

Staunton Public Library
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
July 16, 2020

Call to Order, Attendance, and Presiding Officer's Remarks:

The teleconference meeting was called to order by Chair Josh Howard at 4:30 pm.

Roll was called:

Present – board members Josh Howard, Mark Peterson, Randolph Bertin, Virginia Trovato, and Library Director Sarah Skrobis.

Absent – board member Cass Cannon

Josh opened the meeting by reciting the City's "Presiding Officer's Introduction".

Approval of Minutes:

Josh presented the minutes of the previous meeting on 18 June 20 2020 which had been distributed to the attendees in advance of the meeting. Sarah requested a minor correction to the minutes: the original reading of "Staff and volunteers are wearing masks and eventually she expects it will be extended to inside customers" should be modified to strike "volunteers" since no volunteers had been working at the library. Randolph made a motion to approve the amended minutes, which was seconded by Josh and approved unanimously.

Talking Book Center report:

Virginia noted that she was unable to attend the full meeting of the TBC and did not have a report to present.

Sarah filled in a few details of that meeting follows:

- Activities were moving forward with lots of new board members
- Elaine has returned as part-time staff
- Results of the Patron Survey were presented with 40 responses received and 100% of respondents reporting that the TBC materials improved their quality of life and 78% reporting that it improved their isolation.

Director's Report:

Sarah recapped the past month's activities at the library:

General

- The library is now operating under a "Fine Free" program with fines eliminated to prevent barriers to use
- The summer reading program began July 1 with people logging their reading on-line and the library working to promote local businesses via rewards.

- Curbside service continued with approximately 3,000 physical items checked out and 11,000 returned, serving an average of 320 people per week.
- The library resumed ordering items for its collection, but will be proceeding cautiously to consider what changes to inventory may be needed going forward, especially with uncertainty concerning state budget support.

Rehiring Update

- The library posted a number of openings in June with rehiring in July.
- One part time employee (Pete) left
- One vacancy in circulation remains.
- Four additional job openings have been posted.
- Some prior staff is not returning due to health concerns.

Questions raised by board members include:

- Randolph inquired about the job vacancy and uncertainty concerning state budget support and Sarah clarified that acquisition budget is separate from employment.
- Josh asked about involuntary termination and unemployment pay with Sarah responding that the current end of Covid-19 relief unemployment benefits is scheduled for the end of the month and it is something they are taking into account.

Reopening Plan

- The library has posted positions that need to be filled in order to re-open for public access
- There is no date set for physical re-opening and the library is not prepared to re-open at this time. They are proceeding with caution and closely monitoring what is happening at both the state and national levels. There is some thought that re-opening may occur in August.
- The current plan is to skip one of the original phases of re-opening (open solely for computer use) as it would be too much work and re-work to implement, and proceed to a full opening on a limited schedule.

Questions or issues raised by board members include:

- Randolph asked who decides the re-opening date, library or city and Sarah replied that the library operates with a fair bit of autonomy but it would likely be a joint decision.
- Josh pointed out that it is good NOT to set a Target Date for re-opening too far ahead of time as it may need to be modified repeatedly as conditions change. He added that it is great to include the whole staff in re-opening discussions. Sarah indicated that they are looking at August because of the hiring time frame. There is also quite a bit of anxiety across the staff about re-opening safely. Everyone is trying to remain flexible.
- Mark Peterson wanted to know how the re-opening plans would be communicated to the public once they are decided and Sarah indicated that the city has a communication team for city messages and the Library has its own media outlets as well. They would aim to have advance notice of a week. They will also maintain curbside service for those who wish to continue using it.
- Randolph asked whether there is pressure from the public to re-open for direct physical access and Sarah said yes, with computer access being a significant need and also

patrons knowing that some other libraries (e.g. Augusta) are open leading people to question why Staunton is not. That said, Sarah added that most patrons expressed satisfaction and Josh added anecdotally that he hasn't heard any negative comments about the library.

New Business:

Josh opened the floor to new business. No new business items were raised.

Adjournment:

Randolph made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Josh, bringing the meeting to a close at 5:05 pm.

The next Library Board meeting will be August 20 at 4:30 P.M., presumably as a teleconference.

Respectfully submitted,
Randolph Bertin