

Director's Report – Tricia Perry
Westwood Public Library
7 April 2020



Trustees Meeting – and 21st Century Fund Meetings Postponed

At the present time, we have cancelled the meeting of both the Trustees and the 21st Century Fund that were originally scheduled for April; and are waiting on further instructions and information in terms of proceeding with our May meetings; as per the advice given by Pat Ahearn, Town Counsel. suggested that Boards and Committees delay meetings, if the meetings are not absolutely necessary. Pat Ahearn did communicate with all town departments that If meetings are conducted remotely, the recommendation is that the meeting be recorded in its entirety, with the recording posted immediately following the meeting on the Town's Website. At this time, Chair Paul Fitzgerald has determined that the April meeting be cancelled as the agenda did not include any critical time-sensitive items.

At this time the Library and all town departments and schools remain closed to the public until May 4th.

Town Meeting Elections and Town Meeting are being postponed until June 2nd and June 8th respectively.

Staffing: Adult Services / Reference Librarian Position

Erin McGrady joined our staff on Monday, March 23rd. At that time, we had closed our building to the public but were staffing with skeletal staff still working in the building. Erin did come to Westwood that day, but since that time has been working remotely from home. Molly and I have been in touch with her throughout the closure, and she is working on the development of programs and projects under Molly's direction.

Shirley DeFeo officially retired from the Library in February 2020. In her own words, she is "giving up her wonderful job at the Westwood Public Library." Shirley will be missed by all of the staff, and patrons as well; but we wish her all the best as she retires after 22 years of exceptional, friendly, and gracious service to the many users of the Main and Branch Libraries; in most cases, greeting lifelong friends by name!

Yesterday (4/6/2020) we hosted a virtual "All Staff Meeting" on Zoom; and Erin was one of the 26 attendees. So, individuals were able to check in and catch up with one another – at least via their devices.

We will be continuing these virtual staff meetings on a regular basis (probably every two weeks) as we move forward into late April and potentially beyond. We are closed at least through May 4th, in tandem with the schools. But that date is somewhat fluid; as is everything these days!

Programming:

Virtual Bookgroups and Storytimes: Childrens' Staff have been creating and posting virtual storytimes for several weeks now. We were able to create a business model Zoom Account for the Library, with the assistance of the IT Department and the Town Administrator. This allows us to schedule storytimes, bookgroups, Thursday morning knitting groups and other virtual events without running into conflicts with other scheduled programs or conference calls that are being held in every department throughout the town. We are in the process of updating website and other media to provide more information about how and when to access the virtual options.

All other in-house on site programming has been cancelled through the end of April, and we will make a determination about May and beyond as we move through the month.

Budget:

The Finance Committee met on March 23rd, for the public hearing and finalization of the FY21 Warrant for the upcoming Town Meeting. There will be a town department heads meeting on Thursday of this week, with the budget being one of the items on the list for discussion. I will share any new information that we receive at that time with you all.

Islington Branch Library

Weekly progress and review meetings with architect (Mike McKay), Owner's Project Manager and town staff are continuing with remote participation. The foundation work is still proceeding; at this time about half of the foundation has been poured; and there are discussions between the parties concerned as to next steps for the remaining foundation work. Bid documents for the General Contractor bids have been finalized and the plan is to release the request for bids with revised documentation in the near future. The time frame for the project has been extended, as the delay in foundation work and the need to go out a second time for the GC bids are definitely pushing back the projected completion date.

At this time, the MMO has closed down entirely for the rest of the year. And with all town departments working remotely at this time, there is no activity at the ICC. In terms of next steps, the results of the GC Bid Process will dictate the schedule and outlook as we move forward.

The weekly conference calls are held on Thursday afternoons. And if additional information becomes available, I'll share that with you all as soon as possible.

Time Capsule Planning – on hold for present time.

Technology:

Library Hot spots were made available to the Westwood High School for use by students who did not have internet access. These were in addition to the options available through the school.

Digital Content

In early March, I asked all staff to discontinue ordering of any physical content, pending updates on duration of potential closure due to Covid 19 Pandemic. At this time, digital resources have taken first priority, and we have added a "Cost per Circ" option for several titles to allow for increased simultaneous use and accessibility of titles on Overdrive.

The schools were interested in adding Mango access (world languages database) and initially we thought we would need to provide individual access, but I worked with Theresa Fisher (HS Librarian) and World Languages staff to allow them full access to a complimentary educational subscription for the remainder of the school year, which allows the teachers to monitor the students' progress individually.

Staff are collaborating with all of the schools to provide enhanced digital resources; including access to the 8th Grade ELA list of required reading, and the Historical Fiction options for the High School.

We anticipate a large increase in our Kanopy and Hoopla usage – as well as in our Libby (Overdrive) and database access. So for the moment, staff have been encouraged to create carts for physical books or materials, but not to order anything other than digital content for now.

A Westwood Reads Together (Separately) book initiative is underway. The book title was selected and work was underway, with a rollout fast approaching, when Norwood Library announced that they were doing a similar program with the same book! So, more to come on that as discussions with staff continue on best way to proceed.