

**Putnam County Library Board of Trustees Minutes**  
**Called Meeting: March 18, 2020**

Called to order by Harry Ingle at 4:31pm.

**Board members attending:** Andrew Binkley, Laura Clemons, Bryan Payne, Patricia Phillips, Daniel Rader IV, Kathryn Wisinger

**Putnam County Library System staff attending:** Doyleene Farley, Chelsea Gifford, Matt Knieling, Brian Page, Phil Schaller

**Business:**

*a.) Discuss Library plan/response for COVID-19 pandemic-*

Phil Schaller reports that after information received from the American Library Association, Association for Rural and Small Libraries, and discussion with library admin staff, he recommends that the library closes at the end of the day Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup> and reopen on April 6<sup>th</sup> following the recommended 2 week closing guidelines during the pandemic.

The board discussed who is using the library meeting spaces at this time. Daniel Rader shared that he attended a joint meeting with county and city officials and reported that the hospital has a strong setup, with plenty of ventilators that could handle up to 8 patients at a time. He mentioned that there are currently zero cases confirmed in Putnam County and that there have been tests done at the hospital that have come back clean and county facilities are still open. He said that it would be premature to close the library because there are no confirmed cases here and thinks it should be up to the groups using the library to voluntarily not come. Daniel stated that he had a conversation with Randy Porter and Mr. Porter said that he does not think the library should close. He thinks that since Randy Porter is getting the most up to date information that we should defer to him on when an appropriate time to close the library is while he is making decisions for the other county buildings.

The board discusses other county and city building that are closed such as the History Museum, Depot museum, and Cookeville Leisure Services.

Library staff reported concerns about sanitation with returning materials, having adequate cleaning supplies, staff safety, and what can be done if the library remains open.

Patricia Phillips stated that she would not support remaining open because library staff have to work in close contact with patrons and staying open would not assist in flattening the curve.

The board discussed what would happen with employees if the library were to close. Phil mentioned that salaries are budgeted until the end of the fiscal year and could provide paid leave and there is also work that can be done while the library is closed.

Daniel Rader stated that library services should continue to be provided to the citizens that need it. Daniel makes a motion to allow Randy Porter to make the decision to close the library when

he sees fit, Phil to limit the use of meeting rooms effective immediately, to store circulated items for a week's time to reduce staff handling, and to encourage the use of remote services. Motion was not seconded.

Phil suggests that the library board be who decides when the library should close based on the current information. Daniel disagrees.

The board moves on to discuss library hotspots and when public schools are scheduled to reopen. Most surrounding libraries have closed their doors. Library staff shared how they will communicate with the community through the radio, newspaper, social media, and the website to share resources. Patrons could still call for information as staff will be in the building. They could also place holds online, and pick-up materials through a "Curbside Checkout" service.

Doylene reported that most of her staff are in the high risk population. She will be losing staff because they work through UCHRA and the organization is removing employees from their job sites.

Bryan Payne makes a motion to close the library until April 6<sup>th</sup>, reassessing on April 3<sup>rd</sup> to see if the closure needs to be extended. The library will offer Curbside Checkout services, leave this meeting with a plan for communication, and hourly employees will be paid during this time. The motion was seconded by Laura Clemons, two opposed, motion carries.

Andrew Binkley stated that he opposed only because he hated to close down a resource when the county needs it.

The board discussed a communication plan noting the use of:

- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Wordpress)
- Curbside Checkout- patrons can place holds on the phone or online, staff will check them out to their account and deliver to their car upon arrival.
- Increasing signage- notifying of closure and what services will still be offered
- Broadcasting to the media- utilizing the paper and radio station and preparing a statement
- Letting the other cities (Algood, Baxter, Monterey) know of the closure

b.) *Discuss HB2721*- The board decided to table the discussion on this document.

The next called meeting will be held at 4:30pm on April 3, 2020.

**Adjournment:** 5:38 p.m.