

ALAMANCE COUNTY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Meeting via Zoom
May Memorial Library

Tuesday, August 10, 2021
12:30 pm

Minutes

Present in Person: Kristen Whitlow, Courtney Doi

Present virtually: Jordan Dawson, Colleen Macklin, Shannon Witherow, Logan Savitts

Staff Present: Susana Goldman, Terri Lamm

Staff Representing County: Bryan Hagood, Bruce Walker

County Commissioner Representative: Mr. Turner was not in attendance

Guest: Mary Angeline Hill (*she is a possible replacement for an open position on the board*)

Absent: Paula Hendricks, Jessica Simmons

The live and Zoom (virtual) meeting was called to order at 12:33 pm by Kristen Whitlow, who facilitated the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of 05.11.21 were approved. Kristen Whitlow made the motion to approve and Courtney Doi seconded. Minutes were approved. All in favor.

REPORT OF DIRECTOR:

- The staff has been coping, as well as they can, during this time of Covid. Summer reading went pretty well. This summer we had our game together to present the program both virtual and in-person. We ran the full program almost virtually this summer. This is the last week of summer reading. Everyone is cashing in their reading points to get their prizes. They are also entered into a grand prize drawing for a gift basket. There was a combination of large, virtual programs with big-name presenters along with small, in-person outside programs. Staff is gearing up for the fall and winter programming. But, since children are not eligible for vaccines right now, the in-person programs will have limited numbers and be outside.
- Community engagement events have picked up. These are events where we partner with other organizations, like the Dream Center, Burlington's Fourth Fridays, etc. Since we are getting our mobile library up and running, the children's staff will partner with Outreach to do story times on the mobile library. We have contracted with a company to do a promotional video to publish on our social media. The load-in for all books and materials within the next 2 weeks. IT just finished their part. We hope to do a soft opening in September. We will have the big opening around the first of October. These are tentative dates. There will be a ribbon-cutting event with the Chamber of Commerce followed by a celebration. We will invite all Library Board members to that event. We are hoping to park the vehicle at one of our parks for this event. This park will also be one of our stops on the route.
- We were successfully awarded the grant we applied for to get remote lockers. These lockers will be installed outside Graham Public Library. We will start implementing this soon. The remote lockers are a way to pick up library materials without going into the building. It is a kiosk. Staff load the materials into a locker. Patrons will come to the locker, scan their library card and pick up their items. This allows patrons to pick up their materials, even when the library is closed. This is grant-funded. What we hope happens is that our community uses them so much that we determine from the data we collect that

this is something we can put in various places within the County. This will give people more access to library materials. We hope to have these installed and functional in Graham by December.

- We have to do a software update with our main ILS software. Therefore, the libraries will be closed Sunday, September 5 and Monday, September 6 (this is Labor Day and we were already scheduled to be closed) to allow this update to be completed. During this update our catalog will be unusable. Every record in our catalog will have more data added to it. This will make searches easier and the whole catalog more user-friendly.

Mobile Library

- Plans are underway to drive the vehicle around to potential stops to test accessibility.
- We are working with a company to create a promotional video for the mobile library.
- Within the next two weeks, we'll be doing the 'load in,' to stock the vehicle.
- We hope to have a soft opening of the vehicle in service by end of August, early September to test everything out.
- An official Kick-Off event and ribbon cutting is being planned for some time in late September/early October (tentatively October 1st).

Staffing Information:

We had 6 frozen positions last year. The County unfroze them. Now, we are working on filling these positions. At one point, we had 11 positions posted at once. We are down to 7 open positions. There have been some great candidates that applied for the professional positions. Graham Library has 5 new staff. Bryan said the County Government probably has more positions open now than they ever have. He said if the Board members know good, qualified people, please encourage them to apply. All open positions are posted on the County's website.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Changing Library Hours:

- Susana gave a hand-out explaining the proposed changes. (See below) There are 2 options for changing hours. It was discussed through email the proposal to change some of the hours. Bryan wanted to participate in the discussion with the Board regarding these changes. A few members were on the Board when we adjusted May Memorial's hours to close at 8pm instead of 9pm. The 8 – 9pm hour was only a May Memorial time. We took statistics for a year to determine the 8 – 9pm time period showed an average of 10 people in the building. We have been working on a way to make all branches open the same hours. This will cut down on the confusion on who is open when. North Park is the exception because it follows the hours of the Mayco Bigelow Community Center. With the decision to unfreeze the six library positions, it is possible to expand library hours back to typical operating hours. With that being said, I would like to change our typical operating hours to accommodate community requests, allow for more uniformity in community expectations of operating hours, and more flexibility to participate in the increasing interest for library participation at community events, programming at daycares and schools, etc. We have experienced a lot of change in how our patrons interact with the libraries and expect many of the changes to remain as people's habits have changed. Instead of programs starting at 10am, they would start at 10:30 am. This would allow children's staff to have time to open the branches AND prepare for their programs.
- Typical library hours are:

May Memorial:	Graham & Mebane Libraries:
Monday – Thursday 9am – 8pm	Monday & Tuesday 9:am – 8pm
Friday & Saturday: 9am – 6pm	Wednesday – Saturday 9am – 6pm
Sunday: 1pm – 5pm	Sunday: 1pm – 5pm

- If we adjust the time the libraries' open from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and reduce weekend hours at all of the branches we would be able to accommodate the request to have uniform hours at all of our freestanding library locations, allow more time for staff to plan and present programming, creating more scheduling flexibility to be able to participate in community events, and accommodate more requests for programming at partner locations. This would also make it possible to expand Mebane and Graham's evening hours on Mondays through Thursdays until 8:00 p.m., instead of until 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays without needing new positions. The 9 to 10 a.m. hour has always been a slow hour and COVID has already caused patrons to not expect the libraries to be open until 10:00 a.m. The same can be said about weekends.
- **This would change our hours to:**
 - **Option 1**
 May Memorial, Graham, and Mebane Libraries
 Monday – Thursday: 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
 Friday: 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
 Saturday: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
 Sunday: 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.
 - **OR**
 - **Option 2**
 May Memorial, Graham, and Mebane Libraries
 Monday – Thursday: 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
 Friday & Saturday: 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
 Sunday: Closed
- Since North Park already sets their hours according to the hours that the Mayco-Bigelow Community Center is open these will stay:
 Monday – Thursday: 12 – 7 pm
 Friday: 12 – 4 pm
- All of this would allow us the flexibility to meet the community where they are, offering more hours for those who don't work typical 8 to 5 jobs additional opportunities to use our services, attend library programming, and/or see the library at their community events.
- There was a lot of discussion regarding these 2 options.
- Bryan said he wants to make sure he can convey to the Commissioners the rationale behind the proposal of changing the hours. He said as long as the patrons are kept in the forefront, as long as we know that whatever we are doing is for the good of the patrons. Bryan said that the Commissioners will be able to say that the Library and the Library Board have worked together to come up with the best mix that will serve the highest number of patrons. Bruce said that no matter what new hours are chosen, he was sure the library would be able to pull statistics to show how the changes effect door counts. Susana said the software has been set up correctly on our security gates to track statistics per hour. Bryan said it was very helpful to the Commissioners when Susana provided statistics to them regarding going fine free. Bruce asked if the surrounding counties had their libraries open on Sundays. Susana said she is in communication with other directors and there is no consistency in hours anywhere. It really seems to depend on the communities they serve. She said a lot of directors are looking at the 9 – 10am hour, as a trend in general.
- Susana said that staff have told her that Option 2 will allow for more programs to occur. The library does not do programs on Sundays.

- Kristen asked if anyone had an objection to voting on the closed Sunday option (Option 2). No one objected to voting. A vote was taken on moving forward with either Option 1 or Option 2. There were 6 voting Board members. 4 voted for Option 2 and 2 voted for Option 1. It was decided that we would move forward with Option 2. The next step is to take this proposal to the County Commissioners, along with any statistics and historical information we have.
- Kristen asked how fine-free was going. Susana said it was going very well. We did retro-active forgiveness on materials. There was a large number of materials not returned during Covid. But that is an outlier. There has been a large number of long outstanding lost materials returned in July. Some items have been lost since 2014. Bruce asked what happened to the people that were no longer in our system because of these fines. Susana explained that they were still in our system. But, because they had fines, they were not allowed to check out any more materials. Once these items were returned, the patrons' accounts were unfrozen and can now check out our materials. Susana said she gets notifications almost every day from our collection agency that 5 or 6 accounts have been cleared because they items have been returned.

NEW BUSINESS:

- There was no new business.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

November 9, 2021 at 6:30 pm

February 8, 2022 at 12:30 pm

May 10, 2022 at 12:20 pm

August 9, 2022 at 12:30 pm

November 8, 2022 at 6:30 pm

The meeting was adjourned at 1:19 pm. Motion made by Courtney Doi and seconded by Jordan Dawson.