



City of Oregon City

Meeting Minutes

Library Board

625 Center Street
Oregon City, OR 97045
503-657-0891

Wednesday, August 12, 2020

Online via Zoom

5:30 PM

1. Call to Order:

Scott Edwards called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

Members Present: Larry Osborne, Cynthia Andrews, Scott Edwards, David Goldberg, and Kari Linder

Members Absent: Ken Hall and Nick Dierckman

Staff Present: Greg Williams, Library Director, Denise Butcher, Library Operations Manager, and Sabrina Tusing, Library Assistant for Youth Services

2. Approval of Minutes:

David Goldberg moved to approve the minutes from both the Library Board's March 11, 2020 and June 10, 2020 meetings with no changes. Cynthia Andrews seconded the motion. Larry Osborne, Cynthia Andrews, Scott Edwards, David Goldberg, and Kari Linder voted aye. The motion carried.

3. Teen LGBTQ Collection:

Greg Williams requested that the presentation on the Teen LGBTQ Collection happen before the Director's Report. The Board was amenable to this change.

Sabrina Tusing presented information about the creation of the Teen LGBTQ collection. This collection grew out of the realization that it was difficult to find LGBTQ library materials on the shelves and in the catalog. Additionally, the materials that were available tended to have extreme negative outcomes for the LGBTQ characters. In order to address this barrier to equitable access, planning for a Teen LGBTQ collection began. Seed money for the new collection was provided by the Library Foundation.

Discussion with and feedback from teen participants in the Living Room for LGBTQ Youth helped guide decisions about the collection. Some of these decisions included having visible spine stickering on the collection's items, shelving the collection together to increase the ease of finding the materials without staff assistance, and shelving unlabeled duplicate copies of titles throughout the general teen section to provide more discreet access to materials (the exception to this are the nonfiction materials, which are usually recognizable as LGBTQ subjects by their titles).

Sabrina shared that in 2019 the 197 books in the LGBTQ collection comprised 4% of the teen collection and each title circulated an average of 4 times. Items in the general teen collection circulated an average of 5 times in the same time period. Sabrina also briefly discussed an article about the development of the collection she and Youth Services Librarian Barratt Miller co-wrote, which was recently published in the Oregon Library Association Quarterly journal.

Based on the article, Cynthia Andrews had a question concerning applications for library accounts for students lacking school photo identification. Sabrina clarified that anyone could get a temporary card with no identification or proof of address and that any photo identification could be used for a general card application.

David Goldberg asked if there were sufficient resources to continue developing the collection and if the Living Room participants were still involved in the selection. Sabrina stated that the collection is being constantly augmented and said suggested titles for addition to the collection are always welcome.

4. Library Director's Report:

Greg recognized staff's efforts in providing library services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Greg reviewed safety measures in place at the library, and articulated that staff health and safety was a priority. These measures include: making PPE available to staff; a daily morning staff self-health assessment; frequent sanitization of workspace surfaces; wearing masks and gloves while handling materials going to patrons; wearing masks while in the building; keeping open communication and sharing any safety concerns; and staff staying out of building if they had COVID-like symptoms. Greg shared that clear masks and face shields were recently acquired and made available to staff in order to make lip-reading easier.

Greg acknowledged that staff with school-age children will be facing challenges in the upcoming school year and that the library will work individually with staff and be as flexible in their scheduling as possible.

Greg provided an overview of the no-contact hold pick up process. Greg reported that feedback from patrons has been largely positive, but that occasionally patrons arrive for an appointment thinking they had made a reservation without having fully completed the online process. In these cases, staff try to fit these patrons in when appointment slots are available on the same day, and help patrons reschedule appointments when a same-day option is not available. Additional instructional content was being created to better support patrons in going through the online appointment process.

Greg shared that the lobby was being used as a material quarantine zone, and that, based on new test results, the quarantine period of library materials had recently increased from three days to four days. Greg reflected that the storage of quarantined items had proved to be one of the greatest operational challenges of providing service during the pandemic, due to the physical space required to quarantining materials, and having to make changes from the usual model of library operations that emphasizes the rapid turn-around of items.

Scott Edwards asked if incoming materials from other libraries were quarantined. Greg stated that all materials arriving at Oregon City Public Library were being quarantined. This was to ensure that all patron-bound items met Oregon City Public Library's protocol of materials being handled by gloved and masked staff and quarantined for four days, as this standard of handling was not universal at all LINCC libraries.

David asked if staff were able to keep up with the daily volume of materials. Greg replied that on a weekly basis staff kept up, and explained that a general "rhythm" had developed where different circulation processes were emphasized on different days of the week. Greg shared that shelving the materials had become more challenging because more items were checked in than normal and the shelves were getting full.

Scott asked what staff were back to work in the building. Greg explained that Circulation staff operated on a weekly A/B schedule to minimize risk of COVID-19 infection, and to help ensure continuity of in-person services if staff needed to isolate. Technical Services staff were in building every day processing new materials, generally physically separate from the rest. A member of the Youth Services staff was in building one to two days per week to focus on various mailing activities and efforts. Adult Services, and Information Technology/Public Relations staff were currently in the building on a project basis.

Scott inquired as to the budget impact of the new way of working. Greg responded that since the library is primarily property tax funded, any budgetary impact of the COVID-19 pandemic likely would not be apparent until November or December. Full-time staff were working full time and on-call staff were not getting as many hours as they were before the closure, but the available hours were being distributed as equitably as possible.

Scott asked how Oregon City Public Library's operating days and hours compared to other LINCC libraries. Greg referred to a page on the lincc.org site which provided current service hours of other LINCC libraries. Some offered a weekend day and others, like Oregon City, offered evening hours. Only Wilsonville currently allows patrons inside the building, and this is in a very specific area for limited types of service.

Scott inquired if there were any plans to expand the hours for the return of items. Greg responded that the library is planning to add an additional bookdrop. Even when operating normally, the existing bookdrop needed to be checked hourly in order to prevent overflow. With the number of materials that were checked out prior to closure, the library is currently experiencing a high rate of return, necessitating the limited book drop hours. Greg projected that once the additional bookdrop arrived, 24/7 item returns should be possible.

Scott asked what the plans for reopening looked like. Greg responded that the City had a five-phase plan for reopening, and was currently operating at Phase 3. Phases 4 and 5 of the City plan correspond roughly to Phase 2 and 3 of the Governor's Reopening Plan. Phase 4 at the Library would include public computer usage, a priority based on patron feedback. As currently planned, this appointment-based computer usage would take place in the Carnegie section at physically-distanced stations that would be sanitized between appointments. Bringing people into the library would be limited based on capacity while observing physical distancing. Phase 5, as currently planned, would likely include limited browsing, but would still be subject to occupancy limits. Greg spoke to the challenge of keeping people distanced in a building designed to bring people together.

Scott asked if the library would be open for browsing in 2020. Greg stated that this was a decision for the City Manager and City Commission, but he had not heard of libraries in LINCC, most of Washington County, or Multnomah County expecting to be open to patrons soon. Greg shared that his recommendation had been not to have patrons in the building until at least moving into Phase 2 of the Governor's Reopening Plan.

Greg shared information about new programming and services, including: Anti-Racism Book Club, Library Hacks videos, and Art Kits (available by mail or picked up with holds).

Greg shared that on June 9th, the Oregon City Commission adopted Resolution 20-19 declaring Oregon City's stance against racism, discrimination, and social injustices in the country and community. Greg said the library will continue to support the Commission's efforts.

Scott requested clarification as to what this support would look like at the library level. Greg stated that this would likely be topical programming (like last year's Building Bridges film and discussion series and the current), taking equity issues into consideration, and continuing to identify and eliminate barriers to access.

Scott inquired if other perspectives would be allowed at the Anti-Racism Book Club. Greg affirmed that library's intent is to provide opportunities and safe space for respectful discourse and discussion or all points of view. Greg reiterated that a core value of libraries, and the Oregon City Public Library, is including and incorporating a variety of perspectives in the collection and in library programming.

Greg reported that through Labor Day, LINCC-wide checkout periods had been extended to 28 days and that no LINCC library would be assessing overdue fines.

Greg shared that the LINCC Library of Things project won a National Association of Counties Award and commended staff for their efforts.

5. Public Comments: none

6. Expanding Capacity of 6th Street Book Drop

Greg shared that he wanted to expand the existing 6th Street book drop by adding a second, dual-bin unit next to the existing unit. Greg explained that he checked with multiple City departments to ensure there were no permitting or code issues. He also explained that, as the library is located within a City park, he had consulted with the City Attorney to ensure that an expansion of the existing book drop would not violate the City Charter provision requiring a vote of the people when placing a non-recreational structure on park property. Having the additional unit will allow the library to keep the book drops open 24/7.

David asked if the new unit will prevent the book drop from filling up. Greg stated that they would likely still fill, but having an additional large unit would reduce the frequency with which staff would have to check and empty the book drops, and it would allow for the book drop to remain open over holidays without staff having to come in to empty it. David inquired about the estimated timeline. Greg shared that the unit had been ordered and was on the way.

7. Clackamas County Library District-Final Distribution (FY 19-20):

Greg reported at the end of June, the final FY 19-20 Library District Distribution had been made. The distribution came in approximately \$50,000 over the original budgeted amount.

8. Monthly statistics:

Greg also stated that he had not been able to prepare statistics for this meeting, but he could send them separately or present them as part of the next meeting. The Board requested sharing the library statistics at the next meeting.

9. Communications:

Cynthia reported that the Library Foundation met on July 15 via Zoom. Greg and Denise were in attendance. Cynthia identified two ways the Foundation might offer assistance: providing funding for mailers and updating the upholstery fabric or furniture to something more easily sanitizable than the existing cloth furniture. Cynthia reported the Foundation to be financially stable and that The Oregon City Schools Foundation donated \$500 to go towards the Dolly Parton Project. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is now reaching nearly 200 children monthly.

Greg reported that Friends of the Library were open 3 days a week with limited hours, were making approximately 50% of pre-COVID revenue, and were experiencing some difficulty finding volunteers to staff the shop and handle the elevated number of donations. These donations are being quarantined.

10. Future Agenda Items: none

11. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.