

**Rutherford Public Library Board of Trustees
Minutes for April 20, 2020 Meeting**

Open Meeting Held: Library Auditorium & Zoom Meeting

1. Roll Call

Trustees Present	Ms. Wendy Armacost Ms. Brenda Fargo Ms. Julie Kajouras Ms. Monica Rodriguez (7:30 arrival) Ms. Pat Wester Mr. Palmer Yale
Absent	Mr. Anthony Nicodemo Mr. Jimmy Rizzo Ms. Krista Vellis
Staff Present	Mr. Judah Hamer, Director
Others Present	Ray Guzman, Councilman
Call to Order	The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. by Ms. Kajouras.

2. Provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act

Ms. Wester read the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act.

3. President's Report

A. Agenda

Motion: To approve the agenda
Moved: Wester **Seconded:** Fargo
For: Armacost, Fargo, Kajouras, Wester, Yale
Against:
Abstain:

B. Approval of the minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of the March 16, 2020 open meeting as amended.
Moved: Wester **Seconded:** Armacost
For: Armacost, Fargo, Kajouras, Wester, Yale
Against:
Abstain:

4. Hearing of the citizens

Ms. Kajouras opened the hearing of the citizens. As no citizens were present to speak, the hearing was closed.

5. Correspondence – None

6. Director's Report

Mr. Hamer reported that the staff is shifting gears and making operational changes in response to the pandemic. He related that in late March and early April the team messaged heavily to the public about the digital content that is available, such as eBooks, e-audio books, magazines, along with streaming movies and music. Additionally, the team is highlighting digital services such as Rosetta Stone and Ancestry.com.

Mr. Hamer said that the book drop has remained unlocked, and that the staff are handling carefully the intake of those materials. There has been a downward trend in returns, leaving about 5,000 items out on loan. Overdue fines have been suspended, loan periods for these items are being extended, and patron account expiration dates are also being extended.

Mr. Hamer described the considerable amount of collection work happening at the Library. Curation and ordering of new materials is still happening; these are being held by the distributor until the Library can coordinate delivery. This approach keeps the Library's position in the distribution queue stable. Jane Tarantino and Jen Capoano are also launching a major collection maintenance project in the children's department.

Mr. Hamer related that the team is developing different ways to provide community programming. Jane Tarantino is providing leadership on the changes that will need to be made to bring the summer reading program online; in the meanwhile she is devising a way to carry out the annual summer reading design contest. Additionally, Ms. Tarantino and librarians Sara Cassaro and Rhoda Portugal have been connecting with program vendors and renegotiating agreements and concepts for those programs and events produced with outside vendors.

Mr. Hamer provided a preview of the program *The Librarian is In!*, which provides real-time reference and customer service with the staff, giving patrons the opportunity to connect via email, Facebook messenger, and Zoom. He also shared an upcoming launch of *The Library @ Home*, which is a framework for pushing out fresh content produced by the team, or content that has been curated by them. For example, Mondays will focus on Genealogy, Tuesdays on Library Tools, etc. *The Library @ Home* will be pushed out via Facebook and the webpage; the expansion of our webpage to aggregate this material will provide an archive of sorts for these posts. In addition to these programs, ESL Teacher Tati Ontivero has already shifted to providing online instruction to current students. Mr. Hamer concluded his discussion of staff work on programs and content provision by stating that this is a major leap for the staff, since the Library has relied so heavily on face-to-face interaction. He commended the staff for their hard work and collaboration.

Mr. Hamer noted that the Friends of the Library and Foundation have put all events and fundraisers are on hold.

Mr. Yale asked if some of these changes will stay online going forward, as an addition to the programs we already offer. Mr. Hamer replied that the re-opening of the Library will involve a different profile of programs and services, and he affirmed the continuation of some of these initiatives in light of a long term need to engage in social distancing and restrict access to the building.

Ms. Kajouras noted that operationally going forward the Board packet can be delivered via PDF instead of traditional mail. There was overall agreement with this development. Ms. Rodriguez asked if Zoom [virtual] meetings are in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Mr. Hamer noted that in addition to the Zoom feature, he himself was in the Library Auditorium, which during the meeting is publicly accessible. Ms Kajouras added that compliance has been achieved by the publication of the meeting's ID and the password. Councilman Guzman reported that a version of online meetings are coming soon for the Mayor and Council, too, because the guidelines from the State for the application of this technology to the holding of Public Meetings have very recently been revised. Ms. Rodriguez led additional discussion about the ways in which municipalities do business will likely change as a result of this pandemic and its impact on public life.

7. Finance

Motion: To approve payment of bills enclosed in packet.
Moved: Wester **Seconded:** Fargo
For: Armacost, Fargo, Kajouras, Rodriguez, Wester, Yale
Against:
Abstain:

8. Old Business

- No Report

9. New Business

- Ray Guzman applauded the creativity going on in the Library. He was impressed with the online layers of programs and information and that the Library is doing a great job. He offered his services if there is anything he can help with, including sharing announcements on his FaceBook page, announcing information at Mayor and Council meetings, or putting our information into the newsletter that residents receive after Mayor and Council meetings.
- Ms. Armacost inquired whether the physical shutdown of the Library has yielded any unanticipated cost savings. Mr. Hamer replied that broadly speaking, there are not major savings. He noted that some savings will over the course of the year accrue, but the major carrying costs of the building and staff remain constant. Mr. Hamer noted that the current restraints will have a major detrimental impact on the Friends' and Foundation's fund-raising capacities. It will also virtually eliminate income from overdue fines and severely reduce income from copy and print fees. He

indicated he will monitor financial developments so that adjustments can be made in the current fiscal year and in the development of the 2021 budget.

- Ms. Rodriguez raised a 2019 Board of Trustees discussion about the elimination of fees, commenting that this is a trend in public libraries. She noted this situation may accelerate the Board's movement towards that goal. Mr. Hamer agreed that it may be something he and the Board would by necessity need to work out in this year's budget. He added that nearly all of the Essex County members in the library cooperative have gone fine-free already, and that in time additional fine-free libraries will create pressure for all to go fine free. He pointed out that while BCCLS as a cooperative would like all libraries to go fine free, the setting of fines and fees is squarely under the jurisdiction of each Library's Board of Trustees. The widespread elimination of fines, along with the 2020 codification of loan periods across BCCLS libraries, positively impacts the patron experience because of the way materials are shared across member libraries.

10. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Moved: Armacost Seconded: Wester

For: Armacost, Fargo, Kajouras, Rodriguez, Wester, Yale

Against:

Abstain:

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cori Verdino