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**LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING: REOPENING PLAN**

September 28, 2020

**Meeting held electronically via telephone conference call/live-stream
due to COVID-19 restrictions.**

ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS: Kimberly Young (Chair), Xavier Richardson, (Vice Chair), Martha Hutzel (Secretary-Treasurer), Meg Bohmke, Kerry Devine, Cheryl Miller, Diana Risavi, David Ross

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION: Rebecca Purdy, Chris Glover, Kathy Roberts

Kimberly Young called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm and read the following statement:

This Meeting is being held electronically by live stream, pursuant to Fredericksburg City Council Ordinance 20-05, An Ordinance to Address Continuity of City Government during the Pendency of a Pandemic Disaster.

The Board members participating are: Kimberly Young, Xavier Richardson, Martha Hutzel, Meg Bohmke, Kerry Devine, Cheryl Miller, Diana Risavi, and David Ross. CRRL staff participating are: Rebecca Purdy, Chris Glover, and Kathy Roberts.

Members of the public have been invited to access this meeting via livestream on the CRRL website, Board of Trustees page. Documents to be discussed during this meeting are available for public view at: librarypoint.org/board-of-trustees.

Kimberly Young stated the purpose of this meeting is to discuss providing physical, public access to CRRL Branches earlier than previously proposed at the September 14 Library Board meeting. She explained that this will be a discussion to enable the Board to provide recommendations to the Director and that no vote is required and thus no vote will be taken. Young said the new proposed Building Access



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540-372-1144

Plan was provided to all members on Friday.

Kimberly Young asked Martha Hutzel to present the new, proposed reopening plan.

Martha Hutzel referred the members to the proposed building access plan document and said that while CRRL has not had customer access to our buildings, we have never stopped serving the public through our many resources available online, then through curbside pickup service, and most recently by personalized reference service by phone. Library staff have worked incredibly hard and exhaustively to serve our community and deserve recognition and gratitude for their efforts.

Martha Hutzel stated that as outlined in Phases 1 and 2 of the plan, it was always our goal to offer building access at an earlier date. In an effort to restore access to customers as quickly as possible we turned on customer holds capability and then began accepting returns from customers only seven days later. The results was an overwhelming amount of materials requiring handling which added an unexpected three weeks to the process. Hutzel said that if we had it to do over again, we would allow more time between reinstating those two services. She said that because we were not charging any fines, customers were not impacted financially due to the delayed processing. She expressed to the Board that she hoped they found the additional information provided in the plan to be helpful. She explained that the staff has been working on these reopening plans for many months and she would be happy to share additional details.

Martha Hutzel explained further that the plan has always been based on state guidelines and uses many of the best practices from comparable public libraries such as reduced hours, requiring appointments, having time limits on daily visits, and capacity limits for each location - which is recommended and what most libraries are doing. She said we have a target date of October 12 for ALL of our library branches to reopen except the Fried Center, which Germanna has still closed to the public. Hutzel said she believes Phase 3c is a low liability phase, but there will be additional support needed from the jurisdictions in order to meet state mandates for safety. She directed the members to those details in the final 2 columns on the DRAFT Phases 3-5 tab of the document. She said many of the safety supports still needed are relatively minor, including the addition of plexiglass barriers to public service desks and the supply of additional hand sanitizer stations. She explained there has been difficulty getting hand sanitizer stations as they are scarce and on backorder. Hutzel said we have completed Phase 1 and 2 and will be working through Phase 3 going forward.

Martha Hutzel said that it is important to determine who carries the liability with COVID -- CRRL or the jurisdictions. She said that one key to mitigating our highest liability concern is the need for jurisdictional assistance with the state mandated cleaning of high-contact areas every 2 hours. Spotsylvania has already offered this assistance, and Fredericksburg and Stafford are working on a plan. Fred Presley with Stafford County assured her that the county would be able to provide this requested assistance. She said that Westmoreland has offered enhanced cleaning and that they would be working out those details. Martha Hutzel said it is a priority that all of the high touch areas be cleaned regularly.

Kimberly Young commended Martha on the additional detail provided in this new, proposed plan and opened the issue up to the board for discussion.

Meg Bohmke said that after consulting with Stafford County staff, they told her that under Phase 3, cleaning every 2 hours is not required. She stated that if the library has disinfecting wipes available, customers can wipe down the computers themselves, thus the library does not have to clean every 2 hours.

Martha Hutzel responded that because libraries are not specifically designated in state and CDC COVID procedural requirement documents, they have been using requirements specified for museums, the designation that appears to have the most similar quantifiers to libraries. She explained that most CRRL Branches require multiple touches to access the building. Howell is the only branch where you can get into the building without touching things as the doors are automatic. She added that in all branches, opening to the public will provide multiple potential touchpoints. She said that it is likely that some customers will only use curbside pickup until the pandemic is over.

Rebecca Purdy responded to Meg's statement by directing members to page 2 of the Forward Virginia document stating that frequently touched areas must be cleaned every two hours.

Meg Bohmke said that when COVID-19 restrictions began, grocery stores instructed customers to not touch multiple items and to only touch the items they were going to buy. She suggested that the library could direct customers in the same manner.

Martha Hutzel responded that the point of browsing is to allow customers to physically peruse and flip through items in order to choose which items they want to check out. She explained that asking people not to touch any items they do not check out may not result in compliance, and that it would be difficult to police the amount of contact with items.

Meg Bohmke said that in her research of other library systems, she found that several systems only had a limited number of branches open as opposed to all branches. She suggested that the Board consider a similar measure for CRRL. She then asked Martha Hutzel to clarify if the reopening requirement of "no covid case" was system-wide.

Martha Hutzel answered that we would not close the entire library system or all the branches in a particular jurisdiction based on one confirmed case at a particular branch.

Meg Bohmke said she had questions about requiring customers to make an appointment to enter the branch. She said that other library systems are open fully. She asked specifically about the suggested open hours at 43% in Stafford and 30% in Westmoreland and asked what that would equate to in actual hours open at a branch such as Howell branch.

Martha Hutzel responded that she estimated Howell branch would be open 28-29 hours/week. She explained that the proposed percentages are based on the operating hours approved in June due to budget cuts. She explained further that as we transition forward through each phase of reopening, hours would gradually increase. She expressed concern about reopening to a large capacity such as 80-90% too quickly as some libraries have had to reclose after doing so. She said currently most libraries are opened for limited hours and have additional restrictions.

Martha responded that historically, CRRL offers more open hours than most library systems. She cited the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library (MRFL) and Charlottesville (Jefferson Madison Regional Library) as comparable systems because they also serve multiple jurisdictions. Hutzel said she would

rather open more buildings for fewer hours, than open fewer buildings for more hours at each because this will allow more people to access the buildings.

Diana Risavi shared Westmoreland's response to the proposed Building Access Plan. She said that the county had not received a single complaint about the current operations in place at CRRL and that while moving forward with a limited/slow reopening, Westmoreland was ready to offer support. She stated that Jeff Frazier, who handles special projects for the county, can install plexiglass dividers and that the cost to CRRL for the supplies would be reimbursed with CARES Act funds. She added that the county has a substantial supply of hand sanitizer and will gladly supply that to the branches and will provide enhanced cleaning as requested. Risavi said that Westmoreland wants to have a county deputy posted at each door to assist with security and COVID-19 compliance - ensuring masks are worn, administering health screening questions and temperature checks, and collecting names/contact information provided for contact purpose in the event of a positive case. The sheriff's department is agreeable that once branches are open, they will assign deputies to this task. Risavi explained that in July, Westmoreland had the highest surge of cases in the state and the county wants to make sure we are operating branches as safely as possible, which is the reason for these requested measures.

Martha Hutzel thanked Diana Risavi for communicating the requests from Westmoreland.

Kerry Devine said she likes the Phase 3 plan and that Fredericksburg would prefer to have more branches open fewer hours rather than more hours at fewer branches. She assured the Board that the needed support from the jurisdiction would not be a problem. Devine suggested that having customers swipe their library card when entering the building would help with tracing and would capture the needed information from those who may not check out any items. Devine asked if the limited hours of building access would be staggered to accommodate customers.

Martha Hutzel confirmed that the proposed building access plan includes morning, afternoon and evening hours.

Xavier Richardson said that while he appreciates the desire for more hours at a given facility, the alternative of more branches open with fewer hours is preferable. He added that if there is a confirmed COVID case at a particular branch, only that one branch would need to be temporarily closed. He added that he hopes every location will include temperature checks and screening questions to mitigate risk.

Martha Hutzel responded that the staff had not planned on temperature checks. Xavier Richardson responded that he believed temperature checks are the norm in most places, including schools.

Martha shared concerns with how some of these suggestions might affect privacy. She said privacy is paramount to library customers and we must strive to protect that privacy even during a pandemic.

Xavier Richardson suggested that we don't need to record names and temperatures, but rather simply turn away customers whose temperature is higher than allowed. He added that he would not enter a library that does not take temperatures and believes there are other customers who will feel the same way. Richardson added that some of the measures in the proposed building access plan were too general and that measurable benchmarks are needed. He said the plan references certain gating conditions but these conditions are not detailed and too subjective, citing the examples "cooperative adherence to

precautions” and “positivity rates.” He said that other than the need for specificity and the concerns he has stated, he likes the plan.

Martha Hutzal responded that we can provide more specificity in gating conditions. Xavier Richardson said that adding clear benchmarks will help manage the public’s expectations as they might be frustrated by subjective criteria.

Martha Hutzal asked Kimberly Young if she had any information as to why Virginia’s community colleges have decided to offer only online classes for the 2021 spring semester. Young responded that she did not know the answer. She explained that the University of Mary Washington (UMW) operates independently from the community college system.

David Ross said that he agreed with Xavier’s suggestion to make the gating benchmarks more specific. He said there may be differences from branch to branch and suspected that not all branches would want to enact the measures Westmoreland has requested, such as deputies at the door enforcing the mask requirement. He said each locality will need to decide where they fall on the spectrum and be careful of overreacting. Ross continued to say that he has school age children and children in college, and that the risks of COVID-19 are different for different ages. He added that depression and suicide rates have increased from the isolation and suggested that perhaps we could consider additional hours for certain age groups that are at lower risk.

Martha Hutzal said that limiting access to specific age groups might be illegal. David Ross offered to take any questions to the Spotsylvania County Attorney for assistance and suggested that we ask for input from counsel in our other jurisdictions as well. Hutzal added that for privacy reasons, we cannot ask the age of a customer; and that an adult bringing their child into the library cannot be asked to drop off the child and leave. She added that if Westmoreland wants deputies at their doors, she cannot tell the jurisdiction no and that other jurisdictions can consider different options.

Cheryl Miller asked that as the public regains access to the branches, whether it is the library or the jurisdiction that bears the liability for positive COVID cases, the library or the jurisdiction.

Martha Hutzal responded that both the library and the jurisdiction may be held liable by customers, which is why the library and jurisdictions have insurance.

David Ross suggested that the board bring questions regarding liability to jurisdictional counsel.

Xavier Richardson said that he thought this discussion was healthy, that several good points had been made, and that he was confident the library staff would consider them as they refined the building access plan. He added that he is pleased the buildings will be reopening to the public, but expects the traffic flow will be significantly reduced compared to the pre-COVID traffic flow because many people are just not going places and especially since we have curbside service as an option. Richardson continued to say that we need to be open to modifying the plan as needed based on traffic and suggests implementing then reevaluating as we go, perhaps in every few weeks.

Kimberly Young suggested the board continue to go through the plan to make sure all input is heard.

Meg Bohmke shared that one of her fellow supervisors in Stafford had commented on the lack of specificity in the plan and wanted more details on what the plan was for pulling back if needed. She said that Stafford will not have deputies at the branches because they do not have the bandwidth to provide personnel. Bohmke added that temperature checks are needed because they are doing this everywhere else and it would look silly not to do it at the library. She said Mike Smith (Deputy County Administrator, Stafford) provided Meg a copy of the requests from CRRL for CARES Act funding and asked if the other localities had made these payments yet. She also asked if a list of future needs was provided at the last board meeting.

Martha Hutzal reported that two of the other 3 localities have responded to the requests and confirmed they will provide that funding, but have not yet sent the funds to the library. She said that no list was provided at the last board meeting because it was not requested, however, the lists were provided to the finance offices of each jurisdiction as requested by each of those offices.

Meg Bohmke asked for additional clarification on the pending CARES Act funding requests and said, “\$75,000 seems like a lot of money.” She asked if these items have already been ordered and offered Mike Smith’s assistance in reviewing the needs and costs of items. Bohmke also suggested using bins for library return items to possibly shorten the time needed to quarantine items.

Martha Hutzal responded that some of the supplies have been ordered. She said the library is already using bins for returns and the 14-day period includes several days of quarantine plus the time needed for staff to process the returns.

Kimberly Young summarized the discussion as the Board being in agreement with the overall plan but desiring more specificity, especially with gating conditions. She said the Board understands this is a work in progress and that each jurisdiction will be treated individually. She asked if there were any other issues on the table.

David Ross said there is a rush in adding specificity to the plan in order to provide the public and the local boards to make decisions moving forward. He asked for an executive summary of the plan that might be easier to understand than the current spreadsheet format. He suggested Costco and Stafford County plans as examples. Ross said that we need to be careful not to overreact to a positive COVID case in a library branch, explaining that asymptomatic cases should not be treated the same as symptomatic cases.

Kimberly Young responded that not overreacting is an important point, but it is the library’s responsibility to ensure that we are doing everything possible to protect the public and limit exposure to the virus.

Meg Bohmke said that more specificity is needed and asked for an updated plan to share with her fellow Stafford Supervisors no later than October 1 for review before their October 6 meeting. She suggested a meeting between a library administrator and Mike Smith, Deputy County Administrator for Stafford and said other jurisdictions might want to be a part of that meeting as well.

Kimberly Young asked if the board agreed with the proposed October 12 date to open building access to the public, agreed that more specificity in gating conditions was needed, and agreed with the

request for a summary of the plan. She asked if there were any parts of the plan with which the board members were not in agreement.

Meg Bohmke stated that she is not in agreement with the submitted CARES Act funding requests moving forward.

Martha Hutzal responded that CARES Act funding is a separate issue and the Building Access Plan is not contingent on further CARES Act funding.

Meg Bohmke responded that she will accept the plan if she can get it in a format that is easy to read and stated that quarantine of items should be limited to 4 days, not 7 as specified on the proposal.

Martha Hutzal responded that physical items are quarantined for 4 days and the additional 3 days is for staff to process items through the checking in/reshelving procedures.

Xavier Richardson asked where the board had landed on the issue of temperature checks. He expressed concern that not taking temperatures might send a message to library staff that the Board is not concerned about their safety.

Martha Hutzal expressed concern that temperature checks might feel invasive to customers and that most libraries are not conducting temperature checks. She said that if the Board decided this was a must, the library would comply.

Xavier Richardson said temperature checks are consistent with protocols in other public buildings and shows concern for customers and staff.

Kimberly Young said that temperature check requirements may differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and asked David Ross if Spotsylvania was requiring this.

David Ross responded that he was not sure if Spotsylvania was requiring temperature checks before entering public buildings.

Kimberly stated that the Board is in agreement with the plan plus more specificity in the gating conditions. She shared that one of the challenges that UMW and other regional groups have is crafting a summary that clearly communicates what is happening and when it is happening, and to provide that information in common language for the public. She asked Martha Hutzal if there would be an operational impact with quarterly jurisdictional funds being withheld.

Martha Hutzal responded that there would be a huge operational impact if these funds were withheld and that the library cannot stay open the branches to the public without the funding.

Meg Bohmke asked for an update on the plan for meeting room use.

Martha Hutzal responded that in the initial reopening of branches on October 12, meeting rooms will not be available but opening meeting rooms and individual study rooms will be the next step.

Meg Bohmke suggested that learning pod study groups be allowed to use library meeting rooms as is the case in other libraries. Martha Hutzler responded that she did not believe CRRL was ready for that at this time but would explore that further as we move forward.

Kimberly thanked the board members and library staff for the discussion and the staff for their work on the proposed plan as well as all they are doing with current services. She dismissed the members and ended the virtual meeting at 6:12 P.M.

The next Board meeting will be December 14 at 4:00pm.