

# MINUTES OF THE JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

April 13, 2020

The regular meeting of the Jacksonville Public Library Board of Directors was held April 13, 2020. The meeting was held virtually using Ring Central. Present were President Mary Ferguson, Craig Albers, Kevin Eckhoff, Elizabeth Kennedy, Forrest Keaton, Ted Roth, Noel Beard, and Library Director Chris Ashmore. Absent were Katie Weeks and Robert Underbrink.

President Ferguson called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

It was moved by Beard and seconded by Albers that the minutes of both the regular March Board Meeting and the Emergency Meeting held on March 15 be accepted as submitted. Motion carried.

It was moved by Roth and seconded by Kennedy that all financial reports for April be approved and that all properly approved bills for April in the amount of \$59,026.99 be paid out of general funds as funds are available. Motion carried.

The Endowment Fund numbers for end of March were given.

## Director's Report

"What a long strange trip it's been." For the first fifteen days of March, the library was open to the public and operated as normally as possible; although overall library visits and program attendance began to decline due to coronavirus concerns.

On March 3, I met individually with social work student intern Megan Evans to review her performance at the midway point of the semester. The following day, Megan and I met with MacMurray College's Social Work Field Director Courtney Howell and discussed Megan's performance and her progress on the learning contract that was established at the beginning of the semester. The library has never had a bad social work student intern, but Megan has been exceptional as reflected in her performance review.

After the library closed to the public on March 15, Megan made herself available through email to patrons who need assistance. Technology limitations of the patrons seeking Megan's help made anything more advanced than email an impossibility. As part of her internship hours, Megan interviewed me on March 31 about the Jacksonville Public Library's experience with using a social work student intern. It is extremely sad that MacMurray College is closing its doors. The library had a very productive partnership with the Social Work Program that I am practically heartbroken to see end.

I will look into other available options to fill this huge void, including any other local colleges with a social work program or the possibility of a social work agency placing one of its employees at the library for a certain number of hours per week.

When the library closed its doors to the public on March 15, the full-time and part-time salaried staff had a full week of coming in and working their regular hours. I also offered the opportunity for part-time hourly employees to come in during the day to make up any lost hours, but only one employee took advantage of that offer. During that week of March 16 - March 20, the library staff stayed busy shelving, shelf reading, answering phones and working on special projects that could not be performed if the library were open to the public.

After the Governor's "Stay at Home Order" took effect, things changed once again. Public libraries are not considered "essential businesses" and the staff was told to stay home, except for those who provide "essential services" for the non-essential business. Say that ten times fast. Kim Pohlman, who performs bill paying and payroll functions, came into the library to perform her job when necessary. I considered myself essential and came into the library each day for a full day of work.

You would be surprised at how much time it takes to operate an empty library. By the time I go the post office and pick up the mail, sort the mail, empty the book drop using latex gloves, sanitize each item, check in each item, sort each item and sometimes shelve materials to make room on our sorting shelves, my day is about half over. I spend the rest of my time, answering the phones, helping people over the phone with questions about e-resources, communicating with staff about things they should be doing at home, and many other things that arise. I will be very happy when this ends, as this is definitely no vacation for any of us.

I tried to keep the library visible to the community during March (and have stepped up efforts in April). The *Jacksonville Journal-Courier* ran our normal Shelf Life column with nothing but e-resources. I also went on WLDS radio with Gary Scott to discuss how people could continue to use the library while the building is closed. Sarah in particular, but also Cindy, Bridget and others have or will be doing different things at home to serve our patrons virtually.

### **Adult Services**

March started out as a great month for Adult Services. Many programs were planned but were cancelled by presenters due to the coronavirus. Sarah spent her month working on a number of different tasks. Before the library closed, she created a display for Women's History Month that included books written by women from around the world. Sarah spent her time covering the circulation desk in addition to helping patrons with reference questions, research, local history and more.

After the library closed, she spent time contacting presenters and other patrons to let them know the library would not be able to host events or teach computer classes. She spent time updating the website and social media to get the word out that the library was closed. While the staff was present at the library but the library was closed to the public, Sarah went through a large weeding report that Bridget printed and began analyzing candidates for weeding. She spent time tidying up the periodicals section. Sarah continued to push e-resources more broadly to make more people aware of the online offerings during social distancing. She continued making lists for collection development to inform future purchasing decisions. Sarah spent time thinking of ways to continue to engage the library's patrons digitally should the library remain closed. She answered patron's questions via email from home and at the library to help with technology issues and accessing the library's resources.

### **Interlibrary Loan/Holds**

No statistics available due to the "Stay at Home Order".

### **Circulation Services**

During the first half of March when the building was open to the public, the library continued to provide amazing service to every patron that walked in the door. The Circulation Staff was busy helping people on the computers every day. Diane Hequet was busy cleaning disks, fixing books, and helping patrons. Andy Mitchell was busy helping patrons and serving coffee and cookies every Friday for the patrons. Bridget pulled books from the 'new' shelf that were no longer new and changed their locations in the catalog. She also continued to work on weeding fiction books.

During the first week the library was closed to the public and staff was still able to come to work, Bridget worked on some major weeding projects for every genre of fiction. This work was cut short on March 20 due to the "Stay at Home Order", but will continue when staff are able to return to the library.

### **Extension Services**

March came in like a lion and went out in a fizzle. Normal homebound deliveries were moving along fairly well. Once worries about COVID-19 started circulating, the nursing homes and assisted living facilities immediately closed their doors to outsiders. By the end of the month, even the area apartment buildings were restricting access. Diane called homebound clients to check on them and keep them updated on the library's closure.

The Senior Wellness agencies managed to meet on March 5, and the Knollwood book club discussed "Eleanor Roosevelt" on March 6.

Weeding in the Large Print Collection was completed on March 18, and 48 books were withdrawn. Another round of weeding is already necessary, and shelf shifting will follow. Most suppliers stopped shipments of new books, so it will be very busy once things get back to normal.

### **Youth Services**

March ended up being a short month, with only two weeks of programming. We still had our regular programs like Story Time, Lap Sit and Lego Club. We had one Bookmobile session at ISD before social distancing kicked in. Our attendance was lower at all of our events, which was due to several factors, with the Covid-19 scare probably the biggest factor. Cindy put out the March Story Walk book that continues to be available to patrons. At this point, Cindy is planning to hold Summer Reading as normal, although alternative ideas are being considered as a backup should the library be closed or even open with limited gatherings allowed.

### **Technical Services**

Lauren continued to excel in her role as cataloger. With Linda's cataloging assistance and Kim's efficient processing of materials, things ran very smoothly in Technical Services.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Automation/Technology**

None

### **Building and Grounds**

Ashmore asked if the Building and Grounds Committee members would like to meet with Jamie Cosgriff virtually to discuss proceeding with the repairs to the landscape retaining walls and the west entrance patio or whether they wished to wait until the coronavirus shut down was concluded to meet in person. Ashmore was advised to contact Cosgriff for his opinion on when to meet.

### **Finance**

None

### **Personnel**

None

## **Public Relations**

None

## **FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY**

None

## **RAILS/RSA**

None

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Ashmore asked when the board would like to tell the Mayor of Underbrink's resignation from the board and to suggest names for a replacement. It was decided that this could be put off until the library was open and back to "normal".

## **New Business**

Ashmore reported on many of the things the library had been doing and was planning on doing to engage the public online and virtually while the physical library building was closed.

A discussion was held as to whether to pay part-time hourly workers while the library was closed and they were unable to come to work. According to library policy, full-time salaried employees and part-time salaried employees would continue to be paid if the library was forced to close, while part-time hourly employees would not be paid. Discussion ensued as to the pros and cons of continuing to pay these hourly workers.

Albers made a motion, seconded by Beard that the current personnel policy as concerns the non-payment of part-time hourly employees be temporarily suspended and that part-time hourly employees continue to be paid based on the average amount of hours they would have worked had the library been open and they were able to come to work. This would remain the case through the duration of the Governor's Stay at Home Order. If the Stay at Home Order were lifted, meaning employees could return to work, but the library remained closed to the public, part-time hourly employees would be required to come into work to receive payment, just like any other staff member. Ferguson voted Nay. Roth voted Present. Albers, Beard, Eckhoff, Keaton, and Kennedy voted Yea. Motion carried.

Ashmore briefly went over preliminary safety precautions to put in place when the library is able to open to the public. These precautions will be discussed in more detail at the May board meeting.

With no further business to discuss, meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Beard, seconded by Eckhoff. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Chris Ashmore