

**Concord Free Public Library  
Library Committee Minutes  
May 27, 2020**

Present: Tara Edelman, Dennis Fiori, Lindsay Howard, Krysten Morganti, Mav Pardee and Kerry Cronin, Library Director

Guests: Sherry Litwack, CFPL Corporation President, Royce McGrath, Supervisor of Children's Services, Brian Taylor, Concord Finance Committee

The meeting was held via video conference Call. Tara Edelman, Chair of the Committee opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

CFPL Building Project Update: Sherry Litwack joined the meeting to provide an update on the settlement agreement on the legal appeal initiated by two people who opposed part of the plans for the Library expansion project. From the beginning, the Library Corporation Trustees wanted to resolve the problem in a timely and cooperative manner, and ultimately they were able to do so. The actual agreement is a private document, so there were limits on the level of detail that Ms. Litwack could share with the Committee.

There were three items in the appeal that related to the Historic Districts Commission (HDC) original approval of the project plans. They included accessible parking, windows on one side of the building and the children's activity space. As a result of the settlement, the Library Corporation will make another presentation to the HDC, which because of the constraints of Covid-19, will likely be by videoconference. Revisions to the project drawings and materials will be submitted ahead of the meeting. If all goes well, the project should move forward late in the summer of 2020.

Another consequence of the delays brought on by the lawsuit is that the original bids from contractors expired and the trustees must now seek new bids that reflect current costs. This has a potential impact on fundraising since costs are likely to be higher. Before beginning construction, the Trustees would like to have between 80 and 90% of the total budget in gifts and/or pledges. They had reached that goal before the delay, but will need to review those figures when they get new bids. Another potential problem might be the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on some donors' finances, particularly in the case of pledges.

Ms. Litwack also provided an update on the Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) revocation of a \$200,000 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, another impact of the appeal process mentioned above. The Trustees initiated conversations with the MHC and invited them for a site visit, but it doesn't look promising. They are discussing a possible reapplication, but may need to look for other sources to make up that grant amount.

Brian Taylor, the Finance Committee observer, asked whether the resolution of the appeal required any monetary settlement or financial damages. Ms. Litwack said there were no financial settlements as part of the appeal. She explained that the appeal focused on the project approvals from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and the HDC, and that ultimately one of the two plaintiffs chose to be “dismissed” from the appeal. The settlement agreement was ultimately negotiated between the Trustees and the remaining plaintiff.

Dennis Fiori asked about earlier discussions about whether the proposed construction project was sufficiently “green”. The response was that the Library Committee is including sustainability as part of its long-range planning process, and the Trustees have also decided to further study the various aspects of the project that would have an impact on sustainability.

CFPL Children’s Services: Royce McGrath, the new Supervisor of Children’s Services, had started her new job five days before the Covid-19 shutdown of all Town services. She made a quick and very impressive pivot to online services, working with the full cooperation and support of other Library staff members. It also meant she had to re-work planned summer activities for children.

The usual summer reading program was redesigned as summer learning with an emphasis on fun and enjoyment for participants, a focus on STEM and STEAM activities. The Library coordinated with the schools and their online resources, including online “badges” that children can earn for completed projects. The staff also reworked the summer booklist, making it shorter and finding books that are available on Hoopla. The librarians at Concord Middle School and Concord Carlisle High School worked with CFPL librarians to encourage students to complete 6 books or 6 STEAM projects, or both. In addition, there are weekly virtual events – dance and exercise groups and for younger readers, a chance to read to Luna the dog online.

Anke Voss, the Curator of Special Collections has also asked patrons, including students, to chronicle Concord’s experience with the pandemic over 11 weeks by photographing and/or writing about what they see. This project is coordinating with Umbrella Community Arts. The Friends of CFPL will donate \$200 to Gaining Ground and the strongest participants in the project will be invited to accompany library personnel to deliver the check.

Library Re-Opening Plans: Kerry Cronin briefed the Committee on the plans for moving towards opening the Library. The Library closed on March 13, and Phase 1 of Re-Opening begins on June 8, with curbside pick up of books. Patrons will check out the books online and Library staff will put the books in labeled packages and place them on a table for pick up. Curbside pick up will be available Monday to Friday at the Main Library and Tuesday to Friday at the Fowler Branch. Phase 2 will be a limited reopening of the Library, but those details are still under discussion. Town Manager, Stephen Crane has offered to participate in the Library Committee’s meeting on June 17 to discuss the plans.

During the shutdown, the Library staff has worked remotely with regular videoconference meetings. The staff also sends out weekly newsletter highlighting CFPL resources available to patrons. Ms. Cronin reported on several months of activity during her report and provided financial reports for the three meetings we missed because of the shutdown.

Committee Member Terms: The Town of Concord has extended the terms of all volunteers on Town Boards and Committees until the re-scheduled Town Meeting. No date has been set for the meeting.

The next two Library Committee meetings are scheduled for June 3 and June 17, 2020. Both will be videoconferences.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mav Pardee  
Library Committee member