

Scenic Regional Library
Board Minutes – April 21, 2020

Scenic Regional Library Board of Trustees met virtually, due to the coronavirus, via a Zoom audio-only conference call on April 21, 2020, at 7:00 pm. Board President Kathleen Ham presided at the meeting. Board members attending the meeting were Linda Andrae, John Cheatham, Susan Richardson, Paula Sutton, Carol Leech, Robert Niebruegge, Diann Wacker, John Barry, Joy Dufrain, Karen Holtmeyer, and Carla Robertson.

Steven Campbell, Library Director, Megan Maurer, Assistant Library Director, Kjersti Merseal, Business and Human Resource Manager, Erica Mosley, Administrative Assistant, Diane Disbro, Union Branch Manager, Renny McBride, Wright City Branch Manager, and two members of the public were also on the call.

One member of the public, Joy, joined the call, but was unable to voice her comments until later in the meeting due to technical difficulties.

Public Comments

John Cheatham made a motion to accept the March 17, 2020 minutes as written. Carol Leech seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 12/0.

Approval of Minutes

John Barry made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 17, 2020 executive session as written. Joy Dufrain seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 12/0.

The October 15, 2020 minutes were also submitted for approval. Director Campbell explained that the library's previous Administrative Assistant Charlean Stockton was unable to complete the October minutes prior to going on medical leave. Director Campbell and Erica Mosley finished the minutes, working from Ms. Stockton's notes.

Paula Sutton made a motion to accept the October 15, 2019 minutes as written. Susan Richardson seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 12/0.

John Barry made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 15, 2019 executive session as written. Joy Dufrain seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 12/0.

At 7:08 Wright City branch manager Renny McBride joined the call.

Director Campbell said that, although closing the Library on March 18 resulted in slightly less money being spent in March, the Library continues to pay expenses such as insurance and payroll, and is still purchasing materials. Although the closure has not led to much cost savings, the budget is still on track; the Library is 75% through the fiscal year and 75% through the budget. Director Campbell noted that these numbers might be skewed, since the entire bond payment has been made. He anticipates a surplus of \$250,000-300,000 at the end of the fiscal year. He anticipates the Library will receive 100% of revenue, despite losing some miscellaneous revenue due to the closure.

Financial Report

Business and Human Resources Manager Kjersti Merseal said the Library received \$35,597 in state aid and \$11,930 A&E in April. Director Campbell said the Library will receive less state aid next year, so it may need to be removed from the budget's revenue projections.

Robert Niebruegge made a motion to approve the Financial Report. Joy Dufrain seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 12/0.

Director Campbell asked the Board their opinion on the Library opening earlier than May 26, if the governor does not extend Missouri's stay-at-home order past May 4. He said he is not willing to have staff in the buildings until protective gear has been acquired. He and Megan Maurer ordered 1,500 masks and eleven gallons of hand sanitizer, which should be enough to supply staff for one month. The items should begin arriving around May 3.

Reports

Board member Carol Leech said the original plan, to open May 26, is the best, even though she would like to see the Library open earlier. Board member Paula Sutton said it would be a mistake to push the opening earlier, and that it is important to be cautious for the sake of staff and the public. Board Secretary Susan Richardson, and members Joy Dufrain, John Cheatham, Carla Robertson, and Karen Holtmeyer voiced agreement.

Director Campbell said the Library has already received three negative social media comments from the public about the closure, and if the stay-at-home order lifts and area businesses and the Washington Public Library open, pressure for the Library to open will escalate.

A member of the public, Joy, re-joined the call, and suggested the Library open on a limited basis, allowing only a couple patrons in the building at a time, and requiring them to wear gloves and masks. Director Campbell agreed he would like to see the Library open to serve the public, but explained that doing so at the present time would violate the statewide stay-at-home order.

Board member Carol Leech asked about quarantining materials. Director Campbell said staff is continuing to quarantine returned materials, and that items need to sit for approximately eight days. By the time the Library opens, 90% of materials will have sat long enough. However, staff will then have to quarantine materials that are returned the week before the Library opens, as well as materials arriving from the courier. As a result, the Library can't reopen immediately after staff returns to work; he estimates a week between staff returning and opening to the public.

Board member Carla Robertson voiced concern that, due to widespread backorders, the ordered protective gear might not arrive in time to equip staff. She stressed that safety of staff and patrons is of utmost importance. Megan Maurer said she has received shipping confirmations, with arrival estimates in late April and early May. Director Campbell mentioned the possibility of buying protective shields for the service desks. Thirteen shields would cost \$1,000.

Board member Carla Robertson said she was in favor of buying shields, and that if the stay-at-home order lifts too early, a second wave of the virus could be much worse.

Board Secretary Susan Richardson said masks are meant to keep individuals from spreading the virus to others, but are not effective self-protection. She stressed the importance of hand sanitizer to protect staff. She was also in favor of requiring patrons to wear masks before entering the building. Board member John Cheatham suggested a tape line on the floor to keep patrons a safe distance from the service desk. Board member Linda Andrae suggested putting a hand sanitizer dispenser at the door, as well as advertising the mask requirement through media outlets so patrons are aware of the expectation before they arrive at the building.

Director Campbell asked the Board their opinions on allowing staff members over the age of 60, or with preexisting conditions, to stay home with pay if the Library reopens before May 26. Board Secretary Susan Richardson approved the idea and said pregnant women should be allowed to stay home as well. Board members Carol Leech, John Barry, Linda Andrae, and John Cheatham agreed. Linda Andrae added that, if one staff member becomes sick, all staff who had contact with that person will be quarantined, which may make it difficult to keep branches open.

Another member of the public, Cathy, joined the call, and asked if the Friends of the Library could buy gloves for patrons so that Library staff could feel safe opening early. She advocated a “new normal” and “baby steps,” allowing only a few patrons in at a time, or allowing hold pickups only. Board Secretary Susan Richardson objected to the Library buying gloves and masks for everyone in the Library’s service area. But she agreed the number of people allowed in the building should be limited, and staff can be stationed at the door to enforce limits.

Board member Joy Dufrain asked about testing all staff members for coronavirus prior to opening. Director Campbell said that is not possible, because tests are tightly controlled and individuals must exhibit symptoms before tests are even approved.

Board President Kathleen Ham instructed Board members to forward any additional ideas to Director Campbell and Megan Maurer in the coming days. Director Campbell said he will have a plan in place in case the governor decides to lift the stay-at-home order on May 4.

Board member Carla Robertson recommended investigating St. Louis County Library’s “virtual branch,” and possibly implementing similar resources. Director Campbell said that the Library does already offer online card registration, and numbers spiked in March. The Library is also offering virtual storytime and craft videos.

Unfinished Business

Director Campbell said the Library has finished negotiating its fee with Horn Architects—10% of construction costs. The Library’s attorney has reviewed the contract, and Horn made all the changes he suggested. However, on April 18, Director Campbell was notified that the buyer for the old Administration building has terminated the contract. The nail salon she owns has been closed due to the stay-at-home order, and she has become nervous about opening a second location. The CARES Act gave people the ability to terminate real estate contracts. Because the Library will no longer be receiving the funds from that sale, Director Campbell asked the Board to table the motion to approve the contract with Horn until their June meeting. At the end of the fiscal year, with expected surplus funds, the Library can then afford the \$110,000 architect fee. Actual construction will still have to wait until both buildings sell.

**Contract for
Architectural
Services with Horn
Architects**

Paula Sutton made a motion to table the approval of the contract for architectural services with Horn Architects until the June board meeting. Robert Niebruegge seconded the motion. All voted Aye. The motion carried 12/0.

Director Campbell said the roof replacement on the old Administration building will proceed. The buyer had been going to pay for part of it, but now the Library will cover the entire cost. The roof will be finished within the next few weeks. Replatting is completed.

There was no new business.

New Business

There being no further business, Board President Kathleen Ham adjourned the meeting at 8:08 pm.

Adjourn

Secretary

Approved: _____
President, Scenic Regional Library Board of Trustees

Date: _____