ERIE COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY
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Minutes

1. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 12:03pm.

Members Present: Bill Conway, Julie Boam, Kara Murphy, Liz Allen, Trevor Pearson, Jim DeHaven.
Members Absent: Felix Lohitai, Mary Ann Tempestini, Martha Knuth

Others Present: Alyssa Johnson, Andrew Miller, Blane Dessy, Mary Rennie, Shane Donaldson, Sheryl Thomas, Marcia Wilking, Deana Cooper, Peg Shenefelt.

2. Approval of Minutes – February 20, 2020
Minutes approved as electronically written.

3. Library Reports
  a. Introduce new board member Kara Murphy
  b. Report of Director

Blane reviewed the reopening plans of the library, as publicly released. Noted Blasco capacity will be limited to 150 people. REviewd the current status of grants that the library has applied for/ will be applying for: Yacht Club, Bookmobile funding, Keystone Planning Grant, and noted that ERLF has launched their fundraising efforts for the bookmobile replacement. Wifi capacity has been expanded at all ECPL locations to provide a much needed community access point while many providers have closed their doors. Mentioned that our recently furloughed clerical staff had been completed work on behalf of the US Census. ECPL is looking closely at the food service options that will be available for reopening.

  c. Review of Financial Report

Deana reviewed the current status of the library budget, as sent electronically which covers year-to-date through April 30th. At this point in a traditional year, the library should be at 33% expended budget, we are at 15%. However, revenue decreased by $17k in fines due to autorenewals and the closure. ECPL will not make our expected revenue for FY 2020. We are at about 32% to wages, the furlough savings will be reflected in the May budget report. Mary Rennie contributed that savings in wages and fringes are traditionally absorbed into the general fund. Marcia added that the state is not returning the waiver process for those failing to meet Local Financial Effort standards.

  d. Statistical and Other Reports
     • Reopening Plans—Sheryl Thomas

No statistical report available. Sheryl relayed that the digital materials naturally received a large increase due to the closure. In April 2020 there were 11,000 checkouts compared to just 6,500 checkouts in April 2019. We also saw an increase in unique users. A boon to our users and budget, Hoopla announced "Bonus Borrows" which allowed users to check out select additional items that would not count against the user's monthly limit,

and were available at no charge to the library. Select other digital materials providers also offered free trials and extended limits to library patrons, including World Book.

- Review of Supplies & Capacity—Deana Cooper

Deana discussed the status of supplies and building capacities in anticipation of the library's reopening. ECPL is working closely with the county's Purchasing and Operations departments so that materials are ordered effectively and efficiently.

- Youth Services after opening—Shane Donaldson

Shane shared the Youth Services Department's current dilemma of how to redefine programming virtually. He included a handout on Beanstack—a vendor ECPL is currently considering to facilitate virtual Summer Library Challenge offerings. Trevor added that he will send links for City of Learning tie-ins. The Friends of the Library are underwriting Beanstack at $4,000 per year since the library's programming budget will no longer be used for in-person activities.

- Adult Services after opening—Andrew Miller

Andrew updated with news that the Adult Services staff was able to do much from home to keep up with materials ordering, but the Tech Services department could not process remotely, thus we'll return to the library with a backlog of new items. He echoed Shane's input that we are thinking and trying to restructure programming to serve our patrons in a digital world. In 2020, ECPL has the following programming obligations respective to awarded grants: Lift Every Voice, WQLN Genealogy, ECGRA Beehive, Edinboro Concert Series, Edinboro's Art 100. All of these will need some sort of program to fulfill our obligation.

- Strategic Planning Process—Sheryl Thomas

Sheryl and Marcus are currently working to update the planning timeline, with a public survey currently posted. New timeline ends in November (originally planned for August), which means we will not make 2021 county budget timeline. Tentatively:

July: public forums via ZOOM
Aug: identify gaps and goals, create metrics
Sept: strategy development
Oct: wrap up plan draft
Nov: Ready to present to all parties and press

e. Report of District Consultant

Marcia provided an update on the state funding and guidance for reopening. Dates are currently being coordinated among PLEC and CCFLS. State will not require any library to resume full service until the respective county has entered the green phase. Funding wise, the state issued a bifurcated budget with 5 months funding currently and the remainder of the year TBD. We are anticipating flat funding to last year.

4. Board and Committee Reports

a. Report from County Council Liaison

b. Report of Friends and ERLF

5. Adjournment

6. Appendix

a. News Articles

The public library isn't just for bookworms - Erie Times-News (PA) - April 19, 2020 - page 46

April 19, 2020 | Erie Times-News (PA) | Page 46

As a portal to lifelong learning and creativity, the Erie County Public Library system can feed your brain, but it can also fill your belly, keep you fit and a whole lot more.

At press time, the library was closed due to COVID-19, but when it reopens, prepare yourself for great access to loads of free resources at any number of local library branches or from your own computer or mobile device. Here is just a smattering of what the libraries have to offer.

Find your roots

Genealogy, the study of family ancestry, is among the most popular and fastest-growing hobbies in the U.S. As genetic testing tools like 23andMe capitalize on the trend of family tree research, Erie County Public Library cardholders can dig up their ancestral roots for free. The Heritage Room at Blasco Memorial Library provides access to top genealogy search tools Ancestry.com and Heritage Quest; the military records database Fold3; and local history resources like high school yearbooks, historic maps and more. Visit the Heritage Room and librarians can help you get started researching your roots.

Plant your own roots

Library patrons can cultivate literal roots, using the seed libraries available at the Edinboro and Iroquois Avenue library branches. T hanks to a collaboration between ECPL and the Erie County Department of Health, patrons can check out and plant fruit and vegetable seeds, such as beans, corn, lettuce, radishes and cucumbers.

"We have a big gardening community in Edinboro," Randalee Gross, Edinboro branch manager, said. "We had 86 (seed) packets circulate last year, and this year I'm hoping for lots more."

Seeds from library patrons' harvests can be preserved and donated back to the library, keeping the seed library fresh and vibrant.

Borrow a fishing pole

Add some protein to those veggies when you check out a fishing pole and tackle box – and even a bait coupon, while supplies last. The local nonprofit fishing club S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie provides the fishing gear – available at the Blasco and Iroquois Avenue library branches – and keeps it in good working order, repairing and replacing poles as needed. Patrons can check out the poles and accessories for a week at a time.

Adults must have their own fishing license, whereas children don't need one, as long as they're assisted by an adult.

Enjoy some virtual learning that's fun

Getting back to nature on land and sea is enriching, and so are lots of virtual learning experiences, especially for the youngest library patrons.

Tablets preloaded with educational apps teach pre-K and elementary children about animals, basic math concepts and more. The tablets come with their own charger and are great for keeping little ones engaged on a long haul – like a weeklong family road trip – or just a jaunt to the grocery store. Like all the resources named here, they are available free of charge to library cardholders.

T rack some words for kids

You might use a fitbit or other fitness tracker to keep tabs on your physical activity. But Starling wearables, available from the library, track users' verbal activity. These cute (and drool-proof!) clipon devices track how many words, and what kinds of words, a baby or toddler is exposed to throughout the day. A corresponding app provides tips for improving children's vocabulary and allows users to set daily word goals and view progress over time. Check one out to set your little Einstein on the right track.

Take up the challenge of video games

For older kids, the library circulates about 100 video games for Nintendo (Wii, Wii U, 3DS and Switch), Xbox (Xbox 360 and Xbox One) and PlayStation (3 and 4). They are rated E (appropriate for

everyone), E 10+ (for everyone ages 10 and up), or T (appropriate for teens).

And they pack an educational punch.

Andrew Miller, adult services manager at Blasco Library, explained that gamers develop problem solving

and decision-making skills while following complex story arcs. The American Psychological Association has indicated that playing video games can sharpen cognitive skills like spatial navigation, reasoning, memory and perception. And games can help build reading comprehension, as reluctant readers may be more inclined to read on-screen instructions and back stories if they are excited about the game they're playing.

There are social, emotional and health benefits, too. Friends and family socialize while playing together; video games can relieve stress, especially for children who struggle with emotional challenges; and video games that use a motion sensor, like the Xbox Kinect, encourage exercise.

Get a free pass

Get in some extra steps as a tourist in your own town. Free family passes to the Erie Art Museum and Erie Maritime Museum are available at most local library branches.

Or travel to far flung locales with a Book Club in a Bag. Ten copies of the same book make it easy to coordinate a literary escape with nine of your bookworm besties.

For the solo escapist, Playaways are a great option. These MP3 players are preloaded with an audio book.

Pop in a AAA battery, plug in your headphones and you're off to wherever your favorite author takes you.

"I use (Playaways) if I'm running in a 5K or working in the yard," Gross said. "We probably have 60 titles at Edinboro (Branch Library). And some of the independent libraries we share resources with have them as well. T here's a good mix of some classics and more contemporary books."

Borrow a hotspot

While the tablets, Playaways and many library-supported apps can be used without an internet connection, the library branches also lend out Wi-Fi hot spots, allowing patrons to gain home internet access for up to 10 days at a time.

"I think it's not something people think about when they think about libraries," Gross said. "But it really helps close that digital divide."

Cruise through the virtual branch

About 10 different devices can access the web using one of the hot spots, which may open up a world of exploration, learning and self-improvement for everyone in the household, especially when paired with the library's suite of databases.

These dozens of databases – known collectively as a "virtual branch" of the library – are extremely powerful, comprehensive search and teaching tools that you can access anywhere there's an internet connection, using just your library card. Any of the databases would normally cost a pretty penny, but they are paid for by the library for the benefit of the public.

To find them, follow the quick-link at www.erielibrary.org, or select "e-databases" under the "services" tab.

Library staff named the databases they recommend most often:

Overdrive and Libby offer access to a massive library of e-books and audio books.

Novelist recommends your next read, based on your favorite book, author or genre.

"I might not read the same genre as a patron," Gross said. But using Novelist "really helps you find the next book that you're gonna love."

It's also handy for parents and teachers, providing Lexile numbers to match readers with material that's appropriate for their age and reading level.

BookFlicks and TrueFlicks allow younger kids to watch a video and engage with visual content related to a book. These two apps will also read to the child, or highlight words as the child reads, and they both offer resources for teachers, too.

Consumer Reports is the handy companion to the popular magazine of the same name. Get

reviews and ratings of virtually every popular consumer product under the sun, before you buy. Or use the database to identify which magazine edition the item was reviewed in, and the library can procure that edition if it isn't already in-house.

A few of the databases are especially useful for students. The Testing Resource Center offers help preparing for ACT, PSAT, SAT, LSAT, MCAT and other standardized tests. A scholarship search tool does exactly what it sounds like. And Gale Academic accesses tons of scholarly journal articles, book excerpts and magazine articles. It's easy to filter information, and the database will even pull up style citations, making bibliography-writing a breeze.

For lifelong learners who've left the classroom, there's Universal Classes, which offers more than 500 online classes on just about everything from crafting to history to computer classes to bookkeeping. A real person grades the homework and the tests of participants, and some classes offer continuing education credits.

"There are other people who are taking the classes, too," Gross said. "So it really creates that classroom type environment."

Another great way to expand your social horizons is through language learning. It not only keeps your mind sharp or preps you for a dream destination, but it can also actually change the way you think, revealing the perspectives of other cultures. The Transparent Languages database offers more than 100 languages, and users can learn in English or in almost any other language.

All of these databases are "pretty easy to navigate, and pretty intuitive," Gross said. But for help getting started, it can't hurt to reserve one-on-one time with a librarian.

"I think it's amazing to see a spark of passion occur when someone is loving a program and really engaging," Gross said. "One of my favorite parts of being a librarian in general is having the opportunity to help people. This is something I am able to do every day that I come in to work."

Start your lifelong learning today

These are just some of the thousands of opportunities the library offers to connect to a community of learners.

Including regular programs in the Teen Space and Idea Lab at Blasco library, "we offered over 1,800 programs in the library system last year," Miller said. "From story time for babies to insurance scam seminars for seniors and every age in between."

If you haven't visited your local branch in a while, dust off that library card, log on and explore. You might be surprised what you learn.

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"The public library isn't just for bookworms." Erie Times-News (PA), ELE ed., sec. PA Features, 19 Apr. 2020, p. 46. NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current, infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/17A6FFBF3ABD75D8. Accessed 20 Apr. 2020.

TV Segments:
https://www.goerie.com/news/20200226/minerva-statue-being-restored-at-eriersquos-blasco-library

https://www.yourerie.com/news/local-news/minerva-statue-being-restored-at-the-blasco-library/

Great American Book Sale canceled - By Madeleine - Erie Times-News
(PA) - April 23, 2020 - page 6

April 23, 2020 | Erie Times-News (PA) | Erie Times-News | Page 6

The beloved Great American Book Sale is the latest big Erie event to be canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The massive book sale, which was set to run from June 14 to June 19, will not take place this year.

The Friends of the Erie County Public Library decided to cancel at their board meeting on Monday, said Peg Shenefelt, the group's president.

The Great American Book Sale features tens of thousands of books and other media, which are generally sold for $1 or 50 cents. The proceeds help fund programming at the county's public libraries.

This would have been the sale's third year at its new location, the McDowell Intermediate High School Commons.

Shenefelt said it would be too difficult to postpone the 2020 sale until later in the year.

"We need so much help to pull that off," she said. "It takes us over 100 people to put that together."

The Friends of the Erie County Public Library will try to host smaller sales at the Blasco Library later in the year, she said.

Contact Madeleine O'Neill at moneill@timesnews.com. Follow her on Twitter @ETNoneill.

WiFi Access Expanded at All Erie County Public Library Locations

The WiFi network at each library location can now be accessed from anywhere in the library's parking lot or within approximately 100 feet of the buildings.

Friday, May 1st 2020, 4:52 PM EDT
Updated:
Friday, May 1st 2020, 4:53 PM EDT

WiFi reach at all Erie County Public Library locations has been expanded.

Even before the closure of library facilities due to the COVID-19 outbreak, patrons of the library system had consistently ranked WiFi login and internet lab usage as one of the system's most valuable services.

Now, as the COVID-19 pandemic keeps the library system closed, expanded WiFi will enable the library to continue to offer the service, even though in-person computer labs are unavailable.

The WiFi network at each Erie County Public Library location can now be accessed from anywhere in the library's parking lot or within approximately 100 feet of the buildings.

The increased WiFi accessibility came at a time when Erie County residents are most in need of access.

"We hope this service will benefit the many residents needing free internet access," said Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper.

Dahlkemper also reminds patrons to observe proper COVID-19 social distancing guidelines. She asks users to keep a distance of at least six feet from others and to wear a mask to protect others. She says the guidelines will be enforced.

https://www.erienewsnow.com/story/42080474/wifi-access-expanded-at-all-erie-county-public-library-locations

Erie County Courthouse Preparing for June 1 Opening Date

Erie County Courthouse taking steps to make building safe for full reopening to the public on June 1.

Monday, May 18th 2020, 7:02 PM EDT
Updated: Monday, May 18th 2020, 9:34 PM EDT
By **Lisa Adams**

The halls of the Erie County Courthouse have been empty in recent weeks, but come June 1, life in county government will begin inching back toward normal.

Sheriff's deputies who handle security are already wearing masks, and hand sanitizing stations have been installed at the entrances of the courthouse and throughout the building.

According to director of administration Gary Lee, about 35% of the county work force will be on the job every day, back in their offices.

If they face the public though, there will be glass partitions for protection. Crews were at work installing them on Monday.

Masks will be a must for anyone who enters the building.

The county is looking at systems for checking temperatures too.

The plan is for 34% of the courthouse staff to work on rotating schedules, so work spaces will meet social distance requirements.

The county has found that about 23% of the staff, some 280 employees will continue to work from home. "There are just some particular functions that require that you are here on site at the courthouse," Gary Lee said, "but other functions that you can do remotely, so the department leaders are responsible for determining that mix and making sure that the outcomes are met."

About 100 county employees were furloughed because of COVID-19, most of those at the Erie County Public Library, the rest dotted across the staff. Lee said the county expects to reopen the library June 1 for staff and people returning items. Curbside service is expected to start June 15.

https://www.erienewsnow.com/story/42143747/erie-county-courthouse-preparing-for-june-1-opening-date

MEDIA RELEASE

COUNTY OF ERIE
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Erie County expands Wi-Fi reach at all Erie County Public Library locations

Erie, PA – County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper, in partnership with Erick Friedman, director of IT for Erie County, and Erie County Public Library announce the expansion of the reach of Wi-Fi networks at all Erie County Public Library locations. This move will help increase accessibility to the internet at a time when Erie County residents are most in need of access.

Wi-Fi logins and internet lab usage ranked consistently high in Erie County Public Library's statistics before the closure.

"For many patrons, our free public Wi-Fi is the library's most valuable service," said Sheryl Thomas, assistant director of Erie County Public Library. "Though ECPL is not able to offer in-person computer labs, we can now offer expanded access to Wi-Fi even while the library facilities are closed."

Seeking to provide this essential service to patrons, library administration brought the idea to expand Wi-Fi offerings to the county's IT department who sourced the necessary equipment, installed it at each library location, and completed setup for a May 1 start date.

"Implementing this project on short notice and with scarce equipment in the marketplace was a tremendous team effort between resourceful local vendors, an amazing facilities department and our world class IT team," Friedman said.

The Wi-Fi network at each Erie County Public Library location may now be accessed from anywhere in the library's parking lot or within approximately 100 feet from the buildings.

"We hope this service will benefit the many residents needing free internet access," Dahlkemper said, "but it is imperative that patrons observe proper protocol while using this free service to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Keeping a distance of at least 6 feet from other users and wearing a mask to protect others in the area will be enforced."

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