial support for library programs. The Children's Department provides a welcoming place for reading, artistic expression, and opportunities to broaden children's understanding of the world.
3. Sam Shipley: He has worked at the library for over 36 years as a Reference Librarian. He believes that this proposal is asking the library to give up 50% of its operating room to help 4% of children. If this proposal is carried out it will be a terrible setback for the library. Why would the library, after remodeling the lower level five to six years ago to create a beautiful new children's department and to provide a new home to the KHC, and cram all of this up into the upper floor? The upstairs was more crowded before the remodel and expansion. This is illogical and an unacceptable proposal. Lower-level departments cannot be successfully absorbed into the upstairs. The proposal is well intended but one-sided. He thinks that advocates for this proposal don't realize how popular the children's department and the KHC are. Taxpayers who voted to fund the expansion and remodel of the lower level would not want to give up their money if this proposal goes through. Donors to the renovation and expansion, i.e. the hearth and the fireplace in KHC would not want to see this happen.
  4. Julie Ellis: She is currently a Ford County resident and has been a patron of this library her whole life. This is a highly volatile and emotional situation. She has a few issues and a couple of questions. Has the plan for the daycare center been submitted to KDHE? Ms. Reid answered no. Ms. Ellis found out today that the playground must be 75 sq. ft. per child. The playground must be big enough to hold half of the kids in the daycare center. If accommodating 100 kids, then 50 kids would require 3,750 sq. ft of play area. She doesn't know if that amount of area is available. Another issue will be drop-off for daycare and parking for staff. Regarding staff, JUCO graduates 10 – 15 students per year that move on to the school district. This daycare would be in direct competition with the school system and would need to meet the school system payroll, which is \$15 - \$18 per hour. And with this being a 24-hour care facility, staff pay would require much more than that, and not an easy shift to fill. They would need a large staff – 1 teacher to 12 kids. Finding a director will not be easy. This will be a difficult situation, and she doesn't know if it has been thoroughly thought out.
  5. Gay Rooney: She is coming at this with a different perspective, but she agrees with everything that has been said to this point. Her mother had a long history with the



- DCPL and has served on its board. She was involved with this particular building. She spent many hours with her friends at the old Carnegie Library in the basement. It is important for our library to focus and empathize with all youth and a love for books for all ages. KHC would suffer. The Kansas Genealogy Society is closing and will need to move their resources. We are hoping these resources will come to the KHC. She is asking the board to consider all ramifications to our youth and not just youth needing daycare. The proposal will only make a difference to a very small number. Look at this issue in a way that will benefit more of our youth, and we can keep the library.
6. Rob Boyd: He and his wife have had a daycare here for 28 years and they know a little bit about daycare. As of this morning, there are 38 licensed daycares in the county. He did a quick and impromptu survey on Dodge City Chat yesterday and got 11 responses, from those 11 responses, they have 33 openings. It's not that daycare is unavailable, it's unaffordable. He thinks that a group daycare is a good thing, but this is not the place. KDHE's numbers of 2,064 kids under the age of 6 needing daycare are very, very skewed. KDHE and Child Care Aware keep track of their own kids, so not sure how they came up with that number. So, what is the real number, we don't know. He can tell you being part of the EMS of this town, they do not run very many unattended kids. He is opposed to having daycare in the library.
  7. Lana Maskus: She is not a resident of town, but lives in the small town of Wright. Everything they need to do, they come to Dodge City for. She worked at the hospital in Dodge City from 1975 – 2017. She has strong, binding ties with this community. After graduating from college, she moved to Dodge City. The first four things she did were to find a place to live, join a church, find a doctor, and get a library card. That is how important this place is to her. It is an asset to the community. One of the things she likes to do when she goes on vacation is to visit other libraries. Our library measures up and usually exceeds all the libraries she has visited in similar sized cities. It is attractive, spacious, and well maintained with knowledgeable, helpful, and welcoming staff. Implementation of this plan would reduce the library's ability to provide the most basic of services, as well as all the outreach to the community. It's a center for the citizens of Dodge City and Ford County. The Heritage center is renowned in the state of Kansas and nationally for its collection and materials relating to the history of Kansas. Many writers, scholars, and historians use it. To store part of its collection offsite would be inappropriate. It would be exposed to theft, water, insect damage and other natural events. This building was built to be a library, and she doesn't think it is suited for a daycare. Libraries are vital to the wellness of the community. A strong and growing library indicates a strong and growing community. To diminish the library is to diminish the community.
  8. Martin Miller: He was originally going to repeat what he said at the City Commission meeting that we should let the library be the library. The Heritage center does not



need to be moved and downsized. Clearly, the Fire Marshall has not seen this or people would be asking how they would be able to add direct fire access to rooms underground. But then, the city came out with its press release and now there are more things to talk about. Such as, one of their objectives is to reduce the library's budget. You would have library patrons randomly mingling with the daycare. The building would be open during non-traditional hours. He strongly suggests that we do not approve this uninformed and unimplementable plan and let the library be a library.

Other Presentations, Reports or Announcements: None.

Consent Calendar:

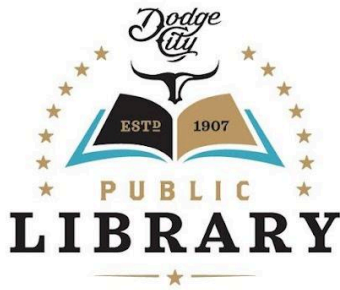
- Approval of Bills for September 2024: Motion to approve was made by Mayor Taylor and seconded by Ms. Maier; motion carried unanimously.
- Approval of September 2024, board minutes: Motion was approved by Ms. Bangerter and seconded by Ms. Hall; motion carried unanimously.

Director's Report:

- Programs & Events: Builder Brigade has a great following with an average of 20 – 25 kids each week. Teen programs are seeing an uptick in teens coming to the library. Adult programming has had several informational sessions and crafts.
- Library Use Statistics: August 2024
  - o 4,166 in-house materials have been checked out.
  - o Total virtual materials checked out were 1,977.
  - o The door count was 6,271.
  - o Programs & Services: 274 in-person; 255 outreach; and 20 notaries performed.
- NCS/SWKLS:
  - o NCS: NCS and SWKLS are working with us to ensure a smooth transition at the end of our contract with NCS.
- Friends of the Library: They have book sales every first Saturday and third Thursday each month. We are in the process of making new signage.
- Dodge City Public Library Foundation: The Wine & Cheese was successful with a great turnout of 70 people. Keith Wondra from Boot Hill Museum gave an educational presentation.
- Staff Training and Updates: Training for new staff members is going well. We are also working on continuing education credits for staff in the form of training and webinars from SWKLS. Their topic this month is cybersecurity.

Board Member Reports/Comments: None

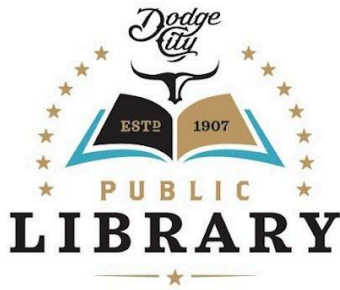




Old Business: None

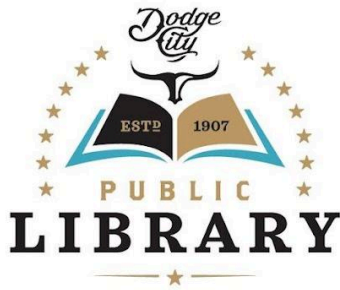
New Business:

- Preliminary Discussion of Ford County Development Proposal: Mayor Taylor asked Chair if she would allow a moment for City Manager, Nick Hernandez to speak. Ms. Reid answered yes.
  - o Nick Hernandez: He is giving a background to how we came to where we are today. A proposal of 5 million dollars in lieu of property taxes. It was determined by Ford County Development Corp to be utilized for childcare. A 501 ©3 was formed and was not part of the city. It is completely independent. Over the past 2 years they had been looking at childcare facilities and options. They were unsuccessful in getting other funding. At this point, they had to ask how to make 5 million dollars stretch far enough because childcare is expensive. We need to make sure they are subsidized for daycare. Plus, this is an opportunity for the shift workers. The gap we have is for after hours or those late evening hours. Background on the library, they have come to us several times asking for money for general upkeep. The library board, as a function, is separate from the city. They can issue bonds, they can lease property, they can do anything they want within that 5 million mill levy without any oversight from the city commission. The library can operate as they see fit. Board members are appointed by city commission. The only reason the city brought the proposal is because we understand that the library has difficulty meeting its maintenance needs. There was a \$400,000 roof repair that was not budgeted by the library. They came to the city to ask for taxpayer funds to help fix the roof. The city did pay \$250,00 funds and he believes another \$200,000 paid over a 3-year period. It's the library's responsibility to repair the roof. There is also a need for elevator repairs that could be worth \$50,000 - \$100,000. There was an opportunity to ask how we can help the library and help childcare. A lot of this could've been taken care of in a vacuum, but it was not. The library receives 1.1 million dollars from taxpayers from property taxes. Salary of the library staff has not increased to meet the standards of living. The KHC was funded by the state of Kansas but has dropped off and is no longer available. Southwest Kansas Library System used to be part of it and was funded and was a part of this library system, that has been pulled too. There are two major funding sources that have been removed and your levy is flat. From the perspective of the salaries and benefits of staff are not increasing because of inflation. So, this opportunity could be mutually beneficial. He is here to lay out the facts and what is taking place. Circulation for the library is down. Libraries are changing overall, they are more hands-on community centers, where children and adults could go to socialize, could have opportunities with virtual reality, hands-on 3-D printers. They are getting away from the hard circulation.



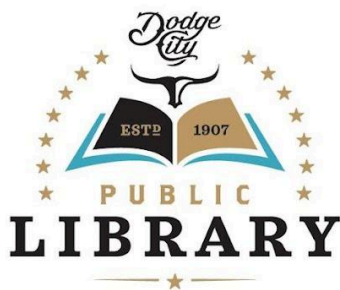
From the city commission perspective, whatever decision the board makes is final. The decision will not be overridden by the city commission.

- o Richard Brookman: Before he starts, he would like to address comments made by the City Manager, Nick Hernandez. The city's commission put the library on the budget by doing the home rule. They are stuck with the home rule until the city commission overrides it. So, the city is controlling the library budget.
  - E-Rate: The whole library is wired for e-Rate. E-Rate is controlled federally, not by state. Guidelines must be met and part of that is that it must be used for specific purposes. Apart from separating the library from daycare, the library could possibly lose e-rate, or it could constitute federal fraud, if we don't follow the regulations. Ms. Reid asked if he could explain how e-Rate is determined. Steve Andrews explains that the calculation is based on several things, such as square footage of the building, and how many children are in the school district. Currently, the DCPL receives a 90% discount on internet and category two, which would be equipment. Right now, the library is getting \$5,000 back from e-Rate. If the bottom of the library became a daycare, that would necessitate moving all the equipment upstairs to ensure it is separate from the daycare. There are no instances where he is aware of any schools or libraries sharing with another entity. Ms. Reid asked if we would have to prevent the bottom floor from accessing the internet, Mr. Andrews answered it's not possible to fine tune with wireless. Concrete between the levels should block most of wireless. He does not know the cost of separating the two floors so that the library is compliant with e-Rate, he would need to contact some vendors.
  - Mr. Brookman: He is the director of SWKLS. They are here to protect the board, staff, and in lieu the city commission. The city is concerned with daycare and are trying to think outside of the box. The library is a city building, city property. The board would need to contact a counselor on property law. Combining entities has been done by cities in the past, but it needs to be looked at for viability. In the past, the library had primarily been on the top floor. SWKLS was on the bottom floor, when they left, it was a mutual agreement. This is what gave the library the opportunity to expand.
  - KHC: When Brandon was the director, there was a threat of losing the KHC. Mr. Brookman couldn't find any paperwork where Brandon or the school district notified the city of KHC moving downstairs at the library. The MOU was signed in June 2018. The library absorbed more expenses so we wouldn't lose the Heritage Center. In the 2016 MOU, even though the city owns the building, the city put it back onto the library to do the



maintenance. The city is governed, to a degree, by the home rule. If the library exceeds budget, then they must go back to the local government, and this is what happened with the roof. The bond was voted on by the people in 2016.

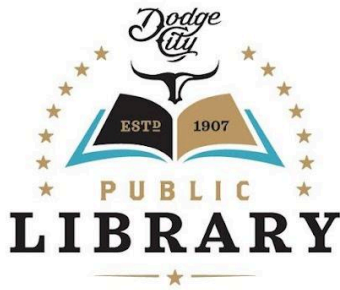
- The library and the city need to work together, one way would be to promote the KHC locally, by state, and nationally. If done properly, it can draw people to the community, not just tourists, but academics. The library can work with Boothill Museum, Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations.
- He recommends getting in touch with past employees or Cathy Reaves, previous director, for support and contacts.
- Get with the Foundation and Friends (of the Library) to see how they feel about everything.
- Start a grassroots campaign to get support for the library.
- The library remodel was done to serve the community. It could be expensive with the rewiring of the building and adding a playground, if downstairs became a daycare. Just leveling the ground is expensive. If digging down, would you be exposing foundation issues? Or it could go up, but either way it will be expensive.
- Storage: Once you exceed storage room, you will have to get another area for storage and you will pay more for that. Decorations and some equipment can be stored in a non-environmentally controlled building. Others can't, specifically the Heritage Center. Items from the center must be controlled in an environmentally controlled manner, this will cost more money. One idea floated about was using the Salt Mine, not only would you have to pay for that storage, but it is not feasible if having to drive to storage, back to the library and then back to storage. Patrons don't want to handle copies; they want to handle the primary source.
- Elevator: For security reasons with a daycare downstairs, you can't have the general public wondering into the daycare. The elevator will have to be keyed off. All the stairways will have to be closed off. You don't want the two to intermingle because then we run into conflicts and possible litigious situations.
- Utilities: Electricity, gas, water, and emergency services will need to be separated, or will the city pay for them? If the city pays for them, then it will be considered a subsidy.
- Responsibility: Who is responsible for the maintenance of the building (basement lights/plumbing? For snow/parking lots/painting lines?)
- Board: the board is an independent body politic and corporate. There is no responsibility of a daycare in their mission. If the alarm goes off in the



daycare, do the emergency services contact Carissa or someone in the daycare?

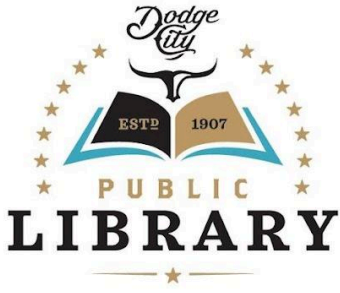
- Other litigious areas: He recommends the board get a counselor to determine the legalities of a daycare on the lower level. For example, a parent court ordered to stay a certain distance from a child. He knows there is a distance along a horizontal line but is not sure if vertical line is considered. Could you be denying access to a parent in the library, because he has so many vertical feet above the child? This could be litigious because the library would be denying access to a patron. If a sex offender has done their time and still has an order to stay a certain distance from children, but they are allowed access to a public library. Who will control that? Playgrounds pose another problem. It could provide a temptation for these individuals if they go outside and who is at fault? Could be a potential lawsuit.
- o Board Comments:
  - Mayor Taylor: He wants to thank all who came to the board meeting. He had a lot of emails, some good, some not so good. He shares their passion with the library. He shared with the director and the chair that he wants the library to be successful. He plays a dual role and the biggest complaint he has is about taxes. He is not here to tell us that he wants to cut funding. If the board decides they do not want a daycare, then so be it. He thought it was a good idea for a couple of reasons. As our new director came on board, he wants to applaud her for putting our budget together for 2025. It's discouraging to him as you go through each line item of the budget, the bulk of them were decreases. Which means we are taking away from programs. We got hit with a \$48,000 - \$50,000 insurance to pay to insure this building. He feels if we don't try to look outside of the box, then he is not doing right by the community. He is on board for what works for the library and what works for the community. We got to start somewhere for the daycare.
  - Mary Hall: She thinks the city and the library board represent our community. We are here to listen to people. We are here to make decisions on your part. She thinks by last night and today, we have got an answer for us. People have brought us issues and concerns which direct us which way to vote.
  - Kirsten Bangerter: She wants to give a shout out to Mollea Wainscott and her team for creative thinking and trying to meet a need in Dodge City that we are desperately in need of. She wishes the entire city could've seen the presentation at our last board meeting that was so well done, beautiful





designs and a stroke of genius. She also wants to applaud all of the supporters of the library who say it must remain the library.

- Nancy Vierthaler: She also has been receiving emails from the public about what to do in this situation. Thirty-eight emails from people who do not support a daycare in the lower-level of the library. She received four emails wanting to have a daycare. The emails were a form letter opposing the daycare. One sentence says it all: Although we desperately need more childcare options, it should not be at the expense of free public spaces available for children in our community when there are other options available.
  - Patrick Lopez: Most of the things he has heard people say is that daycare is not an option for the library. He goes along with what the public wants. Mr. Shipley pointed out that a potential daycare will solve 4% of the problem while the library loses 50% of its space. He checks out different libraries too. He has been to the one in Garden City. It lacks, in his opinion, because they try to pack it all on one floor. Book stacks are high, and it gets kind of dark. In our library, we have space for people to sit around and read comfortably. We have desks, they don't have those in Garden City. He likes our library the way it is. And he thinks the community likes it too. He would like to thank Mollea and her team for all their work. Ms. Maier seconds that.
- o Vote:
- Ms. Reid called for a roll call vote; each person will state their vote, and they will follow Robert's rule if there is a tie. Ms. Hall moved that they vote, and Ms. Vierthaler seconded, motion carried unanimously.
  - Mr. Unruh: he votes in favor of the daycare.
  - Mayor Taylor: Suggest they investigate all concerns for a daycare and votes in favor of the daycare.
  - Mr. Lopez: he votes against the daycare.
  - Ms. Maier: she went upstairs yesterday and toured the available space of the library. She thinks the library has enough space that she would vote in favor of the daycare.
  - Ms. Hall: she votes against the daycare.
  - Ms. Bangerter: She votes against the daycare.
  - Ms. Vierthaler: She votes against the daycare.
  - Ms. Reid: She votes against the daycare.
- o Three voted for the daycare and five voted against the daycare. Vote carried against the daycare.



Motion to adjourn at 5:05 p.m. was approved by Mr. Lopez, and seconded by Mr. Unruh, motion carried unanimously.

Next DCPL Board Meeting: November 19, at 4:00 p.m.

Future Meetings: December 17, 2024, January 28, 2025, February 25, 2025

The meeting ended at 5:05 p.m. by motion of Mr. Lopez and seconded by Mr. Unruh. motion carried unanimously.

Approved (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Board Chair \_\_\_\_\_

DCPL Director \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT