

Sitka Public Library Commission Meeting Minutes 12/2/20

Held via Zoom (Meeting ID #939 8880 6918)
at 6:00 p.m. on December 2, 2020

The Sitka Public Library Commission met on Wednesday, December 2, 2020 via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm. by Chair, Nicole Filipek.

Roll Call

Present: Jessica Ieremia (Library Director), Valorie Nelson (Assembly Liaison), Nicole Filipek (Chair), Jeff Budd (Commissioner), Steve Morse (Commissioner), Darryl Rehkopf (V. Chair/ Acting secretary); *Absent:* Daniel Gunn (Commissioner/excused).

Public Comment

No public comment.

Changes to and Approval of the Agenda

No changes to the agenda; considered approved by Chair.

Approval of Previous Meeting (11/4/2020) Minutes

Minutes for the November meeting (and all meetings) should specify the scheduled start time in the header and the actual start time in the first sentence of the body. Acting secretary will make that correction. Motion to approve (Jeff), second (Nicole), passed unanimously.

Reports

Jessica Ieremia (Library Director):

- Visitor numbers went down slightly last month, most likely due to the holiday; checkouts were up by 3,000 items last month which suggests patrons are using the library more, having more interactions with staff. More kids and teenagers are also coming in. Also, the number of holds from other libraries went up 150 items last month, while computer visits went down by 100 people, perhaps due to the holiday closures and an increase in the prevalence of laptop computers on loan to Sitka School District students.
- Library will be closed Christmas day and the day after, and New Year's day and the day after.
- Small meeting room is still leaking—is this due (or aggravated by) the recent earthquake?
- Margo (Adult Librarian) and Jeff have been working on the Armchair Travel series and the Spelling Bee coming up in February. Jessica suggests that SPL connect with other regional libraries to share programs like these.
<Audio dropout ~45 seconds...>
- People have been very respectful of social distancing in the building, but if things did change that would require the building to close, staff would move to window-service only. Staff is also keeping an eye on the number of people in the library as well as time spent in the building and group dynamics to help ensure safe numbers and distancing. Only a handful of people have

complained about mask-wearing; Jessica attributes this to strong support of mask-wearing policies by the city administration and the community at large which allows SPL to remain safely open, unlike so many public libraries in the state.

- Windows are opened every day for ventilation (it can be cold) and maintenance has been cleaning filters often. <Audio dropout ~45 seconds>
- Staff are wearing masks in the building, plexiglass barriers are in place at the front desk and furniture has been removed—mitigations which also seem to be helping staff morale.
- Margot (Adult Services Librarian) is introducing a ‘What we’re reading’ program which allows a patron to review a book with Margot over the phone; Margot then uploads the review as an audio file.
- David K-T (Library Assistant) has started his ‘Story-time with David’ —now online.
- Maite (Youth Services Librarian) will start sending out teen ‘Craft and Goes’ (teens want projects, too) along with plans for a teen ‘pet parade’ (photos due by 12/17.) The Teen Advisory Board also wants a book club—Maite recently presented a teen book talk to help teens connect with new books. Maite is also working on the ‘Reading Wonderland’ program which will get books out to children of all ages in time for the holidays.
- Jessica believes all the recent programming work will strengthen staff’s ability to provide innovative, high-quality services, particularly as the community continues to reopen. Programming events are promoted through Facebook, radio, newspaper and flyers.
- Teens, tweens and everybody else would benefit from better in-library promotion of new books, like using shelves that allow cover-out display, etc. and staff is working on that.
- ‘Babies and Books’ have received a grant from the Sitka Legacy Foundation and will start a story/art ‘Grab and Go’ twice a month starting in December.
- In order to promote library programs and boost morale, Steve suggests SPL start an ‘employee of the month’ bulletin board in order to introduce staff members and the work they do to the public. Jessica points out that due to current health protocols, there is also an increased workload, and she has been working with the city HR department to find ways to help staff show appreciation for each other.

New business

Discussion regarding community feed-back about the library

- Nicole reports that she has recently received emails which have asked questions or raised issues regarding the operation of SPL, and she would like to remind commissioners that such correspondence should be forwarded to the library director for a proper response. She would also ask commissioners to encourage feedback from the public about the library.
- Valorie says the proper channel is to direct an inquiry to the city administrator, as he is the library director’s supervisor. Failing that, the matter could go to the assembly.
- Jessica says that librarians like to make people happy, and will gladly try to help if given the chance. In most cases, however, library staff’s attempt to respond is ignored.

No action taken.

Old Business

No word back on the Commission's letter to the administrator recommending SPL go fine-free. Jessica will check with John (Leach) next week about its status.

Items for the next agenda

Nomination and election of Commission officers.

Comments

No public comment.

Motion to adjourn *(Jeff moves, Nicole seconds.)*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Next meeting date: January 6th at 6 pm via Zoom.

Minutes submitted by Darryl Rehkopf, V. Chair/Acting Secretary