

**Board of Library Trustees Meeting  
June, 25, 2020 - 7:00 PM  
Video Conference Call**

**Minutes**

**Board Members Present**

Brett Crawford, President  
Samuel Epps, IV, Vice President  
Angela D. Smith  
Dr. Arthuree Wright  
Dr. Hiram Larew  
Sylvia Bolivar  
Toni A. Smith

**Prince George's County Memorial Library Attendees**

Roberta Phillips, Chief Executive Officer  
Michael Gannon, Chief Operating Officer for Support Services  
Michelle Hamiel, Chief Operating Office for Public Services  
Dereje Salehudres, Director of Finance  
Aishar Pinnock, Director of Talent & Culture  
Shelley O'Brien, Director of Development & Donor Engagement  
Blane Halliday, Director for Collection Strategies  
Steve Fitzgerald, Director of Dynamic Content and Engagement  
Jessica Freeman, Executive Assistant

Absent:

Welcome and Call to Order by President Brett Crawford: 7:05 PM

- Mr. Epps moved to approve the minutes from the May 21, 2020 Board of Library Trustees meeting with corrections as discussed. Ms. Smith seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.
- **Board of Trustees Committee Reports**

Personnel & Governance Committee - Toni A. Smith, Chair

No report was provided.

Budget & Planning Committee - Brett Crawford, Chair

The workshops for the strategic framework for the Board, the staff that helped develop the framework, and the Executive Team will be held on August 8th and 22nd. It is hoped that the framework will be finalized and implemented shortly thereafter. Mr. Crawford expressed his view that the framework will be impacted by and partly shaped by COVID-19.

Community Engagement Committee - Hiram Larew, Member

While the committee has not met since the last Board meeting, Dr. Larew is interested in convening again with the CEO and COO for Communication and Outreach. Dr. Larew has been impressed with what the Library has to offer the community. Both Dr. Larew and Mr. Crawford expressed that they are impressed with the Library's efforts to overcome long standing reluctance to engage in difficult conversations and develop a better mutual understanding concerning race relations. Dr. Larew

expressed his backing of PGCMLS's support of Black Lives Matter. Mr. Crawford highlighted the upcoming virtual book discussion with Ibram X. Kendi as he joins PGCMLS and Maryland Partners For Virtual Discussion of his bestselling book "How to Be an Antiracist" which will take place on July 20th. Mr. Crawford also recognized that the Library will be launching fine free on July 1st to increase equity and access to the Library to all of the community.

- **New Business: COVID-19 Phased Reopening Plan - Action Requested**

Mr. Crawford invited the CEO to provide an overview of the reopening plan. Mrs. Phillips reported that PGCMLS closed on March 16th. As of June 1st, Prince George's County lifted the stay at home order and the County entered into a modified phase two of reopening. As of June 15th the County entered into modified phase two of reopening and it was recently announced that as of June 29th the County will enter into full phase two reopening.

In developing the reopening plan, PGCMLS has had the benefit of seeing what other systems Country-wide have done; both successes and failures. The document has been thoroughly researched and has been collaborative with the County, the Union, and Board.

- 1. Phase 1: Curbside/Contactless Service**

- The first phase will include the return of staff (on a limited basis) and sanitization of all materials that have been returned. Staff will manage return check-ins, reshelving, update circulation, alternate office work routines will be restored, virtual programming continues, and telephone/digital reference will continue. Book drops reopen. In-person services will be curbside service only with abbreviated hours for all branches.
- **Monday, July 6th:** Staff to return on an a/b alternating working schedule to be in the branch/department and working from home.
- **Wednesday, July 8th:** Book drops to open
- **Tuesday, July 21st:** Curbside Launch

- 2. Phase 2: Limited Branch Access**

- The second phase will allow limited numbers of customers in branches for a limited time period. Branches will have abbreviated hours. Exceptions: Bladensburg will continue with curbside service only and Baden and Mount Rainier remain closed. Contracted security guards will return to duty. Customers are required to wear face coverings at branches.

- 3. Phase 3: Partial Branch Access**

- The third phase will be a partial opening for all branches, except Baden and Mount Rainier. Those two branches which will only partially reopen if possible with the latest social distancing guidelines. Off-duty police officers will return to branches.

- 4. Phase 4: Full Branch Access**

- The fourth phase will be a return to full operations at all branches, but may still include social distancing and even the continued use of masks. In-person programs, outreach activities, and public meeting room usage may resume. Pop-up locations reopen.

There will be slow and deliberate movement from phase to phase to ensure safety as well as to ensure that operations/procedures are working.

The CEO and Executive Team took questions from the Board.

**Q:** Is accommodation being made for those staff who have a lack of childcare due to the virus?

**A:** Yes, through federally recognized extended family medical leave act, which will be available through the end of the year.

**Q:** Will book drops be manned or unmanned?

**A:** Book drops will be unmanned but materials will be moved by staff to be decontaminated.

**Q:** Has the Union reviewed the reopening plan and are they on board with it?

**A:** A second MOA with the Union is in the works to address concerns and asks by the Union. There are a couple of items being negotiated.

**Q:** What is the liability of the Library should a staff member or patron contract COVID-19 after being at the Library?

**A:** The County is responsible for contract tracing at this time. The County does represent the Library in terms of liability insurance but more research would need to be done in terms of specifics. Mr. Crawford reported that he recalls that the state has a cap through limited sovereign immunity. The legal standard is based on negligence. As long as the Library is acting with due diligence and considering all safety concerns it would be difficult to prove negligence. Ms. Phillips will be looking into the specifics of the Library's liability.

**Q:** Is the two week notice sufficient under the contract with the Union and if so is there any process that the Library has to do during the recall?

**A:** The MOA does not stipulate a need for a certified letter or specific method of communication to staff to recall. Mr. Epps indicated that he read the reopening document and that it is a thorough document but it can remain fluid and able to be changed as needed. But certainly considers first and foremost employee and public safety.

**Q:** With book drops opening, will customers have two weeks from July 21st to return materials?

**A:** Book drops will open on July 8th. Material due dates are not impacted by the book drops opening.

**Q:** Is there concern that patrons won't want to return materials?

**A:** There is that possibility but the Library has received comments that customers do want to return their materials.

**Q:** Although the system is fine free, when will items be considered lost?

**A:** Materials that were checked out prior to the closure are due on September 1st. Materials that are 45 days overdue are considered lost.

**Q:** Will there be a staff town hall to address concerns and questions?

**A:** A staff hall was previously held to engage staff. Shop stewards meet with the CEO once a week to go over issues/concerns and address questions. Mr. Crawford pointed out that the reopening document is not a static document and processes outlined can change based on trial and error.

**Q:** Will the Library receive funding for the purchase of PPE through the CARES Act?

**A:** Yes, the County will be reimbursing the Library for COVID-19 expenses and Mr. Salehudres is coordinating this with the County.

- **Requests to Address the Board**

President Crawford opened the floor for questions from the attendees of the meeting outside of the Board and Executive Team.

**Q:** Will Laurel be in the first wave of curbside services?

**A:** Yes, only two branches will not open for curbside services; Baden and Mount Rainier.

**Q:** Considering that the system's paperwork to request medical accommodations (not leave, but accommodations like teleworking) has not been released yet, and that most medical offices are backed up, doesn't this seem too early to have staff return?

**A:** PGCMLS is following federal regulations and the extended family medical leave act. HR has not provided the forms to all staff as they do not apply to all staff members. But forms are being provided as needed and HR is working with individual staff members as needs arise.

**Q:** Will face shields be mandatory for all staff?

**A:** No, face shields are not mandatory but masks are. Should a face shield be elected to be worn, a mask is still required to be worn along with the face shield.

**Q:** Will staff be required to be tested for COVID-19 prior to returning to work?

**A:** No, staff will not be required to be tested. Staff temperatures will be taken each day prior to the start of staff shifts. It could be a possibility if the County begins testing for their staff and will include the Library in the testing. There are guidelines outlined in the reopening plan that should a staff member have their temperature checked and it exceeds 100.4 degrees that they will need to return home and receive physician clearance to return to work. This is consistent with the County health department.

**Q:** Will the public's temperatures be taken once they are allowed in the building?

**A:** No, temperatures of the public will not be taken but they will be required to wear masks.

**Comment:** The President of the Friends of the Laurel Library thanked the Library for all of its service to the community and indicated that the Friends groups stand ready to help the staff of the local libraries as needed.

**Q:** What is so pressing within a library system that we need to open ourselves up to this risk, where the data everywhere is proving this to be a terrible idea?

**A:** The President indicated that there are communities throughout the country that infection rates are seemingly increasing. The Board has not been pressuring the Library to reopen. The Board does recognize that there are commitments that the Library has as an organization. First and foremost the health and safety of the staff and public. There is also a commitment to provide service to the public. The closure was meant to be temporary. The proposed reopening plan tries to mitigate the risks to staff and the public while also providing service to the community. The Library, its Board, the leadership team, the County leaders and health department are not being cavalier with staff health and safety. Ms. Bolivar also noted the serious digital divide in the County. There are also under and unemployment issues. The Library is trying to be thoughtful and respectful of health and safety concerns while at the same time addressing the equity issues in the County.

Ms. Bolivar recommended holding staff meetings to address some of the process, safety, and other concerns of the staff.

**Q:** Won't staff be called back together at the branch for the first couple days? How does this agree with the social distancing practices later on in the plan?

**A:** July 6th & 7th, only supervisory teams will be in place. Then on July 8th the full staff will be together in branches for information dissemination but only on the public floor where they can social distance and this only applies to larger facilities. Thursday and Friday A team will be in and Friday B team will be in. The following week will be similar. The week of July 20th, staff will then be on an A/B week schedule to decrease staff numbers to allow further social distancing.

**Q:** What type of thermometers are being used?

**A:** The thermometers are touchless and those taking temperatures are being trained by Human Resources with staff privacy in mind. Temperatures will not be broadcast.

**Q:** What would happen if a staff member contracts COVID-19 after returning to work?

**A:** The County Health Department is in charge of contact tracing and would let PGCMLS know that there has been a positive case. At that point the branch/location would be temporarily closed for sanitization.

**Q:** Given that July 8 will be the first day all staff return, can the book drops reopening date be reconsidered (even just to be pushed to July 9) so that supervisors have time to train on that Wednesday July 8?

**A:** Ms. Hamiel will speak with the Circulation Supervisors and evaluate the adjustment with them.

**Q:** Will members of the Leadership team be visiting the branches to work alongside staff?

**A:** Emphatic yes. A schedule will be forthcoming.

**Q:** Will the Library be open to the public on July 21st?

**A:** Yes, but only for curbside service. Members of the public will not be permitted to enter the Library buildings. Virtual programming will continue and Wi-Fi is being further extended into the parking lots.

**Q:** In the reopening plan it states we would be given two weeks notice before returning. Is there a reason we're opening so soon?

**A:** The Library will not be opening to the public but will be providing curbside service on July 21st but staff are being called back sooner to prepare for the launch of curbside.

**Q:** Will the branches be sanitized prior to July 6th when the staff return?

**A:** The branches have been sanitized during the closure. HVAC coils have been cleaned and filters have been changed.

President Crawford closed the public comments and Mr. Epps took charge of chairmanship so that Mr. Crawford could make a motion to accept the reopening plan. Mr. Crawford's motion read:

"Whereas:

- The Prince George's County Memorial Library System is committed to ensuring public access to its services; and
- the library system is committed to protecting the health and safety of the public and its employees; and
- the COVID-19 virus created risks to the public and to library employees that necessitated dramatic changes in the library system's operations beginning in March of this year, including the temporary closure of all library branches and the suspension of in-person library services; and

- library system staff have responded admirably to the challenges presented by COVID-19 by exploring and expanding alternative means of delivering services to the public; and
- the operational changes and response planning necessitated by COVID-19 have created opportunities to build a more collaborative culture within the library system; and
- over the past three months, library staff have worked diligently and in detailed consultation with, among others, other staff throughout the library system, the union (MCGEO), other library systems in the DC area and across the country, public health officials, and county government leaders to develop a responsible approach to reopening the library system and to identify appropriate conditions under which a phased reopening can occur in a manner that meets the library's commitments to the public and to its employees; and
- library system is learning from and incorporating into its plans the experiences of other library systems that have already reopened to the public or will be reopening before Prince George's County.

Thus, the PGCMLS Board of Trustees (the Board) grants approval to proceed with implementation of Phase I of the reopening plan prepared by the library staff.

Recognizing that additional logistical, health or safety considerations might arise during the Phase I implementation period, the Board also grants authority to the library system's CEO to make reasonable modifications to the Phase I plan to accommodate those considerations. Consultation with the Board President and Vice President is required prior to any significant and substantive change to the Phase I plan.

Also, if health or safety conditions in the community or in the library system during the Phase I implementation period warrant it (for example, in response to a resurgence of COVID-19), the board grants authority to the library system's CEO to reverse all or part of the reopening upon consultation with the Board President and Vice President."

Mr. Crawford's motion was seconded by Ms. Bolivar. Prior to voting, Dr. Larew encouraged the CEO and Communication team to continue to provide staff updates and keep in communication with staff regarding the plan. When put to a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

- **Closing Statements:** Mr. Crawford thanked the attendees for their interest and participation.
- **Adjourn:** 8:35PM