

Pierson Library Board of Trustees Minutes

March 16, 2020 - 3:30 PM

Pierson Library, 2nd floor conference room and via Telephone

Attendees: Kevin Unrath (director), Barb Comeau (trustee), Alex Nalbach (future trustee) and Becky Jewett (future trustee)

Trustees: (via phone) Ruth Hagerman, Lisa Merrill, Laureen Mathon, Jane Ribolini, John Boscia, Charlotte Albers

Future Trustee: (via phone) Cate Cross

1. Call to Order at 3:33 pm
2. Approval of Agenda – Ruth moved to approve agenda, John seconded. Charlotte, John, Lisa, Jane, Laureen, Barb approved.
3. Public Comment - None
4. Library policy related to COVID-19 – Kevin met with Town officials this morning. Parks & Rec has cancelled all programs and meetings for foreseeable future. Should there be a massive outbreak, our library is well suited for coordination of 911 services (especially if dispatch office needs to close). Town approves of the draft response and would like us to act in concert with what they are doing. They agree with us closing library to people coming in. Ruth suggested that the library remain open by appointment as outlined in initial draft proposal. Discussion ensued as to pros and cons of this idea.

We discussed staff hours. Town policies regarding pay were discussed and full-time staff will continue to be eligible to take paid time off and receive financial support from the Town. 3 of 4 full-time staff members have school-aged children so will have coverage issues. Part-time staff members are willing to cover, which will be adequate for this proposal. Have projects for employees to do as well as working on pickup/drop off of materials.

Laureen moved to approve the Draft response to library closure due to coronavirus with the following edits: 1) Add “materials” after surfaces in paragraph #3, 2) Remove both references to home delivery in section regarding Pickup/Delivery 3) Remove line “We are sanitizing all books that are returned before circulating” because while we are making efforts to air out materials prior to shelving we cannot guarantee their cleansing 4) Add additional communication methods of Shelburne News, emails/e-newsletter. Barb seconds. Ruth voted No due to her concerns about the lack of private appointments being offered to Town residents, Lisa Laureen, Barb, Jane, John and Charlotte all voted Aye, motion passed. Final draft is copied below in these minutes. We will have this plan in place until next meeting.

Ruth left meeting at 4:05 pm

We discussed how long this draft proposal should remain in effect. Suggestion was made to meet again on March 30th which is one week prior to schools re-opening so that we can re-assess this plan and discuss next steps in this fluid situation. New trustees will not be appointed by Selectboard at that time, but we will continue to involve them in these meetings as non-voting members as their opinions are valued and should be included.

5. Next meeting, **March 30, 2020 at 3:30 pm**
6. Barb moved to adjourn meeting at 4:20 PM. Seconded by John. Motion approved by all remaining attendees. Ruth absent.

Pierson Library Coronavirus Response

The last week has been confusing and stressful for the Shelburne community, as we grapple with the rapidly changing information about the spread of coronavirus. It is no different at the library. Just a few days ago, the town cancelled all meetings, events and programs, and today the library board has made the decision to close the library to the public as well until it is deemed safe to re-open.

We are taking this action to limit exposure of our library patrons to the virus, as national and state experts recommend preemptive closure of gathering places can be effective in reducing or slowing the spread of this virus. Pierson Library's motto is *Learning, Gathering and Celebrating Community*, and it is the "gathering" part—normally such a strength—that in this case makes keeping our facility open a weakness.

While we have been doing everything we can to increase our disinfection of surfaces and materials at the library, we cannot guarantee that the virus will not spread through exposure at the library. Because the library attracts school children, visitors from out of town, the aging populace in town, and almost everyone in between, we are concerned that we are a likely place for the virus to spread from one group of people to another. As the director of the Craftsbury library recently wrote: "I watched many groups from differing sectors of our community cross paths in the library. Under normal circumstances, this is what makes the library a powerful force in the community, but yesterday this interaction was the piece that pushed me to reconsider the relative danger of remaining open."

What will this look like? Clearly one of the best things we can do right now is sink into an educational, enjoyable book or movie. Here are some things we will be doing to help Shelburne residents access materials:

Online resources: If you have already set up an account through the Pierson Library you can check out ebooks and audio books through <https://gmlc.overdrive.com/> If you haven't, you can request a log in from our staff at circ@shelburnevt.org . Please be patient, we may be getting more requests than usual! You can also get many older ebooks for free at <https://www.gutenberg.org/>.

Pick up: We are offering parking lot pickup of books and movies to Shelburne residents. Call (985-5124) or email (circ@shelburnevt.org) to ask for specific titles or ask us to pack up a selection of books or movies. We will develop regular pick up times soon. Please contact us to arrange a pick up time.

Free lending library: We will be setting up a free lending library at the South Entrance of the library (when weather allows) for people to select books from without checking them out. Feel free to pick one up!

Book returns: We encourage people to return books through the book return slot if you are healthy and able. Please don't worry if you are unable to get to the library; the library charges no fines and will not be enforcing any overdue restrictions as long as we are closed.

Wifi: Wifi will stay on and patrons can use our wifi from outside the building.

Communication: The library will maintain communication through our website, Front Porch Forum, Facebook page, Shelburne News, E-newsletter/Emails and postings at the library. We will update our phone message with vital information.

Please know that we are not taking this action lightly, and we are constantly monitoring recommendations and news. Librarians across the state are discussing best practices and exchanging ideas on how to meet the needs of our communities in this rapidly developing situation. We hope that before long we will look back on this time and wonder if we overreacted, but we do not want to look back on this time and regret having underreacted.