

Sitka Public Library Commission Meeting Minutes NOVEMBER 2021

Scheduled via Zoom Meeting ID 886 4579 1099
at 6:00 p.m. on November 3rd, 2021

The Sitka Public Library Commission met on Wednesday, November 3, 2021 via Zoom video conference. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm. by Chair, Nicole Filipek.

Roll Call

Present: Nicole Filipek (Chair), Jessica Ieremia (Library Director), Margie Esquiro (Commissioner), Rebecca Himshoot (newly-appointed Assembly Liaison joined at 6:30), Darryl Rehkopf (Commissioner), Jeff Budd (Commissioner) and Tommy Martin (newly-appointed Commissioner); **Absent:** Stephen Morse (Commissioner), unexcused.

Public Comment

No members of the public present.

Changes to and Approval of the Agenda

No changes; agenda is approved.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the October, 2021 meeting are updated and approved (JB/ME) with edits (Meeting ID, Call to Order time, no Library User discussion for a third time.)

Reports

Jessica Ieremia (Library Director):

- There were approximately 365 computer sessions during October—staff is using kitchen timers to track usage times and the public seems to have become comfortable with it, especially the teens.
- Maintenance has drained the fire extinguisher pipes in preparation for winter; according to the manufacturer, this procedure should be done three months in a row annually.
- Jess has purchased holiday lights for the library to ‘perk things up’ and celebrate winter.
- New shelving, children’s furniture and a rug have arrived.
- Programing: Babies and Books is very much enjoyed by parents and they have made it known. Grab n’ Go is also very popular.
- The National Park Service program, Pack In Pages Book Club, is being delayed until later in the season, awaiting the arrival of the new park superintendent. The NPS will be in the library giving out a free book on November 13.
- The next Island Artist Gallery art talk will be Norm Campbell and Steve Lawrie on November 10.
- Tim and Leslie Fulton will present the next Armchair Traveler Series about climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro.

- A Zoom book event will be held on November 9th for the new book *Whispering Alaska* by Brendan Jones and illustrated by Rebecca Poulson.
- The library is currently displaying a 3-D print(s) of a Tlingit halibut hook(s) created by students and staff of Blatchley Middle School.
- Sitka Legacy Foundation has asked the library to collaborate with them to ask Sitkans to share in the form of artwork (written, sung, painted, etc.) their traditions associated with 'giving' to be displayed by the library and on social media.

Rebecca Himshoot

Is newly appointed as our Assembly liaison, but may have to reorganize her liaison assignments since a conflict exists between meeting times for this commission and the Sitka School Board. Her first task with us is to review the SPL Commission's relationship with the City and Borough Assembly: Are we recognized in the charter? Are we aligned with and necessary to the work of the Assembly? She intends to serve as a pathway between the Assembly and this commission. Regarding the centennial celebration, Rebecca suggests involving sources such as the Daily Sentinel, individuals like Bill Foster and the Sitka Historical Society to speak about what Sitka was like 100 years ago.

Nicole Filipek

Would like to link a library patron membership drive (100-year library cards, etc.) to the centennial celebration, as well as the creation of a library logo. Jess mentions interest in having a booth downtown during town celebrations for public outreach.

Jeff Budd

Friends of the Library have been discussing ideas preparing for SPL's centennial celebration (March, 2023) such as a spelling bee, a 'can't call it a battle of the books' with Sitka High School and walking tours of past sites of the Sitka Public Library. A 'Library Grind' will also be held on December 19. Plans for January 2022 include work on creating a centennial logo.

Margie Esquiro

Kari Sagel with Friends of the Library says the Friends have \$1,000.00 they would like to give to the Sitka Library Association to be used towards its centennial preparations. The Friend's only request is that former library director Nancy Gustafson be recognized for her years of dedicated service to the library. The Friends may also have money available for other library needs. Margie says the committee will share its minutes and proposed calendar with the commission in the future. More people will be needed for ideas, helping hands, etc. (This will be run by Kari to ensure it accurately reflects the intent of the Friends.)

Tommy Martin

New commissioner living in Sitka for two months now; graduated from Yale last spring; works at MEHS as a counselor helping kids along their secondary education path. He's a volunteer EMT at the Sitka Fire Department and passionate about libraries. He is from Tacoma, Washington.

New business

Discussion on commission structure and opportunities for streamlining commission duties.

The question is brought forward by *Rebecca* whether the Library Commission is in the Charter. It is not, according to *Jess*; the Commission is in the Code. *Rebecca* asks, in that case, is there a way of streamlining this commission's work with the intent of reducing city staff's time? Do we need more members, fewer members, fewer meetings, etc.?

Jess—Does the library commission need to meet every month?

Rebecca—Assembly values the work of commissions, but also sees the need to reduce (or balance) staff time in order to create new, necessary commissions to address climate, equity, etc.

Darryl—I feel uneasy; we are unique.

Nicole—The commission's role is to be the interface between the library and the public and to set policy that will be valued by the patrons. I think it may be hard to find another group to 'roll in with' since we are a building and a department. I think there's value here, and that it's helpful for the director to meet even briefly with the commission once a month in order to maintain realtime feedback. The director's work that she does for the commission is work she would be doing as part of her normal duties. Having the commission as a sounding board is beneficial in that case.

Jess—We are a unique board; our foundation and thinking are very different from say, even a museum board. The commission's role as 'sounding board' is, for the reasons expressed by *Nicole*, very important. I think the best decisions are made when you hear all the different points of view.

Rebecca—Do most municipalities have a library board?

Jesse—It varies; but directors who don't have a board, want one. They want the backup strength of a board.

Nicole—We are a 7-member board, with 1 vacancy. A quorum of 4 (with a 7-member board) seems better suited to represent the multiplicity of differing viewpoints across the community.

(Discussion ends; Rebecca will take this back to the Assembly.)

Discussion of the Sitka Public Library's Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Annual Report

(Some highlights shared by Jess:)

- 54,158 visitors to the library during the FY 2020-2021

- 57,720 items in our collection
- 2,437 reference questions answered
- 82,029 items checked out
- 81 online programs during the year

Jess points out that the number of library visitors dropped (due to Covid) from over 166K visitors in FY2018-19 to 54k in FY2020-21, but Sitka Public Library's circulation statistics did not drop very much at all, evidence that people have been able to check out what they need and get questions answered in spite of inconveniences caused by the pandemic.

Old Business

Discussion regarding the draft of the Art Donation Policy/Form as prepared by the library director.

Under selection criteria for artworks, the sentence '*Due to the library's limited display and storage space, the following criteria will be some of the items considered for accepting art donations...*' could perhaps be changed to '*The following criteria will be of consideration for accepting art donations...*'—Nicole.

Also, it would be good to make it very clear that any proposed donation be reviewed and given approval of acceptance BEFORE being delivered to the library building. Add this wording to the policy as well—Nicole.

How can the library protect itself against fraudulent ownership by a potential donor? City attorney will likely address this. The 'deed of gift' wording seems to cover most concerns—Nicole.

MOTION: Pass the Art Donation Policy with the minor edits as discussed. Send the final version to the Commission and to Brian Hansen (city attorney) for review. (JB/ME)
Approved unanimously.

Public Comment/Items for the next agenda

None at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for December 1st at 6 p.m. in the Centennial Building and via Zoom.

Minutes submitted by Darryl Rehkopf, Secretary