



CITY OF RICHMOND
LIBRARY COMMISSION MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MAIN LIBRARY
325 CIVIC CENTER PLAZA, RICHMOND, CA
July 14, 2020
6:30 P.M.

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) ADVISORY

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Contra Costa County and Governor Gavin Newsom had issued multiple orders requiring sheltering in place, social distancing, and reduction of person-to-person contact. Accordingly, Governor Newsom issued executive orders that allowed cities to hold public meetings via teleconferencing (Executive Order N-29-20). Due to the shelter in place orders, participation in the Library Commission was by teleconference only. Public comment was confined to items appearing on the agenda and was limited to the method provided in the agenda.

Library Commission Members:

David Duer, Chairperson; Ritchie Cook; Cordell Hindler; Adrian Ratcliff; and Mimi Vitetta
Eduardo Martinez, City Council Member Liaison

1) **Call to Order:** Chairperson David Duer called the regular meeting to order at 6:34 P.M.

2) **Roll Call**

Present: David Duer, Chairperson; Ritchie Cook, Adrian Ratcliff, and Mimi Vitetta

Absent: Cordell Hindler

Staff: Katy Curl, Library Director

3) **Welcome and Meeting Procedures:** Chairperson Duer identified the meeting procedures.

4) **Agenda Review**

The Library Commission accepted the agenda, as submitted.

5) **Open Forum**

Chairperson Duer noted the difficult and challenging times given the COVID-19 pandemic and the unlikelihood that schools would open as usual, and when it did it would likely be a hybrid of some sort. He commended the City and its resources, such as the Library, that had helped the community, noted that face masks were now required, and emphasized the need to listen to the community and to be respectful of all.

6) **Approval of Minutes**

a. Approval of March 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Cook, seconded by Commissioner Ratcliff to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2020 meeting, as submitted. Motion passed by Duer, Cook, Ratcliff, and Vitetta. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Hindler.

7) **Department Reports For Information:** The following reports were received and filed.

Chairperson Duer commended the information presented to the Board.

- a. Library Services
- b. Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP)
- c. RPL Newsletters
- d. Upcoming Events/Information

8) **Presentations, Discussions and Action Items**

a. OVERVIEW: COVID-19: County and City Response, Status and Next Steps

Katy Curl, Library Director, noted that the State of California issued health orders, Contra Costa County could be stricter or more lenient, and the health orders changed frequently based on the status of COVID-19. She explained that most libraries were conducting curbside services. While libraries had been allowed to open as of June 17th with curbside pickup, things had since changed and as of July 13th Contra Costa was a monitored county and more stringent controls had been put in place. While that did not affect curbside pickup, there were more stringent controls on office work in certain sectors, which could affect the staffing at the Library. At this point, the City would make a determination as to what controls would apply. With respect to essential versus non-essential businesses, she explained that curbside (aka tableside) services would continue although staff would likely continue to telecommute to limit the number of staff in the City buildings at any one time.

Ms. Curl described some of the changes that had occurred in the shelter-in-place orders and the criteria for opening, the difficulty for staff attempting to keep up with the changes in opening, and the fact that the City had generally followed the County's procedures. She explained that LEAP had gotten its program operational very quickly, either virtually online or by telephone. Some City services were being offered by appointment only and that would have been the next step for Library services. For the LEAP program, the GED tests could not practically be taken online by all students and one space had been set up at the City to allow that test to be taken, by appointment only. She stressed that things would continue to change and the City would continue to adapt to make sure that everyone was kept safe.

b. PRESENTATION: Fiscal Year 2020-21 City of Richmond Budget Featuring the Power of Community Support for Richmond Public Library

Ms. Curl stated that the FY 2020-21 Library Budget had initially been status quo, although the shut down in March had changed everything and budget deficit projections for the City had grown to \$29 million for next year along with a projected deficit for the current fiscal year.

Given the concern for the 2020/21 deficit and the need to consider worst case scenario plans, the City Council had requested adjusted budget scenarios from each City Department to address the deficit and had initially determined that the Library would have to cut all part-time staff, close branches and close the Bookmobile, freeze some positions and layoff four positions. The community had expressed such alarm with that determination that the City Council had ultimately allowed the Library to retain its part time positions, a couple of positions had been frozen but the Library had otherwise been left with unchanged funding, all thanks to the public's concern that the Library would not be able to continue to serve the community. She cautioned that shutdowns could continue, there could be larger deficits, and the situation could get worse and more changes might be required. She added that providing some virtual programs might continue potentially allowing different services to be pursued. Given the fact that the community was invested in the Library she suggested that staff could build upon that.

c. PRESENTATION: COVID-19: Richmond Public Library/LEAP Response, Status and Next Steps in Phased Reopening

Ms. Curl described the steps being taken to address COVID-19 issues at the Library when in-house services could again be provided where Plexiglass safety enclosures had been customized by Richmond Build participants to wrap around Library customer service desks. She described other steps that had been taken to address the eventuality of in-Library services; explained how tableside pickup arrangements had been provided using telephones, texts, and emails requesting reading materials; and the obstacles that were being removed to assist and encourage public access such as pushing out due dates, not charging fines, mitigating expired Library cards, a dedicated telephone number for account issues, and unlocking book drops with the door service. She described the process for putting books on hold and suggested the biggest challenge were to those individuals looking for computer access. She added that the website had been updated to identify the services being provided during COVID-19 restrictions, and she highlighted those services and the steps being considered to provide a safe environment.

Ms. Curl also described efforts to provide more robust offerings online, such as online magazines that could be done for free with the Regional Cooperative, and since tableside service was provided from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, service would have to be expanded to provide an evening or a Saturday for those unavailable during the week. Since there were people who had never been able to take advantage of Library services, the virtual services that had not previously been offered would provide more access to the Library. She stated that LEAP's advanced GED classes and online high school classes were now serving more than before COVID-19, especially those who had not had access.

With respect to phased reopenings, Ms. Curl explained that tables and chairs had been removed as had some computers to create space. The thought was to allow a phased reopening by appointment only with one-hour slots. She noted the issues that would have to be addressed, such as security, to allow that to occur. She urged Commissioners to offer suggestions during this time of doing things differently. She noted that LEAP was also considering how to do things differently and getting the most out of what was being offered.

Chairperson Duer asked about the availability of computers for students, although Ms. Curl did not know if the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) was or would be providing access to computers and Internet connections. She sought a sense of the public's current access to computers and whether more assistance could be provided to parents in general.

Chairperson Duer stated that online only schooling was expected, at least for a time, students would have to be educated remotely, and he wanted to know how the Library could help.

d. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: New Service and Service Delivery Model Opportunities Going Forward; Time to Review, Re-evaluate and Re-imagine Our Library

Ms. Curl expressed the desire to be able to support student access to school through Zoom or other systems and encouraged Commissioners to share any information available for how the Library could assist students through the online educational process. She recommended surveys or other tools to identify how the Library could become a community resource.

Ms. Curl acknowledged the difficult situation and commented that while the Library Commission was not expected to meet again until September, if there was a need a special meeting could be called. She emphasized the eagerness of Library staff to get back to work.

e. UPDATE: Elimination of Fines and Fees

Ms. Curl provided an update on the proposed elimination of fines and fees as part of the update to the City's Master Fee Schedule, to be considered by the City Council in September 2020.

f. UPDATE: California State Budget 2020-21 Reductions and Impact on Libraries

Ms. Curl reported that the Governor had cut the funding for libraries in half although there had been some funding to LEAP, which had to cut a part-time position and which was also suffering from ECIA funding cuts. LEAP would therefore have to look for more funding. For the Library side, the Regional Cooperative had pledged the use of reserves to make up the half funding that had been cut. The Regional Cooperative had also offered \$3,000 to reimburse the Richmond Library to provide training for staff this year, which would be used to train staff in various areas.

9) **Items of Interest to the Commission and Announcements**

a. **Director's Report**

The Director's Report had previously been provided.

10) **Agenda Setting for Next Meeting and Future Topics**

The next meeting had been scheduled for September 8, 2020 at 6:30 P.M. via Zoom.

11) **Adjournment:** Chairperson Duer adjourned the meeting at 8:30 P.M. Motion passed by Cook, Duer, Ratcliff and Vitetta. Noes: None. Absent: Hindler.