

ALAMANCE COUNTY LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Meeting in person and via Zoom

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

12:30pm

Minutes

Present: Kristen Whitlow, Angeline Hill, Shannon Witherow, Jordan Davidson, Logan Savitts, Jessica Simmons
Paula Hendricks, Courtney Doi,

Staff Present: Susana Goldman, Terri Lamm

County Commissioner Representative: Craig Turner

Absent: Colleen Macklin

The Zoom (virtual) meeting was called to order at 12:35 pm by Kristen Whitlow, who facilitated the meeting.

Kristen added that Paula Hendricks asked that we discuss some issues today at the meeting. Paula will be called on to share her feedback during the new business section of the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of 11.09.21 were approved. Jessica Simmons made the motion to approve and Jordan Davidson seconded. Minutes were approved. All in favor.

REPORT OF DIRECTOR:

- Susana said she is in the middle of budget season. The big-ticket items all have to do with staff.
 - She asked for a new Information Technology person again, since this request was not approved last year. Susana stressed the importance of getting this position. She is the one handling the tech. items, in addition to her normal Director duties.
 - Other staffing requests have to do with re-classifying part-time positions to full-time positions. These positions are already benefited. Therefore, the County will only have to approve ½ of the benefits to change these to full-time.
 - Another request is to take 2 part-time positions and combine them into one full-time position. To do that, the County Commissioners have to approve the full-time position.
 - We will look to add a few additional resources for our patrons. It will not increase the budget since we will be dropping a couple of resources we are not using. This will be a break-even.
 - One of the resources is called NuWav Legal Forms. This allows people to download fillable legal forms. The only downfall is the divorce form. There are many variables, depending on the situation, and all may not be available.
 - The 2nd resource is called Niche Academy. This is a type of training and on-line platform. This will benefit our patrons and staff. It will have training videos that show how to down-load an app on your phone to use Overdrive, it will teach them how to use an Excel document, how to use social media, how to use TikTok, etc. We can create our own tutorial videos for our patrons. Some of our videos are on YouTube. But, they don't get a lot of hits. These videos will be embedded into our website for easier use. The second part is that there is a staff side where we can do professional development through this resource, as well. The third part is that it allows for an online virtual programming library. Right now, we can't record our virtual story times because there are copyright issues with the materials. Using this platform is like having a virtual library. People have to come to us and come to our resource to watch the videos. It expands our on-line presence for story times, craft programs, etc.

- The third resource is one we are only exploring right now. The main vendor we use that manages our library card accounts have started working with a third-party entity that will create a library app for us. It would be an ACPL app that can be downloaded to your phone. With that, you can search our catalog, put things on hold, go to the website to see the hours and locations, if we were closed unexpectedly, we could put notices on the app. The good thing is that it uses our TLC vendor and does not require access to our library servers. There is no security threat to our County servers. The app is something patrons have been asking about for a while. Kristen said she it was very promising to see how the library is adapting to technology or changes in the society of what the patrons are looking for. She said she thinks the public will really like that.
- Susana is working on a short community survey for the Strategic Plan. This is an extension of the survey we did 2 years ago. The full Strategic Plan with paid consultant will happen in 2 years. This will only get us through until then. This survey will be on our website and out in the community, both in English and Spanish, soon. Susana will be asking staff to figure out from our current strategic plan what we haven't completed and how we go about completing it over the next 2 years. If we do add any goals, they will be short-term ones that can be completed within the next 2 years. Susana has until the next fiscal year to get this shortened plan completed, according to the State Library.
- We are going to be adding the ability to pay by credit card to our printing from public computers. Right now, it is cash-only. We have been getting requests for a credit card addition for a long time. Susana has been working on adding the credit card option for over 2 years. Due to Covid and supply shortages, it has taken longer than normal. Installation date is the first week of April.
- Remote lockers will be installed outside the Graham branch. We will have a cement slab installed prior to the lockers being installed. The slab should be installed this month. Delivery and installation of the units should happen in early April. We hope to have the remote unit up and functional by late April. But, it may take a little while to get the patrons fully trained on how to use them. If this goes well, it is a growth opportunity for the libraries. Because, if the units are very popular, we could partner with organizations further out in the community where people can pick up their materials.
- Susana wanted to do a little plug for libraries. This fiscal year (not including January 2020 – branches are still gathering numbers for that) we have had over 141,000 people inside our buildings, over 160,000 print materials check out, over 47,000 dvds, audio books and music cds checked out and over 35,000 downloadable materials checked out. And, the mobile library has had over 1,384 people on the vehicle since we started that in October. Our mobile café doesn't let people on the vehicle because it just provides internet and free books. But, they have spoken with over 560 this fiscal year. The last month has been hit-or-miss with the mobile café due to cold and inclement weather. The mobile vehicles have been very popular and have done some really great community engagement out there. You can see that swing to people liking that the vehicle is near where they are and near where they are living or working. Kristen said she has heard some great feedback regarding the mobile library and mobile café being used in the community and how helpful it has been.
- Courtney shared some positive feedback she got regarding a new patron who brought her child to the children's department to pick out a book. She read what the mom wrote to her about this experience.
- Angeline said Susana was doing a wonderful job at the library. It makes her more excited to know that she is a part of something that is moving. Angeline is beginning to work with Melody to see what they can do in Angeline's community to help promote reading.
- Jordan said she thought she saw on social media that the mobile café was asking for donations of kids' books. Susana said it probably was something the mobile café asked for. That is where most books are given out, since the mobile café is not equipped to check out materials right now. That will be a project for the future. 4 library board members asked about donating to the mobile café. Susana said she would email them to let them know how to get the materials to us and on to the mobile café.

- Angeline brought up the African American Read-In. Susana said she had it on her report to talk about it. This Saturday, February 12, there is a virtual read-in. She invited everyone to join. The program is 3:00pm – 5:00pm. There is a URL to click on to get the information sent to everyone. Susana sent that link through the chat for all board members. Angeline shared more details about the program.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Paula Hendricks had asked that we discuss some issues today at the meeting. She was having trouble with her audio. So, Kristen read the email that Paula had sent everyone prior to the meeting today. Her email follows:
 - “I have been encountering problems since pre-covid with the outside library drop off box. On two consecutive occasions I dropped off library books and as much as a week later received notification that these books were not returned and were overdue. After this, I checked both my books to be returned and the books I was checking out at the main desk. This has worked for me and was agreeable to the front desk at the time since my account was updated in my presence and those who might be waiting for my books could be notified in a more timely manner. This in my opinion was a good precedent. After covid the most recent difficulty was a book I returned to the main desk on 1/3/22. On 1/13/22 I received an email from the library that the book I had returned on 1/3/22 was overdue. The odds my ongoing problems are not isolated incidents and as stated has been going on for quite some time and is a source of concern as to why this is an ongoing problem. I would like to propose a scanner on the outside book drop off box. The option to return library books again at the same time they are taken out would be of benefit also.”
 - Paula then was able to access her audio. She re-iterated what her email said. Kristen then asked Susana to discuss the normal process when patrons return materials and what possible solutions she can recommend. At the next meeting, Kristen said the board might need to make some decisions as to what needs to happen to resolve these errors. Susana said Paula is not the only one who has put something in a book drop and not had it checked in, historically. When that happens we always look at our processes to see what is going wrong. Most of the time, we have put in a more robust system of checks and balances. Before Covid, that is something we were constantly looking at and re-evaluating the process. Susana said that this is an infrequent occurrence, it wasn't all the time. With Covid having changed how we handle materials, the only way patrons could and can drop off items is through the book drop. Since we didn't have patrons in the building, the focus was on getting materials checked in and back out into patrons' hands. When we started to ease open, we began to realize that having this separation of duties to specific work stations actually worked to reduce the instances of human error. Paula said earlier that she would prefer to hand her returns to a staff person when she was checking out. But, we have found that both before and after Covid, that was a higher increase of things not being checked in or out properly. Many times, it's not a one-on-one situation. Families might come up and have 80 books and want them checked out on 3 different cards. Confusion arises when they might be checking items back in, as well. With Covid allowing us to realize that items checked in at one spot and checked out at another spot reduced the times items don't make it onto the shelves correctly and items not checked out properly. Susana said we will always have a few times when items are not correctly handled. She said we are all humans and we all make errors sometimes. With this system in place, items are checked in 2 to 3 times before they are re-shelved. Due to Paula's suggestion of having a scanner or automated system, Susana said there is technology out there as an option. It is NOT an inexpensive option. She shared her screen to show a few options of machines that scan items as they are checked in. Susana said the

libraries that she knows who have implemented this system have needed a minimum of \$100,000, usually through a grant opportunity. Chapel Hill Library got a top-of-the-line system that takes up the whole 30' x 30' room. Paula asked if a scanner to check in your items could be adapted to the self-check machines we already have. Susana said the machines are not reversible to accommodate check-ins. It would have to have the return bin. Susana said she could do further research. She let everyone know that May Memorial's inside book drop had just been renovated. It now opens from the atrium. Kristen said the app we were talking about may have a way to track what books a patron has returned. She said she was just trying to come up with a possible solution. Kristen said the board would certainly want to make sure the library addresses items of major impact to the community while also be aware of the fact that some of these implementations' things – is the impact on the community so large that it makes sense to be having grants for \$100,000 or more just to attest that a book came back. She said certainly, if there was a huge impact, she could see the board justifying it. Kristen said there may be another solution that would help us eliminate the problem, while being more cost-effective. She opened it up for any feedback from the other board members. No one said anything. Kristen said the board should take a look at the feasibility of this item. The issue has been identified that they need to solve for. Now, the board needs to figure out how to apply it to the full public. Susana will bring more information to the next board meeting. The board will then see how to proceed with this issue.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

May 10, 2022 at 12:30 pm

August 9, 2022 at 12:30 pm

November 8, 2022 at 6:30 pm

Kristen called for the meeting to be adjourned. Courtney Doi made the motion. Jessica Simmons seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1:27 pm.