

Bemidji Public Library Board Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2021

Present: Deb Rossman, Joyce Siegert, Lauree Bahr, Steve Pflieger, Ara Gallo

Absent: Kath Molitor, Heidi Johnson

City Council: Nancy Erickson

Guests: Sharon Geisen

The March board meeting was held via ZOOM. Vice-chair, Deb Rossman, called the meeting to order.

I. Approval of February minutes: Motion to accept by Steve Pflieger with corrections if needed, seconded by Lauree Bahr.

II. Manager's Report

A. Financial report: None available

B. Usage Statistics: Ara Gallo, speaking on behalf of branch manager, Sheri Brumback, gave the following usage statistics for the first week of March, 2021:

1,699 patrons

1930 items checked out

123 Internet users

25 Virtual programs

No libraries are open in the Lake Agassiz and Arrowhead library regions.

C. News: Ara explained a new partnership that the Bemidji Public Library has with the Minnesota Legal Service Coalition. The library made available a small study room to be used as a legal kiosk. A computer and printer/scanner are provided by the MLSC. Legal services and advice through the use of this system will be free. During the Covid-19 restrictions, court hearings are held over ZOOM and paperwork must be scanned and emailed. People without access to computer technology are at a disadvantage. The service is available by appointment or walkup. Reservations are made by calling the library at 218-751-3963. The local library staff is not able to give legal advice but may help a person with use of the computer to get to the necessary program. (See additional information at end of minutes.)

Ara mentioned that he and Amy are creating a website with a theme of women's history in the Bemidji area. People would be able to access local stories, history, and knowledge. He asked about the library board paying for the domain name and the yearly website fee. No action was taken because it is in the early development stage.

Ara asked for the board to pay for a general membership to the American Library Association to access resources. Estimated cost is \$300. Board members asked if the library or the KRLS provides staff development and training money. He said he did not think so.

On March 11, 2021, there will be a Legacy program featuring author William Kent Krueger at 6:00 p.m. He will speak for 45 minutes on his new book, [This Tender Land](#) with another 15 minutes for questions and answers. Register on the Facebook Legacy page ahead of time by calling your local library or by doing a search on Facebook for Bemidji Public Library, then the information of the William Kent Krueger presentation. There is a link to click on.

III. Old Business:

A.

IV. New Business:

A. KRLS funds for the Bemidji Public Library: No action was taken on this topic but information was shared by Nancy Erickson, Bemidji City Council member and representative to KRLS. Unrestricted funds have built up to an exorbitant amount and the accountant says the money should be disbursed.

Background info: Library services are provided by Minnesota legislation to 12 regional systems. 97% of public libraries belong to a system. The Kitchigami Regional System has a board comprised of all elected officials—9 city and 5 county. The legislature set up a complicated system of budgeting which can lead to a levy that is higher than needed to run the organization. Extra money goes to an unrestricted fund. The City of Bemidji contributes more than any other city or county at \$138,000. Brainerd is at \$77,000 with Cass Lake, Walker, Blackduck and Longville all contributing less. Crow Wing county has four libraries; Beltrami county has two.

Reed Olson (Beltrami County) suggested that new programs could be created. Big libraries could offer programs but smaller ones cannot because of staffing.

The money could be returned to the taxpayer or to the contributing government entities. The Bemidji City Attorney is contacting the State Library Services office (Hannah Buckland, a former member of the Bemidji Public Library Board). The Bemidji City Council supports the return of a fair share of the money to Bemidji to be used for the local library.

The director of KRLS (Stephanie) contacted the member libraries to apprise them of the money that may be available for their use and asked for ideas on how it should be appropriated. Sheri Brumback asked her staff for a list of ideas to submit. More information is needed as to what can and cannot be purchased with the funds.

More information may be available at the April board meeting as to its impact on the Bemidji Public Library.

B. Vacant board position: The City of Bemidji has posted the position.

C. Hoopla: Ara was asked about the usage of Hoopla but the local library does not get that information.

V. Kitchigami Regional Library Service Report: Nancy Erickson provided much of the information for the above new business about funds from KRLS for the Bemidji Public Library. KRLS is seeking a new auditor.

VI. Friends of the Bemidji Public Library report: Sharon Geisen mentioned that the Friends have membership in the American Library Association, the Minnesota Library Association and Minnesota Library Friends.

A press release was in the local newspaper about the Mary Harding grants to the ECFE preschool, Bemidji Middle School, the Bi-County Cap program, and the Boys & Girls Club for a total of \$3,499.

The Red Door Book Store is not ready to open yet because of Covid-19 and the lack of volunteers.

VII. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Lauree Bahr, second by Steve Pflieger.

Next meeting will be April 13, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,
Joyce Siegert, Secretary

Additional information about the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition:

It is an association of seven regional legal service programs and is funded through a grant from the Legal Services Advisory Committee and the Court Technology Fund. The money comes from:

1. Minnesota legislature. Statute 480.242
2. A portion of attorney registration fee dedicated to civil legal services
3. Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) created in 1982 through Rule 15 of the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct—Minnesota Supreme Court document
+ \$3.5 million federal CARES Act funding

270 community-based computer kiosks have been set up in a statewide network