

Staunton Public Library
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
August 20, 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, Cass Cannon, Randolph Bertin, Virginia Trovato, Library Director Sarah Skrobis, and city council liaison Steve Claffey

Absent – board member Mark Peterson

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

Approval of Minutes:

Randolph made a motion to approve the minutes of the 16 July Meeting, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

Talking Book Center report:

Virginia provided an update on the TBC as follows:

- TBC is struggling with budget issues
- Patron surveys continue to be very positive
- TBC received \$1600 in donations from a direct solicitation, and they are planning a virtual walk/run as a fundraiser.

Director's Report:

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

General

- Activity report presented showing effect of the pandemic shutdown on various library metrics (26% lower circulation, 31% fewer visits, 27% drop in registrations). There were a few areas that showed notable increases including "attendance" for Juvenile programs where on-line participation was at the patrons' choice of time, and an increase of 27% digital circulation.
- The scaled back annual Summer reading games concluded with 79 participants and prizes supporting local businesses.
- Materials donations are still suspended due to the logistical difficulties of quarantining incoming materials.
- New hiring has brought the staff near pre-Covid-19 levels.

Comments and Questions raised by participants include:

- Josh commended the library on the success of the library in fulfilling hold orders, as these require quite a bit of staff effort.
- Steve Claffey asked about the quarantine duration for returned materials and Sarah described that the initial quarantine period was 72 hours, but new guidelines from library collections resources suggested that 96 hours or longer would be better. At present, the library is operating on a one week quarantine, which has the benefit of being easy to schedule. Sarah added that the combined valley libraries are all operating on the same week long quarantine schedule. Steve Claffey also asked about the sufficiency of space and racks for quarantine and Sarah noted that they have requisitioned some of the spaces that are not being used (such as meeting rooms) and are able to manage.

Reopening Plan

- The library is working hard to prepare for re-opening and hopes to announce a date soon. The initial schedule will be limited hours but still include early evening and partial Saturday hours.
- Promoting a grab-and-go concept, emphasizing use of the catalog to place holds and taking advantage of electronic collections, and minimizing the time patrons spend in the building.
- Curbside service will continue for those patrons who choose to maintain physical distancing, but with a reduced time slots (there isn't enough staff to maintain regular operations and curb-side service full time).

Questions or issues raised by participants include:

- Josh inquired whether the library had sufficient PPE stock and Sarah said she was comfortable with what they have at this time.
- Randolph asked whether there would be masks available for patrons entering the library for did not have a mask and Sarah indicated that will have disposable masks available for such situations.
- Steve Claffey asked when the library wants to re-open and Sarah responded that they were originally aiming for August, but that it had been difficult to secure adequate janitorial service on a regular schedule during the day.
- Steve Claffey asked whether there would be a limit to the number of people allowed inside. Sarah pointed out that this would not be an issue because the ability to accommodate 60-80 at low-density capacity of the building is below the numbers typically seen prior to the pandemic. Also it would be too resource intensive to try to monitor and control this at two different entrances with the staff available.

Flood Recovery:

Sarah recapped the library's efforts to assist in the recovery and relief effort from the recent flooding. As a service oriented member of the community, it was natural for the library to step up and offer assistance to the Stanton Downtown Development Association (SDDA). The library was able to serve as a convenient collector and distributor of donated supplies as well

as maintaining and publishing information about what was available, showing what a tremendous resource the library is for the city of Staunton even beyond its normal functions.

Upcoming Policy Work:

Sarah gave the Advisory Board a heads up that soon they will be asked to provide feedback on policy concerning reconsideration of programs and materials, as well as behavior policy that is being put forward after undertaking a review of the Staunton library policies and looking at what other libraries are doing. Randolph asked about the timeline and Sarah replied that the priority would be addressing behavior policy by next month and other issues to follow in the months after.

New Business:

Josh opened the floor to new business. Steve Claffey thanked everyone for the welcome and urged the library to contact him to let him know what their needs are throughout the year (not just at budget time). He has had his library card “forever” and would be happy to help the library in any way he can. Advisory board members expressed their gratitude to have a council liaison.

Adjournment:

Virginia Trovato made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded, and the meeting concluded at 5:30 pm.

The next Library Board meeting will be September 17 at 4:30 P.M., presumably as a teleconference.

Respectfully submitted,
Randolph Bertin