

**MINUTES OF THE KEOKUK PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
November 16, 2020**

1. ROLL CALL:

Ed Bazow — Present
Joe Fierce — Present
Nancy Graham — Absent
Kristal King — Present
Mike Marsden — Present

Robin McKray — Present
Rex Muston — Present
Sherry Stice — Present
Karen Szawiel — Present
Kathy Fox (liaison) — Present

2. AGENDA/CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

President King called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm. Due to a surge in Covid-19 cases in Lee County, the meeting was held over Zoom. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Bazow. King seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. There were no conflicts of interest.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

The minutes of the October 30, 2020 meeting were presented for review. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Stice. McKray seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

4. PUBLIC PRESENTATION, OR DISCUSSION WITH BOARD:

None.

APPROVAL OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

Bills were presented to the board for review. Bazow asked if the Advantage microfilm bill was for one year (it is) and asked about the two-line item amounts. Winkler explained that she had to break the bill into two line items, so as not to go over budget. Rohlfs explained that the Mobile Beacon bill was for one year of internet service for the 11 hotspots, which we are still waiting on. Winkler reminded the board that the Mobile Beacon bill and the new bookshelf for board books had both come out of State Aid monies. A motion to pay all bills and salaries was made by Muston. King seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. While discussing the bills, Muston and Marsden were curious about the hotspots. They thought it might be a good option for the schools. King found that Mobile Beacon is just for nonprofits and is owned by Sprint. Rohlfs will forward any information they might need to investigate it.

5. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS:

Rohlfs reported that a check was received from Richard and Delores Lofton for \$5,000. It was made out to the library, so she reached out to see exactly where it was meant to go. Mr. Lofton stated that he would like to see \$2,500 go to the Library Park and the other \$2,500 go to the library with no specified category. Rohlfs stated that it will most likely supplement the book budget.

REPORTS:

a. LIBRARIAN'S REPORT:

Donations: Anonymous donations to the collection were left in the drop box, and items were donated to the collection by Roger Davis, Jim Lazarus, Eric Streng, and the League of Women Voters of Johnson County, IA.

COVID-19: For the historical record, as of November 12th, Lee County was at 20% positivity, and Keokuk schools went on-line full-time until after the Thanksgiving holiday, when they will have to reapply if they want to continue on-line.

10/14, Lee County had 796 confirmed cases and 9 deaths.

11/12, Lee County has 1,488 confirmed cases and 14 deaths.

LCHD on 11/9:

“Because of our recent surge in positive COVID-19 cases in Lee County, LCHD recommends ALL businesses, schools, faith-based or community organizations, and worksites to review and update their COVID-19 mitigation plans. ‘Consider what you can do to help mitigate further spread of this virus and help promote public health recommendations to reduce community transmission in our county’ says Ross.”

Are we doing all that we can do to help stop the spread of this virus? Are we thinking about the health of the staff and public? Rohlfs would like the board to talk about metrics and what we should be doing for the safety of our staff and the community. Staff can wipe down keyboards and door buttons, but cannot open windows and update a 60-year-old ventilation system. The CDC has acknowledged that COVID-19 travels in the air from breathing and talking. She noted that staff do not have access to N95s.

Library Services: Starting 11/2, KPL hours were:

Walk-In Hours + Curbside Services: Monday 10:00 am – 7:00 pm; Tuesday 10:00 am – 7:00 pm; Wednesday 10:00 am – 7:00 pm; Thursday 10:00 am – 7:00 pm; Friday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm; Saturday 10:00 am – 1:00 pm.

Rohlfs sent out two email newsletters (which go to the radio stations), two press releases to the *Daily Gate City*, and two blog posts about the extended hours and the board’s decision to open a meeting room to the public. She updated the website, chat, Google, Facebook, voice mail, SAM computer management system, room reservation software, and updated signs, posters, and digital imagery.

Odds and Ends: Rohlfs finished the Lee County Library year-end statistics and budget materials for our next budget meeting with the Supervisors. She also updated the Books for Babies brochure for the Lee County Reading Council. The City is changing line item numbers to adhere to standards, so Monica and Emily will be working to update databases and spreadsheets.

State Aid: We purchased and received a new 4-tier bookshelf for baby board books with funds from the State Library. Our old bookshelf was worn and too small for our collection. We received an invoice for the Internet service and shipping and handling for 11 mobile hotspots.

Online Programming, from Merissa Lewiston, Patron Services:

The regularly scheduled program “Weekdays in the Garden” has returned for November. The first video has gotten 226 views in one week, which is great! So far, we have learned how to do a soil test, and assemble a compost container from pallets.

A demonstration video for the falling leaf candle holder has been posted, and kits have been picked up. The first video in the Book Nook crafting series has recently been posted, and kits are being picked up.

Chair yoga started November 9th, led by Anna Westermeyer. 5 people attended, and the class seemed to go well. The program is every Monday until December 14, and I am optimistic that more people will attend as word spreads.

Grant – New Game Collection: Kat and Emily are working on a wish list of games while we await a check from Lee County Youth Services via the KPL Foundation. Rohlf created a new page on the website, keokuklibrary.org/game-collection, where you can see donations that she has cataloged so far.

Parking Lot Lines: Monica reached out to ProLine Striping, and they repainted the parking lines – in front of the building and in the parking lot.

Letter to the Board: The following letter was submitted to the library board:

Library Board Members:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the library staff in regards to the comments that have been made by some the board members in recent months regarding the staff being able to work from home. Even though we are back in the building now, this needs to be addressed to clear the air and so problems won't result down the road, should this have to happen again.

The notion that we could not possibly still have work to do at home for three hours per day is unfounded. To the staff, it shows that the “behind the scenes” work it takes to run a library is not being taken into consideration. While it may seem unfathomable to the board, it doesn't mean that it's not happening. Most of the world is working from home, including library staff.

Emily has tried to inform the board by listing out the work that has been going on each month in her librarian's report. That work was being done at home—not in-house. Virtual programming takes double or triple the time to complete as an actual in person program would. The Bickel digitization project would have taken years to get done if it had to be done during library open hours—it was a huge project. Cataloging, spreadsheets, indexing, scanning—all was done at home. Staff did a fantastic job of adapting to online services—their outlook was always to provide patrons with new and exciting ideas. Ingenious ideas such as stories on the radio, gardening videos—none of that is a possibility when you are in the actual building with people coming and going. It is a tedious process to film, record, and edit—it's not just something you throw out there. If there were questions by any one of you, you could have asked what we were doing and appeared interested in how the staff continued to provide as much as possible for our patrons during a pandemic while dealing with it like everyone else. Asking about the process instead of assuming we are not working is a much better approach.

Working from home is not a vacation. People were held accountable. If they were sick—they were charged with a sick day. If they needed time off, they had to take vacation days. All of us have dedicated spaces to work at from home, our computers have all the connections we need to access our shared drives and Polaris, our online system, allowing us to give people online cards, answer the chat questions and catalog materials at home.

What it all boils down to is this—members of the library board have called into questions numerous times the work ethic and integrity of the library staff by implying that we aren't working when required. It is demoralizing and degrading and so unnecessary. We struggled in the beginning, just like the whole world. But, as librarians always do, we overcame and rolled out new things to be able to serve our patrons. We continue to do so, despite the negativity

being aimed at us. We know our patrons come first and will continue to provide them with excellent service, despite what you might think of us.

So maybe next time you get the idea that there is no way that library staff can work from home all this time, stop and think. Ask questions. Be better informed board members about how the library works and don't run your staff into the ground. We don't deserve it and expect better from the people who are supposed to be our support system.

Thank you—Monica Winkler on behalf of the library staff.

Bazow commented that he was surprised that the staff felt this way. He stated that just because he couldn't understand how it was happening, didn't mean that it wasn't. That there are many things he doesn't understand. He said he was trying to understand as he had had questions from the public as they were having a hard time believing how the staff could work from home. King responded that she only commented about hours open, not staff, and that she understands working from home as she has had to do it for six weeks now and it is not easy. Szawiel commented that she is very supportive of the staff, and believes the board is, but maybe that did not come across as such. Winkler responded that she had just wanted to let the board know how the staff was feeling and appreciated that there was support from the board.

A motion to accept the librarian's report was made by Muston. King seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

- b. **KPL Board/Foundation Liaison report:** Bazow gave a quick report. The Foundation has received donations from Two Rivers and Pilot Grove Banks. The park model is in the lobby at Two Rivers Bank. Bricks have been discussed briefly and will be \$100. Another level of giving will be a memorial wall. In the spring, a spigot may be installed, so the plants will be easier to water. Rohlfs asked if there was a new vice president, but Fox said that no one has been chosen to replace Andrea. Rohlfs also stated that if they get the brick information to her, she will update the Foundation's pages on the website. Fox responded that they would be looking at that after Christmas—doing a fundraiser for bricks next year.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Community Cultural Partnership renewal: Contract talks will resume in December.

Plan update: Rohlfs is losing hope for the new PLA planning model, as she has heard no updates.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **COVID-19:** Rohlfs reported that since the last board meeting, the Lee County Health Department lists the 14-day positivity rate at 22.3% and deaths for the county are up from 5 to 14. She shared with the board a couple of sites that explain the metrics a little better, one being Global epidemic.org, which places us in a "Stay-at home orders needed" category and another that lists us as number 8 in the nation for growing cases. Another site shows risk for gatherings, and in our county, for a group of 10 indoors, there is a 46-73% chance of exposure. With this in mind, Rohlfs stated that she thinks it is time to go back to digital and online services only, like the schools, and re-evaluate on December 1. She stated that she realizes everyone is tired of the pandemic, but it is still here and more prevalent than ever. Bazow wanted to reaffirm that she would be re-opening on the 30th—Rohlfs says she will look at the numbers and evaluate on that day. Winkler reminded the board of all the places that have shut down or scaled back services. McKray stated that the governor was doing a news conference tonight so that might change things as well. Bazow

wondered if curbside only was an option--Rohlf's stated that she wants to shut down all services at this time starting at 5pm on Tuesday. She stated that it would be only 8 business days total. The staff will work from home and the book drop will stay open and be emptied every few days. McKray wondered about giving people more time. Rohlf's stated that staff are prepped for closing on Tuesday, and people have already been calling and getting large orders since the school closed for virtual. She could let people know with a Facebook post tonight, rather than waiting until tomorrow—the board agreed that this was a good idea. They would also like her to call KOKX and get Suzi G to mention it as a lot of people listen to her. Rohlf's will call the radio station tomorrow, and start working on PR tonight.

- b. **Policies:** Collection Development, Computer & Internet, and Personnel policies were reviewed. The Policy committee recommended minor changes to the collection and computer & internet policies, with no changes to the personnel policy. King seconded the recommendation and the motion passed unanimously. McKray inquired as to when the Administration and Intellectual Freedom committee met—Rohlf's responded that it only meets if there is a challenge and there hasn't been one in the 14 years she has been here. She stated that Joe Fierce is the chair, along with Robin McKray, Sherry Stice, and Karen Szawiel.
- c. **Library Board Continuing Education:** Rohlf's didn't bring CE, so Muston stated that the COVID-19 sites mentioned earlier could be considered CE for the month. Members agreed.
- d. **Other:** Bazow wondered if we needed a motion to close the library. Rohlf's responded that she thought it would fall under the Emergency Closure Policy. She would like for everyone to look at this situation as an ongoing conversation, trying to do what makes everyone as safe as possible.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm. The next meeting will be held on Monday, December 21st at 4:30 pm at a place to be determined.