

**Sparta Free Library
Regular meeting of the Board of Trustees
October 5, 2020**

The meeting was called to order by President Laurie Koll at 5:00 PM.

Members participating: Paul Lenz, Amy Bernath, Sandie Perry, Reinhard Mueller, Bruce Humphrey and Terry Putman. Also participating was Director Michelle Tryggestad. Visitor present: Sparta Police Chief Emilee Nottestad.

Approval of Minutes: The September minutes were presented. **Humphrey, seconded by Putman, moved to approve the September minutes. Motion carried.**

Public Input: Trustee Humphrey introduced Police Chief Emilee Nottestad, explaining that he had invited her to attend the meeting to explain the City of Sparta's request for reduction of WiFi hours around the fountain area.

Chief Nottestad advised that there has been a recent rash of crimes in the downtown area: breaking and entering, drug sales, criminal damage to property. The events are happening overnight, primarily between 7:30 PM and 3 AM, mostly involving the same 22 people, 14 of whom are currently on bond for previous crimes. There is also a growing homeless rate and growing drug addiction. Homeless individuals are sleeping under the bridge behind Mueller Square and in the band shelter at Evans-Bosshard Park. Further complicating the issue are the limits imposed on law enforcement techniques due to the COVID situation. In many instances, the hands of the police are tied.

In response to this situation, the city has taken the following measures: cutting electric power to gathering areas; requesting limiting WiFi hours around the library; posting Mueller Square as city park with opening and closing hours; having police presence visible in problematic areas by having police park their vehicles in those areas while they complete paperwork.

Chief Nottestad expressed the Police Department's appreciation to the Board of Trustees for cooperating with their efforts and shortening WiFi hours. Trustee Humphrey asked if this measure has resulted in any lessening of criminal traffic around the library. Chief Nottestad stated that she did not have any specific statistics to provide, but would advise Director Tryggestad when she has them.

Finances: A printed report reflecting September expenditures and income was distributed, as well as a list of expenditures with comparison to budget for the 8 months ending September 30, 2020. **Perry, seconded by Humphrey, moved to approve the bills. Motion carried.**

Directors Report:

Programming:

- September Programming Highlights: Fall programming is in full swing. Weekly Snuggly Stories and Online Storytimes have resumed with great responses from families. The September Groovy Mondays dance party was a blast, with one of the grown-up participants remarking how much they look forward to discovering new children's music each month at the event. The Artists' Corner challenge ran all month long, with participants of all ages submitting original artwork on a special form. The winners for each age category were drawn and received their art-themed prizes at the end of the month, but the real winner is the library with all the fantastic artwork we now can display

for the rest of fall. Our first two Learn with the Library activity bags for kids (Sensory Seeds and Pigeon Handprint Craft) were a hit and all prepared bags were snapped up before the end of the week each time! In the adult services realm, an enthusiastic group met for Book Club via Zoom to discuss books by Wisconsin authors and/or titles set in Wisconsin. This month we also offered Alzheimer's Awareness - Memory Connections Kits (containing painting, crafts, sensory items, and more!) to community members and have so far given out 9 of the 10 created bags.

- Upcoming Programming: October brings in a few all-new programs. This month the library will be accepting submissions for our first Virtual Costume Contest. We hope the competition is stiff in all 5 prize brackets: birth - 5 yrs., 6 - 11 yrs., 12 - 18 yrs., Adult, and Group/Family! Also new this month is a reimagined version of Lego Club, where participants build on the month's theme (Monsters) and "turn in" a picture of their creation to be shared on the library Facebook page. Teens can pick up an all-new Crafternoon kit containing Spooky Cubees, foldable cube creations, to keep them busy this month. In adult services, we look forward to another round of Memory Connections Kits due to a fresh supply of funds from the WRLS-Bader Grant. Possible kit ideas being explored include a pen pal kit, a sensory experiences kit, and a games and puzzles kit. For all ages, during the week of Oct. 19 - 23, patrons who check out movies at the library will receive a free bag of microwave popcorn to turn their evening into an SFL Movie Night!

Operations:

- Kiwanis Meeting: Amy Van Deuren, Superintendent of Sparta Schools gave an update on the decision to move to virtual. Michelle thanked the group for their generous donation & will schedule photo op. She also shared info about our appointments for computer & Wi-Fi use, as a possible solution for families needing access during virtual schooling.
- Computer/Wi-Fi Access: Appointments have increased with families and regular patrons. Added a family Wi-Fi access station on ground floor (bring your own devices, which works well with virtual schooling).
- Browsing Appointments: Steady with our busiest days being Mondays and Fridays
Grants: Proceeding with round two of the Memory Connections/Aging Grant with WRLS (11 libraries). Added several new patrons in the last month.
- Staffing: Some applicants for Adult Services Coordinator received; open until Oct. 12; posted on WRLS site and shared with WRLS Directors, SWLS, SCLS, WVLS and IFLS systems. Substitutes needed, will begin search and training.

Building & Grounds:

- Roof Maintenance: Leak in Periodicals/ Audiobook Room was repaired by Interstate Roofing.
- Venting/Air System Maintenance: Service Heating and Cooling replaced venting filters to address persistent musty smell in the forced air system – very noticeable difference especially downstairs.

- Custodial: Staff has expressed great appreciation for Carol Schmitz's work – library is very clean and neat, an immense relief with our increase in browsing and computer visits. Trustee Putman noted that since the services of Kemp Cleaning has been terminated, they need to be removed from the emergency contact list at the police and fire departments.
- Outdoor Wi-Fi Access: Patrons trying to use plug-in by back door the first day the charging station was shut down; inhibits use of handicapped access. Continued use of fountain/lot late night not attributed to our WiFi. Increased security monitors on neighboring building(s).

Old Business

Grounds and Fountain (WiFi access): The Board expressed their appreciation to Trustee Humphrey for inviting Police Chief Nottestad to address the City's request to limit WiFi hours, and also acknowledged their appreciation for the candor of her presentation. A discussion ensued regarding the community's lack of resources available to address homelessness and substance abuse issues.

Capital Campaign Update: Trustee Bernath reported that new donations/pledges continue to trickle in. Several annual pledge reminders will be mailed in October. The Capital Campaign Committee has not convened since March. Consultant Jodi Sweeney has 2 months of services remaining, but has not indicated if she will continue on the project. Director Tryggestad agreed to contact Consultant Sweeney to ascertain her future project involvement.

New Business: Director Tryggestad stated that the City Council Finance Committee will be meeting on October 6th regarding the 2021 budget. She will be making a brief presentation about the Library's requirements. President Koll recommended that Director Tryggestad stress the need for adequate funding for the salaries of the library's professional staff. Director Tryggestad will advise the Finance Committee of WRLS compensation recommendations.

Items for Future Consideration:

- Status of Adult Services Librarian recruitment
- Open Library Board Annual Meeting

The next meeting will be the first Monday, November 2, 5:00 PM

Mueller, seconded by Humphrey, moved to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:47 PM.