

Havana Public Library District Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes - Thursday, April 9, 2020

At 4:50 President Mark McGrew called the meeting to order.

Roll Call – Mark McGrew, Jan Hurley, Cathy Toncray, Mary Layton, Stephanie Howeter, Brian Lesemann, Business Administrator Marty Balbinot, Library Director Vanessa Hall-Bennett, and guests: Luke *Baker*, Ellen Mibbs and Karen Elliot.

President's Report – Mark prepared the board for discussions later in the meeting by informing them about unemployment and furlough issues concerning the staff and related government aid due to the Coronavirus. A very appropriate and thorough discussion followed.

Public Comment - Staff members were allowed time to comment concerning the possibility of furlough and the application process for unemployment compensation. Luke Brown expressed a concern about the unreliability of the government unemployment website. Vanessa added that even before the crisis the website was poor. Mark said for this reason staff needed to be able to start as soon as possible with the application process. Ellen Mibbs said she was also familiar with the unemployment website and expressed her disappointment that the library board thought it necessary to make this decision so quickly especially when staff pay is already budgeted. Also, made the point that currently no supplies are being used which also is a saving. Karen Elliot said she was not only concerned about the website, but that there were many who were way ahead of them in the process.

Secretary's Report - With no need for changes a motion was made to approve the March minutes by Mary, seconded by Cathy and approved.

Correspondence, communications, and public comment – none received

Treasurer's Report – The monthly treasurer's report and bills payable were approved by a motion made by Cathy, seconded by Stephanie and passed by board.

Librarian's (Vanessa Hall-Bennett) report:

By decree of the Governor, all schools closed on Tuesday, March 17th. Following the lead of both the government and other libraries in our county, the Havana Public Library District closed on Tuesday, March 17th. We were open Saturday the 14th and Monday the 16th, normal hours.

RAILS has ceased all book delivery throughout the library system. All RAILS libraries appeared to be closed.

I have been in contact with the RSA, updating our information and changing due dates as the shelter in place ruling continues.

In accordance with the Governor's orders, we are now completely closed until at least May 1st. I check my email and the library voicemail daily, responding to any calls we have received.

I have completed the annual interlibrary loan survey and submitted our annual library certification to the state library. I am currently looking into the State Library's rules regarding the spend out of the current per capita grant.

I gathered library garbage and cleaned out the refrigerator. Luke put out the library garbage and recycling last week.

Staff is sheltering at home; Facebook admins Jessica, Ellen, Luke (and myself) continue to post about free online activities, books, etc. on the library's Facebook page.

On Tuesday, I go to the library and check systems, voicemail, and do any necessary

paperwork I can't do at home.

Our newspaper subscriptions are on hold. Our book vendors have been instructed to place all pending orders on hold.

On March 12th, the Board approved my additions to the library's Emergency Closing Policy. We completely closed the library on Tuesday, March 17th in response to the governor's order to close schools. Per our emergency closing policy, all employees are receiving pay for their regularly scheduled hours for 4 weeks from that date (that is, until Tuesday, April 14th). The policy states the board will reconvene to discuss further action. Many libraries (examples: Rock Island, East Moline) have chosen to continue to pay their workers as they shelter in place. Several libraries (examples: Quincy, Dunlap) have furloughed many of their employees; during a furlough an employee is not paid and is eligible for unemployment but remains an employee and retains any benefits. I do not know of a library that has laid off employees. I strongly oppose layoffs for both practical and philosophical reasons. I realize that I do not have a vote in this matter. However, I was hired by the board to further the library's best interests and to uphold the values of professional librarianship. The Havana Public Library District is lucky to have a trained staff that is beloved by our community. Their skills will be desperately needed when we can reopen; many items will be missing and we will need all hands on deck to sort out our system. Please be mindful of the message your decision will convey to them regarding their worth. I realize that it is tempting to save money while the future is so unsure but please consider the repercussions of your actions. Our staff are valued members of the community; their wages pay taxes and buy goods in our district.

Marty added that she has been doing work for IMRF and keeping the bills paid.

There was nothing to report concerning 213/118.

Unfinished Business - none

New Business:

Discussion & Action Regarding Continued Employment of Staff During Library Closure

- After extensive discussion concerning the workers compensation, IMRF, furlough, and lack of knowledge concerning how long the library would be closed and how taxes may or may not be affected a motion *was made by Mark to furlough the staff and seconded by Mary. After discussion and vote it did not pass (2 for and 4 against). After additional discussion another motion was made by Brian and seconded by Stephanie to assess the issue for two additional weeks and meet again on the 23rd of April. The motion was unanimously passed. (removed - passed with 4 votes for (Brian, Stephanie, Cathy and Jan) and 2 votes against (Mark and Mary).*

Stephanie followed with a motion to pay our staff for 2 more weeks, Jan seconded and all passed. During the next two weeks board members were asked to gathering information and be prepared to make a decision concerning the staff. Board members are to submit questions to Vanessa for the lawyer concerning this topic.

Building Maintenance – no updates

Disaster Preparedness - no updates

501(c)(3) - no updates

Adjournment – A motion to adjourn was made by Mary, Brian seconded and it passed.

Submitted by,

Brian Lesemann - HPLB Secretary