

**Sparta Free Library
Regular meeting of the Board of Trustees
September 14, 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 Interim Library Director/Youth Services Librarian Aimee Schreiber. Visitors present: Mayor Kristen Gust, and Michelle Tryggestad (applicant for Library Director position).

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

Perry, seconded by Mueller, moved to adjourn and convene in closed session under the exemption set out in Wisconsin Statutes 19.85 (1)(c) to consider the employment of a new library director, and will reconvene again in open session. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried. Regular meeting adjourned at 5:02 PM. Visitors were excused.

Closed session meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM. The regular meeting was immediately reconvened. Visitors were invited to return.

Mueller, seconded by Humphrey, moved to approve the hiring of Michelle Tryggestad for the position of Library Director effective 15 September. Motion carried.

Trustee Humphrey asked that the new business agenda item pertaining to library grounds and fountain be moved to the next topic of discussion. President Koll so directed.

Trustee Humphrey reported that he had received calls from City Councilman Ed Lukasek, local property owner (property adjacent to the library) John Lodeco and City Administrator Todd Fahning about people loitering around the fountain with littering, vandalism, and a general unsavory environment resulting. All had expressed concern that a contributing factor is the availability of the library's WiFi. Trustee Humphrey also spoke with the Sparta Chief of Police, who echoed the concerns and added that drug transactions are also occurring. In addition, there are problems with loiterers in and around nearby Mueller Square. Since the majority of problems seem to occur outside of library hours, it was suggested that public access to the WiFi be limited to the library's open hours.

Mayor Gust acknowledged that she realized public access to WiFi is a priority to libraries, but that there is city-wide concern about what is drawing loiterers to this general area, noting that within this small area loiterers have free access to a food pantry, electric power, a phone charging station, water, and WiFi. She asked the library's assistance with figuring out how to resolve the situation. She requested the Library Board consider limiting WiFi access to the public.

President Koll advised that the library originally offered 24-hour WiFi availability until 2017 when, per the Police Chief's request, the hours were cut to 5 AM until 11 PM (city curfew).

Future Library Director Tryggestad asked Mayor Gust which hours seem the most problematic. Mayor Gust estimated evening hours (8-11 PM).

Interim Director Schreiber emphasized that WiFi is an essential extension of library services for those who cannot use the library during open hours. It fills the gap in library services for those who do not have the resources for internet access.

Trustee Perry expressed her opinion that the problem is the need for more policing of the area. She recommended that the Chief of Police be invited to the next Board meeting to address the issue. Trustee Humphrey offered to extend the invitation.

Humphrey, seconded by Mueller, moved that WiFi hours be limited to 9 AM-8 PM on Monday through Friday and 9 AM TO 5 PM on weekends. Motion carried on a 5 to 1 vote.

Trustee Lenz noted that the situation should be closely monitored and re-addressed monthly to determine if the change in hours has had any impact.

Finances: A printed report reflecting August expenditures and income was distributed, as well as a list of expenditures with comparison to budget for the 8 months ending August 31, 2020. **Mueller, seconded by Perry, moved to approve the bills. Motion carried.**

Directors Report:

Programming:

- August Programming Highlights: In August we wrapped up the 2020 Summer Learning Challenge and hosted our last summer online programming sessions. Children, teens, and adults who participated in the challenge have been scheduling prize pick-ups during browsing appointments. All 12 of the ticket drawing winners picked up their prizes in the first two days. Beanstack was very popular with all who used it to track their summer activities and staff members were asked a number of times if we would be continuing with the platform for future challenges.
- Upcoming Programming: Fall will see the return of several successful online programs, including Storytime Online, Snuggly Stories, Groovy Mondays, Needlecraft Club, and more. This September we are celebrating our community's creativity by hosting an Artists' Corner challenge, where participants of all ages can submit original artwork on a special form and get entered to win one of four art-related prizes. We have also started presenting Staff Picks Videos on Facebook: each library staff member has filmed a few videos of themselves recommending favorite books/movies/audiobooks and other library items.

Additionally, for each month of Fall 2020 teens will be able to pick up a Teen Crafternoon bag with a craft or activity in it (September's is a mug cake). Starting Sept. 14, kids and families can pick up Learn with the Library activity bags, which will contain various activities/challenges/sensory experiences.

Operations:

- At the August 25 Kiwanis meeting Interim Director Schreiber presented information about library services, programs, and COVID-19 response.
- Adult Services Marissa Bazan has submitted her resignation effective 25 September to accept a position as Youth Services Librarian at the Viroqua Public Library. The position has been posted, with a closing date in mid-October.

Building & Grounds:

- Window Cleaning: FISH Window Cleaning cleaned all the library windows, interior and exterior.

- **Roof Leak:** After the heavy rains near the end of August, the roof sprung a new, fairly extensive leak directly above the Large Print Non-Fiction section, a few steps from the Director's office. Interstate Roofing inspected and fixed the leak, but noted that the roof would likely need further repairs and/or replacement in the near future.
- **Library Custodian Position:** After receiving a great number of applicants and hosting several interviews, the Sparta Library team was happy to hire Carol Schmitz as the parttime library custodian. Schmitz will work 9 hours/week to keep the library clean and functional.
- **Browsing Appointments:** Browsing Appointments have been well-received and for the most part, patrons are happy to follow the guidelines and requirements for a safe visit. Therefore, browsing appointments have been expanded to include Fridays 12:00 - 500pm.

Old Business

Capital Campaign Update: Trustee Bernath reported that new donations/pledges continue to trickle in. Several annual pledge reminders will be mailed in the next few months.

Fine Forgiveness Community Action: Interim Director Schreiber advised that the steps taken to wave all existing fines for Sparta residents resulted in a total financial impact of \$77,468. Trustee Putman asked if the library realistically expected to have ever redeemed any of the outstanding fines. Schreiber acknowledged probably not.

New Business:

2021 Library Closed Dates: Interim Director Schreiber presented a proposed list of 2021 library close dates. **Bernath, seconded by Mueller, moved to approve the library close dates. Motion carried.**

Items for Future Consideration:

- Status of Adult Services Librarian recruitment
- Review of public WiFi availability
- Open Library Board Annual Meeting

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

Mueller, seconded by Perry, moved to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:04 PM.