

Sparta Free Library
Regular meeting of the Board of Trustees
April 5, 2021

The meeting was called to order by President Laura Koll at 5:01 PM.

Members participating: Paul Lenz, Amy Bernath, Sandie Perry, Bruce Humphrey, and Terry Putman. Also participating were Library Director Michelle Tryggestad and Youth Services Coordinator Aimee Schreiber. Trustee Reinhard Mueller was excused.

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

Public Input: Two library patrons provided input via phone conference:

- Heidi Govern requested that the library have a totally open policy similar to the LaCrosse County Library. President Koll assured Ms. Govern that the Board will be discussing reopening options during this evening's meeting, noting that the several library patrons have voiced similar requests.
- Sarah Curtis echoed Ms. Govern's request, expressing her concern that the library risks becoming irrelevant to many patrons if it doesn't fully open soon and that the mask requirement be dropped. President Koll thanked her for her input and invited both callers to remain on the call for the remainder of the meeting.

Finances: A printed report reflecting March expenditures and income was distributed, as well as a list of year-to-date expenditures with comparison to budget for 2021. **Lenz, seconded by Putman, moved to approve the bills. Motion carried.**

Directors Report:

Programming

March Programming Highlights:

- **Adult Services:** In March, the Adult Services team led by Nicole Wallace added virtual book club and trivia programming. Our first Coffee & Chat Book Club had six community members sign-up to read *The Language of Flowers* by Vanessa Diffenbaugh and meet virtually on Zoom. All those who signed up received a copy of the book to borrow as well as a "reading kit" containing thematic (literary-related) treats and a mug to keep. Kristin Shipley from Youth Services joined in and helped plan and execute this successful event. We had so much fun meeting virtually that we even went over our allotted hour! Virtual Trivia was another successful event hosted by Adult Services with special planning and MC assistance from Amy Weissenberger. We had 12 participants compete in Luck of the Irish Trivia. Lots of laughs were had and the very lucky winner received a \$20 gift card to Meraki (here in Sparta!) and a bag of yummy chocolate shamrocks. March also found us planning for virtual needlecraft activities and events.
- **Youth Services:** In March, the Youth Services team continued our online presence with virtual programs including Snuggly Stories, Storytime Online, and Groovy Mondays via Zoom. The March Virtual Lego Club: Mystery Brick Challenge had our best turn out yet, with 21 kids participating in the building challenge (which was using the mystery brick wheel to build something that could fly) and 33 total attendees. Youth Services Coordinator Schreiber

also had the opportunity to present information about library services as well as a Storytime during a Head Start Parent Night event. The event had 31 participants tuning in from home and from cars parked outside the Head Start building. In March Youth Services also premiered Discover Together family activity totes; imagined, created, and marketed by Youth and Administrative Library Assistant Kimmy Wegner. The totes included everything needed for an indoor fort building extravaganza, including clothespins, tablecloths, glow sticks, and more.

Upcoming Programming:

- Adult Services: In April, the Adult Services team will continue the virtual Book Club and trivia sessions, also adding virtual needlecraft to the calendar. The Coffee & Chat Book Club will read *The Dutch House* by Ann Patchett and receive a "reading kit" to keep and enjoy. With creative assistance from Lori Einer, this month's thematic kit includes a Delft china-inspired mug coaster, a bag of Dutch stroopwafels (pronounced STROOP va fill) and some coffee and tea to enjoy. Shipley will continue to lend her expertise and passion for reading to our growing group - we already have seven readers signed up! Our virtual trivia event has evolved in TR-I-N-G-O (trivia + bingo) and will help us kick off National Library Week on April 5th. We're thrilled to retain Weissenberger's MC skills for this virtual evening event. Participants will complete in four Tringo games around the themes of Sparta Free Library and Wisconsin Sports (by community request). Prizes from local businesses will be awarded and all participants will take home Tringo bags with cards, a snack, and dabbers for the virtual event. Finally, in late April, Adult Services will host a virtual needlecraft club (yet to be given a sassy name). Participants will learn (or practice) cross stitch on spring-themed printed napkins. All materials, as well as instruction from Donna Haack, will be included.
- Youth Services: In April, the Youth Services team will wrap up our Spring Snuggly and Storytime sessions and focus in on planning for the 2021 Summer Learning Challenge. New this month, kids and families will be able to stop in at the library to pick up an Out & About Scavenger Hunt entry form. The Scavenger Hunt has participants finding backyard bugs like worms, but also visiting Sparta locations such as Ben Bikin'. Entry forms will be turned in at the library before the end of April and winners will be drawn for prize packs highlighting spring and gardening. The April Teen Trivia theme is books and will highlight favorite books, authors, and more, as teens compete to win a coveted gift card to Barnes and Noble.

Operations:

- Grants: Wallace, Schreiber & Tryggestad submitted an extensive application to the Libraries Transforming Communities: Focus on Small and Rural Libraries, an initiative of the American Library Association. "Find Yourself on Our SFL Shelf" focused on providing community engagement resources and opportunities involving the Latinx and Ho-Chunk cultures and communities. Initial notification indicates that the request has been approved, with information concerning the amount of the grant to be provided in the near future.
- Increased Services: We have seen an increase in browsing requests; however, many patrons continue to utilize curbside appointments. After Leadership Team (Wallace, Wegner, Schreiber & Tryggestad) and All Staff discussions, we have moved to accommodate with four days a week Browsing by Appointment (Tuesdays – Fridays), with Curbside Appointments on Monday only beginning Monday, April 5th . Leadership will also discuss moving to a 24-hour quarantine on returned materials. WRLS Directors are

discussing on April 8th and our staff will revisit all procedures in mid-April to consider further changes to our Phase 3 Re-Opening (Library Express) plans (handout), allowing for CDC guidelines, state, county, and city mandates. As throughout this past year, we strive to uphold safety for both patrons and staff.

- Updated Staff Computers: WRLS IT System Analyst Tou Yang installed various updated station components (all purchased with 2020 funds), including towers with increased memory/speed for all circulation, Administrative Assistant and Director stations; updated monitors for Admin. Assist., Adult Services Coordinator, Director & one A. Services circ station; laptops with increased memory/speed for Youth and Adult Services Coordinators (allowing for old laptops to be repurposed as a travel/standby unit and a virtual programming unit). Yang also installed programs on two laptops received from city via CARES funding which will be used for programming and travel/standby units.

- Phone System Update: CenturyLink did not schedule a meeting with Tryggestad as they said they would. She will pursue a meeting with Lynxx.

- Staff Training & Education: Friday, March 26th was Individual Project Day with staff focusing on separate trainings, webinars, or projects, allowing the hour before opening to self-educate on topics to assist in helping patrons. Topics included GALE courses (Shipley, Weissenberger & Tryggestad), WISCAT user group webinar (Wegner), CreativeBug (Lori Einer, Nicole Wallace & Donna Haack), and Project READY (Aimee Schreiber).

- Staffing: During our unplanned, sudden two-week closure, there was a need for some staff, though not all, to complete various necessary tasks during this time. In immense appreciation, and as per the Time Off Awards Policy, Tryggestad will coordinate time off, separate to regular hours paid through city, with each of the following staff: 50 hrs. (1 staff member), 5 hrs. (1), 1 hr. (1), 30 min. (2). This time will be scheduled based on the needs of the library and will not conflict with any programs or projects. President Koll noted that the Time Off Awards Policy allows for only 24 hours to be awarded. **Bernath, seconded by Lenz, moved to provide a one-time exception to policy to allow for 50 hours of time off for Youth Services Librarian Schreiber, who accrued the additional hours performing the duties of Library Director, as well as Youth Services Coordinator, during the Library Director's medical absence in January and February. Motion carried.**

- Closure Compensation: Last month Tryggestad was asked to contact city regarding whether funds for pay would come from CARES funding or the library budget. Mark Sund's response via email: "No, the Closure Compensation pay would come from the Library's budget. At this point, it is not known if the money we will be receiving in the near future can be used to recover any wages lost to employees being out for Covid reasons."

- COVID Vaccinations: Several staff have received their initial dose (and voluntarily provided this info).

- Friends of Sparta Free Library: Planning a Book Sale for Friday, May 21st, 4-7pm and Saturday, May 22nd, 10am-2pm at the Boys & Girls Club with masks and safe distances encouraged. NO donations are being accepted at the Library for this sale due to the overflowing supply in the storage room.

Building & Grounds:

- Plumbing: Another round of minimal back-up and odor (2 ½ months since previous); called Sure Plumbing who were able to repair quickly; discussed with Todd Fahning who also contacted Sure; both agreed we just need to get by until expansion; will have to see how re-opening to the public will affect the frequency; will keep track of invoices and request from contingency as needed.
- Security System: Battery for alarm pad (unknown location) is faulty; alarms have been going off immediately upon entrance; technician check on Wednesday, March 31st .
- Fire Inspection: Gene Olson, City of Sparta, inspected on March 22nd – battery and two lights need repair; staff will be checking extinguishers monthly; Fire Protection Services completing annual service on Thursday, April 1st; Tryggestad working on an Emergency Evacuation Plan
- Adult Services Desk Shield: As browsing appointments have increased, and as we work toward re-opening, staff have noticed patrons leaning into open space between shields. Volunteer Skip Frazee is working on an additional piece to cover. Frazee has also volunteered his time to prepare Director desk for new monitor arm, as well as repairing loose legs

Old Business:

- Expansion Committee Update: Trustee Bernath reported that City Treasurer Mark Sund has not yet responded to Trustee Mueller's request for information concerning the date when the City will be prepared to fund the start of the expansion project. Consultant Jodi Sweeney contacted Trustee Bernath regarding a potential \$100k Bremmer grant opportunity, with a 1 May submission deadline for an August award notification. Director Tryggestad and Youth Services Coordinator Schreiber will pursue the project.
- 2nd Review Health Crisis Policy: The Board once again considered the March 2020 Health Crisis Policy. **Bernath, seconded by Putman, moved to approve the policy as amended at the March 2021 meeting. Motion carried.**

New Business:

Increased Services & Phase 3 Review: Director Tryggestad provided a draft Phase 3 Re-Opening Statement, featuring:

- No appointments for browsing the collection, checking out library items, library card sign ups, computer use, printing, copying, paying fines.
- Face coverings still required
- Visits limited to 30 minutes encouraged
- Number of patrons per floor not to exceed 15 (not including staff)
- No access to restrooms, drinking fountains, seating (limited furniture), shared newspapers, community puzzle, children's toys.

Programming will depend on the amount of space required, for both indoor and outdoor events.

Conditions were based on guidance provided by the CDC, Monroe County Health Department, and the City of Sparta. The announcement to the public will promote Phase 3 re-opening as "Library Express" to begin on May 3, 2021.

President Koll asked what type of air circulation systems the library has. Director Tryggestad responded the library has no state-of-the-art systems, relying entirely on the regular air system and a small air cleaner in the entry way.

President Koll expressed concern that the implementation date is not until May 3rd. Trustee Lenz recommended that, if possible, it should be implemented earlier. President Koll advised that the re-opening practices of other City departments should be explored.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, May 3, 2021, 5 PM.

Bernath, seconded by Putman, moved to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:56 PM.