

Nashville Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes

July 21, 2020

WebEx – 12:00 p.m.

Members Present: Keith Simmons, Kate Ezell, Joyce Searcy, Katy Varney, Adriana Bialostozky, Robert Oermann

Library Staff: Kent Oliver, Bernadette Huga, Elyse Adler, Terri Luke, Susan Drye, Andrea Fanta, Jena Schmid, Lee Boulie, Kate Rose Collingwood

Also Present: Derrick Smith, Assistant Metropolitan Attorney at Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Board meeting WebEx support from Debbie Jackson, Metro ITS

I. Call to Order / Roll Call

Keith Simmons called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m.

II. Metro Ordinance required to be announced at all Board Meetings

“Pursuant to the provisions of § 2.68.030 of the Metropolitan Code of Laws, please take notice that decisions of the Nashville Public Library Board may be appealed to the Chancery Court of Davidson County for review under a common law writ of certiorari. Any appeal must be filed within sixty days after entry of a final decision by the Board. Any person or other entity considering an appeal should consult with an attorney to ensure that time and procedural requirements are met.”

III. Motion to Approve Conducting Meeting by Electronic Means and Suspending Rules

“I move that the items on the meeting agenda constitute essential business of this Board, meeting electronically is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Tennesseans considering the COVID-19 outbreak, and any rule that conflicts with Governor’s Executive Order 16 permitting electronic meetings be suspended.”

Kate Ezell moved to approve conducting the meeting by electronic means and suspending rules; the motion was seconded by all and passed unanimously.

IV. Board Chair Comments, *Keith Simmons*

Mr. Simmons welcomed Kate Ezell, appointed last month, to the NPL Board.

V. Approval of Minutes: June 16, 2020

Katy Varney moved for approval of the minutes from the June meeting; the motion was seconded by Joyce Searcy and passed unanimously.

VI. NPLF Board Appointment, *Keith Simmons*

Kate Ezell has been on the Nashville Public Library Foundation Board for some time and Mr. Simmons recommends that she stay on the NPLF Board unless she prefers not to. The bylaws of NPLF provide that that the Library Board can appoint up to three Foundation Board members. Ms. Ezell consents to this appointment before voting begins. Joyce Searcy moves that Kate Ezell serve on both [NPL and NPLF] Boards, Katy Varney seconds, and it is passed unanimously.

VII. Library Director Report, *Kent Oliver*

a) General Report

- i. Both Congressman John Lewis and Reverend [C.T.] Vivian passed away within the last week and NPL put out a statement about their contributions to NPL and the Nashville community. They both had a huge impact on NPL's Civil Rights Room and the curriculum for "Civil Rights and a Civil Society." Mr. Oliver mentioned that Congressman Lewis was always accessible to discuss projects at NPL.
- ii. The [Church Street] park across the street from NPL will be closed July 27–August 16 for clean-up and refreshing. The group behind this project is planning to host events around the park's reopening on August 18 but NPL is not sure what they will be. NPL will probably not be involved since August 18 is the opening of the Votes for Women exhibit.
- iii. Lindsey Patrick-Wright (Southeast Branch Manager) and Klem-Mari Cajigas (Family Literacy Coordinator, Bringing Books to Life!) created and presented the webinar "Tackling Racism in Classic Children's Literature." They've presented to over 2000 virtual attendees, including the Memphis Public Library. They have requests to present at the Massachusetts State Library later this year. Their work is becoming a national model.
- iv. We received a question asking if NPL would be able to print mail-in ballots and distribute. It is a felony for a third party to print and distribute ballots and people need to contact the Election Commission and have them mailed to them.
- v. Early voting—the first four days:
 - a. A new policy called for NPL to provide a tent to shelter campaign workers from the sun.

- b. Early last week, the Election Commission decided that people could vote without wearing a mask. Branch staff and the NPL Administration team worked with the Election Commission to set up social distancing and determine the maximum number of people allowed inside each of the voting site buildings. They also marked off six-foot distances for the lines.
- c. On Friday, the Office of Emergency Management determined that the public must be able to enter buildings to vote since the heat index exceeded 100° F. Mr. Oliver closed early voting site branches at 3:00 p.m. that day. Curbside service at these branches is on hold until after early voting since lines of voters are now within the buildings. Most regional branches are closed except for Southeast and Main.
- d. The police were called to the Bellevue Branch for a group not wearing masks or social distancing on Metro property. The Office of Emergency Management was very helpful as was the Election Commission.
- e. Mr. Oliver is very proud of NPL's Administration team who helped figure out how to deal with these issues over the weekend.

b) Budget Updates:

- i. NPL had a flat budget. However, it was \$200,000 less than last year since the Community Partnership Funds (CPF grants) are not supported from a Metro revenue stream this year but with CARES funding.
- ii. The staff hiring freeze has been lifted and NPL will slowly fill positions as they are needed, keeping in mind that not all our locations are open now.
- iii. The downside of budget: 17 positions that were lost in the FY20 budget were not re-funded.

c) COVID-19 Updates:

- i. We continue to monitor health information. Nashville is currently a hotspot in the nation and Mr. Oliver does not see an upside of reopening buildings until the surge is under control. It's a matter of keeping people socially distanced.
- ii. We have not seen a spread through the system staff.
- iii. Human Resources is working with staff to provide FMLA assistance so staff can stay home with their school-aged kids.
- iv. Limitless Libraries and NAZA continue to support schools with material access and equipment, and NPL will continue online programming. NPL's reopening is not contingent on Metro schools opening since we're dealing with the whole population.

Elyse Adler and her team are in constant communication with the schools around access. Some childcare centers are open for essential workers.

d) Votes for Women Exhibit and Campaign Update, *Katy Varney and Andrea Fanta*

- i. The “Ring the Bell” campaign is going forward and the virtual grand opening is on August 18 at 11:30 a.m. CST.
- ii. In 1920 when 19th Amendment was ratified and cities across the country rang bells in celebration, Nashville did not. The “Ring the Bell” campaign invites people to break that silence by ringing a bell and encourages them to share their story of why they are ringing their bell on social media.
- iii. The campaign launched on July 9 and will end with a virtual celebration asking everyone (including institutions) to ring their bells at noon on August 18 as part of the grand opening.
- iv. There will be a special musical guest as part of the celebration, and CBS Sunday Morning will be a part of the coverage. CBS filmed interviews with Elaine Weiss, Juli Mosley, Margaret Behm, and Jeanie Nelson.
- v. Board members are encouraged to record their own stories about what personally motivates anyone to “Ring the Bell” and send to Andrea Fanta. Ms. Fanta will send instructions and tips for making these recordings.

VIII. Staff Reports

a) Curbside Service Update, *Terri Luke and Jena Schmid*

- i. Curbside service began on June 8 and has been going on for a month and a half at the seven regional branches and Main up until this past weekend. Due to early voting, curbside is now available only at the Southeast Branch and Main.
- ii. The public has shown a lot of gratitude for being able to have access to library materials again.
- iii. Statistics show how successful curbside has been. Averages from the first four weeks:
 - a. 18,000 check-outs per week
 - b. 5,000 customers per week
 - c. 23,000 holds per week
 - d. Green Hills is seeing the most book check-outs, followed by Edmondson Pike and then Bellevue.

- iv. Additional services include story time craft kits, book bundles, Summer Reading Challenge prizes and reading logs, patron's printouts, voter registration forms, tax forms, and library card applications.
- v. The League of Women Voters has reached out to NPL asking to provide sandwich boards with QR codes to voter registration sites. Boards are coming soon.

b) Collections Update: NPL's Circulation Trends During COVID, *Lee Boulie*

- i. All E-media circulation is up 24.1% April–June, which includes e-books, e-magazine, e-audiobooks, e-videos. When we look at e-books specifically, we see a 34.5% increase compared to last year.
- ii. We saw an increase of 69.5% for e-videos, which is an ongoing trend. We increased the Hoopla limit from 10 a month to 15 a month, which is more money from materials budget, but a move responsive to public need.
- iii. There was a 181.5% increase in JUV e-books April–June in 2020 compared to 2019, and in June an increase of 159.5%. e-audiobooks are up 52.7% April–June.
- iv. Collections received reallocated funds from Elyse Adler's team to purchase more online materials and negotiated with vendors for better deals. The web team is working on Meta data so searches are more fine-tuned.
- v. Since these services are so successful, Mr. Oliver mentioned that we're going to have to figure out a new paradigm of how to continue once buildings reopen.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:24 p.m.

Next Board of Trustees Meeting

September 15, 2020

Location: TBD

Respectfully submitted by Kate Rose Collingwood.