



Billings Public Library Board Meeting

April 8, 2021
12:00 p.m.

Board and City staff present:

Peggy McSweyn, Chairperson	David Darby, Vice Chair	Cheryle Fisher
Lloyd Mickelson	Trudi Paulson	Sue Bach
Gavin Woltjer, Library Director	Hannah Stewart-Freeman, Assistant Director	Kelsie Rubich, Information Systems Coordinator
Jamie Bratlie, Library and Facility Coordinator		

Not Present:

Andrea Horrell

Guests:

Debbie Willis, Friends of the Library	PJ Smith, Yellowstone Genealogy Forum
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Public Comment

None

Chair's Comments

Chairperson McSweyn welcomed Kelsie Rubich as the acting Systems Coordinator.

McSweyn reminded the board members to raise their hands and wait to be acknowledged by her before speaking, especially during Zoom or GoTo meetings, so they are not talking over another person.

Consent Agenda

a. Motion and second to approve the February 11, 2021, minutes. Approved. Paulson/Darby

Foundation Liaison

David Darby said he will be stepping down as the Library Board representative on the Library Foundation board and asked if any other member would be interested in sitting on the board. Darby said if anyone wants to talk to Leslie Modrow, please feel free to contact her. He said there are a lot of hands on, interesting opportunities serving on the Foundation board. Chairperson McSweyn asked if anyone was interested, to which Fisher responded yes. Motion and second for Fisher to serve on the Foundation board as the Billings Public Library Board liaison. Woltjer said he will contact Modrow to let her know.

Paulson/Darby

Reports

- a. Debbie Willis, Friends of the Library, said the Friends' next meeting is tomorrow, still by Zoom. They will discuss Summer Fair, the Strawberry Festival, and the status of upcoming meetings. She thinks they may resume in person meetings in May.

Sue Bach added that the Nook reached a sale's milestone in March for the first time since COVID began. She is very excited that sales are back on track.

- b. David Darby, reporting for the Library Foundation
 - Food for Thought has been a main focus. Twenty table hosts are confirmed. Food for Thought will be virtual again this year on June 9 and 10. Topics will be unveiled on May 12.
 - An Ad Hoc committee was set up to explore branding and promoting of the Library Foundation. An excellent draft "brand" book has been created. Once it is approved, the Foundation will make it available for the Board to view as well. The Foundation is also looking at redesigning their website to make it more user friendly.
 - Darby also presented the Foundation's contributions to the Library.
- c. PJ Smith, Yellowstone Genealogy Forum, said the Genealogy Room opened on March 29. It is open Monday through Thursday, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. There are seven volunteers who work a combined 32 hours a week. Smith also said their meetings have been held via Zoom, and they are discussing going back to in person meetings, possibly restarting with the annual meeting in May.

Board Discussion

- a. Masks in the library – Chairperson McSweyn reminded the Board they voted for a mandatory mask mandate in the library. She asked what Staff feelings are regarding masks. Woltjer and Stewart stated library staff is somewhat split, but supportive of the mask mandate. Woltjer said the vaccination numbers are good in Yellowstone County; also John Felton is still recommending wearing masks. Mickelson felt the mandate should remain in effect until the CDC and President Biden state masks are no longer necessary. Motion was made to continue the mask mandate in the library. Seconded. Smith noted Billings is a destination city and vaccination status of visitors is unknown. All in favor. Motion passed.

Mickelson/Darby

BPL Update

Kelsie Rubich, Interim Information Systems Coordinator:

Kelsie Rubich introduced herself to the Board and gave some background information about herself. She said she is very excited to make the transition to Systems. Rubich said she has begun working on stats and had a few to share with the Board:

- Digital access has either maintained or increased: YouTube is up 39%, Facebook is up 13%, and Instagram is up 40%.
- Hotspots have been checked out 255 times since July. They are very popular with rural residents.
- iPads have just been introduced for patrons to use to browse magazines while in the library.

- Kindles for seniors are now available. Each Kindle has a specific theme of books loaded on to it.
- Another scanner will be added soon at the printing station upstairs by the computers.
- City Council started meeting in the Community Room last Monday.

Bach inquired when the Digitization Room will be opened. Woltjer told her that is planned in Phase IV.

Jamie Bratlie, Library and Facilities Coordinator:

- The library security contract expired June 30. The RFP for a new contract was issued on April 2.
- Bratlie is currently working on replacing or reupholstering some of the library furniture.
- The process of repairing and painting the portion of the Story Tower that goes through the Tech Lab has begun. The Teen Librarian submitted a request to have a mural painted on it by the teens. The teens will have to submit drawings to be approved by management. This project is in the very beginning stages.
- The bookmobile started allowing patrons back on board with Phase II. Access is limited to one person or family unit at a time. Masks are required.
- Senior Outreach volunteers have been given permission to resume onsite book clubs at the facilities currently open visitors. Volunteers are, or will be, fully vaccinated when the book clubs resume in May. Volunteers must follow the facilities' guidelines.
- April 1 was the roll-out for the senior Kindles. Currently two have been checked out.
- A Day of Service organizer contacted Senior Outreach regarding the S.O.S. project. They want to partner with Senior Outreach on the Day of Service (April 24) to deliver mail and coloring sheets to Outreach to send out to local seniors.

Hannah Stewart-Freeman, Circulation and Reference:

- Exhibits will be coming to the library this summer: the history of Billings' south side will run May 25 – June 25, and Pollinator Week, June 13 – 25, will showcase posters, equipment, and bee displays.
- Twelve people, a combination of staff and board members, will attend the MLA virtual conference next week.
- The High Plain's Book Awards books have gone out, and winners will be selected by readers and announced this fall.
- Summer Reading theme is Tales and Tails. Children's received a donation from the Foundation to prize zoo animal adoptions to five lucky children. The five animals are: river otter, porcupine, bald eagle, tiger, and a red panda. The adoption money supports the animals in terms of care and enrichment. The winners are chosen by raffle. Each child will receive a certificate, sticker, and stuffed version of their adopted animal.

Gavin Woltjer, Director:

- With the board meeting being held in the Community Room, Woltjer showed and explained to the Board how the room is set up for the City Council meetings. He said the first successful meeting was held this week. He stated he is not sure how long Council will continue to meet in the library.

- Woltjer said Roger Young termed off the Board, but one of his terms was a partial, so he is resubmitting to sit on the board for another full term. There is another City vacancy that an application has been submitted for. Woltjer said by June there should be a full board again.
- Woltjer said he is starting the process of updating the Library Strategic Plan.
- A USS Billings display is coming. It will be right outside the Community Room in the foyer.

The meeting adjourned at 1:08 p.m. The May meeting will be held in the Library Community Room.