

Basalt Regional Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 30, 2020
14 Midland Avenue
Basalt, CO 81621
Special Meeting
Emergency Circumstances to Allow Teleconferencing

Call to Order: The meeting of the Board of Trustees of Basalt Regional Library District was called to order on November 30, 2020 at 3:05 PM.

Member Attendance: Enid Ritchy, President; Jim Albert, Vice President; Karen Barch, Treasurer; Christi Blish, Secretary; Becky Musselman, Trustee; Ryan Anslyn, Trustee

Also Present: Sue Kiley, Director; Berenice Forrest, Assistant Director; Sandra Dexter, Administrative Assistant; Laura Baumgarten, Circulation Coordinator

Citizen Comments:

None

Board Comments

None

Staff Comments regarding COVID Closure: Berenice Forrest

- Berenice read a letter that included a compilation of thoughts from staff. Letter attached.
- Board Comments/Reactions/Questions
 - If there is a lack of harmony between staff and trustees that is significant, then we should understand and see what we should do. We should have respect.
 - Startled and alarmed at the disharmony. On a scale of one to ten, with one being mildly concerned, how concerned is staff? Berenice: "About a 3 or 4. They feel like sometimes board members don't take the time to come in and see what we're doing, not just during COVID, but in general. Board members, not just this board, are the decision makers. We are in your hands. We would like to see board members come in and connect with staff more often and would like a little more support."
 - It takes a lot of courage to share feelings that are not really positive.
 - This is not about right or wrong with decisions we have to make. Disharmony can cause a lot of unrest.

Library Response to COVID-19 Dial Level: Sue Kiley

- Staff guidelines: Even though Eagle County is at orange level on the State COVID-19 dial, staff proposed returning to curbside service to keep from moving to the red level. The red level requires returning to curbside with no walk-ins. The new purple level on the COVID-19 dial is above the red level rather than between the orange and red levels as we thought it would be. The new levels to the dial came out after the staff set up guidelines, so the staff guidelines may need some updating. The Eagle County Health Department isn't providing specific guidelines for libraries and the State Library is avoiding a specific mandate for libraries state wide. When we

returned to curbside service, we included walk-up service where patrons can come to the door and request items.

- There was extensive discussion regarding COVID Restrictions, patron requests, staff concerns, staffing requirements, and possibilities for computer use. The board discussed and voted on extending curbside/concierge service to include computer use and to possibly open the library on Sundays.
- Motion: Karen Barch moved that library staff look into finding a way to provide 1) computer access to the public and 2) library services on Sunday (which may or may not include computer services). Jim Albert seconded the motion. The motion carried with a vote of 6-0.
- Also, the Board discussed improving website verbiage to more *clearly* as well as more *positively* express the range of Library resources and programs which ARE available during COVID. From a public relations standpoint, this becomes ever more important as the Library is forced to decrease traditional services. In addition, it was also suggested that the website might include a series of interesting and educational personal vignettes on what individual Library staff members are continuing to do behind the scenes to continue to serve the community. Board members agreed that these website changes and additions were important from a community relations standpoint - Sue will look into making them happen.

Next Meeting:

- December 14, 2020
 - Approval of 2021 Budget.
 - We can decide if we want to meet every two weeks due to COVID.

Motion to Adjourn: Karen Barch moved and Jim Albert seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried with a vote of 6-0. Enid Ritchy adjourned the meeting at 4:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christi Blish

Christi Blish, Secretary

12/10/20

Date

Staff Comments at Monday's Board Meeting

I want to thank all of you for taking time out of your busy lives and volunteering on the Library Board of Trustees. Your decisions impact not only our lives as staff but that of the Community.

CO-VID without a doubt has been incredibly difficult for all. From learning new technology like Zoom to having to learn new software for online videos, at each turn the Basalt library staff has risen to the challenge.

I think the Staff is frustrated and don't feel they are being considered and heard when the Board makes decisions such as reopening which greatly impacts staff. Staff is who is on the frontline.

First, Staff is frustrated that current and past board members don't take the time to understand what entails running a library. Many Board members don't come in and browse our collections, attend Library programs. Most board members do not know any of the staff, let alone know what they do here at the library.

Every day Donna gets between 70-300 Paging requests to place items on Hold for our patron or send items to other libraries. On an average we receive about 200 items from the courier that need to be checked-in and processed. Plus, all items that are returned by our patrons through the return box. And that is only checking in materials. That does not include responding to patron emails, answering phones. When we are open that does not include circulation desk hours that all staff are scheduled to work. Circulation is the basic operations of a library.

That does not include hours staff spends curating collections, making sure inventory is up to date. Weeding, getting rid of dated material. Displays, Cleaning scratched DVDs and audiobooks. Then, there is programming. The quality of our free programs is that of programs people pay for. They are thoughtful and well planned out. They are put on the calendar. Disseminated through social media, radio stations, the library magazine. All is done entirely by the staff.

I would really encourage each of you to take an hour or two and come into the library and shadow a library staff person at the Circulation desk or in the check-in room.

Second, the Return-to-Service Committee is made up of staff. At each meeting we look at different angles of the next chapter of the library opening. How is that going to look in our space? Do we have the staff to implement this chapter? What technology will be needed? Do we have to move furniture around? How soon can that be done?

I think the staff was disheartened and there was definitely a drop in moral when we had to open early. We felt like we didn't matter. We all had an expectation and were working towards reopening. Our other duties had to be dropped in order for the library to be open a couple of days earlier. I don't think it made any difference if we opened Thursday or Monday. There wasn't a mad rush back to the Library by our Community. We were glad to reopen, we also miss our patrons. We can't wait to get back to normalcy and have our patrons enjoy the library as much as we do.

I do think it has to be done thoughtfully and carefully. We as staff are also concerned for our own health. We have small children and elderly family members that we live with, we are all concerned with what we are bringing in and out of the library each day.

I am so proud of the staff and the quality of customer service that is offered at this library. Staff go out of their way to help each patron in any way they can. Especially during this pandemic. Finding the next book for parents to read to their children, scanning and faxing unemployment benefits for patrons. We are constantly looking to see what community members we are not reaching during the pandemic. What services can we provide in this trying and lonely time. I am amazed at the creativity of our staff. We are constantly getting praised by our Community. Our Community is so verbal about the appreciation they have for this Library and I do not think that will be forgotten the next time voters head to the polls and ask for an increase to our Mill Levy.

I encourage you to come by and chat with Library staff and ask about their duties here at the library. What their concerns are. I am amazed how much we all love our jobs, it's incredibly rewarding serving our Community.