

Lynnfield Public Library
Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting
March 10, 2021

CALL TO ORDER:

The virtual meeting was called to order by Robert Calamari at 6:30 p.m. via video conference call pursuant to Gov. Baker's new public meeting guidelines. Roll call was taken. In attendance were Robert Calamari, Chair, Faith Honer-Coakley, Vice-Chair, Russell Boekenkroeger, Richard Mazzola, Andrew Kenneally, Gail Rober, Secretary and Jennifer Inglis, Director. Chair informed the attendees that the meeting was being recorded.

REOPENING PLAN

REVIEW PROPOSAL

The "Reopening April 2021 – Super Rough Draft" presented by Director Jennifer Inglis outlined and characterized the reopening of the Lynnfield Public Library.

Details of planned actions are in the aforementioned document.

Referenced here are the major discussion points as contained in the document.

- Director Inglis indicated that the plan was not modelled on any other town in particular. Rather, it was motivated by and consisted of ideas, processes and actions arising from discussions among Library heads across Massachusetts. Some neighboring or nearby Towns are providing more access to patrons than being proposed for Lynnfield while others are as or limiting more patron access than Lynnfield. Interest was expressed by the Trustees in understanding the extent their inputs had on developing the plan.
- Everyone is conscious of and attentive of staff and patron safety while also attentive to providing the levels of service expected by the residents of Lynnfield. Since this is new to everyone, varied perspectives, viewpoints and priorities are fair to be discussed as decisions are being reached.
- Past experiences and concerns regarding patron access to the Fiction collection on the lower level seemed potentially problematic. However, since the number of patrons in the building at any time is governed by area-specific occupancy limits being posted and enforced by Staff, every consideration is being given to health and safety concerns. Director Inglis was very clear about this in decision-making.
- Director Inglis indicated that DPW (John Tomasz and staff) was actively involved with air quality and air circulation considerations in all building areas.
- Most of the library collections, the children's room and genealogy room will be accessible to patrons on an appointment basis. By appointment, there will also be continued use of the scanners, computers, and all other technology offerings. A list of rules will be updated and published. Properly-worn masks are the basic requirement for everyone in the Library to wear.
- Front door service will continue three days a week.
- Appointment records will be kept for three weeks to assist in contact tracing, if it becomes necessary.

- For any reason at all, the library may need to close at short notice; the normal practice.
- As it gets warmer, some opportunities to conduct outdoor activities will be planned.
- A “soft launch” practice session will be conducted with the Trustees and other interested parties on April 1-2 to identify if any changes need to be made.
- Compliance with the operational rules is aimed at setting the expectations for patrons.

DISCUSSION

- While hours of operation are only 14 hours short of the normal, pre-COVID 64 hours staff working hours, there remains a gap to be filled to return to 64 hours of full patron access. With the proposed plan, all types of patron access to the building across all activity types total 35.5 hours per week. Patron access for any activity type will be very limited to start. Welcoming back the community to open access rather than by appointment only for a few hours a week cannot be solved by simply opening the doors.
- Director Inglis indicated that she had lists of when libraries across the state were open and other parameters of operations.
- The work necessary to relocate the Fiction collection to the main level was felt not worth the effort. This idea has been raised for many years. For any period, it seemed too much effort to close off the lower level and have the staff retrieve items for direct patron access rather than just allow patron access on their own.
- Concerns were raised about how to deal with possible outbreaks of the virus attributable to the Library. Director Inglis stated that based on experiences in Lynnfield this was unlikely to occur. The underlying point was that a Library shutdown due to virus cases originating in the Library would be complicated and confounding to deal with and manage communications.
- Given that the Children’s Room is a desirable destination in the Library, there were questions on whether the restrictions on the Children’s Room will present issues immediately and in the future. Director Inglis indicated that the Children’s Room will not be open in evenings. Access will need to be limited and controlled.
- For the Children’s Room and the other areas (where browsing will be the only activity), Director Inglis raised the issue of compliance with rules and that patrons would have to agree to be compliant with the rules prior to entering. There was discussion about how this would be accomplished. She indicated that patron agreement would be a requirement to schedule an appointment. There was some back and forth on the point. Beyond posting and stating, the Trustees felt that obtaining some prior approval from patrons would not be practical.
- Clear and wide communications on all aspects of the access being proposed and acted upon for April were discussed with the considerations of patron experience being an essential part of the messaging to be drafted.
- The intent of the discussion and clarifications sought by the Trustees was pointed and aimed at being able to communicate effectively to the Town in general and loyal Library patrons of all ages in particular.
- In summary, the Trustees appreciated the efforts by Director Inglis and the Staff in formulating a thoughtful plan as indicated in the closing remarks.
- The Library seems prepared to proceed with reopening and how it may evolve. The Trustees tried to convey to Director Inglis the difficulties that may be encountered in the process and that objective interpretation of feedback and flexibility of approach will be necessary and may be complicated.

- Director Inglis recommended that the Trustees approve the plan, see how operations and services progress and update as necessary. This will involve review and re-evaluation at the May Trustees' meeting based on learnings from April's experiences.

APPROVAL

A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed Reopening Plan as presented. The motion passed by a unanimous 5-0 margin.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. The motion passed by a unanimous 5-0 margin

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Rober
Secretary

Documents distributed:

- Agenda, March 10, 2021
- Reopening Plan April 2021 – Rough Draft