

BAYPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES: July 21, 2020

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

ABSENT: Connie Carlson

CALLED TO ORDER: Meeting called to order at 6:02 p.m.

PETITIONS TO CHAIR/VISITORS: None

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

APPROVAL OF BILLS & RECEIPTS:

Bills: Pretty usual bills with the usual supplies. There were two internet and two phone bills this month. Because there hasn't been much cost for programs, the Foundations for BPL paid the Baker and Taylor bill for the month.

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

Receipts:

- **34760 Service Charges:** \$23.00 for printing, which is set up as an honor system, with a box for payments.

Motion to deposit receipts into City of Bayport Library Fund by Sara W. Second by Pam J. Motion carried.

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

- It's not too late to write a poem for the Poetry Walk in our north windows.
- There are two virtual book clubs on Zoom coming up: July 30 at 6:30 pm—One Book One Minnesota selection, *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*, edited by Sun Yung Shin and August 17 at 6:30 pm—the 2020 selection for the Big Read in the St. Croix Valley: *Lab Girl* by Hope Jahren.
- Should we use the display case to highlight books on race, with the passing of John Lewis? Jill shared that, with all the street/sidewalk construction, there is not much use of the front door. We could maybe do that when the construction is done; we could also put something on the website.

FOUNDATION FOR BPL REPORT:

- The July meeting was cancelled, but they are still open to email suggestions.
- There is no new website yet.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Strategic Plan as outline

- As submitted (see attached)
- Additional comments:
 - Resources: There were 24 registrations for the second Take and Make art class.
 - Staff: Jill doesn't plan on hiring anyone permanently until fall at the earliest, but maybe even until 2021 depending on COVID-19 conditions.
 - The new Wildwood Library will be opening on July 20. Jill will arrange a visit in a couple of weeks.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- None met.

COUNCIL REP REPORT: Rep absent. Jill shared that the city has some COVID funding available-for ZOOM subscription and cleaning supplies; that the new barbeque restaurant is very good, and that Hwy 95 will be back to both ways in August.

BUSINESS:

Old

- **Facilities Master Plan update:** The plan isn't finished yet, but we should be getting a report back from BTR—the assessment of the building-structurally. We still want an entire plan, and don't want to delay the plan. We've paid for the design, so hopefully in August, as we have to have it by September for an additional grant request from the Andersen Foundation.
- **COVID-19 Update:** Jill shared a plan we can use in order to make patron and staff safety the most important factors in deciding whether to stay open and at what level to allow access to the building: **Proposed metrics for deciding if we need to close again and when to move forward with in person visits.** It comes from the Harvard Global Health Institute. She wants to be transparent and explain what we're using and will share with the public that these are the metrics we're going to use. She will publish the graphics with the criteria for decisions.

New

- **2021 Budget:**
 - From initial discussions, Jill thinks our budget will stay flat and doesn't anticipate any reductions.
 - Since we may lose income from meeting room reservations and fines and fees, she will ask the City to increase our property tax allocation by \$5000 to make up for this, but doesn't know if it will be approved. If the city gives us more, then we can ask for more from our granters.
 - When discussing if there are any operational budget priorities to take forward to the city, Jenny pointed out that since next year will be a recovery year, plus our facilities project, it is not a year to focus on a lot of other things.
 - Jill will be working with the City on building improvements as we get firm numbers for the needed improvements. Sara wondered how much the City will partner with us. Adam wants to know how much the improvements will be.
 - Wages and salaries will be helped somewhat by the recent retirement. But with the director scheduled to receive a merit increase and a COLA that will increase the full-time salaries by about \$7,000, a health insurance increase of 3.6%, and a flat budget, that is a lot to take from other pots.
 - We can access some CARES funds.
 - Jill will bring the preliminary budget to the next meeting for approval. The City Council will have a budget workshop in September, which Jill will attend. The budget will be approved by the City Council in December, and we will officially adopt the Library budget at the December meeting.
- **Emergency Management Plan—Review and Update:** Jill is working on our plan using the city plan as a base, but making it more specific to the library. We still have to get an AED.
- **Policy Review Schedule:** Policies are reviewed on a three-year schedule. Jill shared the schedule for 2020/2021.
- **Library Grounds—new tree selection:** Of a selection of recommended tree choices for our front garden, the board chose the Dwarf White Pine.

Adjourn: There being no other business, Sara W. made a motion to adjourn at 7:19 p.m. Second by Pam J. Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting: August 18 @ 6:00 p.m. on Zoom.

Director's Report for July 2020

Reopening – Phase One

Phase One is going well, but the continued high number of cases, both in Minnesota and Wisconsin, concerns me. Staff still feels safe offering use by appointment and limiting time to one hour. We had a total of 32 appointments and 70 pickups the week of July 29; 49 appointments and 92 pickups the week of July 6 and 45 appointments and 72 pickups the week of July 13. This is probably about what we would see per day during a normal July.

We have added Wednesday evenings, but we are not still not seeing a large number of pickups or appointments during the additional hours. I have decided not to reopen for Thursday nights until after Labor Day at the earliest, and to keep the Saturday hours to 10-1. This schedule of hours seems to be meeting the community need for pickup for the summer.

Stillwater Library will remain closed through August 4. They are looking at opening with a limited number of people allowed in at one time – 25% capacity. Washington County Library is now open at limited capacity for walk-in service. They have also reduced their hours and all locations are open the same hours. Using the same formula as the other libraries, our 25% capacity is 24 people at a time, just on the first floor of the library, not including the reading room.

Space

Building Update

We have made our space less comfortable on purpose; most soft seating has been moved upstairs and the Reading Room and Study Room are closed.

Joanne Gustafson, who generously donated the money to purchase a replacement tree for our front garden, has worked with the Master Gardeners to off three possibilities for a new tree. Please review the photos and let me know your top choice.

Resources

Programs

We had 24 registrations for our second Take and Make Art Class with Lisa, our instructor from the fall and winter. So far, I have not had anyone contact me with issues about accessing the video. We still have spots and kits left if more kids want to participate, the video is available all summer. We are doing our last class in August; we are planning more for the fall and adding classes for middle school students.

We had a small number of views for the Mixed Nuts program that we shared over video on July 9 – only 23. I was disappointed in the final product, and will be more demanding if we offer video performances in the future. Showing a video of a performance does not seem to me to meet our mission – I would rather invest in programs like the art lessons where kids and families are creating something.

We are up to 39 kids signed up for the Summer Explorers Summer Reading Program. They have already logged 8713 minutes of reading (that's over 145 hours) and earned 111 activity badges! 5 have completed the challenge. We are seeing mostly elementary age participants. Next year, we will create something specifically for teens.

I am starting to plan for fall programs virtually, and will create reading challenges in Beanstack specifically for kids, teens and adults. We will probably collaborate again with Stillwater on the challenges for kids and teens.

Staff

As mentioned at the last meeting, Janelle St. Claire retired effective 6/16, which leaves us with an open position. The other clerks have been able to absorb her regular tasks, and I will handle the Croixdale visits for now. I do not plan on hiring anyone permanently until fall at the earliest, but maybe even until 2021 depending on COVID-19 conditions. We are OK using subs to partially cover her hours since we are not nearly as busy as normal. I am working through several scenarios of how best to fill her position, especially looking at the 2021 budget.

Technology

Hotspots should be in place shortly provided by a grant from MELSA; there are 30 to be shared across Washington County, so I anticipate they will be checked out with a waiting list. I am planning to add an additional 5 for Bayport.

Connections

Community

It is nice to welcome back community members in small numbers! It feels much happier to be here with patrons! The city is supportive of taking a slow and measured approach to reopening. We are still not overly busy compared to larger libraries. I have not heard many complaints, other than wishing we were open completely from some of our appointment makers. I can empathize! We will move to the next phase when it feels safer.

Foundation

The Foundation canceled the July meeting. They are open to requests via email if needed.

Volunteers

No volunteers will be used in the Library for the foreseeable future.

Other

Website/Facebook

Website visits saw a slight increase to 25 users a day over the past month. The homepage continues to far outpace any of the other pages, so I think most people are using the site to go to the catalog and search for materials, which I think makes sense. It's hard to believe we launched this new site over 4 years ago. I think it is due for another makeover; we should update the look in the next few months and refine what is highlighted.

Facebook Summary: Over the past 28 days, we have reached 693 people, up 163% from the previous period. Post engagement was also up 168%. The post with the most reach and engagement was the post about reopening by appointment – that is not surprising. The reach was about 6 times the reach of our regular posts.

New Neighbor Library Opening

The new Wildwood Library will be opening on July 20. I will arrange a visit after they have been open for a couple of weeks.

ALA Virtual Conference

I was very disappointed in the ALA Virtual Conference. It was definitely driven by exhibitors and sponsors, with only one useful session about selecting and recommending diverse books. The rest was all author presentations – fun to see, but not necessarily educational – and a very disappointing session on intellectual freedom. This experience makes me rethink my plans to participate in any further virtual conferences sponsored by ALA.

Thank you for all of your support through this pandemic. We were closed for over 3 months to the public, and I still can't believe it. It's so hard not to serve as a community gathering place. I am grateful for a flexible and adaptable staff, I know it has probably been difficult for them. I know we will still face challenges over the next few months, I will work to protect staff and community safety while still providing access to books and materials.