

**Missoula Public Library**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**  
**November 25, 2020**  
**6:00**  
**ZOOM online meeting**

**ORDER** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 by Vice Chair, Audra Loyal

**ROLL CALL** Members present were: Audra Loyal, Margaret Wafstet, Becky Mosbacher, Forrest Boughner, Carol Wolfe, and Honore Bray. Barbara Berens was excused.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Karl Olson – MPL Foundation

**CITIZEN COMMENTS ON ANYTHING NOT INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA**

Karl Olson read a request from the Foundation concerning Library Tours in January.

**REQUEST**

The Library Foundation is making a special request that the Board of Trustees approve and on some level participate in planning a program of new building tours to begin in January.

Our request is based on the following principles and assumptions:

- COVID-19 generates **uncertainty**. If infection rates climb too high, our community might lock down. If the rates drop, life might go back to something closer to normal, where people can freely gather in public spaces. The likelihood of these scenarios is uncertain.
- The most likely scenario** is the one we experience now: for several months we might continue to live in what County health officers call a "partial re-opening." Currently, indoor events are allowed 25 socially distanced people; indoor spaces are allowed 50% of capacity.
- While the pandemic presents an ongoing challenge, at this point we're becoming highly skilled at **contingency planning**, and have the data to "game out" scenarios. Plan A, Plan B, Plan C, etc. should be in place and can be shifted to as needed.
- Your primary **two-fold priority** is (1) the health and safety of Library staff, to (2) ensure that staff can safely continue providing curbside lending and other no-contact services and virtual programs. MPL is doing a phenomenal job at this "frontline" task.
- But as Library ambassadors, we have **additional concerns**. There is community sentiment and a growing reaction to the possibility of long-term barred access to the new building. This sentiment is outside concerns about access to materials and services.
- The building campaign and transition is part of a **longer narrative arc**. Today's circumstances will impact the Library and its partners well into the future, after many of us are no longer involved, and should be weighed along with immediate needs.
- The building is expected to be finished by the **end of December**, have its certificates, and turned over by DAC to MPL. At that time, it will

be the safe, spacious facility it is intended to be, with great air circulation—but, on the current trajectory, largely empty. With these assumptions and principles in mind, we're making the following request:

1. Beginning January, we're asking that the community have access to discrete and highly controlled tours of the new building; with tours continuing until the building is fully open to the public.
2. Tours would be open to anyone interested, promoted by the Library and its boards, and would be registered for in advance via Eventbrite. They would not be "open calls."
3. Each tour would have a small cap on the number of participants, and require proper mask-wearing, social distancing, good hygiene. No food, drink, lounging or mingling.
4. Each tour would adhere to a strict schedule (one hour should be sufficient), and would take place only in the Library's off hours: there would be minimal or no staff-guest overlap.
5. Tour guides could be drawn from administrators, members of MPL's three boards, and perhaps if there is interest, senior staff or senior volunteers. Guides would maintain COVID compliance.
6. Tour frequency would be determined by MPL/Trustees, depending in part on availability of a guides, the building schedule, and County Health directives. A minimum two tours per month is ideal.
7. Tours would only take place if the building is mostly finished, accessible, and safe for use; and if allowable under the County's COVID-19 directives at that time.

I'd like to share three additional points:

#### RISK

This request is in no way an attempt to circumvent the County's COVID-19 directives and guidelines. Nor is it suggesting that the health and wellbeing of our library community be de-prioritized. Each one of us is located somewhere on a spectrum of risk tolerance and aversion, and most of us are probably in the same general range.

But it is increasingly difficult to justify **zero** public access to the new building when most people are able to: spend an hour in Costco shopping with a large number of strangers; join other visitors and wander through the Missoula Art Museum (up to 25 at a time); or reserve a private viewing of Radius Gallery's current exhibit with the gallery's staff.

Providing this opportunity does not preclude robust risk management.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

I envision tours as a project/program taken on by a partnership of MPL's Trustees, Foundation, and Friends. In communities with new or unique spaces to share with their public, it's typical for a Library's ambassadors to be the primary driver behind the program. Volunteer leaders are excellent docents, and have a particular pride and nuanced story to tell that both largely overlaps and is somewhat different from the staff's (both are good, both are necessary). And during the pandemic, it seems more advisable to

not add a tour program to the staff's workload. That said, if interested staff *could* participate, I would personally welcome that.

#### **BENEFITS**

While there are details to carefully consider, and obvious constraints, I believe that ultimately the benefits of making this opportunity available to our friends and neighbors far outweigh detractions or uncertainties. Even with a number of limits in place, as suggested in the request, community members who have invested their funds and advocacy in the new building would appreciate that we made an effort to honor their investment in a well-planned, timely, and welcoming manner. In my estimation, it would only amplify a community sense of pride and goodwill, which would in turn serve us well the next time the Library asks the public for support.

Thank you for considering this request. The Library Foundation looks forward to your response and discussing it further if need be.

Karl Olson

**MINUTES , 2020 meeting** – October 28, Becky Mosbacher made a motion to accept the minutes. Forrest Boughner second the motion. Motion carried.

**CITIZENS COMMENTS – None**

**CLAIMS** – October, 2020 Margaret Wafstet made a motion to accept the claims as presented. Second by Becky Mosbacher, motion carried.

**CITIZENS COMMENTS – None**

**STATISTICS** – Discussion took place

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Honore Bray presented the 2021 Calendar following the Federal Holiday Calendar from HR with the additional closed days for the Library. Discussion took place concerning the calendar.

Curb Service is going well. The entire staff is helping to allow this to happen. With the staff divided into ½ the people working each day it is necessary for all staff to help with the effort. Many great comments are being shared by the public who are grateful for the service.

The State Library has purchased many hot spots for public libraries using LSTA money that was available due to so many other program cancellations during 2020. They are very popular with users at MPL.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Building Project** Honore Bray reported that there are still many punch list items that are not finished at this time. The front doors are not complete. The monumental stair case treads are complete but the right side of the stairs is still waiting to be completed. This is important before opening the library. The Montana Room doors are still incomplete, as well as many other interior doors. Two sets of shelving are still expected. The anchors

are in the floor so once they are built they will be anchored and ready for the items waiting to be shelved. There are many other little items that are being attended to by the subcontractors.

**Opening to the Public:** This is tabled until the December meeting.

**OTHER OLD BUSINESS:**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**2021 Calendar:** Forrest Boughner made a motion to accept the 2021 Library Calendar. Seconded by Becky Mosbacher. Motion carried.

**December 2020 meeting:** December 30, 6:00 on zoom

**Join Zoom meeting**

Topic: Trustees December meeting

Time: Dec 30, 2020 06:00 PM Mountain Time (US and Canada)

<https://zoom.us/j/94324209717?pwd=cFl0RnpRbWU4OGl0UjVsL3k3MEtFZz09>

Meeting ID: 943 2420 9717

Passcode: 568568

One tap mobile

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**ADJOURNMENT**

Respectfully submitted by:

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Honore D. Bray, Director

Date

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Barbara Berens, Chair of the Trustees

Date