

**TRACY MEMORIAL LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**EMERGENCY MEETING**  
**For the purpose of discussing the response to COVID-19**  
**Thursday, March 19, 2020 at 2:00 pm**

**The meeting was called to order at 2:02 pm.**

Present at TML: Gordon Terwilliger (2021), Director Sandra Licks, and staff members Missy Carroll, Jo-Ann Roy, Ben Cote and Bill Bastille

Present via video teleconference: Wendy Dumais (Chair 2021), Eula Kozma (2021), Nancy Mahar (2022), Kim Bonin (2022), Marianne McEnrue (2023) and Steve Solomon (2023)

Director Licks opened the meeting with an explanation of the purpose of the emergency meeting “to discuss the library response to the COVID-19 pandemic.” Ms. Licks went on to say:

The emergency designation allows us to waive the requirement that a quorum of board members be physically present, allowing for any number of the board members to attend by telephone or electronically. We are still obligated by the *Right to Know Law* to provide a physical location for the public to attend this meeting, and this has been accomplished by unlocking the library door, even though we are otherwise closed at this time. Our library has been closed since Monday, March 16 and it looks like we will be closed at least through April 4. Five staff members have been on site this week working behind the scenes, checking in materials, answering phones and emails and brainstorming and strategizing. Every time I think we have a plan, the landscape changes before we can implement. It's been really heart-warming to hear from library staff and to hear from other libraries in the state. We all want to provide some level of service even though our doors are locked. Initially some libraries moved to implement curbside or pick-up service. But the tide is now turning due to the evolving information about how long this virus lives on surfaces. What we are hearing now is that the virus can be infectious for several hours in the air and for days on surfaces including the plastic with which most of our books are covered. Because of this changing information some libraries have been closing and locking their book drops, so that patrons cannot return potentially infectious materials. Some of the libraries that started doing curbside pick-ups have stopped. This may not be the time to be sharing our physical materials with our customers. One of the things that I am struggling with is that none of us are immune to this virus. I worry about us, the staff possibly getting ill from each other or possibly from the materials that are in the book drop. There is even the possibility of any of us being carriers when we come into work and spreading the illness despite our best efforts to wipe surfaces and wear gloves. If you had asked me a week ago if I thought we would be in this position I would have thought you to be crazy, but this is where we are. I am sure you are all aware of the news and information that has been flooding in

over the past several days but I can summarize after March 11 when the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. A couple of days after that on March 13 our Governor declared a State of Emergency. Also on March 13, Colby Sawyer College extended its spring break and moved to online learning through April 3. That same day, COA Chapin Senior Center, here in town, closed and they eliminated their transportation service. Then on March 15, this past Sunday, the Governor directed all schools to close and shift to remote learning. On Monday the Governor ordered all bars and restaurants to shift to delivery and take-out only. On Tuesday, New London's Hogan Center and the Colby Sawyer Library closed to the public. And just today our town administrative offices closed to the public. Last time I checked, the number of positive COVID-19 cases in New Hampshire was 39. The specific issues that I am struggling with is the possible contamination of materials that continue to come into our book drop that up until now we have continued to check in and shelve. I am also worried about the possible contamination from other people working in the building as well as possible contamination should we try to offer some service curbside or pick-up. I very strongly feel that the library is so vitally important in the long term, but perhaps for now I am recognizing that we are not as important as the hospital or the fire station or food services or the pharmacy. I would like to open this meeting up for a conversation about what we should offer going forward, above and beyond the digital services we want to continue to highlight through our website. Take a look at what Ben has been doing online; his programs include online story time via live stream Facebook. I would like to open this up for any discussion that the board wants to have and possibly make some decisions about what if anything we can offer, and how the building should be staffed if at all going forward.

Q: Marianne McEnrue (board member) asked how the staff felt?

A: Bill Bastille replied they are taking reasonable precautions including wearing protective gloves, disinfecting hard surfaces and being cautious to protect themselves.

Q: Eula Kozma (board member) asked if it is really possible to safeguard yourself. Nothing is certain and the library staff is most vulnerable.

A: Missy Carroll stated her biggest concern is that the library staff could be infected and not know it. Another concern is for the homebound delivery, these patrons are so dependent on this service. There are a total of 6 people who take advantage of this service.

Nancy Mahar (board member) commented that the library drop box is being used and the library has been accepting these materials. It was agreed by all that little/no contact with these materials would be prudent.

Jo-Ann Roy stated it is important to err on the side of caution especially since we have such a large elderly population. There is still so much unknown.

Chair Wendy Dumais emphasized it is important to limit all human interaction.

Ben Cote opined it is important to continue some kind of normalcy and continue to offer some library services.

Kim Bonin (board member) suggested the library offer an on-line tutorial on how to use the Libby App especially for the older population. She also added there is no centralized source in town that offers a comprehensive list of openings/closings. Some restaurants are open for take-out only.

Steve Solomon (board member) said we should not be a clearinghouse for information and act independently. We would need other institutions to agree. Steve endorsed using the library website for instruction to patrons.

Marianne McEnrue (board member) is in agreement that the library website is to be used to maintain library services.

Gordon Terwilliger (board member) agreed with Chair Dumais in that the library should shut down for a reasonable amount of time, possibly 3 to 4 weeks and then reassess. He does not want to lose any individual to this virus.

Eula Kozma (board member) said we should proceed as if every person is a carrier. Eula also commended Ben's dedication to his story-time and activities.

Director Sandra Licks suggested that all these materials (from the drop box) be set aside for 5 days as a quarantine. Do not scan, do not clean, just put materials aside in the meeting room.

Steve Solomon (board member) suggested locking the drop box so that items cannot be returned.

Bill Bastille worried that patrons will just leave their materials on the ground and they will get damaged. It was decided to post a sign to patrons to please keep books safe at home and there will be no fines.

Sandra said she needs one person to stop by the library daily to check on things such as the phone. If there are extra materials outside she will put aside. Ben stated he did not have a problem coming in.

The Board asked how many staff members were in the building at one time and Sandra informed that 5 employees were coming in regular hours.

Eula opined that only 1 or 2 employees should be in the building at the same time. All 5 core staff should not be in the building at the same time. As things change this can be reevaluated.

There was some discussion about how restaurants are leaving take-out orders outside for customers to pick up but this does not mean there are no germs present. Jo Ann said there is still danger in any kind of contact even with gloves.

Steve Solomon (board member) said people are dealing without a lot of things right now. Books are not as necessary. The less we do, the less risk to patrons and ourselves.

Missy Carroll explained how she goes about getting a reserved book to a patron. She makes a phone call once she has the book in hand and makes an appointment time to put the book outside on a cart. This is easily done but wonders if it is necessary. Marianne McEnrue agreed that it is not necessary and too risky.

#### RECAP by Sandra Licks

The following list is what the Board of Trustees and core library employees agreed to implement at Tracy Memorial Library effective immediately.

- Library services shall be limited to online and digital offerings only
- There will be no pick-up service
- The book drop will be shuttered
- There will be no more than 1 or 2 staff members in the building at one time
- Staff should check email at home to stay informed
- Jo Ann to highlight and expand digital offerings (Hoopla for adults and TumbleBooks for children.) All board members approved expenditure of monies to facilitate this.

Several optional dates were suggested for reopening the library and will be used for consideration:

- If and when the schools reopen on April 3
- When the state of emergency is lifted
- Consideration at the next regular Board of Trustees Meeting on April 15
- At another emergency board meeting that can be requested by anyone on the Board

In response to a question by Chair Dumais, Director Licks stated that all staff members would continue to be paid according to their regular schedules. Sandra felt especially strong about this and stated this decision is already built into the library policy and budget.

Gordon Terwilliger suggested postponing all evaluations and the visitation from librarian Starr LaTronica from Brattleboro.

The meeting adjourned at 3:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Vitiello  
Recording Secretary