

**MINUTES OF THE KEOKUK PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
September 21, 2020**

1. **ROLL CALL:**

Ed Bazow	— Present	Rex Muston	— Present
Joe Fierce	— Present	Sherry Stice	— Present
Nancy Graham	— Present	Karen Szawiel	— Absent
Kristal King	— Present	Kathy Fox and Martha Marsot (liaisons)	— Present
Mike Marsden	— Absent		
Robin McKray	— Present		

2. **AGENDA/CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:**

President King called the meeting to order at 4:33 pm. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the meeting was held outside in the Kilbourne Park shelter house. A motion to approve the agenda was made by King. Bazow seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. There were no conflicts of interest.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

The minutes of the August 17, 2020 meeting were presented for review. A motion to approve the minutes was made by King. Muston seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

4. **PUBLIC PRESENTATION, OR DISCUSSION WITH BOARD:**

Rohlfs reported on a couple of comments from patrons: one stated how they appreciate the Wi-Fi access, and another appreciated what the library does to enrich the lives of our patrons.

5. **APPROVAL OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

A motion to pay all bills and salaries was made by King. Muston seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

6. **COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS:**

None.

REPORTS:

a. **LIBRARIAN'S REPORT:**

Donations: Anonymous donations to the collection were left in the drop box, and books were donated by Jerry Kearns.

Fun fact: out of 24 Pickleball paddles, 10 were checked out over the Labor Day weekend!

Emily also cataloged the library's 28 board and card games that were sitting in storage for (eventual) check-out. The KPL Foundation met on Monday, 9/14, and voted to allow the library to use its 501(c)3 to submit a grant request to Lee County Youth Services for the new circulating Game Collection.

COVID-19: For the historical record, as of September 17th, 30 million people worldwide have contracted COVID-19, and over 943,000 people have perished. The United States has 6.65 million confirmed cases and over 197,000 deaths, and Iowa has 77,204 confirmed cases (10.7% individuals positive) and 1,250 deaths. Lee County has had 572 confirmed cases and 7 deaths, up from 133

confirmed cases and 4 deaths on August 14th (an increase of 330% in one month). The positivity rate is 9.9% as of 9/17/2020.

Emily talked to Sara Willette, statistician and author of iowacovid19tracker.org. She is the Iowan that discovered a major flaw in the State's data collection that skewed positivity rates, which the State corrected after school started. Emily was having difficulty finding and understanding benchmarks for reopening, and Willette explained that: "According to the World Health Organization, countries/states/counties with extensive testing should be at a positivity of 5% or lower over a 14-day period before reopening. A higher positivity rate than the average means there is not enough testing – that testing is revealing predominantly symptomatic positives and might be missing asymptomatic/subclinical positives (meaning there is "community spread")."

Library Services: We have added more appointment times at the board's request, despite the increase in cases. We have 30-minute appointments for up to 144 book browsers and 22 computer users per week, and 2 laptops set aside for longer computer use each day. Tuesday's modified curbside hours are Noon – 7:00 pm, and appointments run from 4:00 – 7:00 pm. Appointment times are not filling up, so there is usually space for more than one walk-in during appointment times. Curbside and telephone reference continues to be popular, and the staff stays very busy on phone/email/chat and running out print and book orders. Emily stressed that staff can accomplish a lot from home with laptops with remote access, including to Polaris, email, and our new chat service. And even though the time is unpaid – library staff have been answering reference questions via chat and social media before and after hours and over the weekend whenever possible. Rohlfs received more information on remote notarization, and the training is an additional \$30 per Notary, plus the library would have to purchase a secure software. She and Monica discussed and opted to stick to curbside notary, which continues to be popular.

Genealogy & Local History, From Angela Gates, Senior Circulation Clerk: The Bickel project is nearly ready for the next phase! Scanning and indexing is 98% complete as of 9/16. Once the final binder is scanned and indexed, everything will be ready for the next phase. This will consist of consolidating index subjects and terms and preparing the 84,000+ terms and 8,858 source pages for uploading to Omeka. It has been a massive undertaking and we are looking forward to what's coming next.

Work has also begun on a collection that will organize and index obits from 1971 through 2004. This time period is often a "no man's land" for genealogists, because it is too old to be available on non-subscription newspaper searches, but too new to be found already digitized on historical archives. We continue to find collections and sets of materials that we can make more accessible with modern technology, in order to be more helpful to researchers. Genealogy requests continue to roll in consistently. There have been a few requests from previous researchers who want to expand their searches. Some requests are basic, like obituaries or mentions in a city directory, while others have been much more in depth and are ongoing projects.

Library Staff Continuing Education: We have just a month left of our subscription to "The Homeless Library" training, so I have encouraged library staff to take advantage of this time and take at least one more training session. They have added quite a few since we first subscribed and took the CORE training. I have heard glowing staff reviews on sessions: "Jerks with Homes," "Burnout, Vicarious Trauma, & Compassion Fatigue," and a session on "Problem Behaviors Related to COVID-19."

Next month the Iowa Library Association's annual conference is entirely online. I will be taking time to attend from home.

Online Programming: You will notice this month that statistics look very different for programming, after Emily’s conversation with the State Library. Because it is difficult to understand the abbreviated headings on your statistical report (that you will receive at the meeting) she explained the categories.

“Live Virtual” – Interactive programs, where the presenter and attendees can interact in real time. Examples: “Virtual Story Time” on Zoom; “What the Craft?” on Facebook Live.

“Recorded” – Self-explanatory; could be uploaded to social media, Facebook, our website, etc. Examples: Merissa’s container gardening videos; Radio Story Time (website hits).

“Passive” – Challenges and links on social media or in the library. Examples: Links to other libraries escape rooms and trivia; Boggle board and puzzles at the library.

“Library” – Reader’s Advisory and Library Instructional programs and videos. Examples: Kat’s slideshow videos of recommendations and staff picks, Merissa’s “Browsing the New Bookshelves” videos, and Emily’s “Library How2” videos (using the catalog, reserving items, etc.).

Statistics for “Pandemic Programming” so far indicate a preference for recorded programs, especially videos that include a visible library staff member. Emily reached out to Rhonda Frevert at the Burlington Public Library to see how their programming is going, and if they are having any successes that we could learn from. She said that attendance has been hit or miss and, like us, things shared on social media Live or pre-recorded have had better participation. This may be because you can view them conveniently and in your own time. Unfortunately, we still have to use Zoom for certain programs for practical reasons – we don’t have the copyright permission (or the funds and/or time/manpower to secure permission) to share certain things on a prerecorded video. Zoom is a safe option to have when copyright is a factor.

Saying this, my first Take & Make Craft (butterfly shadow box) was requested by 7 patrons, but only one attended the “Craft at home together” Zoom. Our next craft is hummingbird shadow boxes. After that, I’m planning an embroidery craft.

From Merissa Lewiston, Patron Services: Two adult programs (“Weekdays in the Garden” & “Browsing the New Books”) have continued. Even though the library began offering appointments on August 10th, views of the Browsing videos have not dropped significantly! Views of the gardening videos are dropping off as the season draws to a close.

A Zoom craft class is scheduled for the end of this month, with another planned for October. This month’s craft is a falling leaf candle holder. Kara Winkler will be leading the craft. Craft kits are available for pickup, though many people may be able to find the materials at home.

Zoom Chair Yoga is set to start November 9th. Anna Westermeyer will be leading the class.

From Kat Cook, Youth Services: From the end of August through now, I have implemented a number of new virtual programs. Some of these are working well and others are not. The ones that seem the most popular currently are video-based programs like “Mindful Monday” and Readers’ Advisory videos. The plan is to expand upon these as they give patrons more flexibility with when they watch – we know that some patrons are adjusting to back-to-school. “Virtual Story Time” at 10:00 AM on Wednesdays is being built back up as many of the “regulars” have started Preschool, which is always exciting!

For October, we will be hosting a 3-Sentence Horror Story Contest for youth and adults, DIY Halloween Decor videos weekly for tweens/teens, and “Hamilton the American Musical Trivia” for teens/adults. I am putting together “Halloween Party in a Bag” kits for families. These will include treats, games, crafts, and decorations for kids. People will be able to sign up for these and they will be given out on a first come, first served basis, as kits are limited. We are also going to try take-and-make

crafts twice in the month. Instructions will be included and a link to a video will be provided (the video will also go on our Facebook and YouTube pages). Zoom based programs will include: “STEAM Tuesdays with ISU Extension,” “Conservation Tuesday” with Lee County Conservation, “Choose Your Own Adventure Together” (Kat will begin reading a Choose Your Own Adventure book aloud and when I reach the options for where to go next, the participants will make the selection), “Pet Show and Tell”, and “#OwnVoices Family Book Club.”

Book Sale: Terry Welker, Circulation Clerk, and Emily have been brainstorming pandemic-friendly book sale ideas and trying out different options. We first listed a few boxes of books by different authors on GovDeals, the auction site that the Keokuk city departments use to sell used items to the public. We have sold a lot of items on GovDeals, but it is usually old furniture and equipment. Then we decided to list pictures of the book boxes and a simple list of items for sale on our website. It is early days, but we have sold to several people already, including a couple of boxes of children’s books. We are asking for the amounts that we usually charge for book sale items, but striking deals if they buy in bulk.

Hot Water Heater and LCIHS: Patron Douglas Atterberg submitted his concerns to Ed Bazow about the hot water heater in what we call the “safe room.” Since that meeting Emily met with the President of the Lee County Iowa Historical Society (which was easy, since the new President is Angela Gates at the library!), and with a plumber from Frank Millard Co.

Angela was also confused about the origin and reasoning of the concern. LCIHS has an archival storage room downstairs, and there is no hot water heater in that room. As far as I know, our local history material in the “safe room” belongs to the library. Because anything donated to the library is library property, she asked Angela if LCIHS keeps anything in the “safe room.” Angela said that there are photos of the Hubinger mansion on a high shelf that belong to LCIHS, and that’s it. Emily asked if there were concerns about the photos and if they should be moved down to the archival storage room, and Angela said she had no concerns.

The plumber inspected the hot water heater and declared it and the drain in great condition. He said that hot water heaters usually last around 20 years, and this one is 18 years old. If the library board wants to replace it now, the cost will be \$1,256. Rohlfs asked about leaks and he said that any leaks should go right down the floor drain which is less than a foot away, and he pointed out that the floor is concrete and the shelving is metal so there should be no damage to the collection. He said that if any issues arise, they can quickly replace it.

With a difficult budget year barely started and the hot water heater appearing to be in great condition, perhaps we should factor this into our budget request for the City for fiscal year 2021- 2022 – unless the library board wants to use fine and donation money to replace it sooner.

Rohlfs reported that Fold3 usage has been very low and she has decided to cancel that subscription.

Iowa State University Extension has scheduled a Zoom meeting to learn more about eight new STEM backpacks that will be available.

We just received our check from the State Library for being accredited and participating in the Open Access Program – \$3,620.99!

A motion to accept the librarian’s report was made by Muston. McKray seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

- b. **KPL Board/Foundation Liaison report:** Ed asked Kathy and Martha to speak for the liaison report. They reported that they are still fundraising and have raised a little over \$100,000 at this point for the next phase.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Community Cultural Partnership renewal: The KAC board agreed to continue the current contract and resume talks in December.

Plan update: Becky Heil from the State Library has offered to meet with the KPL Board to talk about Planning for Results, revising the library's plan. Rohlfs set up a date/time - would the board like to meet with her via Zoom on Monday, 9/28 at 6:00 pm? A couple of members said they would be available.

Also, the Lee County Advisory Board will be meeting on Zoom on Tuesday, 9/29 at 7:00 pm. The Directors are recommending that we do not request an increase in funding from the County.

Bench: Still waiting for the City to fit us into their Fall schedule. Rohlfs mentioned possibly getting some anti-graffiti paint from Sherwin Williams.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **COVID-19:** Rohlfs was again asked about the plan to open the library. She stated that the positivity rate today was 8.9%. The WHO recommends that rate being below 5% for two weeks before reopening, so that is her benchmark. McKray suggested publicizing the hours that we are open more to get the message out there; Bazow is concerned that people will forget the library is there; Graham stated that she did not think it was even a pandemic anymore, which many present disagreed with; Muston suggested that one weekend day be considered, whether with curbside only or along with appointments. It was also suggested to get rid of the appointments and just have open hours for the times we currently offer appointments. Rohlfs said that that could be possible and will investigate doing that. It was also mentioned to maybe get the radio the information so they could get it out to the public as well.
- b. **Policy: Emergency Closures:** Bazow wanted to talk about the closure in March, wondering if we jumped the gun too quickly on closing, stating that the board was not notified of when it would be happening. Rohlfs disagreed, referring to the March minutes that said the board was in favor of closing the next day. Bazow then apologized for not remembering that statement but stated that he believes the board did not realize it was happening that day. He agreed with her having the authority to close but feels the board would have liked a heads up when it happened. He would also like Rohlfs to keep the board members informed on what is happening with hours and updates on when changes occur so that when the public comes up to them, they can answer the questions being asked of them.
- c. **Library Board Continuing Education:** Rohlfs summed up part of the “Jerks with Homes” session she was watching. It explained the importance of humanizing rather than dehumanizing people, and gave several useful tips and tricks on how to gain more empathy for people, whether homeless or just different from yourself (race, economic class, gender, religion, politics, etc.).
- d. **Other:** McKray was curious about the out-of-state fees and how that worked for kids. Rohlfs explained how that came about and that the fee was based on the tax rate citizens pay for library service. McKray was concerned with the economic plight of some tri-state residents and wondered if that could be lowered or changed so that some of them could get a library card. Rohlfs said that would have to be a change to the policy. Ed Bazow asked for more information.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 5:32 pm. The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 19th at 4:30 pm with the place to be announced later.