

ALAMANCE COUNTY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Meeting via Zoom
May Memorial Library

Tuesday, November 10, 2020
6:30 pm

Minutes

Present: Emily Conner, Logan Savits, Kristen Whitlow, Paula Hendricks, Courtney Doi, Dodie Boone, Colleen Macklin

Staff Present: Susana Goldman, Terri Lamm

Staff Representing County: N/A

County Commissioner Representative: Steve Carter – Mr. Carter was not present at this meeting

Absent: Jordan Dawson, Renee White

The Zoom (virtual) meeting was called to order at 6:36 pm by Kristen Whitlow.

Introductions were made again.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of 08.11.20 were approved. Colleen Macklin made the motion to approve and Emily Conner seconded. Minutes were approved. All in favor.

REPORT OF DIRECTOR:

- Susana let the board know that Renee, who is a Mebane resident is not in attendance tonight. She had some remote-learning problems with her children. Jordan is a Graham resident. She is not in attendance either.
- Most of the requests Susana sends via email are either meeting reminders or are requests for you to reach out to the public officials and express your support of library initiatives with regards to funding. Susana made it clear that no one has to reach out. They do so only if they are comfortable. She mentioned this because budget season is coming in February. The public hearing for the budget is around May or June. Susana's part is late winter/early spring. She will start sending emails to the board during that time. Susana reminded everyone that grant funding is how we were able to purchase our bookmobile.
- Bookmobile update: Susana got an update from Matthews Specialty. It is in production now. Susana showed the board pictures that Matthews sent her. There is a potential of 6 – 8 weeks before completion. This may be delayed due to having trouble getting some parts. The grant process was started in 2016. We received a grant from Impact Alamance in 2016. Then, the LSTA grant was awarded that same year. We had to reapply for the LSTA grant due to some complications. The Outreach team is working on seeking partners where the book mobile can make scheduled stops. These stops will be outside locations only, at this point. In the future, we may have stops at day cares and adult care facilities where we can go in. The Outreach team is also developing virtual marketing due to Covid-19 not allowing us to do a grand kick-off. Colleen asked about the bookmobile driver. Susana explained that the primary driver is full-time. We hope to add a part-time driver in the future. The full-time book mobile driver is currently driving the mobile café. We don't know how much longer the van for the mobile café will hold out. It has gone in for repair 4 times this year. Once the van dies, this staff member will move to the mobile library. Colleen asked what type of staff will have these positions. Susana said they will both be paraprofessional positions. Right now, as a full-time staff member, she is driving the mobile café van, researching locations to take the mobile library to and learning the operations of running a library. However, when the bookmobile is ready,

she will move over to that. Emily said she really liked that the mobile library is wheelchair accessible. She said she wasn't expecting that. Susana said we just got word from the City of Burlington that we can park the mobile library across the staff lot at May Memorial. This lot is separated from the staff lot by a row of boxwoods. Susana said that though our original completion date was set for June, the LSTA money has already been spent. Therefore, the grant parameters have been fulfilled.

- ACPL Connect program – This program partners the libraries with the local schools in Alamance County. All students in these schools are able to use their student ID's to obtain an ACPL connect account. They use this to check out materials. We had one more school sign up for this program last month. It is the new Alamance Community School in Mebane. The school does not have a library. So, when we have the mobile library on the road, their school will officially become one of our stops. That makes a total of 6 schools – ABSS is listed as one “school.” There are 5 more that are not a part of ACPL Connect yet. Susana is contacting these schools on a monthly basis. She is in negotiations with Burlington Christian Academy right now. That leaves Blessed Sacrament, Alamance Christian School, Bradford Academy in Mebane and Grace Christian Academy.
- The Friends have been having invitation-only sales, limiting the number of people at one time. This is a new experience for them. They were not sure how this would work out. Friends have had good success with this new way of doing things. Dodie said she had been twice and it was awesome. Normally an average sale is during a 10-day period. They make around \$20,000 - \$30,000 during that time. The way they did it this time brought in \$22,000. Normally the sale has around 4,000 people in during that 10-days. The total was around 630 people that attended this sale. Colleen said this may be something for them to think about continuing in the future.
- Kristen said, in previous meetings, we had talked about a new cargo van. She was able to secure us a contact for the cargo van. The libraries would qualify for this price on a State contract. Kristen is emailing Susana the information.
- Courtney said Your Next Great Read program is the best thing that ever happened. Since patrons were not able to come in and find books, Courtney signed her daughter up for this program. Her daughter loves getting these specially chosen books for her. Courtney then signed herself up and has been getting great books. She has been telling everybody about the program. Susana explained that this program assigns you a personal librarian who selects your books. The patron fills out a questionnaire on their likes and dislikes in reading and the librarian chooses books based on that. 3 books at a time are checked out on the patron's library card and put into a brown paper bag to be picked up from their designated branch. Courtney said the Mebane librarian, “Nailed it,” for her daughter. Courtney said “her” librarian chose books that she would not have normally picked out for herself. However, she has loved all of them.
- Colleen said she really enjoys using our Libguides, especially the Virtual New Book Shelf guides. She said ours were such a nice feature for our patrons. Colleen said it was a wonderful addition to our on-line services.
- Emily asked if our meeting spaces were open now. Susana said they are not open yet. The main reason is that they contain furniture and quarantined materials. Susana said she was also notified today that a new Executive Order is going into effect that will change inside occupancy from 25 to 10. So, the meeting rooms probably won't open for the foreseeable future.
- Emily asked how staff were doing. How they were handling more people coming into the library. Susana said, as far as she can tell, staff is handling things well, just as they always do. Of course, there are good days and bad days. There was an incident in Mebane with a patron a couple of weeks ago that would not wear their mask and would not leave. That was stressful for staff. Those are few and far between. Graham had their first incident yesterday. Staff dealt with it and then, if gave them a moment of, “OK, we can do this.” Colleen asked if someone really got ugly, could staff call the police? Susana said our first attempt is if they are not willing to wear a mask, staff recommends that the patron use our virtual services and/or curbside. If they are not amenable to that, the staff can call the police. If necessary, we will trespass them. Susana said that is in our behavior policy for any sort

of confrontational situation. A confrontational situation is defined as staff dealing with something that makes them uncomfortable. This has been in our patron behavioral policy for some time. This is not something we want to do. We don't want to resort to that. The mask policy is clearly stated as people come in the door. They have to wear one coming in and keep it on while they are in the building. We haven't had to trespass anyone for mask-related issues recently.

- Paula gave her opinion on mask wearing. Susana said she can understand that opinion. We do also follow when there are medical issues, about mask wearing. But, the way we have to function is following mandates and Executive Orders.
- Kristen asked if there were other additional questions from the Report of the Director. She asked if anything needed to be approved regarding this report or is it informational. Susana said it was only informational.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Susana said she hoped that most of the board had a chance to skim the proposal she sent last week. This is an item we would need a motion and approval for. Since Covid started, we have been fine free. Because we have not been normal functioning – we are only open 4 hours a day – we are not charging fines right now. She said we know, historically, that fines are a barrier for a percentage of the community. Since there are national and state-wide trends for it, we would like to continue to be fine free permanently for the library. This applies to overdue fines. Fines for a replacement card and for copies will still have a fee. Susana cited statistics from 2018 – 2019, not 2019 – 2020 because this year has not been a normal operating year. The amount of money we make off fines, historically, is, at most, 1% of our total budget. Susana explained a “normal” interaction of staff and patrons when processing their fines. Considering how much time it takes for staff to process fines, it is the equivalent of one full-time staff person's salary for the year. This is basically the amount of money we bring in for the fines. We are not seeing enough of a fiscal return. As stated before, this is a barrier to some of our patrons. Then, when they can't or won't pay a fine, they stop coming to the library. Colleen said that she has been a librarian for 45 years. In all the systems she has worked in, none of them have charged fines for overdues. She said she, “hates fines and thinks they are stupid.” Susana said that in her proposal, she cites 6 libraries in North Carolina that moved to fine free this year. These libraries have seen an increase in the long-overdue items being returned. Because they have gone fine-free, patrons who have stopped using the library and owe money now return items and become a library user again. Dodie asked about library inventories and how they are impacted by going fine free. She said that was answered by Susana showing that the libraries say they have their items returned more now that they are fine free. Dodie asked, at what point, long overdue items are listed as such. Susana said, right now an item becomes lost 45 days after it has not been returned. It is officially marked lost and starts being charged as a lost item to a patron's library account. The longer delay there is in returning the items, the more collections fees will be accrued. We do use a third-party source to communicate with the person to try to get the materials back. After 5 years of not getting the materials back, they get written off. One of Susana's first proposals showed us probably getting up to 50% of our materials back should we go fine free. This amounted to \$780,000 worth of materials. That is over the entire history of library cards in our system. Some patrons that have fines on their cards are not able to check out physical items. They are able to check out electronic materials. Some of the physical items may be over 20 years old. Though we don't necessarily want 20-year-old items, they could come off the patron's card and that patron would be able to use all our services Paula asked a question about replacing books that are lost. There was discussion about what Susana's information has shown regarding returning

materials after a library has gone fine free. She also explained the process of how we order books. Colleen called for a vote on going forward with fine free. Courtney made the motion to go fine free. Kristen seconded the motion. A vote was needed. Kristen asked Susana that when we have differing opinions, do we need to do an individual vote? Susana said yes. Kristen polled everyone. Fine free vote was taken. Courtney, Dodie, Colleen, Emily, Logan and Kristen all voted yes, to go fine-free. Paula was opposed. Majority ruled for Susana to present the proposal of going fine free to the County Commissioners.

- Kristen asked if there were any more items that needed to be brought up.
- Susana said she wanted to let everyone know that the next step for fine free is to put it into the County Commissioners' budget for approval. They have the final decision.
- No more new business. Motion to adjourn made by Kristen. Colleen seconded.
- Susana said before everyone goes, this would normally have been the thank you meal we supply for the board members. Since we can't have a meal together, Susana said the library purchased a small give of thanks for each board member. She mailed them out this week.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

February 9, 2021 at 12:30pm
May 11, 2021 at 12:30pm

August 10, 2021 at 12:30pm
November 9, 2021 at 6:30pm

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 pm