

Lewiston Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting, September 3, 2020

Meeting was called to order at 5:36 pm by chairwoman Sarah Gillespie.

- Meeting was held by Zoom
- Brief centering exercise led by Sarah
- Brief check-in all around

Present: Elizabeth Clifford, Sarah Gillespie, Abdifatah Afrah, Dan Jenkins, Anne Kemper, Ted Walworth, Mayor Mark Cayer, and Pat Gautier from APL

Approval of minutes of July meeting. Moved by Dan, second by Ted. Unanimously approved.

Library Director's report - Darby moved to approve; Ted seconded; unanimously approved

- Staff Updates - Children's Librarian Sara Groves resigned but remains with us part-time. Finalist interviews for a new Children's Librarian will happen soon.
- NEH Grant - work on this has been delayed b/c of Sara's departure, but things are still moving, including collaborations with Lewiston Public School colleagues, Lewiston Public Works, and virtual Book Reach reading program with daycare centers. Plus, are continuing the successful "take & make" kits from the Summer Reading Program.
- Shout-out to the Collection Services staff for their amazing work during COVID, when they added, reprocessed, or removed thousands of items from the collection.
- Reopening updates - We are still getting mixed messages about COVID and books—namely, studies that dispute the original 72-hour quarantine because the virus is now detectable, even after six days, on books that have been stacked. Will continue to grapple with the emerging evidence and its implications for us.
- The library is now open for computer appointments and Children's Room Visits, and this is going well. Our appointments are not usually filling up, so we are able to accept some walks-ins.
- The City's "Keep Maine Healthy" funds have allowed the library to purchase some new COVID safety materials and to support daytime cleaning and door greeters.
- We are planning for a general reopening phase. Trying to figure out how to enforce time limits, especially as the weather gets colder; also not sure yet about maximum capacities for our spaces. No problem so far with mask-wearing.
- The Great Falls Forum schedule for this Fall is now online. The programs will be offered via Zoom webinar and will be streamed to Facebook Live (and possibly also shared via YouTube).
 - 9/16: Neil Comins, "What if the Moon Didn't Exist?" More info on the Oct/Nov programs on the library website.
- Summer Reading program - over 100 participants, which is pretty encouraging given the pandemic; distributed over 200 "Take & Make" activity kits.
 - Personal testimony re: how great the activity kits were. Kudos!
- Keep an eye on our weekly Events email for news about upcoming programs.

The Endowment Fund Report is usually presented in September but is being postponed until November.

- Marcela noted that our cash reserves were down at the end of the fiscal year, but overall, the endowment gained ground despite the pandemic. Expenditures were in line with previous years.

Consideration of the Endowment Fund budget for the current fiscal year (which is already underway)

- Anticipate a budget shortfall from the City again this year.
- Discussion of the cost and availability of the Library's Zoom account.
- Dan moved to use a six-month budget for the Endowment 2020-21 fund. Will revisit the budget in December, after we hear from RM Davis. Anne seconded. Unanimously approved.
- Mayor Cayer moved to approve the six-month budget as proposed. Dan seconded. Unanimously approved.

Discussion of library fines

- National trend is for libraries to move away from charging overdue fines, as an equity commitment. There is also no evidence that fines incentivize the timely return of library materials. Fines and fees can function as a barrier to library guests, especially lower income guests. Portland and several other Maine libraries have recently decided to eliminate overdue fines.
- Despite all the great reasons to do away with overdue fines, a key reason to preserve them is to stay in line with Auburn's practices. They get \$15K of their operating dollars from fines, where we get \$3,000. Notably, if statewide reciprocal borrowing becomes permanent, we could more easily choose to eliminate overdue fines.
- Agreement that we would like to move in the direction of eliminating the fines, but we want to be attuned to Auburn's thoughts and situation. Pat will discuss with Mamie. The conversation about this will continue next month, ideally with Pat as our APL guest again.

APL Board meeting report

- Have been open for limited in-person visits since June, with various COVID restrictions in place. Things are going quite well so far.

Darby moved to adjourn; Dan seconded; unanimously approved!

Next Board Meeting: October 1, 2020