



**BALDWIN PUBLIC LIBRARY MINUTES,
VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING
November 16, 2020**

Call to Order and Roll Call:

The meeting, held via Zoom, was called to order by President Ashley Aidenbaum at 7:32 p.m.

Library Board present: Ashley Aidenbaum (Birmingham, MI), Melissa Mark (Birmingham, MI), Frank Pisano (Birmingham, MI), Jim Suhay (Birmingham, MI), Bob Tera (Birmingham, MI), Jennifer Wheeler (Birmingham, MI); and Student Representative Storm Stephenson.

Absent and excused: None.

Library Staff present: Doug Koschik, Director; Rebekah Craft, Associate Director; Robert Stratton, Administrative Assistant.

Friends of the Library liaison present: Ryndee Carney.

Contract community representatives present: None.

Members of the public present: Five.

This meeting was held online, via Zoom.

Wheeler read aloud the Library's Mission Statement.

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance following establishment of quorum.

1. Consent Agenda:

Motion to approve the consent agenda.

1st Tera

2nd Mark

A roll call vote was taken.

Yeas: Aidenbaum, Mark, Pisano, Suhay, Tera, and Wheeler.

Nays: None.

Absent and excused: None.

The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Election of Officers for 2020-2021

Aidenbaum called for nominations for the election of officers for 2020-2021.

Motion to elect Melissa Mark as President.

1st Pisano

2nd Tera

Yeas: Aidenbaum, Mark, Pisano, Suhay, Tera, and Wheeler.

Nays: None.

Absent and excused: None.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Motion to elect Frank Pisano as Vice President.

1st Mark

2nd Tera

Yeas: Aidenbaum, Mark, Pisano, Suhay, Tera, and Wheeler.

Nays: None.

Absent and excused: None.

The motion was approved unanimously.

Motion to elect Jennifer Wheeler as Secretary.

1st Pisano

2nd Aidenbaum

Yeas: Aidenbaum, Mark, Pisano, Suhay, Tera, and Wheeler.

Nays: None.

Absent and excused: None.

The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Board Reports and Special Announcements:

President's report: Aidenbaum, the outgoing President, turned the meeting over to Mark, the new President. Mark thanked Aidenbaum for her service as President. With Koschik retiring in January, the Board has elected Rebekah Craft to the position of Library Director.

Board comments: None.

Staff Anniversaries: Pisano recognized the following staff anniversaries: Lauren Clifford (1 year of service), Susan Dion (15 years), Bart Gioia (13 years), Cheyenne Kennard (1 year), Cailey Kosciuk (1 year), Robert Stratton (1 year), Betty Tremba (20 years), Phebe Wong (18 years).

Upcoming events of interest: Craft reported upcoming events at the Library, full details of which can be found on pages 40-42 of the November Board packet. These events will be held virtually, as physical-presence Library programs have been cancelled for the foreseeable future.

4. Board Committee Reports

Finance Committee:

Tera reported that the Finance Committee held a Zoom meeting on Monday, November 9. Present were Suhay, Tera, Koschik, and Craft. Full minutes of this meeting can be found on page 20 of the November Board packet.

Tera and Pisano noted their pleasure at awarding staff salary increases, originally meant to be implemented in July but delayed due to an uncertain financial situation. Tera mentioned the Committee now feels "more sanguine" about future revenue and the Library's financial situation.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee will take place on Monday, December 14, 2020, at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Building Committee:

Suhay reported that the Building Committee held its last working sessions on November 12 at 9:00 a.m., and the Youth Room Construction Committee met on November 12 at 2:00 p.m. Minutes of these meetings can be found on pages 23-24 of the November Board packet. Deviations from the report are stated below.

In discussion for the upcoming Birmingham long-range planning session on January 23, the Construction Committee had committed to researching reasonable cost estimates for outfitting a café. Mark had a conversation with the owner of Svenska Café to get an estimate of initial opening costs. The Svenska Café owner said they spent about \$70,000, including \$15,000 for an espresso machine. Pisano had a similar conversation with Birmingham Roast manager Andy Vickers, who said to expect \$70-100,000 in initial buildout costs. Vickers recommended hiring a consultant beforehand to work hand-in-hand with the architects.

Aidenbaum suggested the Board can anticipate questions about this proposed café increasing competition with existing Birmingham businesses. She also noted the very slim margins most cafés and restaurants operate on. Pisano noted the proposed café would likely operate as a public/private partnership, helping insulate the Library from financial liability or diversion of funds from the Library budget.

The next meeting of the Building Committee will be held on Monday, December 7 at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. There are no planned future meetings of the Youth Room Construction Committee.

5. Library Report and Discussion of COVID 19 Measures:

Koschik reviewed the status of COVID-19 and the extent of library services. He noted that COVID-19 cases are increasing in Oakland County, with approximately 37,000 new cases within the recent 5-day period, which was 50% more than the previous week and 100% more than two weeks earlier. Deaths have also increased. The current test-positivity rate is 14%, and hospitalizations have doubled in the last couple of weeks. Seven staff members are currently quarantined due to possible exposure to infected individuals. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) set new restrictions to take effect November 18, closing some institutions including high schools and colleges. Birmingham Public Schools have decided to revert to virtual learning only. While most of Library patrons have followed masking and social distancing guidelines, patron behavior within the Library has not been entirely ideal: Baldwin has suspended one person's privileges, and another person has been given a letter of warning. The approaching holiday season brings concerns that social gatherings will increase infection rates. Many of the libraries in southeast Michigan have reverted to curbside-pickup only in recent days.

The Library Network (TLN), a library cooperative that Baldwin Public Library is a part of, has issued surveys to determine where cooperative libraries stand. Out of 44 libraries who have responded to this survey, 1 is closed entirely, 24 are curbside-only, and 20 are at a 'grab & go' stage. These survey results are likely out-of-date, as Koschik notes he continues to receive new notices of reduction of service from local libraries every day. A number of staff members have sent notices of concern to Koschik, and appealed to return to curbside-service only.

Koschik had notified City Manager Joe Valentine about his intended recommendation to the Board to return to curbside-service only, and Valentine understood the move. City Hall is currently closed, and the City's ice arena will close on Wednesday, November 18. The City is reestablishing an emergency call center for COVID-19 assistance.

Koschik recommends that the Library return to Phase 4 (Curbside-Service Only), from its current Phase 3 (Grab & Go), effective November 17, with a prospective reopening date left open-ended. The Library would maintain its normal hours for curbside-pickup. Staff will work from home when possible. Virtual programs would continue. Craft Kits To-Go and Idea Lab projects would continue. Full reference services would continue to be provided.

Craft noted, from her discussion with Clinton-Macomb Public Library Director Larry Neal, his worry of local library closures resulting in increases of traffic in those libraries that remain open. With Baldwin open and surrounding libraries closed, capacity issues have arisen already on weekends in the Youth Room. Craft has prepared a statement for the public to be emailed and posted to the website, and the City would also receive a notice about the Library's status change. Koschik requested comment and consensus from Board members, with five in support and one against:

Tera felt it was imperative to revert to curbside, acknowledging this would pose a disadvantage to patrons and members of other communities using our Library. Stephenson felt it was crucial for maintaining the safety of employees and patrons alike. Suhay sees the Library as a refuge to those in need, but acknowledged the risks of COVID-19 and has seen the disregard for masking and social distancing by some patrons within the building. Wheeler agreed with reverting to curbside and recommended accelerating social media interaction with the community. Pisano, on the other hand, recommended keeping the Library open and limiting the number of patrons allowed. He stated a closure of the building to the public would be detrimental to those that need internet access, have mental illness conditions, or depend on the Library for social interaction. Tera agreed with Pisano on those points, but cited conversations with friends who are management or board level at other local libraries, where exposure or infection of COVID-19 has impacted their staff. Tera restated his concern for the well-being and health of staff and their families. Pisano noted he wants the best for staff, and that staff can become infected outside of the library as Library as well. He stated, "There is a certain population that does want to come in, and that wants some sort of normalcy in their lives, and as long as they're listening and doing the protocols, I think you're robbing them of that right." Koschik noted that while there have been no positive test results received by a Baldwin employee, seven individuals are currently in self-quarantine due to exposure to test-positive individuals. Aidenbaum agreed with all that has been said, but that the safety of staff and patrons is her priority. She recommends increasing regular mailings to patrons who may not necessarily access email or the internet. She cited the surge of cases Canada experienced through their Thanksgiving holiday season, and recommended not setting a specific date for reopening. She agreed, however, with Pisano's comments on the Library functioning as a social safety-net, a warm place, and a venue for internet access, and urged librarians to do their best in providing referral services to those in need. She also thanked Pisano for standing up for his opinions on this matter.

From the public, Birmingham residents Sheila Brice and David Bloom both provided comments. Brice thanked Koschik for his data regarding the TLN cooperative and local libraries. She was worried about increased traffic during the holiday season, and agreed with the move to curbside-service. She noted that her husband, on the other hand, agrees with the Pisano's opinion. Bloom stated that he understands the concerns about the pandemic, but feels the Library can occupy a middle ground between closing the building to the public and offering in-person service.

Pisano requested to a formal motion in lieu of consensus agreement.

Motion for Baldwin Public Library to revert to Phase 4 (Curbside Service Only), from Phase 3 (Grab & Go), as dictated by the Baldwin Public Library Pandemic Response Plan, effective November 18, 2020, with plans to resume service to remain under Board and community review until further notice.

1st Aidenbaum
2nd Tera
Yeas: Aidenbaum, Mark, Suhay, Tera, and Wheeler.
Nays: Pisano.
Absent and excused: None.
The motion was approved with 5 - 1.

Craft provided updates on IDEA Taskforce, Battle of the Books, staff changes, and staff virtual attendance of Adaptive Umbrella and ALSC. Full details can be found on pages 25-36 of the November Board packet.

6. Liaisons

Friends: Carney reported the Friends online grab-bag sale has opened to the public effective November 16, which may be accessed at www.baldwinlib.org/shop. The Friends are weighing whether to pay Facebook for further exposure of the sale. At the time of this meeting, 10 bags have been sold throughout the first day. The Friends have received 167 new memberships, and approximately half of current members have renewed.

Beverly Hills: There was no report.

Bloomfield Hills: There was no report.

1. Unfinished Business: None.
2. New & Miscellaneous Business: None.
3. Items Removed from Consent Agenda: None.
4. Information Only: See pages 40-42 of the September Board packet.
5. General Public Comment Period: Birmingham resident David Bloom stated that competition is the foundation of our way of life, and disagrees with arguments against a café based on fears of increasing competition between local businesses. He also gave recommendations for Baldwin's Phase 3 of renovation to include additional glass doors or openings in the southeast curtain wall. The Dailey Company provided Bloom an estimate of \$35-40,000 per door. Bloom recommended four or five of these openings built into the curtain wall. Bloom noted that he has a rough rendering available of prospective artwork to be displayed along the upper fascia inside the north, east, and south sides of the Youth Room. Mark requested that review of the artwork to be tabled and take place, instead, at the Building Committee meeting on December 7.
6. Adjournment:

Mark noted the Library will close at 5:30 p.m. on November 25 and will be closed entirely on November 26.

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

1st Aidenbaum
2nd Wheeler
Yeas: Aidenbaum, Mark, Pisano, Suhay, Tera, and Wheeler.

Nays: None.

Absent and excused: None.

The motion was approved unanimously.

The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 21, 2020, at 7:30 p.m.

Jennifer Wheeler, Secretary

Date