

Coralville Public Library Board of Trustees
April 15th, 2020

An Electronic Meeting (pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.8) of the Coralville Public Library Board of Trustees was held Wednesday April 15th, 2020 at 6:00 pm because a meeting in person was impossible or impractical due to concerns for the health and safety of Trustees, Staff and the Public presented by COVID-19. Until further notice all of our Board of Trustees Meetings will be held electronically only. The meeting was live streamed Wednesday, April 15th, 202 at 6:00 pm on www.coralville.org/coralvision.

Present: The following members of the Library Board were present: Lindsay Bland, X. Cretzmeyer, Amanda Elkins, Deborah Hatz, Keith Jones, Pat Kenner, Shaner Magalhaes, Mitch Gross (City Council Representative).

The following Library and City staff members were present at city hall: Alison Ames Galstad (Library Director), Ellen Hampe Alexander (Assistant Library Director), Laura Crossett (Adult Services Coordinator), Sara Glenn (Youth Services Coordinator), Mike Funke (City of Coralville Human Resources/Risk Manager), Jon Hines (City of Coralville Communications Specialist).

President Jones called the meeting to order at 6:01. He noted a few logistical items. All board members are attending virtually, while Galstad and Alexander are present in the City of Coralville Council chambers in order to maintain access for public comment. Public comment was also invited via mail or email. All votes will be via roll call.

The Board considered approval of the agenda. Hatz moved that the Board approve the agenda as presented. Elkins seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board considered approval of the minutes of the March 5, 2020 meeting. Kenner made a small grammatical correction, and Hatz motioned that they be approved with this change. Bland seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board considered approval of the bills for March. Kenner asked about Overdrive. Galstad explained that selectors have been adding a lot of e-books and e-audios for the Overdrive collection. Bland asked about the Jymbag invoice – Galstad explained that this was hoodies that were purchased for staff. Cretzmeyer motioned the bills be approved as presented, Kenner seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board reviewed operations as currently modified under restrictions in place due to COVID-19. There were several public comments submitted via email, and Laura Crossett was present in the Council Chambers. She took the podium and addressed the Board. She thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak, and said she did not feel safe not wearing a mask, then reviewed concerns outlined in the letter sent to the Board by herself and several other staff members. She said that she reached out to staff in a message that she “wishes she had gotten from her supervisor” asking them to reach out to her with any concerns about how CPL was handling operations in light of COVID. She reported getting an outpouring of worry, anger, and other emotions. Eventually a letter was written outlining staff concerns, signed by ten staff members and “eight other concerned staff members,” and sent to the board. Crossett claimed that she sent an email with questions she had received from staff to coordinators on April 1st, but was reprimanded. She said she was told that cleaning supplies were limited. She felt like there was no clear leadership from the beginning, and that teams were left to make their own decisions regarding procedures. The letter asked that curbside delivery cease, and if not that four conditions be met.

Jones asked about other public comments - Galstad read four emails from members of the public in support of the curbside delivery service in response to the Iowa City Press Citizen article.

The board discussed: Magalhaes asked what role the trustees can play beyond a decision about continuing to provide access to physical materials or service or not. Jones said this was a good point. The city has deemed

library service as essential, and although the library board has some autonomy, that is essentially the question. Jones agrees that it is essential. Elkins said that she doesn't have any information about curbside delivery procedures, thought Bland had used it and asked how her experience was. Bland has used it twice and felt that they were very different experiences. The first time was March 24th, the second time was this week. There had obviously been more procedures put in place between the two. Also, Bland thanked Laura for sharing comments. She expressed concern that half of the staff signed the letter, and that some board members expressed interest in meeting sooner. She asked to hear what changes have been made since April 6th to present.

Hatz told her experience with curbside delivery as well, pointing out a marked difference in safety measures. Had heard that there might be a letter coming, and was surprised at staff reactions. She thought back to how COVID had progressed, and how everyone has progressed as new standards came out. She thinks that the library management has taken steps as information came out. Karen Stierler told Hatz that she thinks staff has felt much better about implementation of more safety measures. Any staff were allowed to take leave. Hatz's opinion is that more measures have been put in place as they need to be.

Galstad read some staff emails submitted as public comment, as well.

Mike Funke gave the city's perspective and expressed gratitude to the Board, as well as to all city staff for continuing to work. Bland asked about what has been done since the letter, but he wanted to also point out that a lot had been done before the letter as well, just as in other general public settings, where organizations have been adapting as more information becomes available. The city asked all departments to come up with a plan to address staffing issues by working in smaller teams. Funke and Kelly Hayworth felt the plan was workable, including no more than six staff member in the building at a time. This model was implemented March 25. Supplies have not run out, we were not close to running out. Doesn't think that much of the letter was factual, but a lot was interpretation.

Galstad read two more emails from staff that came in right before 5pm.

Kenner reflected on how she felt receiving this letter from staff. She thought the fact that staff were concerned about how things were handled at the beginning was something the board needed to listen to. She understands the concerns, thinks we need to work to communicate, and making others feel safe and comfortable. She didn't realize that books could also be mailed, thinks that should be communicated more. Bland asked what ICPL is doing. Galstad explained that she has been meeting a lot with the ICPL and NLCL directors. ICPL decided immediately to close the library and discontinue services, as their entire city was doing that. Elsworth has had to make some tough decisions regarding paying staff and not continuing services. We are all in the position where want to be paying staff, but it is a difficult position in which to be. NLCL is also working on teams and doing curbside pickup. We are doing a much larger volume than NL, but for each of us it is working well. Given the patron base and circulation statistics of Iowa City Public, it would most likely be untenable for them to be able to provide curbside pickup.

Gross said first that as the City Council representative to the Library Board, he understands that the Board has jurisdiction, but that he is getting many questions and comments about this issue. He was very disappointed that he had to read about this in the newspaper. Takes employee rights very seriously. He asked for clarification from Laura about the following: Funke said there were some inaccuracies in the letter, and wants the facts to be out there. He noticed on Facebook that Laura commented that she had received no instructions behind washing your hands and sanitizing your workstation. Is this true? Funke – throughout the entire process, the message has been handwashing, good hygiene, etc. and putting it down in a policy is hard. What didn't you know what to do? As more and more information came out, staff meetings were held (Mike attended one and was not asked any questions), more procedures put in place. Funke asked for clarification on what staff were not told going into this.

Crossett – thinks it is dangerous to assume that we all know anything. She mentioned that different cleaners have very different directions. Had all these different supplies, rushing around like mad to try to get books. She described a hectic curbside procedure. She started a timeline of what she had been told when. She looked through the board packet when she got to the council chambers and thinks there are inaccuracies in it as well. She doesn't remember there being a time when she was asked to come up with curbside delivery procedures. She would think we would want to develop a comprehensive list of things that should be cleaned

in the library before a team leaves. She says that when she proposed that this is done, she hasn't heard back, and does not know what this means.

Funke says he thinks that this is where some of the inaccuracies are. The letter mentioned not being worth it to do the service for the small number of people who are doing it. That seems inconsistent with the "rushing around" characterization of this hectic service. She also mentioned several cleaners that are being used, which seems to contradict the claim that supplies are low. Books are being quarantined at return for at least 72 hours. How complete do directions need to be. Even with a very detailed schedule, nothing is fool-proof. Laura declined to say more to Funke, but said she was happy to entertain questions from anyone else. Kenner thanked Laura for bringing the concerns forward, so that they can be heard and try to come to a solution. Gross also asked Laura if she feels that things have gotten better since the letter was written. She said she does not. Cleaning supply amounts change from day to day, she doesn't think communication has gotten better, and overall sanitization procedures have not gotten better. Asked Mike and Alison if we can say unequivocally if we have enough cleaning supplies? Funke – so far, yes. Galstad has asked maintenance department to be looking, and Beth Bartlett has been looking supplies options through various vendors. Galstad – we have had to go through different avenues to get supplies, but we have not run out of anything. Has been exchanging information with other city department managers. Sometimes types of cleaners have changed. Funke – there is also a building maintenance crew that comes in each night to clean thoroughly. Galstad noted that the Iowa City Press Citizen reporter did not ask her any questions about safety procedures, he asked for statistics and asked her to comment on the letter. She was not able to comment on the letter because it had not been addressed by the board yet.

Gross – if there is an employee who does not feel safe, what are the options for that employee. Funke addressed that library staff may take personal time off, and that staff are only physically in the building thirteen hours per week. Funke did put out the information telling staff that because of different schedules, vacation requests may be harder to have approved. He mentioned the FFCRA act and has kept staff informed about that, plus anyone who has come to us with an underlying condition has been granted leave – they will need a doctor's note sometime, but has not been required immediately. Also any staff needing to take time off due to childcare has been allowed the time.

Elkins asked if Galstad and Alexander are in the building for curbside pickup. Galstad is not on a team, was gone for four days the week of March 23rd, but was still actually in touch a lot that week. Was not in the building, then self-quarantining the next two weeks (due to travel) but working remotely, in constant contact and in the building other times. Ellen is on a team, and in constant communication with Alison. When the rotating staff model came up, we knew the team leader would need to have the oversight. Relying on the leadership of those teams – Ellen, Sara Glenn, Laura, and Karen Stierler. It was difficult for Galstad to understand why it was hard for team members to avoid using each other's equipment. Alexander commented that she is on one of the teams, and would say that each of the teams has had to come up with the specific procedures that work for them. We have all had to retrain ourselves how to work.

Bland asked Galstad and Alexander what we make of the fact that so many staff members signed the letter. Alexander said that she thinks it is just that it is an anxious time.

Galstad mentioned that Sara Glenn was in the council chambers and asked if she would like to comment. Glenn mentioned that there are also issues of timing – one day there may be fewer supplies. Everyone has a personal responsibility. She thinks that how teams handle things is partially the personality of the teams. Bland thanked Glenn, and said she loved her storytime this week.

Gross asked of the people who signed the letter, Mike is working from home - are there others not working. Two are working 100% at home, one hasn't worked in the building since January. Five are salaried, five are hourly employees. One took vacation time with no notice at the beginning of this.

Cretzmeyer commented on the steep learning curve for everyone. He noted that the change in the delivery system shows that the library has been proactive. Information has been changing quickly.

Jones thanked everyone for the input. It was unfortunate that Galstad was gone for the beginning of this, but it is good to hear that many staff feel that some things are better. The real question is does the Board feel that providing curbside service is an essential service to the community.

Magalhaes states that he believes that it is important to continue to provide access to physical books, since

there is a portion of our community who cannot use electronic resources. Glad to hear that things have improved.

Bland asked if all teams are following the same procedures for curbside pickup. Alexander found an email exchange from March 25th-26th in which Laura sent instructions about curbside delivery in response to an email that she and Eric should come up with those guidelines. Cretzmeyer took some time to look at American Library Association website and the Iowa Library Association, and really got the message that this is a local decision.

Magalhaes motioned that the board support the library staff to continue providing curbside delivery service, and adjust procedures to address sanitizing and customer safety as needed. Hatz seconded.

Bland asked about addressing the four requests from the letter if curbside is not ceased. Jones asked Galstad to address the points. Wonders if we can do some of these things – can we come up with a full and definitive list of areas that need to be sanitized. Galstad is happy to come up with a list of things that need to be cleaned, though it will never be complete because different teams touch different things. One thing she said in a recent staff meeting was clean the surfaces you touch. Will come up with a general list. Hatz had heard from staff requests for Plexiglas at the desks. The Plexiglas would be considered as part of a phased opening plan, but does not seem to be addressing the real issues for current service. Arrows were put on the floor to show a pattern of walking, but there are no customers at this point. Kenner suggested that team leaders get together to come up with a list. As far as assuring that supplies will not run out, if we were to run out, we would need to make decisions across the city at that point. Gross wanted to double check that we are not at the point of being low on supplies – supplies are shared city-wide.

Gross addressed the fourth request, and from a city standpoint we are very committed to making sure employees are continuing to get paid as long as there are funds.

Jones did point out that while it is a challenging time for communication, Galstad has been having weekly staff meetings. He asked that she address the recently released State Library guidelines. Galstad said that we already were in compliance. One thing to note is that we rely on staff to self-report on symptoms including fevers, as we are not allowed by HIPPA to record temperatures. Have let all staff know that if they are at high risk or have an underlying condition, and they self-report, they can will not be required to work in the building at this time. Hatz asked that the motion be read again. The motion passed unanimously.

Cretzmeyer gave a report from the Friends of the Library. Their May book sale and annual meeting have both been cancelled. Typically the Board of Trustees gives the Pat Dee award at the annual meeting, and would decide who to give it to at the April Board meeting. Cretzmeyer proposed that this be tabled until the Board meets in person next.

The Foundation has not met, and Galstad does not have a full Putt Fore the Library report yet. She will send this out soon. Galstad mentioned that there was a strategic planning session set up with the Friends, Board, and Foundation Board; this will be back on the agenda at some point.

Galstad gave the Director's Report. She pointed out the curbside delivery, circulation, and programming statistics. The library was closed to the public on March 17th. E-media additions and use are way up. We also included a bar graph that shows the number of clients using wifi.

Galstad was supposed to be in Washington DC for a legislative day, and the ALA conference that was supposed to be this summer has been cancelled.

The May meeting will be via Zoom most likely, possibly on May 6th.

Next week is National Library Week, and we will be doing some posts on social media to celebrate.

Kenner moved that the meeting be adjourned, Hatz seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Alexander
Assistant Library Director
(Subject to approval at the May 2020 meeting.)