**Director’s Report**

**Prepared by Donita Ward:  August 2021**

**Attachments:**

*All reports and attachments are online*

* Statistics and Digital Statistics
* Balance Sheet
* Profit and Loss Report
* Updated Services Policy
* Draft Short Range Plan
* Call for Election (English and Spanish)
* Minutes from last meeting

**The following item(s) up for review can be found on the library website.**

* Services Policy <https://www.wblibrary.org/about-us/library-policies/services-policy-2020.pdf>

**Budget Adjustment Requests:**

* None at this time

***As of the writing of this report, Travis County has moved our risk level for the COVID19 pandemic to 5, the highest level possible. Williamson County is also at its highest risk level. Executive Order GA-38 positively prevents us from reducing capacity or requiring masks for people coming into the library. There is no option for government facilities between doors open and doors closed.***

**Finance & Administration**

Sales Tax Income remains strong. It would seem likely that we will meet our expected budget income for 2021 despite fluctuations from the pandemic.

There is one qualified applicant thus for the two trustee positions open on this year’s ballot. If we have fewer than three qualified applicants by 5pm on August 16th, we may cancel the election and avoid the cost and work associated with it.

The Procurement Policy has restrictions for check signatures. With only two trustees and the director listed as signatories for the account, it can be a hardship when one trustee is unavailable. The cash account, which only requires one signature, has a limit of $500. Going forward, we could do several things to address the issue. We could add the library bookkeeper as a signature. We could remove the requirement of two signatures on the account and instead have the payments countersigned after the fact at the next regular board meeting. We could increase the check writing limit on the cash account.

**Operations**

Grab & Go hours remain popular despite rising contagion levels and concerns. Most patrons coming into the library are wearing masks and adhering to requests for social distance and time limits, but there are the outliers who refuse and we cannot enforce those requests. Contact Free services are also in high demand. Comptuer appointments have very few users, often less than one per day. To go bags, especially the crafts, are very popular.

Digital offerings are changing. I’ve ordered another 6 hotspots for circulation. We exchanged our Mango Language Learning database for Pronunciator, which has a citizenship course included. Hopefully, use will increase when we can have live workshops to demonstrate and promote the service. Brain Fuse, which includes HelpNow and JobNow, was not used by our community and we’ve decided to let it go.

The printing and document station has been squirrely for months due to update inconsistencies between the various softwares involved. Fortunately, it was all sorted last month and should be operating at full capacity when we are able to open that type of service again.

Circulation trends and door counts went up enormously when we opened the doors. Our total circulation numbers and new patron counts nearly tripled. Digital circulation, in balance, only dropped by about 15%. That said, we are still getting the odd complaint that there are no study spaces or computers available during those hours.

**Internal Affairs**

Volunteers are back. We had 122 hours of donated services in July, which includes some folks coming into the library proper for shelving, Katy managing our virtual story time room and helping with passive programming, and the FoL members who have been assembling craft to go packs from home.

August is the time we are making up for the staffing stability we enjoyed over the past two years. We are going to be hiring two assistants (entry level to replace people we lost during the pandemic) and an Adult Services Librarian. I expect the Adult Services Librarian position will be open for a time as we cannot fill this in a rush. This position acts as director when I am unavailable, so we must find someone perfect and take time to train them thoroughly. In the meantime, we are distributing the tasks and responsibilities among staff who are currently in place.

**Facilities Issues**

Through Book Drops were replaced. The gutters have been cleaned and the property treated for mosquitoes as our outside programs were having bug bite issues. The irrigation system has been reset after our well was shut off then turned back on again. Fortunately, there was enough rain that we did not lose any of the new landscaping.

Two phone jacks and a data port in the meeting building have been activated to be available during the closure when staff is working completely out of that building. We are on target for an August 16 demolition start date and about three weeks of reconstruction to install new carpeting and desks and move the shelving.

I got a beautiful quote for a permanent sun shade to cover the front yard so families could play and attend outdoor programs in greater comfort. Unfortunately, we cannot install such a structure due to limitations on impermeable ground cover. We are still waiting for installation of replacement windows.

P**rograms & Outreach**

Summer Reading 2021 was once again completely virtual. The program had 456 registrants who read 523566 minutes and completed 154 challenges. The 2020 virtual program had 224 registrants reading 337949 minutes and logging 146 challenges. That means participation went up 55% for number of readers, 103% for number of minutes read, and 5% for challenges. This year we also had a walking challenge to meet the migration journey of a monarch butterfly, which we met, and we collected 118 book reviews.

Regular live programs resumed at limited capacity in June and had to be rolled back in July. Patrons really enjoyed attending Lego Lab, Knit & Crochet on the Porch, and other in person programming. Special programs that were delivered live over the summer were very popular. Circus Chicken Dog performed in the rain and still had 56 attendees. There were 70 people at the reptile shows, 30 at Young Rembrandts, and 33 at the Lucas Miller concert.

First Friday was back over the summer. There were 30 people at the Shinto Dance performance and 20 came to see Terrence Taps. These programs were outside in the Texas summer heat and sun, so these neighbors were committed to seeing the programs. There were eleven people each at Figuring Painting and at the Flower Seed Paper Craft. Seven gardeners took advantage of the seed library.

Most adult programs remain virtual, book clubs and writer guild for example, but we are transitioning to live for others. Meditation and evening yoga have little to no participation and are being cut back for the fall. Crafting programs and to-go packs are still popular and planned for the foreseeable future. We gave out 240 craft to go packs for kids in July and 300 in June. Adults took 35 summer maker kits in July and 41 in June. Katrina is putting out roughly 10-12 adult DIY supply packs each week for her programs.

**Considerations for Re-Opening**

Throughout the pandemic closure, we have waived the majority of our fines and fees. There are no overdue charges, no cost to replace a library card, and no charge for printing up to 5 pages. We have also been allowing 90 day phone renewals. All of this is scheduled to go back to regular practices when we reopen after the renovation. If we elect to phase in those fines and fees, we will need to give adequate notice to all patrons. Many libraries in the area have elected to remain fine-free (only for overdue fines).

Right now, the infection numbers are trending in the wrong direction. All of our reopening plans have been contingent on being in stage 2 or 1 after the carpet replacement. A large percentage of our community is still unprotected from the pandemic. It would be unsafe to offer all day lounging and seating to unmasked and potentially contagious persons in a building servicing vulnerable populations.

There are several options available to us. We could simply postpone reopening until children can be vaccinated or the risk level goes back down. We could reopen partially without seating, the way we have been this summer and try to mitigate the health risks without violating GA38. We could fully reopen as planned and accept that coming to the library is a health and safety risk for children under 12 and anyone else who is unvaccinated or otherwise immunity vulnerable. We could reopen and require safety behaviors such as masks in defiance of GA38 and accept any potential consequences of that violation.

**Rough Timeline for Renovation & Reopening (from last report)**

August 1-15: After summer reading, library traffic generally slows. Staff will be purging and cleaning out desks/shelves/cabinets in preparation for moving. We will keep summer hours & service levels until demo starts.

August 16-21: Demo Week- no library services, no access to the building for staff. Employees will spend the week getting ahead on program planning, reinstating CPR certification, taking vacation if they so choose, etc. We do need to have at minimum one manager on site during the work. Staff who want to keep working can do authority control or similar tasks. *It is possible that demo will take less than a full week and we will be able to move into construction/remodel service models before August 22.*

August 22-September 4: Construction/remodel. Library staff will have access to the building for 1-2 hours per day to pull reserves. We will have contact free services available through the other building. We cannot offer computer services or printing, but we can offer reserves and virtual services. *It is possible that work will be complete before September 4 and we would be able to move forward the reset and soft opening. However, we should keep the advertising and celebrations at the later date, just in case.*

September 7-11: soft open, staff resets the main building, open to the public

September 12- Grand ReOpening Party/Reception (?) I think it would be wonderful to welcome the community back into the newly updated library for full services with a celebration. *This event will likely be canceled or significantly postponed due to uncontrolled viral spread.*

September 13- back to regular hours and services. *This will probably need to be adjusted due to uncontrolled viral spread.*

* We should be fully open in our new configuration Monday to Thursday 10am-8pm, Friday and Saturday 10am-6pm and Sunday 1pm-6pm.
* Programs aimed at ages that are mostly vaccinated (which will hopefully be everyone) will be transitioned back to live in person programming.
* Regular computer use and document station services should be available again.
* Soft seating, quiet study spaces, and collaboration areas should be available again.
* The Family Place Play Area will probably not be re-opening until 2022.