

## MINUTES

### PARK RIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

20 S. Prospect Avenue, Park Ridge, IL 60068

Planning and Operations Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Board of Trustees  
held via videoconference – March 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

President Rapisand explained that the Library Board was meeting via videoconference and stated that she authorized the Board to meet remotely as per Illinois Public Act 101-0640 which, among other matters, amends Section 7 of the Open Meetings Act to allow meetings of members of a public body subject to the Act to occur without a quorum being physically present at the meeting due to COVID-19.

#### ROLL CALL

Trustees Present: Lauren Rapisand, President; Karen Burkum, Vice-President; David Somheil, Secretary;  
(via videoconference) Stevan Dobrilovic, Treasurer; Alexandra Hanba; Josh Kiem; Michael Reardon; Joseph Steinfels; Deepika Thiagarajan

Others Present: Angela Berger, Interim Library Director; Alyson Doubek, Library Finance Manager; Charlie Melidosian, Alderman, City of Park Ridge.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

#### CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Steinfels called the Planning and Operations Committee meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Trustee Hanba made a

**MOTION:** to approve the minutes of February 9, 2021

Committee Chair Steinfels seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Burkum, Dobrilovic, Hanba, Kiem, Rapisand, Reardon, Somheil, Steinfels, Thiagarajan

**Motion passed.**

#### Fine Free Trial Patron Survey

Interim Director Berger reviewed draft patron survey developed by staff with regard to the Fine Free Trial program. The survey was directed at getting feedback on patron experience with trial, and in soliciting opinions on adopting the model going forward. She expressed concern with the timing and with how representative the data gather would be, given that the Library was closed for part of the time the trial was in place.

President Rapisand reviewed the questions and thought they were well written and would lead the Board to the information they are hoping to obtain. She is very interested to see the answers to number 4 – haven't used library since November 2020. She thought Question 6 was most important question – would you support the library eliminating fines by using the account block model. She asked about breaking it into 2 questions – yes or no and why. That will be huge indicator of truly what the public feels.

Trustee Reardon stated there was an issue missing that he was concerned about. He stated that it appears from the data collected thus far during the trial that materials are coming back later because of fine free. Theoretically people have to wait longer for items on reserve. Do people know that because of the fine free model they may have to wait longer for materials? President Rapisand suggested that maybe that was not a survey question but question for staff. How many hold materials are immediately checked out again? Trustee Reardon said he was trying to get at something different. He wants to be sure people are aware that they may have to wait longer for materials due to the fine free policy. President Rapisand said that was an assumption, we should determine first if that is actually the case.

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Committee Chair Steinfels said we don't know enough to take output and turn it into input. Do we want to make a decision at this point and ask questions based on assumption or is there enough data in to move ahead? President Rapisand said that if we have concerns, we should verify before we imply that in a survey.

Interim Director Berger said that currently, there are many other factors that could explain a delay in returning materials. The building was closed, COVID-19, usage is down, quarantine period. She didn't think that the survey should be used to determine patron's perception as to delays in receiving materials.

Treasurer Dobrilovic said he thinks Trustee Reardon and President Rapisand raise good points that need to be included in the survey.

Trustee Thiagarajan agreed with President Rapisand, that there was a need to prove that there is causative relationship before we put it in survey. She also asked if there is any value to having demographic data tied to the survey. Interim Director Berger said she shared Trustee Thiagarajan's thoughts regarding the addition of demographic data. It is something that can be done.

Vice President Burkum likes the idea of including demographic data. She does not think this is the best time to be doing survey – it's such an unusual time. The Library is closed, quarantine of books; she would personally like to postpone or extend the trial after we are back to normal and then do survey.

Treasurer Dobrilovic in reviewing the survey asked if it was necessary to include question 1 – Since November 1 has your account been blocked as result of not returning book? Isn't this data we can get. We know how many accounts have been blocked – why are we asking? He was unclear as to what Question 3 was asking – has account block system kept you from using library – prevented you from getting book when you wanted book.

Trustee Hanba said the Board decided to move forward with 6-month trial even though they knew things would be off because of COVID-19. As of April 30, are we going to extend this so? Do we can know what fine free trial would actually look like? Do we have what we need to have a conversation about going fine free permanently? She doesn't think it's a good idea to send survey out at this time.

Trustee Kiem said the survey not be the end all for decision. We will have additional data that reflects the performance of the library in the key performance indicators of book turnover and statistics. What the survey is trying to get is community input about their experience with the block model. Even if everyone loves it, it may not be right answer when we go to look at the data.

President Rapisand does not have problem with continuing trial until we have accurate view of what data looks like for the average patron. She was one of the people who wanted to do the trial, she felt it was important to do, especially in time of uncertainty, she wanted to make things easier for patrons not to worry about fines. She feels that it would be important to continue the trial until we have data the Board feels comfortable with in making this decision. She feels there is still a lot of uncertainty, people are still dealing with a lot of change. She thinks fine free policy would be a positive at this time.

Committee Chair Steinfels asked about adding anecdotal questions – have you noticed a delay in materials you wanted? It is better to tweak the questions to get information we are trying to find. Any data we get now will have huge question marks looming over it. There is still validity in pulling in information, but it is difficult to extricate all

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the issues that are impacting use, blockage of accounts, fines. The issue before the committee tonight is the survey; at a future P & O the Board could discuss extending the trial.

Vice President Burkum asked if there was there value in completing survey while in COVID – then extend the trial and do the survey 6 months after everything is open to compare?

Trustee Reardon wonders if there is reason to do survey at this point? He supports getting good data – good data only comes after we are completely open and COVID is behind us and we can compare to pre-covid data we have on file. He thinks survey talk is premature; best to wait until we are back open, people are back to normal life, using library the way they always did. Ask them – we did this during COVID, how do you feel about it without COVID?

President Rapisand - If we say we are going to extend the trial, wait until life is back to “normal.” We can’t yo yo people around. If we are going to wait to get more data, we have to stay fine free. She wants to be clear, and make sure people feel comfortable with extending fine free until we can get more data.

The Board discussed the length of the deadline.

Trustee Kiem made a motion to extend the account block model until 6 months after the board starts to meet in person again. He suggested that tabling the survey at this point is a good idea.

Trustee Reardon said the Board can always extend the account block trial. The Board is all in agreement that they don’t want to yo yo people around. How long will we be fine free with block model until we have enough data.

Trustee Reardon made a

**MOTION:** Extend fine free block model trial period until the end of September 2021

Trustee Kiem seconded the motion.

President Rapisand asked if it makes more sense to extend through SY21, then the Library will be on calendar year budget. Does it make sense to align with the new budget?

Trustee Hanba suggested extending until Oct 31 – then the program would be in place for 12 months and would have 12 months of data. Amend motion to extend fine free trial through October 31, 2021

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Burkum, Dobrilovic, Hanba, Kiem, Rapisand, Reardon, Somheil, Steinfels, Thiagarajan  
Motion passed.

Committee Chair Steinfels clarified that the purpose of extending the block account trial was due to the uncertainties tied to any data because we don’t have solid data on which to make a long term decision.

Committee Chair Steinfels further clarified that the board is opting to forgo conducting the survey at this time, deferring it as the survey data would not be useful at this time. The Board concurred.

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.