

# MINUTES OF THE JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

June 14, 2021

The regular meeting of the Jacksonville Public Library Board of Directors was held June 14, 2021 in the meeting room of the Jacksonville Public Library. Present were President Mary Ferguson, Forrest Keaton, Noel Beard, Ted Roth, Lisa Haley, Kevin Eckhoff, Craig Albers and library director Chris Ashmore. Absent were Elizabeth Kennedy and Katie Weeks.

President Ferguson called the meeting to order at 4:34 PM.

It was moved by Albers and seconded by Eckhoff that the minutes of the May Board Meeting be accepted as submitted. Motion carried.

It was moved by Eckhoff and seconded by Roth that all financial reports for June be approved and that all properly approved bills for June in the amount of \$55,748.30 be paid out of general funds as funds are available. Motion carried.

Keaton reported on the Endowment Fund balance as of May 31, 2021.

## Director's Report

The library began to open up more in May, as the state entered the "Bridge" phase of its Restore Illinois Plan, and the CDC surprised everyone with a major loosening of mask wearing requirements. The "Bridge" phase began on May 14, allowing the library to increase its capacity limit, and the State of Illinois followed the new CDC mask guidance by allowing fully vaccinated individuals to go unmasked in most public places, including the library. While some places of business, including many libraries, kept their mask requirement for all, we decided to only require masks for those who are not fully vaccinated. We do not ask for proof of vaccination, but assume those who are unmasked have been vaccinated. We do ask any unmasked children to wear a mask, as we know that anyone under 16 is not fully vaccinated (In a few weeks, this will change to anyone under 12.) We have had absolutely no issues with our change in mask requirements. Many vaccinated people are relieved to be able to go maskless, while many others continue to wear masks even though vaccinated.

Unless something changes dramatically, the State of Illinois is set to enter Phase 5 of its Restore Illinois Plan on June 11. At that time, the library will open up all public computers and bring back all chairs, as we will be able to operate with no capacity limits, and will not require social distancing. Events held in the meeting room and conference room will also be back to full capacity. Beginning on June 11, the only guideline the library will keep in

place will be that those who are not fully vaccinated will be required to wear a mask and to six-foot socially distance, if possible.

Throughout May, the library staff, in particular Cindy and Bridget, were busy preparing for both the Adult and Children's Summer Reading Programs, as well as the "Books on Wheels" program – all starting in June. We are all looking forward to having more people at the library this summer, but realize that even with a large amount of time spent on publicity, the numbers may still be lower than pre-pandemic. It is not so much that there are a large amount of people who are still hesitant to go out in public (although there are some), as much as the fact that over 15 months, many people have formed new habits and we must keep working hard to remind them that the library is fully opening and is a destination spot for a variety of reasons. It may take some time, but I am confident that the library will be able to get its numbers up to pre-pandemic levels and higher.

One way of reminding people of the library is appearing at events outside the library. As events begin to once again be held around town, the library has plans to try to participate where we can. We will be setting up a table two Saturdays a month at the Lincoln Square Farmer's Market and will also have a spot at each of the Friday evening concerts in the downtown concert series. I continue to keep my eyes open for other events where we might be a fit.

While the library will continue to offer virtual programming, we are starting to plan more in-person programming. It is important that in-house programming return to emphasis the library's role as a community meeting place. We will also be incorporating our video conferencing equipment in the meeting room to offer hybrid opportunities for both the library and outside groups.

In late May, I met with Samantha Burton and Nora Bishop. Sam will be our social work intern starting in September, and Nora, who holds an MSW which is required for this internship, will work with the library as one of Sam's supervisors. Sam is completing her MSW through Aurora University. Cataloger Lauren Little was out for the month of May on maternity leave, but volunteer Linda Little very capably picked up the slack. Other tasks keeping me busy in May included collection development, public relations and maintaining the day-to-day operations of the library.

## **Adult Services**

The Adult Services department had a great month. Sarah had nine technology appointments and helped patrons with other daily technology questions. Sarah also helped a handful of patrons with a new Illinois rental assistance program for COVID relief. Cindy and Sarah worked together to get the Youth Services programs uploaded onto Facebook. Sarah spent time researching and promoting events and library services using social media; sending items to local media outlets and more. She also

worked on research projects with patrons relating to local history and genealogy and helped with other daily reference questions. She updated the blog, social media and website as time permitted. Sarah also continued weeding books to create room on the shelves upstairs.

Sarah had four live virtual events in May. The first event was called “Ageless Grace”, and the library held three separate sessions. This exercise class, which runs into June, is for people of all ages and abilities and focuses on brain and body health. While attendance tapered off towards the end of the month, it’s been a really fun way to get a little exercise for a variety of patrons. Sarah also held an author event with Alex Kotlowitz, who wrote the award-winning bestseller *There Are No Children Here* and a more recent title, *An American Summer: Love and Death in Chicago*. The discussion of violence in Chicago was illuminating, coming from an author who has researched, interviewed and delved into the issue for the majority of his career.

Sarah researched items to purchase for the collection and placed book and AV orders as needed. She also put up a new display of materials. Sarah attended a reporting and evaluation training for the American Library Association grant that culminates with a program in June. She went to the Users Group meeting for RSA to learn about the goings-on of the overarching library system as well. Sarah also worked with a new volunteer who is helping to finish digitizing the yearbook collection. Our new volunteer is also helping with other ongoing local history projects and more.

### **Interlibrary Loan/Holds**

In May, there were 858 items borrowed from other libraries; 750 items lent to other libraries; and 323 reciprocal circulations.

### **Circulation Services**

The library continued to provide amazing service to every patron that walked in the door during the month of May. The Circulation Staff was very busy helping people on the computers and microfilm. Diane Hequet was very busy cleaning disks, fixing books and helping patrons. Andy Mitchell was busy helping patrons and pulling books for patrons with health issues.

Bridget pulled books from the ‘new’ shelf that were no longer new and changed their locations in the catalog. She also worked on the library’s Pinterest account and kept the Pinterest pages up to date. Bridget kept track of the ISD and ISVI books to see if they were turned in at the student’s home libraries. Bridget mailed out overdue notices every day, comparing the information with the patron’s accounts to make sure the items had not been turned in yet. She continued to work on weeding books to make room for all

the new books that have been switched over. Bridget also continued to put mark the reader labels in all the books so patrons can initial to keep track of what they have read. Bridget also removed and updated patron emails based on reports sent by RSA and worked on getting everything ready for "Books on Wheels" and the Adult Summer Reading Program.

### **Extension Services**

The month of May brought some welcome changes to Outreach Services. A couple of Assisted Living residences opened their doors and Heidi was able to bring books inside and finally meet some of the wonderful people she has been delivering library materials to since January. Books were displayed for perusal so that the residents could make their own selections, and there was time for them to talk and share their special interests. Heidi was able to order books from other libraries in our system for outreach patrons who wanted specific books that are not in our Large Print collection.

Another first in May: Heidi registered a person for the Library of Congress Talking Book Program. AperiCare nursing home requested applications and information about signing up their residents for this program as well, which Heidi was able to provide.

Large Print collection development continued. Old books were weeded and new books were ordered, including new summer bestsellers.

### **Youth Services**

May was a busy month for Youth Services. Cindy continued to offer the 10 AM Story Time session and added a 3 PM session. She did not have many takers for the 3 PM session, but believes things will eventually pick up from the Covid-19 fallout. Cindy is also planning to once again offer Lap Sit and Lego Club starting in June.

Looking to June, Cindy continued gearing up for Summer Reading. Unfortunately, she was not allowed to send out flyers through the Jacksonville School District, but she was able to give notice through electronic backpack and send flyers out to the private schools. Summer Reading begins on June 8th and goes to July 24th. The theme is "Reading Colors Your World", and the library is looking forward to a great summer. Cindy will be offering some things online and some in-person, with the biggest events taking place outdoors in the library's green space. Cindy has worked very hard to create a Summer Reading Program that is as close to 'normal' as possible.

### **Technical Services**

In Lauren's absence due to maternity leave, Linda covered for her nicely and things continued to run very smoothly in Technical Services.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Automation/Technology**

None

### **Building and Grounds**

Ashmore reported that the Courtyard Renovation Project had not yet started.

### **Finance**

None

### **Personnel**

None

### **Public Relations**

None

## **FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY**

None

## **RAILS/RSA**

None

## **Old Business**

None

## **New Business**

None

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 PM on a motion by Roth, seconded by Beard.

Respectfully submitted by Chris Ashmore