

Meeting (Zoom) of the Acushnet Public Library Board of Trustees

June 30, 2020

In attendance: Jennifer Alves, Chair

Dina Brasseur, Director

Diane Ferreira

Nancy Francis

Jeri Howland, Secretary

Stephen Reale

Secretary's Report

A motion was made by Nancy to accept the secretary's reports from March 12, 2020 and April 3, 2020. The motion was seconded by Diane. All voted in favor.

Financial Report

Today is the last day of the fiscal year so there will be some adjustments to the report provided. Most of the salary line will be depleted. Aside from contractual obligations, spending essentially stopped when the library closed to the public and any remaining money will go back to the town's general fund. Stephen moved to accept the financial report. Diane seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

New Business

Jennifer & Dina thanked Henry Preston for his 12 years of service as a member of the Board of Trustees, especially during the transition to the new building.

The town election was last Saturday (6/27). There is currently one seat open on the Board of Trustees. There were some write-in candidates and the town clerk is still counting ballots so we will know next week the name of the new member.

The annual election of officers was held. Nancy nominated Jennifer to continue as chair. Diane seconded. All voted in favor. Nancy nominated Jeri to continue as secretary. Diane seconded. All voted in favor.

Reopening Plan

The library has been working on a reopening plan since April with constant revisions to include the most current information. The Board of Selectmen has approved this plan and the Board of Trustees is asked to approve it as well. The library is now in stage 1 of reopening and services are limited. Only staff, town employees and vendors are allowed in the building. Take-out service was started on June 11th, public response has been positive and as of June 30th, a total of 686 items have been taken out. Patrons are limited to take out what is currently in the building but new material is starting to arrive. The summer reading program is virtual this year and craft bags to go are also being offered. Wifi is available from the parking lot and is strongest on the North side of the building.

Stage 2 depends on government guidelines and directions from the Board of Health. The library understands that computer access is a critical need for some people and will be working on a proposed plan which would allow access to the building by appointment only in the near future, but a full scale opening is still very far away. The government says the public is allowed to enter the building only to pick up material but the Acushnet library has a good set-up to distribute through the windows of the community room. Jim Marot has built two trays for the library take-out service. Patrons must wear a mask and present a library card and no one needs to enter the building.

Handling material during quarantine is a big issue. People would like to come in to browse but there are a lot of touchpoints in a library and concerns about how long the virus can live on a surface. Dina has been consulting many reports on that information. One report said the virus could not be detected after seven days on plastic but other sources indicated that it may be only 3 days. As a result, the library is currently quarantining all returned material for 7 days. After the next study which will be out in July, the library may adjust from 7 days to 3 days depending on the results. The DPW has provided bins to use for storage of all material for the quarantine period.

Programs are usually one of the core services of the library, but not this year. The library will be cautious about starting programs, which will not happen until at least September, maybe January. The use of the community room and the study rooms are also a big concern and will be discussed at a later date.

Many people cleaned out and purchased books during the quarantine but the library is not accepting donations. The Friends of the Library is not holding a book sale this year.

If there are increases in the Covid numbers in Massachusetts, the library may have to backpedal the take-out service.

At the present time, all material checked out has a due date of July 31st. as set forth by the SAILS network. Dina would like to suspend fines through the end of the year. The fines go into the revolving fund and the library would like to keep money in the revolving fund but it is more important for people to feel safe returning items. Stephen and all members agreed to waive fees through the end of 2020.

Jennifer asked if the library would be able to backpedal operations without direction from the Board of Health or the Board of Selectmen. Dina said those decisions can be made by the Library Director and the Board of Trustees. Dina praised the Board of Selectmen and Julie Hebert for allowing the library staff to work remotely. Jennifer and Nancy praised the library take-out service.

Nancy moved to accept the reopening plan and suspend fines to the end of the year. Stephen seconded. All voted in favor.

Announcements

PPE (hand sanitizer, thermometers, wipes, masks, gloves, gowns and face shields) have been provided to all departments by Fire Chief Gallagher. These supplies are very much appreciated. Staff are doing self-assessed temperature checks and monitoring their health to stay home if they do not feel well.

8 staff members worked from home while the library was closed. Dina will summarize what the staff did remotely and present her report at a later date. Two laptops went home with staff who needed them.

Webinar watching led to future projects and new creative ideas were fostered during this difficult time. The transition to working from home was tough as most of the staff work directly with customer.

Dina is predicting the take-out service will be here to stay for quite a while.

Nancy asked if the bags are still necessary for take-out. Dina said they have plenty of bags right now and will continue to use them. The Friends purchased some bags and some were purchased with state aid. The COA has also offered to donate cloth bags if needed. In the future, the library will give people the option of using bags.

The summer reading program has launched but it is very different this year. Beanstack was purchased with a grant from the state. It tracks books read, reading minutes and also has challenges!. The staff created a Beanstack website. The ACUPL website has the summer information and a link to Beanstack. There is a community challenge to read 30,000 minutes between 6/29 – 8/15 and 390 minutes were logged after just the first day! A castle in the window of the library will show how many minutes read. Participants can receive online badges, play Bingo, and play Clue with Beanstack. Sandra wrote a challenge called Hidden Castle Quest which involves learning things about the Town of Acushnet. Read and Bead is back for ages 3+. Take and make craft bags will also be available each week.

The next Zoom meeting of the Board of Trustees is Tuesday, July 28, 2020 at noon.

Stephen moved to adjourn at 1:06 p.m. and Diane seconded. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeri Howland