

ALAMANCE COUNTY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Meeting via Zoom
May Memorial Library

Tuesday, May 12, 2020
12:30 pm

Minutes

Present: Emily Conner, Hiroko Solari, Logan Savits, Kristen Whitlow, Paula Hendricks, Jordan Dawson, Courtney Doi, Renee White

Staff Present: Susana Goldman, Terri Lamm

Staff Representing County: No one

County Commissioner Representative: Steve Carter

Absent: Dodie Boone

The Zoom (virtual) meeting was called to order at 12:45 pm by Courtney Doi.

Introductions were made due to new members. This is Courtney's last meeting as Chair since her term is ending.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of 02.11.20 were approved. Emily Conner made the motion to approve and Kristen Whitlow seconded.

REPORT OF DIRECTOR:

- Susana sent the agendas and last meeting minutes to all everyone prior to this meeting.
- Susana sent everyone a physical copy of the by-laws. She also is displaying the by-laws on screen during meeting. Our State library recommends that libraries and library committees and/or boards review their by-laws every 4 – 6 years, just to make sure everything is as it should be. There is one correction that Susana knows needs to be made and a question on the term limits of members. Susana asked if there were any suggestions or questions in addition to the ones she just talked about. Renee asked about the process of members filling out applications with the cities and County to be appointed. She asked if this process needed to be included in the by-laws. Susana said the process varies, depending on the city. Renee was satisfied with that answer. Susana added that she is working with the cities and the County to try and merge their processes. That is a larger conversation, however.
- Logan asked why the terms were only for 2 years. She just re-applied since her first term was already up. She said she feels like she is just getting her feet under her. The County and cities have no regulations as to how many terms a member can serve. However, Susana said she would check with the County and each city, if everyone wanted her to, in regards to the length of each term. There was discussion on that. Susana walked through the process of applying to the cities and the County. Because there are checks and balances in place with the application process. After this discussion, it was decided that the terms would remain at 2 years each.
- Susana then went through each section of the by-laws to make sure everyone was in agreement. In Section III, the State Library suggested we edit the verbiage talking about the Secretary being the Director to include "or the Office Manager." Everyone agree to change that verbiage.

- Article IV, regarding the quorum, Logan said that in the past few years, there have been meetings where we have not met the quorum number of 5, due to vacancies on the committee. Should that be changed to include ½ plus 1?
 - Article V, regarding the duties of the committee – Susana asked if a line should be added regarding advocacy. Courtney asked if the committee actually recommended the schedule of fines and charges. Susana said that when there are recommendations for changing that, she brings it to the Library Committee for feedback and approval. Then it goes to the County Commissioners for approval. Susana asked, again, if she should add a line for advocacy. Everyone agreed that it should be added. However, there was no feedback on which number it should be. Courtney said all duties are just as important. Everyone was satisfied with the changes. There were no more edits or changes to the by-laws. Logan made a motion to approve the edits. Renee seconded the motion to approve. Susana will submit the changes to the County Commissioners for final approval.
- Susana updated all committee members on where we stand as a library, we closed to the public on March 18. We were able to run curbside services for a week until the Governor imposed the stay-at-home order. We stopped the curbside service at that time. We suspended all fines. With the Governor rolling out Phase 1, the library also implemented our Phase 1. That is to begin curbside service yesterday, at all 4 of our locations. Curbside will run Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10am – 2pm and Tuesday and Thursday from 2pm – 6pm. This will allow anyone working to still use the curbside service. We are also beginning to look at what we need to do to resume other services. Because we deal very closely with the public, we are assessing what practices we can put in place to maintain social distance for the health of our staff and patrons. We already have hand sanitizer stations at 3 of our 4 branches. However, we are looking at putting the plexiglass shields at our circulation desks. Furniture may need to be re-arranged to maintain social distance, as well. Computers will be regulated using software we already have in place to shut down every other computer. We have also added a lot more electronic resources for check out. Hoopla was added in April. This is an on-line streaming service. We switched some of our materials budget from print to digital. These are audio and downloadable materials. We also added an on-line service called Creative Bug. It is a DIY for crafts. Susana said we are constantly analyzing our practices to make sure we are keeping staff and patrons safe now and in the future. Because we don't know what the future looks like. We aren't sure what the next phase will look like. But, we are working on finding the right combination.
 - We are still in the budget period for the County. The County Manager will present the budget to the County Commissioners at the first meeting in June (June 1). The public hearing will be the third Monday in June (June 15). That public hearing will probably be electronic. The public can register to get a call during that meeting or they can send in a comment. Commissioner Steve Carter said that was correct. Susana hasn't heard whether we will have to cut the library budget or not. We did not ask for any increases this upcoming fiscal year, so the budget remains flat. Since the County has lost a lot of money from sales taxes, no one is sure what cuts will be made to the budget. Commissioner Carter said the most recent estimates show a short fall in sales tax revenue of between \$3 and \$5 million. Budget requests are up \$8 million over what they were last year. He said the budget may not be voted on June 15. They may schedule a special meeting the following week to actually vote on the budget. That decision has not been made yet. We have to have a budget by the end of June, according to State law. Courtney asked Commissioner Carter what would be most effective in advocating for the library at the public meeting. He said he can't understate the value of having an individual take a stand on behalf of an organization. The Commissioners listen to that. He went on to say that he does not see the Commissioners voting to increase the property tax, after increasing it \$.08 last year. Susana added that

if anyone is going to speak on behalf of the library to remember that when the economy is hit hard – as when the housing market crashed in 2007/2008 – the library is needed even more because we offer so many resources to the citizen free of charge. Our library usage skyrockets during that time.

- Paula asked Susana that status of the mobile library. In March, our chassis had been built. It was then sent to Odyne. When they stopped all construction during the pandemic outbreak, our timeline got pushed further out. Matthews Specialty should get the vehicle towards the end of June or early July. Once Matthews starts working on it, their timeline is 1 ½ to 2 months. That means the vehicle could be completed by the end of September. Most of our financing came through grants. The \$100,000 federal grant timeline ends in June. However, the federal government has extended the deadline to August 31. Susana is in contact with the State library, who navigate these timelines and administer these grants. They are aware of Matthews' September completion time. Susana said the State library has said there are ways to work with this timeline and still get the funds. We will not lose the money. Commissioner Carter said the County is getting a little over \$3 million in the CARES Act. This is designated for rural counties like ours for specific items like sanitation. He said if we have specific bills related to sanitation going into the new year, we should separate them out and talk to Bryan Hagood about allocating some of those funds to pay for those expenses. Susana thanked him for that information.
- The library will also be looking into new projects and/or services that will help the public should something like this pandemic ever happen again. We are exploring the option of making mobile hotspots available throughout out the County. We will also be researching remote lockers. The public can use their library cards to open the lockers. These lockers will contain library materials checked out to that specific patron. This will allow no-contact pick up of materials outside the library location. This would mean grant funding to pay for this service. Commissioner Carter asked if we had looked at a way to protect the library staff that are handling the returning materials. He suggested using ultra-violet light. Susana said we have a 72 hour quarantine for all materials. Staff are masked and gloved when emptying the book drop. The materials are then put on a cart and set aside for 72 hours before the item is checked in. That is the recommended length of time to wait in order for the virus to die. When this 72 hours passes, everything gets wiped down with disinfectant before it is checked out or re-shelved into the collection. Commissioner Carter asked what kind of impact the disinfectant would have on the quality and condition of the reading materials. Susana said it will not have any impact. About 99% of our print materials have a Mylar cover. Courtney asked if we needed to put masks, gloves, etc. in the County's CARES Act for reimbursement. Susana said that we are now working with the County in ordering these supplies. Their maintenance department is the one handling the CARES money. They have already supplied us with masks, gloves and cleaning solution. They are also working to get the Plexiglas we need for the service desks. The State library has some mini-grants available for these items, as well. Susana has a request for the next County Commissioners' meeting to ask that they allow her to apply for that grant. It can get us around \$2,000 - \$2,500 to use for those purposes. Kristen said UV lights would also be a good thing to purchase since it would be reducing the overall costs of the disinfectants, wipes, etc., as they are consumables. It would also take out the human error in not cleaning as well.
- Courtney asked when the mobile library would be operating again. Susana said that at all the physical libraries, Wi-Fi has been changed to continually stay on 24/7 for the foreseeable future. A few weeks ago, knowing that students needed access to Wi-Fi, we worked with the schools to determine where the mobile café should set up each day. It has gone to apartment complexes and other locations where we know there are lots of students and other patrons that need the internet. It has been running for the last 3 weeks. It goes out from Monday through Friday to 2 locations each day and offers Wi-Fi. These are not our normal stops. We have been sent the requests from organizations we already

partner with. Courtney asked if Susana could get someone from one of those organizations to write in on behalf of the library for the Commissioners' meeting. She said it shows how the library fills a need in the community during times like these. Susana said we are working closely with Alamance Achieves and ABSS, among others, on their literacy programs they started during their stay at home time. There are expectations this year that summer slide numbers will be much higher than normal.

- Logan asked where we stand with Alamance Reads. Susana said the committee was reading possible titles they are going to vote on. There is potential on the program still happening. However, summer reading programs have taken precedent. Susana said Alamance Reads lends itself to bringing in an author virtually with the future on hold.
- Courtney asked what is happening with summer reading. Susana said that most of it will happen electronically. The State library is working on purchasing software for the public libraries to use. This will allow for virtual programming. We are still hoping for the occasional in person program. However, we realize most people may still be inclined to participate only in outdoor events. We may partner with various organizations we deal with on a regular basis. Susana said our staff has done phenomenally well is transitioning to virtual programs. They are doing twice-a-week story times via social media. Susana said there have been other programs that have been offered virtually. Most staff have done this with little to no training in this area of virtual technology.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

- There was no new business. Courtney asked if anyone wanted to be vice-chair. She asked everyone to think about it and let Kristen know if they wanted to be vice-chair. Courtney asked if there were any vacancies on the committee. Susana said the only openings are Courtney and Hiroko. However, if the County Commissioners pass the by-laws changes, and both want to re-apply, we will have no vacancies.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

August 11, 2020 at 12:30pm

November 10, 2020 at 6:30pm

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm