

**Draft of
Windsor Library Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Sept. 10, 2020**

Present (via Zoom) Cheryl Curtis, Carol Sama, Fran Ward-Nelson, Denise Panos, Caren Barry, LeighAnn Tyson, David Raney, Kevin Washington, Susan Kirschner-Robinson

(in-person) Gaye Rizzo, Denise Ricotta (IT Librarian)

Absent: Betty Hellerman

Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM by Cheryl Curtis.

Cheryl asked for a volunteer to take minutes for the meeting. Gaye Rizzo agreed to be Secretary.

Public Comment: None.

Resignations and Appointments:

Kevin Washington was reappointed for a three-year term to expire on April 30, 2022. Cheryl Curtis, LeighAnn Tyson, Fran Ward-Nelson and Caren Barry were reappointed for three-year terms to expire on April 30, 2023.

Staff Reports

As I review the staff report that I prepared for you in March I see a simple yet poignant reminder of just how dramatically things have changed since the **COVID-19** virus set our world on edge. More than a third of that report detailed **programs** for every age being held at both the main library and the branch. Currently, there are **no in-person programs** taking place at either location. Even the successful Artist-in-Residence program had to be suspended as meeting room space earmarked to display the artwork is now being used to store much of the library's furniture. Hard to imagine programs for the public on cookie and cupcake decorating only a few short months ago when today, staff is not even permitted to pull down their masks long enough to drink a cup of coffee or heaven forbid, from the same carafe. Speaking of **masks**, rather than walking through the building to offer patrons help in finding materials or to use equipment we're now patrolling every hour to remind everyone to pull up their masks and to remain **socially distant**. The concern I shared with you at our last meeting about the impact of Grace Church's **Food Pantry** on the library parking lot is no longer relevant as the church hasn't opened its doors to parishioners since mid-March and the Food Pantry is permanently closed. In my last report I also welcomed two new part time members to the library staff. Today we're still working hard to fill **8 part-time vacancies**. We were gearing up for the **U.S. Census** when I

reported to you last. Imagine the chilling impact the virus will ultimately have on those numbers. In fact, as you stroll past big bottles of **hand sanitizer** placed strategically where furniture once sat, try to recognize friends and neighbors behind shrouded faces and communicate with staff separated from you by large sheets of **plexiglass** you might actually feel more like a visitor to the Twilight Zone rather than to the once warm and welcoming Windsor Public Library.

Other things that are being done differently to comply with the Governor's Phase 2 re-opening plans for libraries include **quarantining** of all returned items for 24 hours before discharging them, **limiting the use** of the **public computers**, **wireless** and **quiet study rooms** to one hour per person per day to keep occupancy levels at a reasonable number, **floor markers** at public desks to ensure social distancing, **deep cleaning** of the building at the beginning of each day by our library janitors and again later in the day by an outside cleaning contractor and elimination of the information desk. In addition to in-person and the **volunteer programs**, **meeting rooms** are not available at this time and **passport** and **proctoring services** have been **suspended**.

Uncertainty surrounding the virus and a potential vaccine has created an unprecedented level of **stress** for staff working at the libraries. Patrons are frustrated and have been venting their anger and even using profanity towards staff for restrictions being imposed on them. Many of those patrons are from other towns, whose libraries remain closed. COVID testing and travel restrictions have also impacted **staff attendance**. Protocol dictates that once tested, staff are not permitted to return to work until either a negative test result is received or after 14 days of quarantining after a positive test result. Staff members who have traveled to a state that is on the Governor's travel ban list must also quarantine for 14 days before returning to work. This has added another layer of **stress** on staff who have had to do their own work in addition to that of absent colleagues. And if that wasn't enough, summer **storm Isaias** hit! We're still not sure whether it was more stressful having several days with no power or several days with power and serving members of the public who still had none at their homes. With **schools re-opening** on a limited basis, staff are gearing up for the potential **challenges associated with unattended children and teens** at the library.

The good news is that despite all of these changes and restrictions, your Windsor libraries, unlike most other libraries in the state, are **open**. When the pandemic first hit, some of the full time staff worked from home for a few weeks, curbside pick-up began on May 1 and both the main library and the branch **re-opened on June 22**. Windsor was one of the first libraries in the state to open on that date. With limited staff and services the main library reduced Monday –Thursday evening hours from 9:00PM to 7:00PM but expanded summer Saturday hours from 1:00PM to 5:00PM. Branch hours remained the same. Curbside pick-up was still available for anyone uncomfortable about coming into the buildings. The main library is now averaging **350 patrons per day** who are checking out nearly twice as many items. We believe that it's possible to provide access to library

materials and keep everyone safe. Thankfully, no one at the library has tested positive for COVID-19.

Thanks to a resilient and innovative staff, **programs during COVID-19 have morphed** into four different categories that have all been very well received. Most are **virtual**. The first include books clubs, storytimes, speakers and online performers and are run through **Zoom or social media**. The second type are **self-directed** and involve little interaction with library staff or electronic devices. Examples of these programs are the storywalk that Children's Dept. staff set up at Northwest Park or hopscotch on the sidewalk in front of the Mather House. **Take home kits** are the third type of programming that the libraries offered all summer long. Each week, children and adults could pick up a bag filled with a different craft or activity to take home and complete. The final type of program is a **hybrid** since it involves picking up a craft kit from the library and then following along on Zoom to create something exciting with the help of an instructor. An example of this was a henna design program for teens. Also, patrons were able to participate in the **summer reading program** this year by picking up a physical bingo board at the library and doing the activities at home to fill in their board or participate with an online bingo board. We were very fortunate that the **Windsor Library Association** agreed to allow library staff to use unspent FY20 program budgeted funds on FY21 programs and also for their willingness to support all four of these non-traditional types of programs.

In closing, I'd like to **thank each of you** for accommodating the **time change** for the meeting this evening to allow for technical assistance from our **IT Librarian, Denise Ricotta**. Hopefully it won't be long before we can meet again in person at the library. Please take good care and stay well.

Windsor Library Association Update

Susan Kirschner-Robinson reported that WLA will soon be launching their fall fundraising campaign. She noted that their members have invested in attractive Windsor Library Association polo shirts. (Carol Sama held one up to the camera for the group to see). Carol also explained that since WLA will be unable to come together as a group this year to stuff envelopes for the fundraiser, she and Meg Geary-Hale will improvise by meeting outside on either of their decks to work on and distribute packets of flyers for members to put together at home.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: March 5, 2020

Cheryl Curtis pointed out that on the second page, fourth paragraph, fourth sentence there is an errant "J" before the word "They".

Motion: To approve the minutes, with that correction
Made by: LeighAnn Tyson

Second: David Raney

Vote: Cheryl Curtis Y Betty Hellerman absent Carol Sama Y
Fran Ward-Nelson Y David Raney abstain Denise Panos Y
Kevin Washington Y LeighAnn Tyson Y Caren Barry Y
Susan Kirschner-Robinson Y

Set next tentative meeting date: Dec. 2, 2020 at 5:30pm via Zoom.

Motion: To adjourn.
Made by: LeighAnn Tyson
Second: David Raney

Vote: Cheryl Curtis Y Betty Hellerman absent Carol Sama Y
Fran Ward-Nelson Y David Raney Y Denise Panos Y
Kevin Washington Y LeighAnn Tyson Y Caren Barry
Susan Kirschner-Robinson Y

Meeting adjourned at: 6:00 pm

Respectfully submitted: Gaye Rizzo