The Hiawatha City Council and Hiawatha Library Board met in a special meeting in the Multi-Purpose Room on the lower level of City Hall on February 8, 2017. Mayor Bill Bennett called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. Council members present: Marty Bruns, Bob Rampulla, Aime Wichtendahl, and Dick Olson. Dennis Norton was absent. Library Board Members Present: Karlene Nesslage, Janet Libe, Brenda Powers, Anna Ronnebaum, Matt Dunbar, Jerry Mohwinkle, and Sue Halter. Staff present: City Administrator Kim Downs, Finance Director Cindy Kudrna, Library Director Jeaneal Weeks, and Community Relations Coordinator / Library Assistant Julie Jewell. Guests: Nathan Caraway and Daniel Hoffmann.

Rampulla moved the approval of the agenda, seconded by Wichtendahl. Motion carried.

Hiawatha Public Library Building Expansion Presentation

City Administrator Downs explained designer and contractor Nathan Caraway is attending the meeting because Downs asked Caraway to review the current proposed library building expansion project and provide guidance to staff and library board members on potential cost savings and area to improve building efficiencies.

Library Director Weeks presented information on the Hiawatha Public Library operations and building expansion. Summary of presentation below:

The current 8,543 square foot Hiawatha Public Library was built in 1998. Circulation in 1998 was 47,727; current circulation is 84,659. The library conducted a space needs study in 2005, and at the time the projected population by 2030 was 9,500; recommended 32,760 square foot building for this size population. In 2005, the library went through the site selection process for a larger library and found 12 potential sites, eventually narrowing locations down to the top five.

In 2014, Mayor Theis gave approval to start the process again with a building plan consisting of a 17,000 square foot building by adding on 8,457 square foot to the current building and remodeling the existing facility. Estimated project cost of $4,361,606 in 2014. Cost estimate for 2018 projecting a 4% increase is $4.9 million.

Funding for the library building expansion project will come from Local Option Sales and Service Tax (LOSST) dollars in the amount of $1 million, fundraising capital campaign dollars in the amount of $2.2 million, and General Obligation Bonds in the amount of $1.7 million. With this funding plan, the current tax levy rate will be maintained. Note: If the City does not use the General Obligation Bonds for the library building expansion, the bonds will be transferred to another project within the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The Library Board plans to go out for referendum vote on the November 2017 General Election Ballot.

Library staff and board members obtained cost to break the building expansion project into phases:

Phase I - $4.9 million including small basement
Phase II - $5 million
Phase III - $5.3 million

The fundraising is for the current building expansion project. If the library project would have to be phased, there would be no ability to go back to the same donors if the plan were to change. The library building expansion project is currently earmarked in the Capital Improvement Plan for FY 2018.

The Library Board and Friends of the Library are trying to obtain the necessary votes to pass the referendum during the November 2017 General Election; need 10% of people who voted in the 2015 election. Library staff have partnered with every library to provide structure, guidance and advice on approaching people in the community. The Library Steering Committee are fundraising in the entire metro community, not just Hiawatha.

Hiawatha is an E size library with circulation surpassing circulation of larger F size libraries. The metro area drives the circulation numbers because the Hiawatha library is close to larger metropolitan communities. The Hiawatha library building is 8,543 square feet and the average size building for an E size library is 14,000 square feet.

There are 3,521 Hiawatha library cardholders with 2,100 residential houses. In FY 2015-2016, Hiawatha residents checked out 35,132 Hiawatha library materials, 15,477 Cedar Rapids library materials and 11,462 Marion library materials. Hiawatha library had 56,000 checked out items compared to 552,000 checked out items at all metro libraries.

Discussion and Question and Answer Session:

Mayor Bennett asked if the new Marion library will have an effect on Hiawatha library circulation. Library Director Weeks said no really; all libraries are utilized by all metro citizens depending on programming and services. Marion circulates more materials to Robins than Hiawatha does.

Council Member Bruns added the reason Hiawatha had so much circulation in 2008 was due to the flood. Even after Cedar Rapids recovered from the flood, Hiawatha circulation continued to increase without Cedar Rapids.

Mayor Bennett commented the City of Robins is in discussion on the possibility of building a library. Weeks commented if Robins did build a library they would be asked to join the metro network. The network is based on average per capita cost where cities pay 80% per capita; next year Hiawatha will ask Robins to pay $85,000 for use of the Hiawatha library. Weeks said Robins called around in the last year and found out Hiawatha was a good deal.

Weeks explained Hiawatha is reimbursed by the state for out of city collections; Hiawatha is gaining from serving the larger community.

Council Member Wichendahl asked about additional staffing costs connected to the building expansion for personnel and benefits. Weeks answered the library will not need to hire any more staff at this time.

City Administrator Downs added staff has been working with Nathan Caraway to loot at the customer access locations and locations of staff stations to best serve the expanded building. Downs said Caraway is challenging the current building design plans to look at all aspects and usages such as adding a drop off spot at the back corner of the building where people wanting to drop off materials can go to a different location than customers coming to use the library.

Weeks mentioned the building expansion will have an increase on operating costs for things such as copiers, equipment and heating and cooling by approximately 7%.

Council Member Wichtendahl asked about additional parking. Weeks said no additional parking can be added to the lot and one handicap spot was already moved to gain a space. Weeks said it is a possibility to use on street parking and city hall parking for overflow.

Downs added current parking meets zoning requirements even with the building expansion.

Council Member Wichtendahl asked if there was a back up plan in case the library expansion referendum did not pass. Weeks said the library will have to continue to educate; one option is eliminating the basement as it is the highest cost, but is important for storage and for use as a storm shelter.

Council Member Wichtendahl said as a council member she does receive pressure to lower taxes. Wichtendahl continued to state during the 2015 General Election the fire station received votes but not majority vote. Wichtendahl stated her preference to keep as much off the ballot as possible; the more the library can fundraise the better. Weeks said library staff plans to work hard to get the necessary votes to pass the referendum.

Council Member Wichtendahl commented the Cedar Rapids library turned out bad for the city. Weeks said it is not Hiawatha's intent to overbuild and library staff will work hard to get the word out that Hiawatha is not Marion or Cedar Rapids; the project is scalable based on size of the community.

Council Member Rampulla stated there has been enough analysis on the library expansion project and now it is time to get moving. Rampulla added it depends on how the project is funded, a 10 or 20 year bond.

Downs noted the library bonding is included in its FY 2017 CIP bonding totals with a 13 year bond estimate, which will allow the City's levy rate to stay intact at 15.40.

Council Member Olson said library staff needs to stay the course and climb the hill; it is a big task to accomplish $2 million in fundraising.

Weeks noted the 2015 General Election was different because the library was asking citizens to pass a $0.27 levy similar to Cedar Rapids process for their new library. Weeks said library staff learned a lot from that experience and should have put a sunset on the levy.

Council Member Rampulla stressed the importance of using social media to reach the public and targeting the Hall Perrine grant.

Weeks said library staff presented to Hall Perrine about one year ago but Hall Perrine wanted to wait for the referendum so they can be the gap funding source. Weeks added if the library receives the grant, it would be more than a quarter of $2 million in fundraising.

Downs asked for Council input on constructing the library expansion project in phases considering the funding requirements increase for each phase. Council Members were of the opinion that a phased project did not make sense due to a $400,000 increase and loss of potential fundraising opportunities.

Downs noted the dollars earmarked in the CIP are dependent on securing the necessary fundraising dollars; the City is going to need to know where the library is with fundraising when it is time to put the measure on the ballot for vote. Weeks said there is no way of knowing exact information because the library will not have the Hall Perrine grant at that time.

Designer and contractor Nathan Caraway reminded Council and the Library Board there is no contract in place for his services, Caraway is only here to provide guidance on the project.

Council Member Olson expressed he did not believe the library needed the basement; eliminating this feature could bridge the gap. Weeks said the basement is $500,000 of the cost. Bruns disagreed and saw value in the basement for mechanical room, storage and safety from storms.

Weeks explained the library currently has nowhere to take people when the sirens go off; everyone cannot fit in the bathroom and the whole building has windows. Weeks said if the basement goes away, the library must have another option for weather emergencies. Olson questioned the need for the City to provide a storm shelter now when it has not been an option in the last 20 years. Weeks added the mechanical equipment would also be located in the basement and a large part of the cost is the elevator necessary to get people down to the basement.

Council Member Rampulla stated everything must be in place by August to get the measure on the November ballot. Rampulla wondered if this was feasible.

Council Member Wichtendahl mentioned during a work session, council and staff had discussion on adding solar panels with future construction for City buildings; library should keep this in mind for the expansion.

Rampulla moved City Council support of the library staff and board members to move forward with finalizing the design plans for the construction of the library building expansion project and to take the steps necessary to place the measure on the November General Election Ballot for referendum vote, seconded by Olson. Motion carried.

Rampulla moved to adjourn at 6:36 P.M. seconded by Wichtendahl. Motion carried.

Bill Bennett, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kelly Kornegor, City Clerk