

Trustee Special Meeting Minutes

November 2, 2020

The special meeting of the Leominster Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Monday, November 2, 2020, via Go To Meeting teleconference. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

In attendance were: Chairperson Mark Bodanza, Vice Chairperson Susan Chalifoux Zephir, Susan Shelton, and James Despo. Lawrence Nfor and Joanne D'Onfro were absent.

Others present included Acting Interim Director Nicole Piermarini, May Lee Tom, Tim Silva, Andrea Freeman, and many library staff.

Open Forum

May Lee Tom spoke regarding the work that had gone into creating the reopening plan and the thoroughness of what was presented. She noted how the library has been offering services through the entire pandemic while taking thoughtful and deliberate steps to keep both staff and patrons safe.

In light of Leominster's new designation as a high-risk community and rising case numbers, she cautioned against moving too quickly which could risk the health of the community and potentially cause the library to lose the public's trust, goodwill, and perception of the library as a safe space.

Andrea Freeman spoke about the Governor's press conference earlier in the afternoon and asked two questions of the board:

Are there any libraries in the area, in MA, or New England that are classified as high-risk communities in the red that are open to the extent we are or are thinking of expanding their services?

1. Do any members of the Board of Health have a Master of Public Health degree?
2. The Chairperson noted that while people can't ask questions in the open forum, he felt she raised valid questions and that the board would consider them in their discussions.

Tim Silva asked the trustees to take the staff's opinion about reopening as presented in May Lee Tom's statement seriously because they have been doing the day-to-day work to keep both themselves and patrons safe while trying to provide the best service possible. He expressed his concerns about expanded reopening in light of the increasing number of COVID-19 infections

and the Governor's more restrictive revisions to previous orders around gatherings and mask-wearing that were released earlier in the day.

New Business

Review of the Leominster Public Library COVID-19 Reopening Plan

The Trustees noted that the staff had put in a lot of time and effort into the plan as it is very thorough.

The Chairperson asked if the board would consider approving the plan and the timeline of enacting it as two separate items. All agreed.

The Acting Interim Director detailed grammatical changes she had made to the plan based on feedback from Trustee Despo. She clarified the differences between what the library is currently offering and what is proposed as part of Phase 1, highlighting the difference in the number of patrons allowed in the library. She further detailed the factors that would affect the timeline to reopen the library after a staff exposure resulting in a necessary quarantine. The Acting Interim Director noted that the building cleaning cost was the best estimate given by the Purchasing Agent based on the cost to clean City Hall.

Trustee Shelton noted much of the plan is based on staff hiring being accomplished

The Chairperson inquired if any of the trustees had any information pertaining to the questions asked by Andrea Freeman during the open forum. The Acting Interim Director detailed Fitchburg Public Library's current offerings as well as their anticipated timeline for expanding services.

Trustee Chalifoux Zephir moved for "more time to review and to delay approval of the plan" (JD).

The motion was adopted. Vote: 4-0.

The Chairperson asked that this be left on the agenda for the next meeting and suggested that he, the Acting Interim Director, and the Mayor should meet to discuss the plan.

The meeting adjourned at 5:57 pm.

Nicole Piermarini, Acting Interim Director