

Minutes
Bartholomew County Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
June 8, 2020
Board Meeting 4:00 – 5:00 pm

Call to Order

By order and permission of the Governor, the meeting was held by combination of both on site and virtual attendance (Zoom). The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m. by President Gron.

Present by Zoom: Monta Frazier, Gary Gron, Vern Jorck, Billie Whitted, and Mike Wilkerson; Mike McIver, attorney.

Present on site: Library staff: Jason Hatton, Director; Angela Eck, Assistant Director; Michelle Williams, Business Services Coordinator.

Absent: Brenda Tallent and Angie Wieneke

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the May 11, 2020 board meeting were reviewed. Wilkerson moved and Jorck seconded approval of the May 11, 2020 board meeting minutes as presented. The Board was polled and all answered Aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report and Approval of Claims

A. Claims 366 through 433 in the amount of \$495,143.16 were reviewed. Hatton made note of the following claims: Claim 370 to Carrier is to replace a check that was lost/misdirected in the mail. Claim 376 to Sue Breeding is for the Historic Columbus Indiana webhosting and domain name. Claim 393 to Fox Cabinets is for the cabinets in the Book Express. Claim 395 to CinLee Cleaning at a 50% rate for cleaning during our COVID 19 closure. Claim 413 to Quick Signs is for the “sandwich” boards for Curbside signage. Claim 427 is for transfer from TrustIndiana funds to our Checking account at First Financial. Whitted moved and Jorck seconded approval to pay Claims 366 through 433 in the amount of \$495,143.16. The Board was polled and all answered Aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Action Items

A. Operating hours. Hatton reported that he and staff members have been studying our operating hours to determine if we are being most efficient with our staffing and funds. We are open on Sundays during the school year basically from Labor Day to Memorial Day, closed June, July and August. The holidays in December and January make that schedule inconsistent. All Sunday hours are paid as Overtime. Staff was tasked with collecting data regarding Sunday usage. Hatton reported that once the data was gathered, we were going to revisit whether Sunday opening still made sense, then COVID 19 happened. The 2020 budget for Overtime is \$25,000.00. We anticipate that our revenue will be down significantly for 2021 and potentially beyond that. Based on the circulation and on-site data collected previously and the concerns over future budget constrictions, Hatton said staff felt that Sundays should be eliminated. He also suggested the possibility of changing hours during the rest of the week.

There were pros and cons for both, but mostly boiled down to the most efficient use of our resources and the possibility that those resources may need to be reallocated in the future. Gron asked what other libraries in Indiana are doing. Hatton said he looked at libraries in surrounding counties and libraries across the state that serve similar populations as BCPL and found wide variations in days of the week and hours of the day libraries are open. We are currently at the very high end of operating hours. Potential changes would put us in line with most of the libraries we looked at. McIver asked if there was a different crowd that came to the library on Sundays. Hatton answered that it's pretty much the exact same people as during the week. Wilkerson asked if having the library closed on Sundays would allow more time for cleaning and Hatton responded that was a possibility.

Frazier asked if the proposed new hours would result in a measurable reduction in costs. Hatton answered that without Sunday hours, the \$25,000 currently budgeted for overtime could be applied elsewhere. He said it could result in a slight reduction in part-time hours, but most likely, those staff members would just be scheduled for a similar number of hours when we need them more. We could see a reduction in utility costs. Frazier asked then whether cost was the first reason for the change. Hatton responded that it reflects a more efficient use of staff time as we see a dramatic drop in patron numbers in the evenings from 8 – 9pm. Frazier asked if there were duties in the library that can be better performed without patrons in the building. Hatton answered that Tech Services, cataloging, business services can be done regardless of operating hours and would remain 8 am – 5 pm. Public service staff would be scheduled for open operating hours. Eck added that there are some projects that are easier to do without patrons in the building, particularly in the stacks.

Whitted said she appreciated that Hatton had done due diligence in gathering the information and presenting it with the pros and cons. She remarked on the unknowns due to COVID 19. If sports and other outlets are curtailed or cancelled, how does that change the outlook for the library? She said if BCSC cuts their programming and field trips, could BCPL pick up that slack with our already robust programming, both in the library and through outreach. Eck added that if schools limit visitors, our outreach may be impacted. Hatton said Kelly Kennedy has been doing a great job going to the schools, but at this time, there are just too many unknowns about whether she'll be able to continue in the same manner. Whitted asked if the new hours would be as a trial period. Hatton answered that it was, and that we could amend as needed in the future. He would like to see a test run past the COVID phase and potentially re-visit in the next year. Jorck expressed concern over cutting hours without hard facts in support, adding that any operating hours are going to have more/less efficient hours for staff. Gron said he felt the new hours would bring us closer to what is normal for other libraries in the state.

Frazier asked about the funding for our budget and what concerns we had regarding a potential decrease. Hatton answered that 30% comes from Income Tax and that due to unemployment and lay-offs, that amount will be diminished. We also receive money through property taxes. As the deadline for filing/paying has been set back, our June distribution is unknown. We also know that the Average Growth Quotient will shrink based on the economy. As a proactive measure, Hatton said he asked the Collection Developers to incorporate a 10% reduction in purchases over the remainder of the year. Some expenses have been reduced because of the COVID 19 closures, such as Professional Meetings and Development, because no conferences are being held. We won't know much more on the impact until later this year he said. Whitted commented that the City of Columbus is looking at a reduction of 40% in a worst case scenario. Hatton added that the State of Indiana has projected losses of over \$1 Billion in revenue and is projecting cuts across the board. Whitted also added that some studies have shown that 3-30% of students will not go back to a school building. The library

may be looked at to provide supplementary virtual resources. Hatton suggested that we table the discussion and move any possible action to the July Board Meeting.

Jorck commented that the City and County have both implemented hiring freezes and asked if that was happening at BCPL. Hatton answered that while we do not have a formal policy in place, we simply aren't hiring right now. We have no vacancies that we are currently attempting to fill. We may have some retirements in the next 6 to 12 months, but we are not doing any extra hiring. Frazier asked if we had any employees close to retirement who may choose not to return. Hatton answered that we have none at this time. All agreed to table the discussion until July.

Reports

A. Phased Re-opening. Hatton reported that staff will be resuming full schedules on June 10. On June 15, we will begin allowing patrons inside the building. We will station one staff member as a greeter at the door to advise/remind patrons of the policies in place, including restricted seating, limited hours, and limited public computer availability. Whitted asked if staff will have their temperature taken on site. Hatton answered that we will not, rather staff members will be asked to self-regulate and if they are sick, not to come in. Frazier asked about the quarantine on returned books and other items. Hatton answered that we will continue, as before, to quarantine items for 72 hours as recommended. He also reported that the Friends of the Library has donated 300 masks to be distributed to patrons who have none. They will be free to patrons, but we will accept free-will donations to the Friends.

B. Summer Learning. Eck reported that the Summer Reading Challenge as evolved, by necessity, due to COVID 19, which drastically changed the plans. The new iteration is almost entirely virtual. We will be using the Book Points platform. The new program is the Community Summer Learning Challenge. It is a joint effort with community partners. The prize structure has changed as well. In past years, there have been multiple "small" prizes, which typically were trinket-type toys, etc. This summer, the focus is on books and coupons. There will be weekly drawings for gift cards and we are looking at "swag bags" from local businesses as well for some prizes. Hatton reminded the Board that a copy of the insert from The Republic was included in this month's Board email. He said this year has been a challenge in many ways, and in particular, for the Summer reading Program. It is the library's Super Bowl, as so much effort is put into the planning and the programs we present.

Public Comment – 10 minutes

Paul Mack addressed comments to the Board as a self-described "new neighbor" of the library. He views libraries as the bedrock, most essential part of a community. He expressed some concern about the presences of loiterers outside the library, and was interested in working together with the library to make that situation better. Gron suggested starting a conversation with Pat Bryant as Director of Security. Hatton agreed that the sidewalks around the library, particularly the walkway to the East are active, and that we work diligently to maintain the property to address issues as they come up and to prevent escalation of unwanted activity. Paul said he appreciated those efforts, as he would hate to see a negative review on social media about the library. Gron thanked Paul for attending and expressing both his appreciation and his shared concerns.

New Business

Hatton reminded the Board of the next scheduled meeting on July 13, 2020. Based on the current State guidelines for reopening, the July meeting could be in person with proper social distancing possible in the Conference Room. The decision on whether we will conduct that meeting via Zoom or on-site will be made as that date gets closer.

Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

Attested:

Billie Whitted, Secretary

Gary Gron, President