

**MINUTES OF THE KEOKUK PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
January 26, 2021**

1. **ROLL CALL:**

Ed Bazow	— Present	Rex Muston	— Present
Joe Fierce	— Present	Sherry Stice	— Present
Nancy Graham	— Present	Karen Szawiel	— Present
Kristal King	— Absent	Martha Marsot (liaison)	— Present
Mike Marsden	— Present	Kathy Fox (liaison)---	Present
Robin McKray	— Absent		

2. **AGENDA/CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:**

Vice-President Muston called the meeting to order at 4:36 pm. Due to a surge in Covid-19 cases in Lee County, the meeting was held over Zoom. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Marsden. Bazow seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. There were no conflicts of interest.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

The minutes of the December 21, 2020 meeting were presented for review. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Stice. Marsden seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

4. **PUBLIC PRESENTATION, OR DISCUSSION WITH BOARD:**

None.

APPROVAL OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

Bills were presented to the board for review. Marsden asked about Deep Freeze and Rohlfs explained that it is a program that is on all the public computers and resets everything back to our set defaults when the computers are restarted. She emphasized that it does not let patrons permanently change settings. A motion to pay all bills and salaries was made by Muston. Marsden seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

5. **COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS:**

Rohlfs reported that our library automation system, Polaris, is preparing for an upgrade. She mentioned to them that she had been looking at other companies to try and offset their high price each year and that they are now trying to see what they can do to keep our business.

She also stated that she had spoken with Mike Krehbiel and he was informing her that his new book comes out in February. He is interested in having the book sold at the library with all proceeds to go to the Foundation Park Project. He also offered to do a free virtual program for the library. Rohlfs sent an email to Martha to let her know of his intentions.

REPORTS:

a. **LIBRARIAN'S REPORT:**

LIBRARY SERVICES

Starting 1/4, we returned to Walk-In + Curbside Service hours:

- Monday, 10:00 am – 7:00 pm
- Tuesday, 10:00 am – 7:00 pm
- Wednesday, 10:00 am – 7:00 pm
- Thursday, 10:00 am – 7:00 pm
- Friday, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
- Saturday, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

As usual with each change, Emily sent out email newsletters (which go to the radio stations), press releases to the *Daily Gate City*, blog posts, and social media posts. She updated the website, chat, Google, Facebook, voice mail, signs, posters, and digital imagery with current hours and services.

COVID-19: For the historical record, as of January 13th, Lee County is at 15% positivity for its 14-day average (Lee County Health Department).

10/14, Lee County had 796 confirmed cases and 9 deaths.

11/12, Lee County had 1,488 confirmed cases and 14 deaths.

12/16, Lee County had 2,621 confirmed cases and 21 deaths.

1/13, Lee County has 3,084 confirmed cases and 28 deaths.

On “The Path to Zero” website (globalepidemics.org) our area is Red for “Tipping Point: Stay at-home orders necessary.”

The Event Risk Assessment Tool (covid19risk.biosci.gatech.edu/) shows a 15-23% risk that a COVID-19 positive individual would come to a meeting of 10 people in Lee County. (Yesterday it was 24-42%.) Despite this data, I reluctantly reopened two library meeting rooms on 1/4. Last month I told you that I had to deny two people wanting to use meeting rooms. Emily recently found out that one of those individuals was unknowingly COVID-19 positive at the time of that request.

She decided to reach out to a physician on the subject of COVID-19, and that was Dr. Philip Caropreso, our former Board President. Dr. Phil and I haven’t spoken since we had a difference of opinion about a year ago and he decided to part ways with the library board – but he was very open to talking with me about the pandemic and the library, and they spoke on the subject.

Dr. Philip Caropreso is a retired physician, and he is on the Iowa Department of Public Health, the Lee County Board of Health, and the advisory committee on vaccines. He and Emily looked at statistics together, the infection and positivity rate trends, and talked about how the virus is transmitted. They discussed how masks reduce the spread, but don’t prevent it – when they are worn 100% of the time and properly, about the very old/poor ventilation in our building, and how the virus spreads more easily in environments like this.

They talked about how meetings (an activity where people get together to talk) is the riskiest

behavior you could have in a library, outside of singing or just working together. And they talked about how library work and services have to adapt to get this virus down to a manageable level and prevent community spread.

The library has offered various library services since the pandemic began:

- digital only, staff working primarily from home (last time – 20% positivity)
- curbside services only
- curbside services + computer appointments
- curbside services + computer appointments + browsing appointments
- open to limited capacity
- open to limited capacity + public meeting rooms available to limited capacity (today, 15% positivity)

It is his professional advice that at this time we limit our services to curbside only or curbside with limited computer appointments until a vaccine is uniformly available to the public. There is still some risk in this plan, so he believes it is a good compromise. Meetings of more than 2 or 3 should not take place until we are below 5% positivity and have reached herd immunity (70% vaccinated).

Emily reached out to the Lee County Health Department to ask when library staff might be vaccinated and was told that we are not in the upcoming phases with school faculty and staff.

ODDS AND ENDS:

City budget request for Fiscal Year 2021-2022: (last month I noted the wrong fiscal year in my report): Our budget request was submitted to the City. Cole O'Donnell, City Manager, asked that we move our \$1,500 capital equipment request (for a new hot water heater) to line item 6310: Building Repair and Maintenance. This brings that line item up to \$16,500, but the bottom line of our request remains the same.

Lee County budget request: The Lee County Libraries annual budget request was presented to the Board of Supervisors on January 6th. They were very nice, and appreciative that we did not ask for an increase for next fiscal year.

Youth Services grant: We received our \$1,000 grant via the KPL Foundation for the Lee County Youth Services grant. Kat and I collaborated to purchase \$1,000 worth of games (card, board, and outdoor) and supplies to process the games for checkout. The games are just starting to trickle in, and I will be cataloging them as time allows.

Gray interest income voted on last month should be coming this month from the KPL Foundation.

ONLINE PROGRAMMING

From Kat Cook, Youth Services: Virtual programming is still chugging along. I'm reaching out to schools and daycares again to try to get an audience. Recorded videos are still going better than live virtual programs. For Grab 'n Go Kits this month, we're offering "Retro Pen Pal Kits" for ages 10-17 with accompanying videos each Friday highlighting ways to create your own unique stationery. We still have Family Night Kits available at the Front Desk, for all ages. The Winter Reading Program begins Monday, January 18th and is open to all ages for the first time (including the 2 and under crowd, to promote early literacy). For each book read (or read to the participant), virtual event attended, or library activity completed, participants are entered into a prize drawing. They choose which prize drawing to enter within their age range. Tracking will be done primarily through Google Forms, but we will also have paper forms available. Youth prizes include:

- Board Book Bundle
- Toddler Play Basket
- 3 x Dinner and a Movie Baskets
- 2 x Craft Baskets
- Spa Basket

Next month, we'll be offering a Grab 'n Go: 3-D Heart Card kit for ages 5+. The craft is super easy and fun. The normal Story Time variations, After School Virtual Hangout, STEAM Tuesday, and Cooking Club (Stuffed Strawberries) are on the docket for February as well. In addition to the "normal" programming, we're going to try something new: a watch party. We paid for permission to show *The Year We Thought About Love*, a film that "goes behind the scenes of the oldest queer youth theater in America. In a twist on the common image of LGBTQ youth as victims, the film reveals the troupe members as artists and activists, celebrating the fullness of their lives in both thoughtful and hilarious ways." Participants will be able to either watch with us on Zoom via screen sharing, or stream the film on Kanopy and watch it along with us, using the chat feature on Zoom to talk with other participants. We also purchased the DVD for patrons to check out.

From Merissa Lewiston, Patron Services: The Winter Solstice garden video received 159 views, which was higher than anticipated. The recorded Martina Mathison program that was shown Tuesday night ("Chicago: True Stories of the 1920's) had 55 attendees on Zoom. Anyone still interested in seeing the program can reach out to receive a temporary link (reference@keokuk.lib.ia.us). So far, 5 additional patrons have requested a link. This program brought a lot of attention to our Facebook page, which has seen an increase in visitors in the past week, and it was our best-attended live/virtual program yet.

This month's gardening video includes a hands-on component. Participants will be able to pick up a "Winter Seed Sowing kit" and follow along with the video, which will be posted to Facebook as usual. Russ Fry's documentary "The Murder of Eunice Rockefeller" will be shown on Zoom on January 26th. Gardening videos are in the works for February, along with another Martina Mathison presentation, "Edith Head: The Woman Who Dressed Hollywood" (2/16).

Accreditation: Things are going very well on this front. We've updated the relevant policies and the By-Laws. Becky Heil can vouch that we've started the planning process to update goals. I've completed the "ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities – Priority #4: Additional Access." The library board must review and sign off on this "ADA walk-through" before I can reapply for accreditation (I will present this at the library board meeting). Then I will gather all of the materials, take photos of our exterior book return, and fill out the lengthy questionnaire on the State Library website to submit our application.

Security Camera: I've tried a few times to record myself walking by the outdoor cameras, but ice made this a little dangerous when I slipped! Today someone is using the bench and I'm finishing up the board meeting packet and attending a webinar. Rest assured, it hasn't fallen off of my radar.

A motion to accept the librarian's report was made by Fierce. Graham seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

- b. **KPL Board/Foundation Liaison report:** Bazow reported that the Foundation had met and did an overall inspection of the park with Woodring. The water feature will need fixed this spring. He reported that Marsot has agreed to be the Foundation representative in the Strategic Plan for the library. He informed the library board that some vandalism in the form of plants being pulled out had taken place, but by the time it was discovered and reported to the director, the security footage had been overridden for that day.

- c. **KPL President re: Director Evaluation:** Due to King’s absence, this is tabled until next month.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Community Cultural Partnership renewal: Rohlfs let the board know that a meeting time has been set on Zoom for Thursday, January 21 at 4:30 pm. She reminded the board that pre-Covid-19, we had looked at leaving the rent at \$125 and having the Art Center do free programs benefiting the community instead of an increase in rent. With things as they are now, she wondered if the board was okay with leaving the rent the same and revisiting that for the next contract. No comments were made from the board for guidance for the committee (Rohlfs and King).

Plan update: Rohlfs reported that she has reached out to 16 individuals recommended by the library board. So far eleven people have agreed, with 4 more needed. She has contacted 6 others, but has yet to hear back from them, but she did have to mail out a few letters, which takes longer. She will allow a bit more time for those individuals to respond before promoting to the community in general. She reminded the board that a member of the board needs to be part of this step—no board members volunteered.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) **COVID-19:** Rohlfs introduced Dr. Phil Caropreso to the board. She has invited him to speak regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. She gave an overview of the versions of opening that the library has gone through in regards to services to patrons: digital only; curbside & alternating staff shifts at the library/working from home; curbside & staff full-time in the library; curbside & appointments for computers & browsing; open to patrons with limited capacity; back to digital only; and now open to limited capacity and meeting rooms. Rohlfs would like the board to hear from Dr. Caropreso and then make a plan for moving forward.

Dr. Caropreso addressed the board. He stated that while it is true that he is a surgeon and not an epidemiologist, he serves on the Board of Health and on the Vaccine advisory committee for Iowa so he is well acquainted and on top of the research. He stated that in regards to a policy and a plan for the library for Covid-19, less is more. He stated that some of the things we had previously implemented—curbside, appointments, Zoom meetings—those were the right things to be doing to help patrons without increasing the risk to employees. He reminded the board that 400,000 people died during all of World War II; the Covid death toll is 400,000 in one year. Graham responded that she believes those numbers are inflated because the hospitals get paid more money if it is listed as a Covid death. Caropreso said that while he appreciated her input, 400,000 is pretty accurate. He stated that Dr. Fauci today talked about a new variant that does not necessarily make people sicker, but spreads faster, resulting in more deaths. He addressed the fact that there is an actual Covid Caution Fatigue Syndrome—people are tired of the precautions and tend to disregard the fact that it is still very active and dangerous.

Dr. Caropreso believes that a strong policy with metrics that are hard and fact-based, based on unequivocal evidence, will allow the library to ride the next wave with confidence. He again stated—less is more.

Rohlfs thanked Dr. Caropreso and asked his opinion on a senior volunteer currently doing some a project for the library. While she feels for the volunteer, she is uncomfortable with him working in the library at this time. Dr. Caropreso agreed, saying that now is not the best time for that. Rohlfs mentioned that there has been a lot of pressure to reopen the meeting rooms and he suggested that a 14-day positivity rate of 5% or lower should be reached in addition to herd immunity before re-

opening those rooms. That percentage shows a trend towards herd immunity (70% vaccinated). He stated that he has been doing Zoom meetings for almost a year now and feels that people are adjusting to the format. He asked that if those wanting to use the meeting rooms would feel just as comfortable offering their homes up as a meeting space. Again—fewer people in the library is the safest option right now. Rohlf agreed, stating that it was hard to police patrons in the stacks to make sure they have their masks on and are social distancing. Caropreso assured the board that he is looking out for the staff and would like to keep them safe.

Fierce noted that with the vaccines coming out, it is a particularly good time to council prudence and the main concern should be the staff. With the end possibly in sight, it is no justification to let out guard down.

Marsden stated that his family had gotten it, even following the protocols and that while he was thankful it wasn't worse, it was not fun. He stated the board has the choice to do what they can to protect the staff and patrons.

Bazow thanked Caropreso for presenting to the board. He stated that he had spoken to Enderle and they have some things that might help with purifying the air. He asked if we fog the library at night—Rohlf stated that we priced fogging and it was too expensive (about \$500/each), due to the square footage. Rohlf stated that she will contact Enderle. Marsden cautioned that the school looked into something like this and it was very expensive. Rohlf will report back her findings.

Rohlf brought up KN95 masks and stated that Dr. Caropreso has offered to supply a couple of months supply for library staff and then would like to use trust funds to purchase after that.

Marsden asked what organizations have requested use of the meeting rooms. Rohlf stated that it has mostly been the Foundation. Graham stated that her book club would like to use it. Rohlf wants to see at least a 5% 14-day positivity rate before resuming meetings, as stated earlier.

Bazow asked if we lower the capacity number down to 5 or 6 at a time for both browsing and computers, if that would be a better option than the 10 we have now. Graham said she thought the fire department had given a number; Rohlf stated that they did, but that was for whole capacity for the building for fire safety. She asked how the current hours were going and Rohlf stated that it seems to be going OK. Rohlf also pointed out that people look to the library as a kind of a role model in the community and people assume that if we are open, if we allow people from different households to meet in a meeting room for hours, it must be safe to do so. She said if we continue with an attitude of “there's nothing we can do about it” so we should resume business as usual, the virus numbers will never improve.

To jump off the conversation on metrics, she proposed the following: If the 14-day positivity rate is 10-15%--library appointments of 1 person for computers, one for browsing, for 30 minutes; 6-9% increase the number allowed in and if 5% or less open to limited capacity and re-open meeting rooms. There was no response to that suggestion.

Graham would like to see it stay as it is. She stated that all the changing around is making people frustrated and they don't really know when we are open. She thinks 10 people is very reasonable.

Rohlf stated that she understands that we don't want to backtrack, so maybe today we just address the meeting room situation.

Muston mentioned that the State may soon require schools to be face-to-face and was not sure how that would impact the library. Perhaps if we drop it from the current 10 down to 5 at this time and then revisit the issue next month, we can see what the situation is then.

Szawiel said that the staff are the ones who are there all the time and they should let the board know how many people are in each day so they can get a better feel for what is happening with patrons.

A motion to lower the capacity limit to 5 and close the meeting rooms was made by Stice. Fierce seconded the motion, Bazow, Marsden, Muston, Szawiel answered yay; Graham was a nay. The motion passed.

- b) **Accreditation: ADA checklist for existing facilities, Priority #4:** Rohlfs reported that she had completed the walk-through needed for this priority, which focused on the water fountain area and fire alarm system. She explained the steps and results to the board. A motion to accept the results of the walk through as satisfactory was made by Marsden. Bazow seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.
- c) **Library Board resignation/vacancy:** None.
- d) **Library Continuing Education:** Rohlfs handed out an insert of the “Role of the Board and the Library Director” from the State Library of Iowa. This handout included a table of responsibilities that compared the role of the director and the role of the board in different areas. A member asked whether board members were to attend city council meetings, as it was listed as a role. Rohlfs responded that she is not comfortable with in-person meetings right now, because of the pandemic, but she does watch on Facebook live, though the audio is not the best.

There was also information included that addressed a board member’s comment that they didn’t know how to evaluate based on employee relations because they can’t talk to the library staff. The information, available on the State Library of Iowa’s website, points out that the director is staff liaison, responsible for staff and accountable to the board for the performance of all staff, and that the board has no direct responsibility for or over the staff, other than the director. Staff members may attempt to go around protocol and take complaints directly to board members, and if that happens it is proper for board members to remind staff of the grievance policy. The board cannot act on complaints from the staff, except through that policy. A copy of the policy was included.

- e) **Other:** None.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 5:58 pm. The next meeting will be held on Monday, February 22nd at 4:30 pm at a place to be determined. Please note that we meet on the last Monday in February, due to the Presidents Day holiday observance.