

Hillsdale Free Public Library

Board of Trustees

March 25, 2020

In attendance were: Mary DeChiara, Elizabeth DiLorenzo, Warren Harris, Al Metz, Joanne Miano, Carol Schepker, Kathleen Scordato, Barbara Wertheim, John Ruocco, Mayor

Also present: David Franz, Director of the Library

Excused: Marie Hanlon, Abby Lundy, Liaison to Council

Mr. Harris called to order a special meeting of the Trustees of the Free Public Library of Hillsdale, Bergen County, New Jersey. Notice of this special meeting was transmitted to the newspaper of record, filed with the Borough Clerk, and posted on the Library's website and doors, in accordance with the Open Public Meeting's Law.

The emergency remote meeting was called to order at 7:37 PM. Directions that were posted are appended to the minutes below.

Public invited to speak: No one was present.

President's Report: Mr. Harris: He expressed his concerns for the health and wellness of all trustees, staff and their families.

Director's Report: Mr. Franz: Overview of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic situation as it pertains to the Library.

1. He released a report yesterday to all Board Trustees. The Library is currently closed to the public, initially out of caution when the schools announced their closures so as not to mix students with Senior citizens. It was later ordered closed by NJ Administrative Order 2020-3. Libraries have changed what they have done with their respective staffs. Mr. Franz has been working one on one with Mr. Harris with regard to our Library policies and how we should proceed. Staff have been working at home on specific tasks; some wanted to work with collections in the Library. He would prefer that all staff remain at home. He posed several questions and spoke about policies regarding emergency closures from the Library personnel manual and that of the Borough.

Ms. Scordato stated that it is prudent that the staff work from home; Ms. Miano was in agreement. Mr. Franz stated that NJ Governor Murphy issued an administrative order that only absolutely essential personnel should be working. Ms. Scordato asked about the book drop; He has established procedures for taking books from the book drop; he will be doing this personally. All incoming items are discharged and put in a separate area for a quarantine period. The work area is then wiped down with disinfectant. Mr. Franz put a sign on the book drop to ensure that the drop was not being used for book donations. Since then, it has been very manageable. Mr. Metz asked if there are any ways to interact with the public remotely. He gave several suggestions, for example, to explain the roll-out of Udemy and Kanopy. He asked if there would be a librarian on call that could answer questions. He asked if librarians could do live-stream of story time. The Library staff is not as adept with that type of technology yet. Staff will be posting links with free content providers, content

that has been made free of charge to the public. Mr. Metz suggested providing links for live stream events on the Library website.

Mr. Harris said that he feels that the staff should remain home, and Mr. Franz should discourage staff from entering the building for everyone's safety. Tasks that need to be done at the library should be decreased as much as possible, i.e. extending return due dates. Mr. Franz feels he should go in a few days a week. There are 5,000 items out at the moment, so he feels safer with the items coming in slower and going into quarantine. All members were in agreement that staff should remain working on assigned tasks at home.

2. Most BCCLS libraries reporting by survey are following the emergency closure procedures to pay staff for some weeks ahead. Mr. Franz wants to keep the staff engaged in remote training and tasks while at home. Ms. Miano explained protocol from her company. Mr. Harris stated that the Library is closed due to emergency health reasons and the Library is covered under the Library manual and Hillsdale municipality. This is defined under a 'temporary' status. Mr. Harris stated that the library staff should continue to be paid and try to continue to work online. 58 of 60 libraries are paying their staff during this 2-3 week closure. Mayor Ruocco stated that the town is currently paying all employees, FT and PT. Mr. Metz asked about income from the town that would impact the Library. The budget was slightly scaled back by the Finance Committee. Mr. Franz said that the portion of our budget that pays salaries is administered by the Borough. We receive a quarterly payment that covers collection development, utility bills and other monthly line items. There will be a drop in anticipated fine revenue. Mr. Metz asked if the Board would authorize salary payments until a certain date; Mr. Harris suggested that we wait until the Board reconvenes at the regular April 13th meeting. Mr. Franz suggests that the Board reaffirm the current policy - that it is a health emergency; that they will be paid for the time being, but that the Board reserves the right to alter the policy at any time (that is how it is stated in the personnel policy). That mirrors what the Borough is doing. All members were in agreement with that. Ms. Miano asked how many hours the PT employees will be paid; Mr. Franz said they would receive what they were regularly scheduled to work. Mr. Harris asked about payment for pages. Mr. Franz said that there are some remote tech tasks that they could do. Mr. Harris asked if they would be getting pro-rated pay. Pages are budgeted to work 6 hours each per week.

1st motion: Mr. Harris stated that we will request the staff remain working at home on tasks assigned by Mr. Franz until such time as will be necessary to reopen the Library, with the proviso that Mr. Franz will periodically go to the library to handle the book drop and deliveries. A motion was made by Mr. Harris, seconded by Mr. Metz. Unanimous vote of approval.

2nd motion: During this temporary health emergency, the staff of the Library shall be paid accordingly to their regular salary through April 17, 2020. The Library Board of Trustees will discuss this further at their next meeting on April 13, 2020. Ms. Miano and Mr. Harris did ask about the hourly employees. Mr. Metz asked how health and pension benefits are covered as long as they are employed. Under normal operations, their benefits would be covered until the end of April (the end of the month). Mr. Franz will check on this. Mayor Ruocco suggested that Mr. Franz speak with the Borough administrator and labor attorney.

We should have more clarification by April 13. Ms. Wertheim made a motion to approve payment to staff according to their regular salary until April 17, 2020, subject to review at the regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting on April 13, 2020, seconded Ms. DeChiara. Unanimous vote of approval.

3rd motion: Mr. Franz asked about consideration of the Woodcliff Lake memberships since they don't have access to the Library right now. We receive about ten WL vouchers a month. He is recommending that we extend all memberships to align with reopening of the Library. A motion was made by Mr. Metz, seconded by Ms. Schepker. Unanimous vote of approval.

4th motion: Mr. Franz said that since the Library is closed, new patrons who wish to take advantage of the online services could be issued a temporary card with a short-term expiration date so that they can take advantage immediately of online services. Their residency would be proved when the library reopens. A motion to approve this temporary library card was made by Mr. Wertheim, seconded by Ms. DiLorenzo. Unanimous vote of approval.

Mr. Franz shared a working document with all staff with tasks that Mr. Franz needs them to do and some that they chose.

Mr. Harris asked for a sub-committee to be available to Mr. Franz for further ad hoc discussions. He asked for four volunteers and Mr. Harris, Ms. Wertheim, Ms. Schepker, and Mr. Metz volunteered to be on this committee.

The next Library Board meeting will be on April 13, 2020. Ms. Miano moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Wertheim. The meeting officially adjourned at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Deirdre Danaher
Recording Secretary

Directions to Join:

Hillsdale Free Public Library – Special Board Meeting
Wed, Mar 25, 2020 7:30 PM – 9:00 PM (EDT)

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/163593237>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3212](tel:+18722403212)