

Minutes of the Emergency Board meeting held on April 6, 2020 at 5:30 pm (Preliminary)

Board Members Present:

Sharon Groene, Jane Bartlett, Candice Smrt, Ron Welder, Anne Heitz, Phil Hecht, Tom Pollpeter and Mary Whitcomb.

City Council Liaison Present: Bob Morawitz

City Staff Present: Sarah Clendineng, Doug Krogmeier

Response to Governor Reynolds new proclamation continuing State Public Health Emergency Declaration including closure of libraries.

This morning, Governor Reynolds expanded her State Public Health Emergency Declaration to include the closure of libraries. At about 1:00, the library director got a call from the city manager that he was sending city hall office workers home and thought we should probably do the same at the library. In the meantime, the State Library of Iowa reached out to the Governor's office for clarification on this new closure and received the following responses:

“May library staff be allowed to continue working in the library building if it is closed to the public?”

The proclamation only closes the establishment to the public and does not prohibit staff from continuing to work in the library. They should be encouraged to follow all the Governor's recommendations on social distancing, hygiene, working from home if possible, and staying home when sick.

Is curbside service or patron pickup allowed with a library closure?

Libraries can offer curbside or delivery services and are encouraged to [follow] social distancing, hygiene and other safety practices.”

The State Library recommendation is that staff may continue to work in the library but, as usual, should follow any local recommendations from the city about whether staff may work in the building.

There was some discussion of staffing, one board member suggesting possibly rotating employees out to minimize the number in the building at the same time or finding ways for employees to work from home. The director explained that there is very little, primarily prepping for children's program crafts and her administrative tasks, that can be done at home. Other board members felt that library employees should be treated similarly to city hall employees. There was also the question of pay for employees, it is the director's understanding that under recently passed legislation, the employees will receive pay for the next two weeks.

There was a motion to follow the city's personnel recommendation made by Anne Heitz and seconded by Phil Hecht. Unanimously approved by roll call vote.

There was also discussion about continuing curbside delivery of materials. Since we can't lock the outside book returns, the director plans to continue to come to the library and check books in and not fall too far behind on administrative tasks. She could provide curb side delivery while she is there. The current declaration does allow non-essential retail services, including bookstores, to provide goods with curbside delivery and the library plans to continue this as long as they can. One board member was concerned that it might be too much for one person. Another board member commented that the availability of the service could be reduced based on fewer staff available to provide the service.

There was also a motion to temporarily waive the current policy that there always be at least two employees in the building during the current public health emergency when the library is closed to the public and the building is locked. This motion was made by Anne Heitz with a second by Candice Smrt. Unanimously approved by roll call vote.

The final thing was notifying the board of an added item to the city council Tuesday agenda, "Discussion and possible action concerning the shuttling of some services and possible layoffs during COVID-19 crisis." The city council liaison did not have any more information that what was on the agenda and the director will report back to the library board after the city council meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:58 pm. Next meeting Thursday, April 16, 2020 at 5:30 pm.