MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON COUNTY FREE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD VIA ZOOM MEETING
May 13, 2020

Present: John Schnebly, President
Judith Chambers
Kimberly Halsey
Al Martin
Christine McGee
Katherine Oliver
Aaron Peterancez
Stephen Schutte
Greg Snook

Board Absent: None

Staff Present: Jenny Bakos
Kathleen O'Connell
Elizabeth Hulett
Sara McCall

The meeting was called to order by the President, Mr. Schnebly.

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2020 meeting of the Board of Trustees was made by Mr. Martin; seconded by Mr. Snook and unanimously carried.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Bakos made contact with Ms. Greeves at Washington County Government. At this time, the library funding request is slated as flat funded. Administration is taking steps to cut in places that will have minimal impact on staff and services. Cuts include reducing police overtime at the Fletcher and a potential hiring freeze for all open positions. Ms. Bakos provided the finance committee with a multi-phase plan to reduce expenses in preparation for the worst while hoping many of these steps are not needed.

The state has not released funding information as of yet. Libraries are slated for an increase; however, with the current state of the economy, this may pass with the budget.

Ms. Bakos is on the State Library reopening committee.

Assistant Director's Report

Ms. O'Connell has been active in multiple email strings and meetings regarding reopening the facilities, virtual programming, curbside pickup and virtual reference.

Ms. O'Connell and Ms. McCall collaborated to submit a grant to the Washington County Gaming Commission for automatic doors at the Boonsboro and Smithsburg branches.

Associate Director, WMRL

The migration of Allegany County into the Polaris consortium was completed about ten days prior to the shutdown. Staff have been working to clean up the system while teleworking.

Ms. Carroll has been working on updating websites and adding forms to the websites for the counties.

Ms. Hulett is operating WMRL on preliminary figures with concerns of budget cuts. The state has not released funding information and many databases renew with the new fiscal year.

WMRL received CARES act funding to distribute approximately $20,000 to each of the three counties for PPE expenses.

Financial Statement

Mr. Martin reviewed both the WCFL and WMRL financial statements of March 2020.

Ms. Oliver moved and Ms. Halsey seconded to accept the financial statements as presented. This motion was approved unanimously.

The Finance committee met with Ms. Bakos regarding applying for Federal Relief in the PPP Loan program. Administrative staff experienced challenges working with our current financial intuition to apply for the loan. They were able to work with different financial intuition who responded promptly. The loan forgiveness will occur in FY 21 contingent upon meeting loan stipulations.

Ms. Oliver made a motion to empower the administration and the finance committee to examine banking relationships and take action for RFP as they deem necessary. Ms. Chambers seconded the motion and the board carried unanimously.

Old Business

New Business

Reopening Plan: Governor Larry Hogan mentioned Libraries as essential businesses.

Ms. Bakos previously sent out the reopening plan to the board. The plan continues to expand daily. Staff have been instrumental in working together to procure/create shields, masks and other necessary PPE that are difficult to obtain.

The reopening plan includes:

- Cleaning and sanitizing conducted every two hours by staff utilizing CDC and other agency recommended products and guidelines.
- Staggering notifications to patrons that book drops reopened for material returns.
- Quarantine of returned materials and inbound packages.
- Outside service contractor requirements.
- Return to work guidelines and plans for staff, including daily health assessments.
- Utilizing one entry and exit when reopening to the public.

The board responded to the reopening plan with no questions from Mr. Snook, Mr. Peterancez and Ms. Chambers.

Ms. Oliver inquired about a budget for PPE supplies. Ms. Bakos advised we are utilizing grant funds from the WMRL Service Enhancement grant to cover these expenses. Through the CARES act, we anticipate more funding for dedicated PPE items.

Ms. Oliver stated the communications are a key component in our current state and appreciates Ms. Bakos's communication steps have been great thus far, anticipating the same going through the reopening phases.

Ms. Oliver thinks staff have done a marvelous job thinking through the reopening plan.

Ms. McGee believes the Ms. Bakos is handling the situation like a champ. She is curious about what happens to materials not returned and fines. Fines are on the agenda later in the meeting.

Mr. Martin stated the staff are doing a great job handling things so far. Things are not going to the old normal. Many people are switching to digital resources. How are we looking at this going forward? Ms. Bakos stated we are looking at how we need to adjust materials and services in the future.

Mr. Schutte indicated everything is moving and progressing nicely. His employer has not closed during the pandemic. The Library is on the same lines of what he is experiencing. It was brought up earlier about employee mentality and that is the way thing to foster and bolster a positive mentality. In these difficult times, thinking needs to be WAY outside the box for problem-solving.

Mr. Schnebly wants to convey to staff that as we reopen, we need to be as careful as possible for our staff.

Fines:

Ms. Bakos asked the board to suspend fines on materials until after August 31, 2020. Suspending fines provides the encouragement for materials returns and a reprieve to staff from cash handling for a short period of time. Ms. McGee motioned to suspend fines until August 31, 2020 and Ms. Chambers seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Board Comments

Mr. Schnebly thanked everyone for their time and input during the discussions.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 15, 2020 at 12:00 noon.