

Putnam County Library Board of Trustees Minutes

January 12, 2021

Call to Order: Chairperson Harry Ingle called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

Board members attending: Andrew Binkley, Harry Ingle, Kristy Herr, Bryan Payne, Patricia Phillips, Cynthia Putman, Daniel Rader IV, Alicia Upchurch, and Kathryn Wisinger

Putnam County Library System staff attending: Shannon Chaney, Doyleene Farley, Matt Knieling, Matthew Krist, Brian Page, and Phil Schaller

Falling Water River Regional Library staff attending: Matt Kirby

Determination of Making Board of Trustees meeting electronic due to COVID-19 pandemic as permitted by Executive Order No. 71: Alicia Upchurch motioned to hold this meeting virtually, Andrew Binkley seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Patricia Phillips asked for clarification about the purpose of the called meeting in December 2020, and Matt Knieling explained that it was held to approve the minutes from the prior meeting to allow the Bookkeeper to move forward with staff longevity payments. Patricia Phillips motioned to approve the minutes, Kathryn Wisinger seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Approval of Treasurer's Report: Daniel Rader inquired about the money spent on longevity pay, and Phil Schaller explained that it came from the fund balance. Mr. Rader stated that he expected for the longevity pay money taken from the fund balance to be reflected in a line item. Mr. Schaller said that he did not think that was typically how things had worked in the past but that he could ask the Bookkeeper how she accounts for fund balance spending. Bryan Payne asked whether other spending from the fund balance had gone into line items, and Mr. Schaller stated that he believed they had not. Mr. Rader asked how much money was spent on longevity pay, and Mr. Schaller said it was approximately \$40,000 split in half between December 2020 and January 2021. Mr. Rader asked why these payments were made in two installments, and Mr.

Schaller and Mr. Payne noted that this was done based on the Board's determination. Mr. Payne stated that this was done to encompass two budget years for tax purposes for the employees.

Mr. Payne asked Mr. Schaller whether COVID-19 had impacted the budget, and Mr. Schaller indicated that revenues were slightly lower due to the PCL not charging fines due to logistics with quarantined items, although fees for copies and fines for lost and damaged items had remained in place. He stated that PPE such as disposable masks have been the Library's primary additional expense, as the glass shields at each service desk were paid for by Putnam County, with the exception of the glass for the desk in the Children's Library, which was paid for by the PCL through either the Facilities Maintenance or Supply budget lines. He also noted that the Library has requested that some of the PPE costs be reimbursed by the County. Bryan Payne motioned to approve the Treasurer's report, Alicia Upchurch seconded the motion, motion carried with one opposed.

Public Comment: N/A

Old Business:

a. Continued discussion of the library reopening plan in light of COVID-19: Harry Ingle noted that approximately six employees had addressed their concerns to the Board, and that he had emailed all of these communications to the Board prior to the meeting. Patricia Phillips emphasized the value of PCL staff and the importance of taking measures to ensure their safety. Cindy Putman asked whether the Board adhered to the guidelines it set forth regarding progression from Phase 2 to the current Phase 3. Mr. Ingle noted that the phases had been modified slightly. Phil Schaller replied that the phased reopening plan dictates that the Library may transition between phases at any time at the Board's discretion. He pointed out that the Library's transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2 coincided with a drop in COVID-19 case numbers in Putnam County, but the transition from Phase 2 to Phase 3 occurred amidst a spike in case numbers, and case numbers have only risen since.

He also noted that the primary determining factors in his recommendation for changes to the Library's current services were current COVID-19 case numbers in Putnam County, which had reached an all-time high; the need to safely serve the community while addressing

employees' concerns; the governor's executive order limiting public gatherings of more than ten people; and current best practices for libraries, particularly based on nearby libraries. He stated that the governor's executive order excludes restaurants, churches, and essential services.

Mr. Schaller mentioned that some libraries in the area have reverted to curbside service only. Alicia noted that, according to the Regional Report, all but four libraries had returned to full services. Kristy Herr expressed her concerns with the Library's lack of services on Saturdays and after four o'clock. She also expressed concern because Putnam County had stopped compensating its employees who must miss work for COVID-related reasons, and the most recent version of the PCL's COVID-19 policy that the Board had received did not reflect this change. Daniel Rader agreed with Kristy Herr's concerns.

Phil Schaller recommended that the Library revert to a modified Phase 2 in which the Children's Library remained open by appointment. He stated his willingness for the Library to offer Saturday hours if the Board preferred, but he said that he did not sense a need to extend the Library's evening hours, as the current weekday hours accommodate working persons, as would adding hours on Saturdays. He also recommended that the Algood Branch return to curbside services only due to the risks posed by serving patrons in such a small interior space. Additionally, Mr. Schaller recommended that a called meeting be held in February to facilitate further discussion about the Library's reopening plan.

The Board discussed the possibility of requiring patrons to wear masks inside PCLS buildings. Cindy Putman asked Matt Kirby if other Regional libraries had mask policies. Mr. Kirby answered that at least four libraries in the Regional System did, including White County, Overton County, and Macon County Libraries.

Kristy Herr inquired about the ultraviolet lights that were installed in Putnam County buildings, and Phil Schaller reported that these had also been installed in Library buildings. Kristy Herr also suggested that the Library require employees to take their temperatures prior to each shift to help employees feel safer. Mr. Schaller agreed to consider this.

Bryan Payne asked if the Board's previous measures to provide Phil Schaller with the flexibility to adjust employee work hours and the Library's service hours remained in place. Mr. Schaller said that he believed that applied solely to the branches due to the Monterey Branch's limited staffing since UCHRA recalled its Title V workers. Mr. Payne said that the original

intent of the relevant motion was to provide Mr. Schaller the flexibility to alter hours as needed to fulfill staff and community needs.

Mr. Payne expressed interest in hearing details about Mr. Schaller's idea for modifying Phase 2 and asked whether the Library offered special hours for senior citizens. Mr. Schaller responded that the Library did not offer senior citizen hours but could consider doing so, and he explained that his concept for a modified Phase 2 included all the elements of Phase 2 plus continued by-appointment access to the Children's Library, eliminating patrons' abilities to use the meeting rooms and enter the stacks.

Mr. Payne asked if the Library had any capacity limits, and Phil said that there were none except for in the Children's Library, due to feasibility concerns. Matt Knieling noted that some current restrictions, such as blocking off certain seating areas, effectively limit capacity by discouraging lingering. He also said that, despite the Library's lack of formal senior hours, ten a.m. to twelve p.m. tended to be when individuals over sixty congregate upstairs. He pointed out that the large upstairs space inside the main library allowed people to spread out and the continued use of curbside pickup services helped reduce the number of patrons entering the building. He noted that senior citizens and families with multiple children appear to be the most prevalent users of curbside service.

Daniel Rader made a motion to require masks for patrons, allow staff to politely refuse one-on-one service to patrons without masks, institute a formal policy that someone who has a fever or symptoms of COVID as described by the CDC or is in quarantine should not enter a Library building or utilize curbside pickup at that time, and resume normal hours while maintaining current service limitations (by-appointment access to the Children's Library, curbside pickup service availability when possible, and meeting room reservations for ten people or fewer). Phil Schaller asked if this would mean essentially remaining in Phase 3 but returning to normal hours, and Mr. Rader said yes.

Bryan Payne made a counter-motion encompassing all aspects of Mr. Rader's motion except for returning to normal service hours. Mr. Rader indicated that the current motion must be voted on before addressing a counter-motion. Kristy Herr seconded Mr. Rader's motion.

Harry Ingle prompted further discussion. Matt Knieling described the staffing challenges that increased service hours would present. The Board also discussed the Library's previous and current hours, as well as possible changes that could be made.

Kristy Herr requested that Daniel Rader make the same motion he did previously with the addition that the Library should be open at night two days per week. Mr. Rader amended his motion to include requirements that the Library remain open until eight p.m. two nights per week and open for at least five hours on Saturdays. Kristy Herr seconded the amended motion. The amended motion carried. Phil Schaller agreed to amend the current phase plan to reflect the Library's pending new hours of operation.

Harry Ingle confirmed that Mr. Schaller still had permission to alter branch hours.

Mr. Schaller requested to revert the Algood Branch to curbside only. The Board made no motion.

- b. Review of Project 4/Review and approval of bid for outside signage:* Phil Schaller said he tried to get in touch with County Maintenance regarding the outside lights but had not yet been able to schedule a meeting. Mr. Schaller said that he also contacted John Ward at City Planning for permits and information on the ordinances impacting digital marquees and that Mr. Schaller planned to place another bid request for outdoor signage. Matt Knieling discussed the Library's plans for an outdoor bench and the possibility of the Library receiving a functional bench/art piece through a grant.
- c. Discussion of HR training for staff as discussed in last meeting:* Phil Schaller recommended that the Library implement the same sexual harassment training and OSHA training that Putnam County offers for its employees. Kristy Herr and Harry Ingle expressed their approval.
- d. Review and approval of amended Employee Manual as discussed in past meeting:* Phil Schaller noted that most of the changes were alterations to the manual's language and that the County Attorney has received the amended manual to review. There was discussion regarding Library employees' statuses as Putnam County employees.

New Business:

- a. Review and approval of 5-year plan for the county:* Phil Schaller stated that the 5-year plan draws from the strategic plan and mentioned that the Marketing/Communications Librarian position and the expansion of the parking lot were a part of the 5-year plan. He also stated that he sent the plan to the County Mayor. He said that the HVAC unit and the Baxter and Algood Branch Managers becoming full-time employees were no longer in the plan for this fiscal year

and that other facets of the plan had shifted years. Patricia Phillips motioned to approve the plan, Kristy Herr seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

PCLS Director Report: Phil Schaller presented the Infected Persons Procedure for approval by the Board. He also requested that the Library be permitted to continue compensating all employees who miss work due to COVID-19 without requiring full-time employees to use sick or vacation leave. The Board made no motion.

Mr. Schaller provided an update on the Library's future new website. He also noted that the Monterey Branch's hours were reduced due to staffing limitations and provided details about a \$2,650 grant that the Library received from Twin Lakes and the Foundation for Rural Services: The grant should help the Library offer N2Reading services. He described the Library's plan to partner with local schools to drive the state-wide literacy initiative Reading360.

Matt Knieling described the Library's partnership with Cookeville High School allowing students to receive library cards that provide them with access to READS but not to physical materials. He said that this could likely be implemented at other high schools in Putnam County.

Review of Branch Reports: Phil Schaller stated that all pertinent information could be found in the Branch Reports he had previously sent the Board.

Falling Water River Regional Library Report: Matt Kirby noted that all Regional staff were currently permitted to work from home only and were banned from in-person meetings. He described the Regional Library's efforts to compile information on the statuses of Regional libraries and the limitations of the resulting report. He also mentioned past and upcoming virtual in-services that the Regional Library offered and planned to offer to its libraries and said that a Directors' Roundtable would likely be held soon.

Friends of the Putnam County Library Report: Patricia Phillips said that the Friends of the Putnam County Library received a grant to help grow their membership and planned to implement it that month.

Phil Schaller provided an update regarding the status of the Library's efforts to build a Library Foundation, stating that the Library was still seeking new Foundation members.

Harry Ingle proposed that the Board meet again virtually on February 9, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. to continue discussion of the phased reopening plan. The Board agreed to hold the meeting as a called meeting.

Harry Ingle stated that he would follow up with the employees who had sent emails expressing their concerns to the Board and would forward any further communications from staff to the rest of the Board.

Adjournment: Patricia Phillips motioned to adjourn the meeting. Bryan Payne seconded the motion. The motion carried.