



Fletcher Free Library
LIBRARY BOARD of COMMISSIONERS
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 15, 2020

Present: Gale Batsimm, Emilia Bloche, Megan Butterfield, Jonathan Chapple-Sokol, Mary Danko, Chol Dhoor, Ariel Felcan, Patrick Halladay, Molly Loomis, Cate MacLachlan, Amy Mellencamp, Jessica Nordhaus, Mona Tolba.

Approval of Minutes: From May 2020: Patrick Halladay/Cate MacLachlan

Approval of Agenda: Megan Butterfield/Patrick Halladay

Public Forum: No one in attendance. This meeting was offered as a Zoom Webinar due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Friends' Report: Jonathan Chapple-Sokol said that the Friends are considering how to run low-key live book sales and online book sales. Their eBay sales of collectible books have been doing very well and will compensate for some lost revenue from cancellation of the March, June, and September sales.

Director's Report: Mary Danko reported that she visited Roosevelt Park, a book distribution site for the youth and teen departments. The library is also distributing activities such as take and make kits. She noted that the library is trying to keep up with growing digital demand and is working with vendors. The pricing for each vendor works quite differently. FFL is putting resources toward expanding anti-racist resources so there will be a shorter wait time for materials that are in high demand. FFL also received some donations toward anti-racist materials. The library has begun setting tables and chairs outside the library, socially distanced, when we have security on duty to monitor, as a way of providing a safe place to read or use a laptop since we are not allowing prolonged indoor visits. The circulation desk and the tech center desk have plexiglass barriers. She remarked that the library is transactional right now and has not reopened stacks for patrons to browse. Mary said staff is working hard and need to try to restore. Christine Webb will be leaving FFL for a new position with Polaris. Mary hopes to be able to backfill this position. Mary also noted that two staff--Barbara and Alyssa—are working with City teams Analytics & Research and the RRC. Molly inquired about how the library is supporting staff—particularly working mothers—since working mothers are disproportionately handling childcare during the pandemic. Mary noted that EAP through the City is helpful and that the department is working individually with staff for support. Chol remarked that he was pleased the library is seeing the need and requesting books on racial justice. He inquired about temperature screening of people when they enter the library. At present this is done for staff, but not patrons. Ariel inquired about a special location for the new racial justice books. Mary replied that there is a display, but not a designated section. Patrick asked whether the library had pursued a CARES grant. It has not, but the Friends did receive a \$5,000 CARES grant for cultural nonprofits that have realized a decrease in income.

Meeting Room Policy: The Commission was asked to review changes to the policy, primarily consisting of adding valid contact room contact info and incurring charges for meeting rooms used beyond allotted time. All meetings are free and open to the public. Policy change states that contacts reserving room can be shared. They are also vetted by staff. Patrick noted that it can be difficult to reserve rooms, they are in demand when available. Jessica wondered whether we should wait to make any changes to policy as she anticipates new COVID-19 changes may need to be made moving forward. Amy noted that this is an initial policy to also look at through an equity lens and that there will be others. Gale noted that these policies are on an annual calendar for review. There was discussion about whether policies should go to subcommittee for review. Molly suggested an initial statement about intent of policy in opening statement, not only about not discriminating, but inviting feedback because this is public space. Mary explained that this policy already went to the attorney's office. There was some discussion about the incurrance of fines. Chol suggested a softer approach, with two warnings first. He felt that people will do the right thing the second time. Megan also raised the question of equity since fines hit some people more than others. The Commission decided to put policy on hold for now. Library will reword clause.

Recruitment Subcommittee: Molly, Patrick, Amy, Mary and Gale met via Zoom to review procedures for recruiting a new Trustee to the Commission. This position is self-appointed by the other Trustees on the Commission and the geographic criteria is Chittenden County. The Commission completed a matrix to determine areas already represented by the Commission. Amy noted that we are trying to be thoughtful about filling the position. Mary said there are three critical areas she has been considering recently: COVID-19 (health sector), Anti-Racism/Equity, and the Strategic Plan. Amy said that she would frame a post for an "open call" for a trustee that would go in the FFL newsletter and Front Porch Forum. Mary asked that the Commission amplify the post into communities, particularly ones FPF may not reach.

Reviewing Library Policies for Equity: Jessica noted that all policies can be viewed as inherently racist since we live in a racist system. Molly suggested the Commission look to the new Center for Anti-Racist Research at BU, headed by Ibram X. Kendi, as we unpack and address policies. Emilia asked about the ordinance in relation to mental health policy. Mary explained that the new ordinance is kinder in this regard, allowing lesser consequences for different infractions. Additionally, there is now a restorative justice option in the new ordinance which was not in the old ordinance. Amy said that there could be a subcommittee or that the Commission could review policies at each meeting. Gale noted that a calendar of policies existed and read the policies that are up for consideration each year. Cate said training would be helpful in reviewing policies through an equity lens. Chol noted that it is important to know what the training is and what is covered and not covered; he said starting the discussion is positive. Mona noted that training is a good first step and questioned how much was covered by laws and rules and how much the Commission could change these policies. Mary said she would talk to Tyeastia Green, Burlington's Director of Racial Equity. She has also spoken to City Council members about the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Regarding the collection, Emilia noted that many of the new racial justice resources are geared toward the white community. Patrick said that diversity in the collection should extend beyond nonfiction materials. Gale lauded the diversity of the books the youth department has acquired and distributed this spring and summer.

New Business: Based on the Commission discussion at the May meeting, Channel 17 is now airing a weekly Library Show at 5pm on Mondays, consisting of youth and teen department videos. Two multilingual brochures/flyers are now being distributed to the public. The adult brochure is still being developed. Thanks to Mona for the Arabic translations.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 16, at 10:00 am