

Bemidji Public Library Board Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2020

Present: Deb Rossman, Stephen Pflieger, Joyce Siegert, Heidi Johnson, Lauree Bahr, Sheri Brumback, Deb Graves

Friends of the Bemidji Public Library: Sara McKinney, Sharon Geisen

Absent: Nancy Erickson, Kath Molitor

The board meeting was held via ZOOM. Chair, Deb Rossman, called the meeting to order.

I. Approval of June minutes: Minutes were not read or approved.

II. Manager's Report

A. Financial report

- Monthly purchases of custodial and office supplies – the library is keeping their stock of supplies high due to CoVID situation. Operating expenses for annual subscriptions to Wandoo Reader, \$420.91 – an online method of signing up/participating in the summer and winter reading programs, and Signup, \$458.64 – an online software to electronically sign up for using the library meeting room. These programs are a little expensive; Sherry will keep watch for other options, but these are tools that will help people access programs and services in the library during CoVID and beyond.

B. Usage statistics

- Statistics for checking out materials are down in the Bemidji library about 47.6% over the first half of the year. A good part of that time the library was closed, but curbside pickup has helped give access to materials again. The other Kitchigami libraries also saw a reduction of 40-50%. Wadena is doing slightly better, perhaps explained by the fact that they are building a brand new library and their community/library has had many activities to promote their building project.
- Electronic resources: Downloads of eBooks and eAudio resources has increased some over the first half of the year. Ancestry use has gone down about 500 searches during the same time period, which may be due to the fact that library computers were not available for use, and also that the ancestry software is much more affordable and easy to access at home. Flipster usage was up a little, but ELM searches/sessions were down a lot, perhaps due to students not writing papers or researching information as much during the change in school format.

C. News

- Patrons continue to request books and participate in curbside pickup. July 14 was the first day that patrons could make an appointment to enter the library to use a computer. There are 6 computers that can be used at a time, and each patron is given a buzzer that will tell them when their 45 minute time period is up. Then the staff has 15 minutes to sanitize the area for the next patron. The library is being strict with patrons – everyone must follow the rules. There were only a few computer requests on the first day, but as the community realizes this service is available, the requests for computer use will increase. The Facebook site has

information about the hours and services available. Discussion followed about having an ad on the radio or an interview on Chat About to raise awareness of the current services and hours. Sherry was going to consider this/these opportunities.

- July 14 was also the first day that all the library staff was called back. They are acclimating to the new guidelines and routines. The library needs 5 staff at all times: Rover, Information Desk, Circulation Desk, Curbside Pickup, and one person at the door to allow patrons with computer appointments in and answer questions.
- All libraries have had to cut back on their hours of service. At this time, Bemidji is open to service the public with curbside pick-up and computer use Tuesday – Friday, 12 pm – 7 pm and Saturday from 9 am – 12 pm for curbside pick-up only. Sherry will make modifications as needed, according to patron usage and staffing needs. (Is there strong usage on Saturdays, or should we switch to Monday-Friday?)
- Sherry shared that there have been some negative reviews about the Bemidji library not being open and some pretty awful things said. Some of the other libraries are experiencing this too. It seems like it is getting a little better now. Generally, Sherry felt the actual library patrons are understanding of the CoVID guidelines and have been supportive. She wondered if there was an area political group that may have submitted these negative reviews for their own purposes. There may be some confusion about not being “fully open” since some people are able to enter due to having a computer appointment, while others, who may just want to browse are not allowed in. (Perhaps the radio ad would help alleviate misunderstandings.) Steve commended Sherry on the good job she and her staff have done with Phase 3 – that the guidelines she has set and the efforts the staff have made to meet people’s needs have been great.
- Lots of work has been going on inside the library during CoVID.
 - o The information desk has been moved to the end of the circulation desk, and the staff love it. The open space on the floor makes it easier to see everywhere in the library, and it is a good place to help patrons with their questions right as they walk into the library.
 - o Shelving changes – the fiction section is combined now. The paperback and hard cover books are all shelved together. This will make it easier for patrons to locate these books. Looks really nice.
 - o Periodicals have been moved to the front of the library. Many newspapers and magazines are printing only a few issues per year instead of monthly now. Our subscriptions for magazines are about ½ of what they used to be. Some magazine subscriptions are gone because companies are closing or stopping production of some of the titles. Magazines are not out at this time – patrons have to ask for them.
 - o Moved Book Club in a Box and Obituaries to the back of the library – where the periodicals used to be.

- PPE is getting installed. Plexiglas will be at all service desks, and an added barrier between the service desk and where the patrons stand is being added. Staff has been busy marking the floor with tape so people will have assistance with proper social distancing between themselves (X) and can follow the arrows as they navigate the library space. Employees are required to wear masks/shields. Those working in the circulation area and handling money must wear gloves. Hand sanitizer stations will be at the entrance, and one at the desk. (One station had to be returned because it wasn't working.) Other hand sanitizer pumps are available throughout the library.
- Branch Managers Meeting – Libraries will be getting guidance on what steps will need to be taken should a staff member be exposed to, or test positive for CoVID. What if we find out a patron has contracted coronavirus after they have visited us? Kitchigami is working on answers to these questions. Kitchigami has applied for a grant to purchase technology, Laptops and Hotspots, that people will be able to check out for personal use. Still some issues to work through – how to protect the equipment? How to track where equipment is?

III. Old Business: Library book sale was canceled for this year, but Joyce spoke with Evangelical Free Church, and we were able to carry over our deposit for this year to apply for rental next year, and sign a new contract for the same week July 2021. Joyce will sign the papers. Bags from Menards for the book sale can be used next year, and have been dropped by the library. Sherry has them in her office.

IV. New Business:

- Our next meeting is on an election day, and needs to be rescheduled. The consensus was to have our next meeting on Wednesday, August 12 at 5:00 pm via Zoom.
- Library will move to Phase 4 at the beginning of August, with limited browsing in a select section of the library, with books chosen for that section, mostly new materials. All other bookshelves off limits. Library staff will not be retrieving books from those sections for patrons who come in to browse. Those items need to be requested for curbside pick-up. Limited number of people in library at one time, 50% capacity at 200, maintain safe distance. Sanitation, social distancing, minimum contact with staff, and cleaning lavatories more often will be high priority. Patrons will be encouraged to wear a mask. At this time, Kitchigami is not requiring temperature checks before entering the library. Should we purchase a thermometer for library? Sherry was going to make inquiries about this added measure of safety.

V. Kitchigami Regional Library Service Report: Nancy is attending the meetings by phone, but has no report at this time. Not a lot going on.

VI. Friends of the Bemidji Public Library report: Sara McKinney reported on their free BookPage publication, and that copies are now being added to patron's curbside pick-up bags. Sharon Geisen sent out a link to Friends of the Bemidji Public Library for BookPages. Sharon Geisen reported that there is no specific date that the Red Door Bookstore may open, but it will be after the library is completely open again. They are concerned about getting enough volunteers since many of the current volunteers are older people. The September newsletter is being prepared. Sharon asked that Sheri write an article for it.

VI. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Heidi Johnson, seconded by Lauree Bahr.

Respectfully submitted by
Deb Graves
Joyce Siegert

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 12, 2020