



Billings Public Library Board Meeting

January 14, 2021
12:00 p.m.

Board and City staff present:

Cheryle Fisher, Chairperson	Peggy McSweyn, Vice Chair	Andrea Horrell
Roger Young	Trudi Paulson	Sue Bach
Lloyd Mickelson	Gavin Woltjer, Library Director	Hannah Stewart-Freeman, Assistant Director
Jamie Bratlie, Library and Facility Coordinator	Cody Allen, Information Systems Coordinator	

Not Present:

Jennifer Quinn David Darby

Guests:

Clare Young, Friends of the Library	Leslie Modrow, Library Foundation	PJ Smith, Yellowstone Genealogy Forum
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Public Comment

Leslie Modrow gave a quick update to the Board about a special project the Foundation did for year end. The Foundation put out a \$3500 challenge for Giving Tuesday, which was surpassed. The Gazette featured the project, and a new donor came on board with the Foundation to sponsor Chromebooks. Allen added the plan with these is to have 10 kits ready for tax season. Modrow also mentioned the Neonatal project to give bags of books to parents of NICU babies is on track.

Chair's Comments

Chairperson Fisher's audio was not working for the meeting, so Vice Chair McSweyn stepped in to chair the meeting. She said it sounds like everything is going well at the library, including curbside.

Woltjer introduced the new board member, Trudi Paulson, and asked her to tell the Board about herself. Ms. Paulson said she is originally from Minnesota and has been in Billings for seven years. She is the Director of Family Services and she loves to read. Wherever she has lived, one of the first things she looks for is the public library. She looks forward to meeting everyone in person in the future.

Consent Agenda

- a. Motion to approve the November 12, 2020, minutes as corrected to show Jennifer Quinn present. Motion approved. Young/Bach

Election of Officers

Woltjer thought the Board's intent was for the Vice Chair (V.C.) to move into the Chairperson position and the board to only elect a new Vice Chairperson; however, he could not substantiate this and asked the Board to discuss and make it official if they choose to. After discussion, the Board decided to offer the V.C. the Chair position first, but not to make it an automatic move.

Motion to elect Peggy McSweyn Chairperson for the 2021 year. Seconded. All in favor. Young/Bach

Both Darby and Horrell were nominated for the Vice Chair position, so a roll call vote was instituted. The 4-2 vote, with Paulson abstaining because this was her first meeting, was in favor of Darby for Vice Chair.

BPL Update

Cody Allen, Information Systems Coordinator

- Allen will have a 2020 statistics update at the February meeting.
- The hotspot project with the Library Foundation has been a success.
- Allen has been working with Senior Outreach on a grant to purchase 7 Kindles and load them with a variety of books.
- Allen has started researching the possibility of only digital magazines and periodicals, with devices made available for patrons who come into the library. Fisher inquired how frequently those items were viewed by patrons pre-COVID. After Board discussion, Woltjer reminded them research on this idea has just begun.
- Research has also begun regarding the possibility of becoming a "fine free" library. Allen said he has been checking with other libraries.

Jamie Bratlie, Library and Facilities Coordinator

- The emergency lighting was tested in November. A few batteries needed replacement, but otherwise everything checked out well.
- The LED light bulb replacement has begun on the first floor, with the remainder of the first floor lights to be changed out within the next few weeks.
- There is now one Notary Public certified staff member at the library, and a second staff member is working toward certification. When both are certified and library hours return to Monday through Saturday, the library will be able to offer Notary services to the public Monday through Saturday, open to 5 p.m. on most days.
- Outreach services are staying busy, with an increase in homebound participants. The bookmobile has seen decreased usage at some stops, but increased usage at other stops.

Hannah Stewart-Freeman, Circulation and Reference:

- Curbside continues to be very successful, with Take and Make kits being popular.
- Stewart-Freeman is applying for a Montana History Foundation grant to request funds for the Progressive Preservation project. Monies will be used to purchase protective supplies and exhibit materials for the BPL Archive.
- The library has received a number of donations through the Library Foundation. The funds are being used to purchase new materials for the library's collection in the names of the donors.

Gavin Woltjer, Director:

- Woltjer asked to move his update into the next agenda item as they tie directly together.

Governor Directives

Woltjer said, during his press conference, Governor Gianforte rescinded the hours and capacity restrictions (that former Governor Bullock put into place). He said the mask mandate is still in effect for the time being. Yellowstone County Health Officer John Felton has followed Governor Gianforte's mandate.

Woltjer continued by telling the Board the library will re-open to the public on February 1. He said there will be a five phase opening plan put into effect. Phase 1 will be similar to the fall, with the addition of seven public computers available with 30-minute time limits with no renewals. The phased opening plan will be revisited at the beginning of each month, with the goal to move to the next step until the library is fully re-opened and all services available. This will be contingent upon the state of the pandemic and the Governor's directive. Woltjer explained if/when the mask mandate is rescinded, he will not put his staff in position to enforce mask wearing if there is no higher mandate.

Woltjer then asked for discussion and a vote regarding how the Board wants to hold its meetings for the next few months and going forward. After some discussion, McSweyn asked if there was a motion. It was moved and seconded to hold the February meeting online and to discuss it further during that meeting. All in favor. Paulson/Mickelson

2021 Board Goals

Woltjer asked if the Board Goals could be tabled until the February meeting. McSweyn affirmed his request and asked for a Board vote. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m. The February meeting will continue via GoToMeet.