

Sparta Free Library
Regular meeting of the Board of Trustees
March 11, 2020

The meeting was called to order by President Laurie Koll at 5:02PM.

Members present: Paul Lenz, Amy Bernath, Sandie Perry, Reinhard Mueller, and Terry Putman. Also present were Interim Library Director/Youth Services Librarian Aimee Schreiber and Adult Services Librarian Marissa Bazan. Trustee Bruce Humphrey was excused.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the February meeting were distributed. **Putman, seconded by Mueller, moved to approve. Motion carried.**

USDA Grant Public Discussion: Because USDA determined that the City of Sparta will not be eligible for grant funds for Community Facilities until 2022, there was no need to solicit public comments at this time.

Finances: A printed report reflecting February expenditures and income was shared. Trustee Bernath explained one of the first checks received in support of the Library Expansion project in 2018 (\$1,000) had been deposited into the library's Money Market Account at Union Bank. President Koll instructed Trustee Bernath to move those dollars into the Friends of the Sparta Free Library Building Fund. **Bernath, seconded by Mueller, moved to approve the bills. Motion carried.**

Directors Report:

Programming:

- February Programming Highlights: February saw great event attendance and variety with 60 passive and active programs throughout the month. In Children's the month started with 60 attendees at the annual Valentine Creation Station craft event. Lego Club, with a Valentine's/Love theme, had almost 30 kids and parents participate. The monthly Groovy Mondays dance party had 26 enthusiastic movers and shakers bopping along with fun kids music in the program room. 396 children and grown-ups were reached with February outreach storytimes to Parenting Place, local daycares, and Head Start. The teens enjoyed another round of Cookie Wars, with a decorating theme of "book covers". Some of the creations were quite detailed and well thought out! The first Ukulele Strum Along was conducted for Adults and 18 folks attended. At the Permaculture Gardening Presentation educator and Permaculture designer, Jarad Barkeim, co-owner of Coulee Region Ecoscapes, LLC in La Crosse, shared sustainable gardening tips and advice to an audience of 28 attendees. Hot Reads for Cold Nights had over 120 registered participants, with 57 folks completing Book Bingo to receive a free mug and a packet of hot cocoa. Six participants did "black out"; they completed all the Bingo squares to receive two mugs.

Overall our February program participation was 1,568 people.

- Upcoming March Programming: March programming has lots of new and exciting events for all ages! In partnership with Southwest Bus Company, a first ever Storytime on a Bus will be hosted on Thursday, March 12. Attendees will take a leisurely ride around town while listening to bus stories and singing bus songs. Wacky socks are welcome at Sock-a-palooza, a kid's event with crafts, games, activities, and snacks all planned by Kimmy Wegner! Teens are looking forward to a new program, Movie and a Mug, where participants will make brownies and cakes in mugs to eat while watching the movie *Knives Out*. At the

tail end of the month is Spring Craft Day, offering a variety of spring-themed crafts including rainbow flowers, rockin' bunnies, and superhero magnets. For the adults, another Uke Strum Along was held on Saturday, March 7 and on March 21 there will be a Spanish Conversation Group event, which will promote the online resources Mango Languages and Gale Courses.

Operations:

- Personnel: On February 10 and 11, Library Assistants Kristin Shipley and Kimmy Wegner represented the library at Child Development Days; an event put on by the Sparta School District to screen kids before pre-k and share information with parents and guardians. Youth Services Librarian Aimee Schreiber participated in La Crosse Public Library's Adult Storytime at Turtle Stack Brewery on Tuesday, February 11. Schreiber was also invited to participate in Maplewood Elementary's "Read with a Special Guest" event on Thursday, February 27. As a reward, she read silly stories aloud to kindergarten and first graders who have been following the Sparta Way of being respectful, responsible, and safe.
- Staff Development Day: On Monday, February 24, the staff participated in a staff development day at the library. Highlights included presentations from Natalie Carlisle of the Monroe County Safe Community Coalition and Rob Walensky from the Tomah PD and West Central Metropolitan Enforcement Group ("MEG" Unit) discussing drug use in and around Monroe County. Throughout the day staff then discussed county drug use trends and the potential impact on the library and staff. Later work included a mini expansion workshop, with in-depth discussion of where the project is, what the building layout might look like, and staff questions and concerns about fielding public inquiries.

Building & Grounds: Some furnace and heating issues led to several visits from Service Plus to replace flame sensors, filters, and to tweak the system to respond to current building temperatures. Near the end of February the left-hand restroom downstairs had a significant plumbing issue, involving valves and replacement parts, which was resolved by Sure Plumbing.

Old Business:

2019 DPI Public Library Annual Report was submitted in mid-February.

Capital Campaign Update:

- Trustee Bernath announced that the amount raised for the Library Expansion project is \$1.25 million. The next meeting of the Capital Campaign Committee will be held on March 25th. Consultant Jodi Sweeney's contract expires at the end of April. As the goal of \$1.5 million has not yet been reached, Sweeney has offered to extend for 2 additional months for an additional \$4,000. As the preliminary \$5 million budget estimate provided by FEH architectural firm included a line item for fund raising costs, Trustee Bernath inquired if the \$4,000 could be taken out of current project revenues. President Koll deferred that decision to the Friends of the Sparta Free Library and the Capital Campaign Committee. President Koll further advised that, whatever decision is made, the Sweeney Group must provide a detailed plan outlining what measures need to be taken to raise the remaining dollars.
- President Koll reported that she has been coordinating with the Superintendent of Schools regarding local schools participating in fund raising for the expansion project. While actually collecting funds is prohibited by policy, distributing information regarding fundraising efforts may be possible.

President Koll and Interim Director Schreiber provided information about a library tour for State Senator Testin conducted by Library Assistant Kimmy Wegner on March 9th. In addition to the physical aspects of the tour, Senator Testin was provided with information about the library's participation in WRLS and WISCAT. He was also informed that DPI funds not only schools, but also public libraries. He seemed impressed with the expansion plans and offered to write letters of support for future grant requests.

New Business:

- Interim Director Schreiber advised that, in order to remain in compliance with the city of Sparta's policies, the Holiday closings dates will be amended to include closing on 3 July, as well as 4 July.
- Interim Director Schreiber presented a proposed Health Pandemic Policy for Board consideration. Trustee Lenz inquired if gloves and masks are available to the staff. Schreiber reported that gloves and sanitary wipes are available, but not masks. President Koll inquired if the city of Sparta has a policy. Schreiber will inquire. The Board will review the proposed policy prior to the next meeting.

Bernath, seconded by Perry, moved to convene in closed session under the exemption set out in Wisconsin Statutes 19.85 (1)(f). Motion carried. Closed session convened at 5:45. **Bernath, seconded by Perry, moved to reconvene again in open session. Motion carried.** Open session reconvened at 5:58 PM.

Interim Director Schreiber will continue to serve in that capacity until a new director is hired. The position will be posted in June 2020.

President Koll will contact the City Administrators regarding creating a new fulltime Library Assistant Position.

Paperwork will be submitted to the City Treasurer to raise the salary of the Admin & Youth Services Library Assistant to compensate for additional responsibilities included in the position's job description.

Items for Future Consideration: None.

The next meeting will be the first Monday, April 6, 5:00 p.m. – Library Lower Level – Multi-Purpose Room

Perry, seconded by Putnam, moved to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:03 PM.

Special Board actions taken in preparation for and response to COVID19 restrictions during the following weeks:

- On March 13, via e-mail vote, the Board approved the proposed Health Pandemic Policy.
- On April 3, because the Library had been closed and Capital Campaign fundraising had been temporarily suspended, President Koll cancelled the regularly scheduled April

Board of Trustees meeting and requested Trustees vote to approve payment of bills for the month via e-mail. On April 7, the Board approved the payment of bills.