

## **FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH LIBRARY COMMISSION**

### **MINUTES March 17, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Library Commission was held electronically via Zoom and in-person in the Board Room, Noel Wien Library, 1215 Cowles Street, Fairbanks, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 4:04p.m. by Rex Nutter, Chair.

#### **A. ROLL CALL**

##### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Rex Nutter, Karen Fox, Jeff Jacobson, Nicole Eiseman, Elyse Guttenberg, Charles Simmons, Maida Buckley, Robert Hannon, Mary Matthews

##### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

##### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Melissa Harter – Library Director  
Renee Van Nort – Administration Manager  
Denise Thompson – Administrative Assistant

#### **B. MESSAGES/PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

#### **C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Agenda approved without objection or roll call vote.

#### **D. MINUTES**

Minutes from February 17, 2020 approved with minor corrections and without objection or roll call vote.

#### **E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

None

**G. REPORTS****Directors Report**

1. Sincere thanks to Rex for partnering with Melissa to give a presentation to the Assembly. The presentation was about partnering with other libraries.
2. On April 9<sup>th</sup> the library will be open for browsing appointments on Friday afternoons. The appointments will be 45 minutes long with 30 people during each session and 15 of those patrons designated as Berry Room browsers. The borough's mitigation plan requires us to clean hourly and/or clean items that are touched. Our plan for the books that are touched is to have patrons put them on a nearby cart so that the books can be quarantined for a few days before being re-shelved.
3. Berry Room just finished up their Spring Break Program. They handed out 200 activity bags.
4. March 2020 – February 2021 we had a circulation of 194,763 items and approximately 125,000 downloadable items. There was an average 30% increase in downloadable items across the states which is true for us as well. There were approximately 20,000 pick-ups at the Bookmobile.
5. Developed a mitigation plan to have AARP come in the library on Saturdays to provide tax aide. They are providing service by appointment only and are completely booked up. They are also holding appointments during the week at the JP Jones Center. Because the tax filing deadline might be extended to May 17, AARP may be able to provide more appointments.
6. Bookmobile will be getting a cellular modem to provide more service and will allow us to use a laptop to issue library cards on the spot when needed.
7. Melissa was elected to be on the Alaska Library Network Board. The first meeting will be tomorrow morning.
8. Our budget session will be briefing the Assembly on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Should go smooth as we are keeping the budget flat this year.
9. A measure was passed in the Assembly that all Boards & Commissions will be staffed by the Clerk's Office. Spoke with the Clerk's Office about how important it is for the Library Commission to meet at the Library and not JHAC and they don't see that as being a problem.
10. The Borough is letting the emergency declaration lapse so in May we can go back to meeting in person if people are comfortable with that. Social distancing and mask wearing will still be required, so we will need to move the Commission Meetings into the Auditorium.

11. The fundraising group for the expansion is continuing to meet regularly. Two new people have joined the group. Gena Tran works for Fairbanks Native Association and has a lot of experience with grant writing. In addition, we have Peggy Carlson, Kathy Alton and Lesa Meath on the core board and Trina Bailey from Senator Murkowski's Office has joined us.
12. The America Rescue Plan was signed last week and has a big impact for libraries. Alaska has been allotted \$2m and this will be given to the State Library and they will be putting grant applications out in April.

### **Officers Report**

None

## **H. COMMISIONER'S COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

**Nikki** – Was speaking with some people and they expressed how the library is closed on Sundays and how horrible that is when you think about meeting the needs of the public. Is there a possibility of getting that back or have we given it up for good?

**Melissa** – We never give anything up for good. That happened because they cut our staffing. If we had more people to allow us to open on Sunday's, we certainly would do it. I think a Public Library of this size should be open on Sunday.

**Nikki** – Policy question – How does somebody that doesn't have a permanent address get a library card?

**Melissa** – This subject comes up frequently. Need to convince the Borough to change its policy. At the end of the day, they are worried about collecting for lost or damaged items. Other libraries have just factored that loss into the cost of doing business. I have met with legal a couple of times regarding this and will continue to try to change their mind. The good thing that has come out of this pandemic is that people can sign up for the digital library card & you don't need a physical address. Patrons can at least access some information that way.

**Jeff** – Something to consider as you try to change the rules is maybe you can have a special category of card holders where they may be limited to the number of items they can check out at one time.

**Robert** – Featuring an interview with Todd Sherman and part of the interview next week is about his working with Bill Berry on the mural. The interview will air Tuesday evening.

**Rex** – Next meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2021.

## **I. EXCUSE FUTURE ABSENCES**

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

4:59 PM