

**Sparta Free Library
Regular meeting of the Board of Trustees
2 August, 2021**

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

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

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

Public Input: None.

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

Directors Report:

Programming

July Programming Highlights:

- **Adult Services:** This month, Adult Services provided 30 Adult Activity Kits and 50 Spice Club Kits with Garam Masala to our adult patrons. Our Needlecraft Club, hosted by Haack and Wallace, had 12 participants learning to needle felt cacti. Coffee & Chat Book Club modified their programming and met virtually during the closure--Wallace was joined by 4 participants. TR-I-N-G-O Summer with Weissenberger and Wallace was rescheduled for August 2nd and has 12 people signed up to play.
- **Youth Services:** We currently have 215 participants of all ages registered on Beanstack, participating in the Summer Learning Challenge. This month Youth Services hosted the second of the three Necedah National Wildlife Refuge Presentations: Where Animals Live and discussed natural habitats of native wildlife species. Crochet Critters, led by YS Library Assistant Wegner, had 20 participants over 2 sessions, crafting crochet amigurumi owls. July's Nocturnal Animal Outdoor Scavenger Hunt had 71 participants and 3 raffle winners earned book prizes. Additionally, Schreiber presented at 4 sessions of Magical Mondays at Memorial Park, hosted by the Parenting Place, with themes including nature, science, and construction. Attendance at Magical Mondays averages 25 participants.

Upcoming Projects & Programs:

- **Adult Services**
 - Adult Activity Kits: Flower Themed--August 2, 49 Kits
 - Spice Club Kits: Spanish Paprika -- August 2, 40 Kits
 - NNWR Presentation: Gardening with Native Plants--August 12 @ 5:30 PM via Zoom
 - Coffee & Chat Book Club: When Harry Met Minnie-- August 17 @ 10:30 AM, Ginny's Cupboard

- Needlecraft Club: Marbled Embroidery--August 19 @ 11:30 AM, Outdoors at Sparta Library
- Youth Services
 - Kid's Summer To-Go Kits (150/week) – Themes: bunnies, wolves
 - August Teen Summer Activity Kits (100) – RPG starter kit, edible books, DIY cat toy, Lego bracelet
 - SFL Story Trail – July 26 - August 22
 - Teen Trivia: Animals in Pop culture – August 10
 - NNWR Presentation: Wolves – August 11
 - Teen Advisory Group Meeting – August 17
 - Virtual Lego Club: Mystery Brick Challenge – August 18
 - Teen Picnic (Amundson Park) - August 20

Operations:

- Closure (July 14-25): A staff member notified us 7/13/21 of a positive test for COVID. As they had been in the building that same day, working with the entire staff, we made the decision to close on 7/14 & urged staff to be tested. With several staff fully vaccinated, no further positive tests or symptoms, we decided to open after 12 days (only 8 service days). Youth Services programs continued with online presentations during this time. Adult Services programs were either modified for online or were rescheduled. Going forward staff will be wearing masks while in the building, only removing in the staff lounge, bathroom or if working in the building alone for the day. President Koll asked if continued masking is so the facility can remain open in the event future positive COVID tests occur. Director Tryggestad responded that the presence of masks is not the issue, but rather the number of bodies required to keep staff members separate while keeping both floors operational.
- Fall and Winter Schedule: Starting September 7th hours will shift to provide for Saturdays. Staff will be in the building from 8:30 a.m. to 7:15 p.m., Monday through Thursday, Fridays 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. and Saturdays 8:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Hours for the public will be Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Fridays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a total of 51 hours available time for patrons (compared to 43 currently).
- Increased Services: Staff remain hopeful we will proceed with reintroduction of services which have been limited since the pandemic beginning. Part of our upcoming Aug. 23rd Staff Development Day will be devoted to prep including replacing furniture (tables, chairs, couches), computer hubs, and program room organization. We hope to gradually reintroduce restrooms and water fountain, along with children's play center and STEM toys; however, we will adjust this schedule with consideration of CDC, state and local advisement regarding patron and staff safety. President Koll asked of it would be feasible to convert the water fountain to a bottle filler, and what cost would be involved. Director Tryggestad will research the matter.

Building & Grounds

- New grass: Coming in nicely where trees were removed.

- Parking: Staff has been encouraged to park in the spaces facing the creek as well as north of the building to maintain easy access for patrons in the spaces facing the library. It is noted the streetside parking is very busy most days, mainly for courthouse business.
- Security cameras. City Administrator Fahning asked if the library would be willing to accommodate the addition of one or two external security cameras to focus on Mueller Square. Director Tryggestad expressed concern about costs (both equipment and staffing) and whether it would violate ALA policies on privacy. Trustee Mueller advised she pose those questions to Administrator Fahning, requesting written response, before a Board decision is made.

Old Business:

Expansion Committee update: Director Tryggestad reported that Mayor Gust will probably not convene the committee until after Labor Day. Trustee Humphrey advised that the Committee will elect a Chair during the first meeting.

Campaign Committee update:

- Trustee Humphrey provided an overview of the efforts that have been made to acquire some federal funding for the expansion project. Because of his legislative experience, he had volunteered 3 years ago to serve as a liaison with legislative offices, both state and federal. A formal application was submitted to Senator Tammy Baldwin in March of this year. Senator Baldwin is key member of the Appropriations Committee. Her staff representative in La Crosse relayed the Trustee Humphrey that Senator Baldwin is keenly interested in our proposal and, time permitting, would like to tour the library during the upcoming Congressional August recess. He recommended Trustee Bernath and Director Tryggestad coordinate that tour. Trustee Bernath advised that the Friends of the Sparta Free Library, as the official recipients of any potential grants, be included in the process.
- Director Tryggestad reported that she had received a phone call from Philip Gelatt, whose PMG Foundation pledged \$250K to the expansion project. He inquired about the status of the campaign and asked about library operations during the COVID situation. Overall, he seemed pleased with how the campaign is going and how the library performed throughout the pandemic.

Staffing needs: Director Tryggestad noted that an article in the July 12th *Monroe County Herald* reported that several city departments are in need of additional staff positions, but did not mention the library. Has any formal notification ever been given to the City Treasurer or City Council of the need for more staff at the library? President Koll replied that we were in the process of developing a proposal when COVID struck and that we should now reexamine the issue.

New Business:

WRLSWEB Contract: Our contract is due for renewal in the near future. President Koll will be reviewing and signing.

Annual Meeting and Goal Setting schedule:

- President Koll observed that the Annual Meeting schedule has been increasingly inconsistent. In order to correct that, we will conduct a brief Annual Meeting following our regular monthly meeting in September to elect Board Officers for the September 2021 thru May 2022 time period, which will us back on track. Trustee Bernath noted that the Annual Meetings have traditionally been held after a regular monthly meeting, when Trustees are anxious to adjourn as quickly as possible. President Koll agreed and advised that stand-alone Annual Meetings will be scheduled beginning in May 2022.
- President Koll advised that the Board should begin focusing on goal setting and strategic planning. Possible topics for consideration: staffing and compensation. Director Tryggestad asked if she should contact WRLS Director Kristen Anderson to facilitate a goal setting session. The Board enthusiastically agreed. Director Tryggestad and President Koll will coordinate scheduling a goal-setting session shortly after the September Annual Meeting.

Items for Future Consideration: Library Director review process.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 13, 2021, 5 PM.

Mueller, seconded by Lenz, moved to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:43 PM.