

SCHENECTADY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
March 26, 2020
Teleconference Meeting

- PRESENT:** Cheryl Cufari, Deborah Escobar, Randy Fine, Sharon Jordan, William Levering, Steven McCutcheon, Julie McDonnell, Tina Chericoni Versaci
- Ex-Officio:** Karen Bradley, Director; Beth DeMidio, Assistant Library Director for Operations; Peggy King, Schenectady County Legislature, Chair, Education and Libraries; Janice P. Martin, Board Clerk
- ABSENT:** Portia Alston, Jennifer Barnes, Heather Gray, M. Joe Landry, Carmel Patrick, Marsha Mortimore

President William Levering welcomed attendees to the teleconference trustee monthly meeting (Open Meeting Law has been suspended due to COVID-19). He previously sent out an email with information to participants to call in by phone or connect with their computer. He announced that while this is an official meeting, there will be no business conducted this evening, including approving the minutes of the February 27, 2020 meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Devon Hedges attended the PLA Conference in Nashville during the last week in February. He provided detailed notes of what was reviewed at the conference. It has been posted for all staff to view.
- Administration and staff met with SCI Furniture to discuss new furniture that is part of the 2020 Capital Budget. The plan is to start with Niskayuna and Glenville.
- A serious incident occurred at the Bornt Branch on March 4, which involved verbal assault and attempt to harm staff by shoving our equipment toward the employees. A report was filed and damage to library equipment was assessed. As a result a meeting with Bornt staff, administration, Leela Moore (HR and Safety & Security), JoAnn DeSarbo (EAP), and Jennifer Hayden and Michelle Cezjak (Community/Social Services) to discuss how to equip staff with contacts within the County to handle patrons who suffer from mental health and substance abuse. We also reviewed further training needs for staff as well as having a full training day for all library staff. We are planning to provide safety related training and emotional support for staff that has had relentless incidents to deal with. We are concerned that the current COVID-19 situation will further impact of the most vulnerable members of our community and further put strain on our staff.
- On March 7, an informational session was held for the 2020 Census Session. Legislator Peggy King and Trustee Bill Levering were able to join us.
- Effective Friday, March 13, all SCPL locations were closed to the public per the order from our County Manager.
- The week of March 16-20, administration and key staff developed several different plans to deal with COVID-19 as the staffing reductions increased throughout the week to the final 100%

reduction on Friday, March 20. The remainder of the staff focused efforts on cleaning and sanitizing our library materials and surfaces.

- We worked with MVLS to extend the loan periods of our library materials that will be due and all fines for materials that are incurred during the COVID timeframe will be waived. MVLS also worked with our Overdrive vendor to free up the content so that if you have a fine over \$5.00 you can still download materials. We began to explore other things we may be able to set up to assist our patrons. We have a link on our homepage where one can click to get information via email. This has come to a temporary halt as we are being asked to support the County in any way that we can to deal with the Pandemic response.
- On Friday, March 13, County Manager Rory Fluman contacted Karen Bradley to ask if she could pull together library staff to volunteer at the Public Health Department on Saturday morning. That evening Karen was able to call some staff, and those that could came on Saturday and others came on Sunday. At that point staff was being asked to make wellness calls for those in quarantine, with a County cell phone, in front of the residence and to drop off a brown bag with a thermometer and mask. This soon became overwhelming and calls were made at the Call Center and others dropped supplies off. This was really a remarkable mobilization of people, equipment, supplies and an organizational system that was constructed day by day. One of the people Karen was able to get to come in on Saturday was Serena Butch, our retired Assistant Library Director.
- Effective Monday, March 23, library staff with the exception of administration and departments essential to the library operation, i.e. payroll, were directed to stay home as part of the workforce reduction mandate. The main focus of library staff will be to assist the County with the COVID-19 pandemic. On Monday, March 23, the County Manager called Karen and asked if she could report immediately to the new Boys & Girls Club as the food distribution program needed to be set up. Karen was put in charge of the Call Center, which will be manned by library staff. Once again, there is a monumental task that is being set up as we began taking calls. We were flooded with calls once the press release was sent out about the program. Devon Hedges has worked extensively to set up the infrastructure for this. Beth has been tending to payroll, deliveries and mail, calling staff to set up a schedule for the call center, bringing up supplies that are needed, and many other things too numerous to describe. Doug Bixler is working closely with Erin Roberts to design the graphics for the County COVID-19 response. Our staff has stepped right up to assist as their personal situations have allowed. Some have children now at home and are homeschooling them and some have lost daycare and others are supporting the older members of their family.
- Karen is grateful for the County leadership team that is guiding our community and staff through the Pandemic crisis. We don't know what the coming days will bring for our families, friends, neighbors and co-workers. At some point, when we receive notification from the Governor and Rory about a lessening of the restrictions, we will need to develop a re-entry plan.

Discussion ensued.

- Library staff is being paid during the Pandemic crisis. They are volunteering their time to the County. The work stations at the Boys & Girls Club are placed at a safe distance between staff and everyone is equipped with cleaning/sanitizing products.
- Staff is monitoring and answering questions from the Library's Website/Homepage @ Ask a Librarian. Digital content is being promoted at this time.

- A resolution for the library's construction projects will be presented at the April Legislature meeting. Sharon Jordan announced that Scotia's exterior construction is beginning and that construction projects are going forward on the state and county level.
- Concern was expressed regarding staff safety and protecting them from workplace violence.
- Beth DeMidio has been checking up on all branch locations.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m. The next meeting will be held via *Zoom* on Thursday, April 24, 2020 at 6:36 p.m. William Levering will be sending out a link to participants.