

BAYPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES: April 21, 2020

PRESENT: Connie Carlson, Jenny Erickson, Pam Johnson, Mary Ostertag, Colleen Robinson, Jill Smith, Sara Wagner

ABSENT: None

CALLED TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 6:06 p.m.

PETITIONS TO CHAIR/VISITORS: None

ADOPTION/AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA: Sara W. made a motion to accept the agenda. Second by Pam J. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF BILLS & RECEIPTS:

Bills:

- **302 Contract Service:** \$11,025.00 to BTR is the first bill for the Facilities Master Plan from BTR architectural firm.
- **321 Communications/phone, cable:** \$600.00 to Nova is for the annual phone service contract.

Motion to approve bills by Sara W. Second by Jenny E. Motion carried.

Receipts:

No receipts for the month.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to approve the February minutes by Jenny E. Second by Sara W. Motion carried.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

- Thank you to Jill for her leadership in these unprecedented times and also for her excellent communication with us.
- Thanks also to the staff for their flexibility and reduced hours.
- Libraries may have a whole new role as we come out of this--meals, internet, etc.
- It is important for all of us to look ahead--think of people who would be good to have in focus groups.
- Also, think about giving blood at the Legion on May 4.

FOUNDATION FOR BPL REPORT:

- The board is not meeting in April, but if there are any financial needs, they will help us remotely. They could maybe pay for some hotspots after grants expire—we'll talk more in May.
- There will probably be a fall appeal, but no spring appeal.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Strategic Plan as outline

- As submitted (see attached)
- Additional comments:
 - Building Update: First, thank you for all your support. We got a draft from the architects about 4:30 this afternoon (4/21/20). Jonathon and Ann would like to set up a meeting with the library board in the next few weeks. She will send possible dates out to meet. Please send her any names/emails of people for focus groups.

- Programs: *The Create Your Own Mini-Figure program had nine people registered, then a bunch cancelled, but 16 showed up! *There were some big group-25 kids plus 22 adult helpers showed up for the Toddler & Preschool Drive-in Movie and 48 attended the showing of Frozen II *While having to cancel programming for the foreseeable future, Jill hopes to do some small scale online programming.
- Staff: Most staff are understanding about the reduction in hours and changes in job duties, and all were very thankful for the two weeks paid leave, so Jill passes along their thanks.
- Technology: We are planning an online summer reading program and also planning to add HotSpots to check out to the public who need internet access. We will talk about this later.
- Connections: The annual report showed that volunteer hours increased from 215 in 2018 to 298 in 2019-Nice progress!
- Website: The search function on the homepage has been fixed.
- Jill also shared some highlights from the Public Library Association Conference, which had a focus on inclusion. One of these was *Transforming Service through Spaces* about three libraries in Canada that did redesigns, including the Calgary Library, which she said to definitely look up online! She will be sharing information with the Foundation from the session, *Uniting Library Patrons, Staff, Donors and Advocates for Library Giving Day*, which she thinks could have a lot of potential for next year. Her favorite session was *Closing Opportunity Gaps through School-Library Partnerships*.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- The PR committee shared an Idea Activation Plan, developed with ACThoughtful Consulting. Do we put our energy on the super Users or attracting diversity through new users? There is not a right or wrong answer; but, rather something to consider as we move forward. Discussion seemed to center around coming to the Library vs. connection to the Library. Right now, there seems to be a need for connecting, and building partnerships within the community. We will have more discussion on it next month.
- Facilities committee will meet before our next meeting.

COUNCIL REP REPORT:

- Mary Goulette's (Office Support Specialist) father-in-law, David Goulette, passed away from COVID-19, so Mary has had to be off for the 14 days of quarantine. Chantelle McRoberts (Office Support Specialist) has been covering for Mary during this time.
- While City Hall is closed, the city is still open for business.
- The city council has been meeting on Zoom.
- There is not a lot going on. The DOT public meeting about the Hwy 95 project was cancelled. There is nothing different about the project. There are going to be two lanes of traffic, except for two weeks, probably in August.

BUSINESS:

Old

- **Facilities Master Plan update:**
 - Jill will send something out in the next day or so.
 - There are some issue to look at:
 - Chimney and some masonry
 - Interior-restrooms, lighting, some electrical systems
 - Fire alarms-no flashing lights/horn that would sound
 - Outside book drop may need retooling
 - Some preliminary ideas, but more will come:

- Use of upstairs space
 - Repurpose teen area to new space, possibly business center
- Work with the city on some of the stuff-masonry, etc.
- The design part is covered by the grant; may have to work in phases on the rest-most critical stuff first. The deadline for the capital grant is the June meeting; will probably have to be pushed out.

New:

- **COVID-19 Response:** Jill shared a brief timeline of what has happened so far, and reflections on some of the ways our response could have been better. She also shared a document “Needs to Manage Closing Better,” looking at having plans in place for closures, including policies, technology needs and other-like cleaning supplies, gloves, masks.
- **Annual Report:** Some things the report showed were that circulation increased, programming was fairly steady, and 2019 was a good year for us!
- **Summer Reading:** Jill thinks it is necessary to cancel all in person programs for the summer. She is not planning to offer any virtual entertainment programs (big draw programs) at this time. Our online group is pretty small, so probably not a good idea here-but available to them through large systems. Instead of the original plan to create a paper logbook for summer reading-with Angie Petrie, the youth services manager at Stillwater Library, it will be simpler to send most summer reading tracking online. They are still working out the details-and some of it will depend on if we are able to be open in June-but current plan is to hand out a “Summer Reading Kit” with a free book, bookmarks, and a one page activity sheet to families who request it. When children and teens sign up online, they will be able to log their reading, complete activities, and write reviews to earn badges—10 badges gets them another book to keep. The live site is being reviewed by Beanstalk right now. It should be ready by May 15. The launch will be announced on FB page, newsletter, anyplace possible.
- **Reopening Plan:** Jill presented a Reopening Plan. Jill feels like the governor/state are doing a good job and will follow their guidance. The main priority in reopening the library is the health and safety of our patrons and staff. In thinking about reopening to the public, factored in will be recommendations from the State Library Services, the Minnesota Department of Health and our neighboring library systems. Included in the plan for reopening are: *Priorities for reopening*, including Access to checkout library materials and Library returns; *Services that will need to be monitored and regulated to clean spaces between use*, including Computer use; *Services that will take longer to resume*, including All in person programming, Meeting room reservations, Ordering/processing new materials-other than high-demand titles, this is a low priority; and, *Staffing Plan*—the most difficult part of the library closing for Jill, because of all the contributions our staff makes to our library, making it very difficult to reduce their hours! Jill has not heard anything from the city about budget reductions, but will keep the Library Board updated.
- **Personnel Policy progress:** Jill met with Colleen, and really appreciated her expertise, as they talked about our current policy and updates she would suggest. They talked about moving to a broader policy, with several of the items being put into an employee handbook—and make ourselves a more friendly employer. They will bring a draft to the next meeting. Some things will have to be coordinated with the city, especially about any changes to paid time off.

Adjourn: There being no other business, Sara made a motion to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Motion was seconded and meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting: May 19 @ 6:00 p.m. at the Library or on Zoom.

There will be a Facilities Committee meeting, a PR committee meeting and a Zoom meeting with the architects before then.

Director's Report for March and April 2020

Space

Building Update

While we put on hold some of the community outreach, the assessment of the building has continued and a report of existing conditions should be ready soon. I met with Ann and Jonathan from BTR on Friday, and they will have an update for me to share at Tuesday night's meeting. The building assessment should be complete very soon. We will explore having small focus groups via Zoom in the next month, so please let me know if you have names and emails of people who might want to participate.

Resources

Programs

We had a great response to our programming over Spring Break this year!

Sixteen attended the Create Your Own Mini-Figure program, and created amazing figures.

They also

We had a huge group of 25 kids plus 22 adult helpers for the Toddler & Preschool Drive-In Movie on March 11.

We had 48 attend the showing of Frozen II on Thursday, March 12, but only 6 for the showing of Abominable on Friday, March 13.

Book club will meet on March 9 to discuss *The Newcomers* by Helen Thorpe. We will explore trying zoom or other online book clubs in May and throughout the summer.

Unfortunately, we will have to cancel programming for the foreseeable future. I am hoping to do some small scale online programming, please let me know if you have ideas for useful programming.

Staff

Staff has continued to stay healthy. Most staff are understanding about the reduction in hours and changes in job duties. All staff were very thankful for the two weeks of paid leave.

Technology

We are planning on an online summer reading program this year using a program called Beanstack. We can also use this for other reading "challenges" throughout the year for all ages.

We are planning to add HotSpots to check out to the public who need internet access. There is a possibility we can get grant funding to pay for the first six months. I will update you when I know more.

Connections

Community

We are very sad to close our doors to the public. The majority have been very supportive of our decision to close. The only thing that has been hard is the confusion as Washington County Library has provided different services at times. I still feel like we made the right decisions for our community.

Foundation

The Foundation has cancelled the meeting scheduled for April 23. They are willing to meet online to vote if we need anything. Without a flyer for summer reading, the spring appeal may not go out this year, and they may just do a fall appeal.

Volunteers

As we completed the annual report, it was exciting to see that volunteer hours increased, from 215 in 2018 to 298 in 2019. I think we were on track to see an increase in 2020, but for now, we are not having any volunteers work at the library, nor do we plan to until we can be sure that they will be safe.

Other

Annual Report

The Annual Report has been submitted to State Library Services, and copies had been shared with the Library Board. It was great to see an increase in circulation, both print and electronic. We will probably see a sharp decrease in several measures for 2020, as will libraries across the country. Please let me know if you have any questions about the report.

Website/Facebook

Website visits decreased slightly to 18 users a day over the past month. We did see a spike of use the last couple of weeks of March, with a peak of 81 on March 16 – the day we closed, but it has since returned to a smaller average daily number.

The search function on the homepage of the website has been fixed – searches once again with search for the words entered automatically, it will not just bring you to a blank search screen.

Facebook Summary: Over the past 28 days, we have reached 664 people, down 79% from the previous period. The post with the most reach and engagement was the post when we first decided to close on March 16. I am trying to add more images to our posts, and I am also planning to add more video, with advice on posts from Jenny.

PLA Sessions Report

Although the Public Library Association Conference seems like a lifetime ago, it was really less than two months ago. I had a bad cold, not COVID 19, during the conference, so I did not feel like I was able to enjoy spending time in Nashville, and focused my energy on the conference sessions I attended. I am very thankful for the support of the Foundation for Bayport Public Library to fund my conference travel expenses.

Opening Session with Stacey Abrams

Stacey Abrams was very inspiring in this packed opening session. She focused on making sure that everyone is allowed to vote and what measures libraries can support to ensure access. We are very fortunate to have a strong voting system here in Minnesota that really encourages participation.

Big Ideas with Dr. Bettina Love

Dr. Love works in equity in education, and she talked about her work could also be used in libraries to promote equitable services. She is a very inspiring speaker and made great points about how we set up or perpetuate systems that are inequitable.

Decreasing Barriers to Library Use

This session was about work to decrease barriers to library use. There was a lot about fines, which doesn't apply to us. I did like how they talked about awareness of services varies for communities that did not grow up always using libraries. I also liked how they thought library services should be an overlapping circle of experiences that are pleasant, products people love and well thought out facilities.

Transforming Service through Spaces

This was about three libraries in Canada that did redesigns – but it was really big libraries with multi-million dollar budgets, so I don't know that I can bring a lot back for our project. The libraries are in Ottawa, Calgary and Edmonton. The Ottawa Library is still in the planning process. The Calgary Library is stunning, and you should definitely look it up online! They had thousands of people attend their grand opening celebration and have seen a huge increase in use. The Edmonton Library project started as a simple redo of the outside and turned into a much more in depth and expensive project.

Library Space Designed by Library Staff

This library, in the Hamptons in New York, took a boxy space in an industrial park and turned it into a functioning library on their own (with a little help from a designer that they didn't mention much.) The staff was very involved in creating the design for the library, and they did have help procuring shelving and furniture, and the industrial park owners did the construction of the space. If we had more staff or I had design skills, a project like this would make sense for us. It went easier because they were moving into brand new space and could specify how it was done, and had a fairly large team that could devote time to the project.

What Your Onboarding Says About Your Organization

Having just worked to start a new staff person, I thought this might be interesting, and although it was, it was also clearly for larger organizations. I do think important points to consider is how I can promote a better working culture and how to make new staff feel more welcome to share ideas for improvements.

Big Ideas with Haben Girma

Haben Girma is a deaf blind young woman who completed Harvard Law School and who works for disability rights. Her talk was touching and very inspiring as well, and really made me think about how much we take for granted about how the world works, and how it really is not difficult to make whatever accommodations you can to allow everyone to participate.

Closing Opportunity Gaps through School-Library Partnerships

This was my favorite session by far. The Marin County Library in California hired staff to work with schools in their area directly to really foster partnerships with schools and students. While early in their project, I think it really speaks to what libraries can do if they put resources behind their priorities. At the same time, the staff was realistic about the barriers that they faced and talked about some of the real challenges in their work.

Uniting Library Patrons, Staff, Donors and Advocates for Library Giving Day

This was a presentation from the Seattle Public Library Foundation about Library Giving Day, which is happening this year on April 23. They have developed an easy to use toolkit for libraries or library foundations that want to participate. I will be sharing this information with the Foundation, as I think it could have a lot of potential for next year!

Recruiting and Engaging Friends and Trustees Under Age 40

This session talked more about generational differences than I thought was necessary, but really spoke about how the majority of Friends groups and trustees for libraries across the country are boomers. We do have some younger members, thank you! One of the pieces of advice is to listen to your new members, so I hope we are listening to our new members! The other advice was to recruit for roles, and I do think we tried to do that last year.

A Deep Dive into Diverse Books

This session covered a wide array of diverse books for children. The presenters have a database called the Diverse Families Bookshelf, available at diversefamilies.org. Finding more diverse recommended titles for children is always welcome and appreciated.

Strategic Approaches and Sustainability for Library Creative Spaces

While "Spaces" in the title caught my attention, it was really more about creating a makerspace or other space for creativity in your library. My current plans are not to add a dedicated makerspace to our library, but it was interesting to hear about libraries that are working on makerspace projects.