AGENDA
Board of Library Commissioners
of the City of Grand Rapids
April 28, 2020 – 5:15 pm
Virtual Board Meeting*

"Inspiring opportunity, connection, and innovation."

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comments on Agenda Items
3. Approval of Minutes of the
   a. Regular Board Meeting on February 18, 2020 (enclosed)
   b. Special Board Meeting on March 14, 2020 (enclosed)
4. Board Comments
5. Committee Reports
6. Library Director’s Report (enclosed)
7. Old Business
8. New Business
   a. Discuss Postponing Library Director’s Evaluation
9. Information Items
10. Grand Rapids Employees Independent Union
11. Agenda Items for Regular Board Meeting: May 26, 2020
12. Public Comments
13. Adjournment

*Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-15
Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids

Regular Meeting Agenda Calendar

January
· Attendance Record from Previous Year (E)
· BoLC Policy Manual Approval (A)
· Voluntary Commitment to Serve (E)
· Budget Information Review (E)
· Review of Committee Assignments

February
· ALA Midwinter Conference Report
· Budget Approval (A)
· Election of Board Officers (A)
· Foundation Board Appointment by Board President
· Director Evaluation Documents (E)

March
· Service Awards

April
· Director Evaluation [Special Meeting]

May

June
· Service Awards
· Professional Development and Travel Opportunities for Next Fiscal Year (E)

July
· ALA Annual Conference Reports

August
· Security Update (E)
· Facilities Update

September
· Service Awards
· Summer Reading Program Evaluation (E)
· Year End Financial Report (E)

October

November
· Policy Review Committee Update

December
· Service Awards
· Approval of Meeting Schedule (A)
· Closing Calendar (A)
· BoLC Policy Manual Updates (E)

Committee Meeting Calendar

January
· GRPL Foundation Representatives
· Nominating Committee for Board Officers

February

March

April
· GRPL Foundation Representatives

May

June
· GRPL Foundation Representatives

July

August
· GRPL Foundation Representatives

September

October
· Budget Review Committee
· Policy Review Committee

November

December
· GRPL Foundation Representatives
MINUTES
BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS
OF THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS
February 18, 2020 – 5:15 pm
111 Library Street NE – Board Room

Sparks called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.

1. **ROLL CALL**

   Board Members Present: Rachel Anderson, Deborah Bose, Kelly Boston, James Botts, Sophia Brewer, Kathryn Dilley, Kent Sparks

   Board Members Absent:

   Administration Present: Robert Adcock, Amy Cochran, Kristen Krueger-Corrado, John McNaughton, Rebecca Near, Briana Trudell, Patrick Beatty

   Staff Present: Jen Vander Heide

   Public Present: Dan Poortenga, GRPLF

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

   No comments.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

   MOTION: By Commissioner Botts, supported by Commissioner Bose, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of January 28, 2020.

   Dilley asked that the committees be added to each agenda.

   **ACTION: AYES 7 – 0**

   Motion passed.

4. **BOARD COMMENTS**

   Anderson commended staff for all the work they did for and at Taste of Soul Sunday.

   Botts told the board that he, former BoLC Caralee Witteveen-Lane, and McNaughton have been working with Sergeant Steven Steele of the Kent County Jail to help provide quality books for those in the jail. Botts added that the group has also connected with Kent District Library because he feels it is a good opportunity for collaboration between the two systems. McNaughton stated that KDL’s outreach coordinator offered insight regarding this opportunity with the jails. He continued that there are a lot of moving parts in this project. He added that he and GRPL staff came to a conclusion to keep gaining more information to find the most responsible way to provide those in jail access to a library. Sparks asked the director to look into it more and bring a suggestion to the board.

5. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

   No comments.
6. STAFF & FOUNDATION REPORTS

A. Library Director’s Report

McNaughton told the board that they’ve added a “Notes from the Director” section in addition to the “Staff Highlights.” He added he and staff are still working together to come up with the best way to report monthly updates with the board.

McNaughton showed the board a rough draft of a possible dashboard to show the progress of the Strategic Framework Initiatives. Krueger-Corrado then explained further about the tool to the board and shared staff’s aspirations for the dashboard.

McNaughton stated that he will provide the board with a write up that is a snapshot of what he does day-to-day for his evaluation. He said that he will continue to work on this with Sparks and will send it to the board next month.

He then gave the board members the library’s mobile library lookbooks. He added that the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation Board will be passing these out to donors to help raise funds at the White Glove event.

McNaughton gave the board a document that explained the scope of the work for the replacement of the HVAC system. He asked the board to review it and get back with him with any questions.

B. Financial Report

No comments.

C. Foundation Update

Poortenga stated that GRPLF has been supporting Taste of Soul Sunday for many years and he was able to be the greeter this year. He added that he appreciates the energy each year.

Sparks thanked Poortenga for the foundation’s support of the event.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. FY2021 Budget Approval

MOTION: By Commissioner Botts, supported by Commissioner Anderson, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve the FY21 budget proposal and fee schedule, effective February 18, 2020.

Boston inquired about the GRHSC $30/hour charge. Near replied that it is for the time staff provide for extensive research.

ACTION: AYES 7 – 0

Motion passed.

B. Fine-free Discussion

MOTION: By Commissioner Anderson, supported by Commissioner Botts, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve that GRPL go fine-free for all materials.
Sparks asked when will this take effect. McNaughton replied that they plan to roll it out to the public on March 18.

**ACTION: AYES 7 – 0**

Motion passed.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

   A. **Director Evaluation Documents Review**

      Sparks explained that this is a new approach for evaluating the director. He asked the board to get familiar with the evaluation tool and come to him with questions. McNaughton stated that he’s looking forward to this structure and he’s happy this is in place.

      Bose asked if the rubric was attached to any of the goals. McNaughton stated that he’ll take his goals and tie them into his documents that will be provided to the board. Sparks added that the documents McNaughton will provide will help to aid in his evaluation.

      The board then discussed the documents to better understand the review process.

      Boston asked if there is a way to gather staff feedback about McNaughton. Sparks asked if there was something that could be done to collect this data. McNaughton stated that he's not opposed to the board talking to staff. Brewer added that the board asked for staff feedback during the hiring process and that it only makes sense to ask their feedback for his evaluation.

      Anderson suggested that the board continue to do his evaluation as planned this year and to do more research on how to gather staff feedback for the next time. The board then created an ad-hoc committee for the director’s review. Sparks appointed Anderson, Botts, and Brewer with the goal of obtaining staff feedback for McNaughton’s review in 2021.

9. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

   A. **Media Index**

      Botts commented that he appreciates the Media Index.

   B. **Statistical Report for January 2020**

      No comments.

   C. **Staff Changes Report**

      Anderson commented that she likes the stat updates. Sparks added that the library should consider adding additional genders for staff to use in the HR system.

   D. **Board & Administrator, February 2020**

      No comments.

   E. **Tax Abatement**

      No comments.

10. **GRAND RAPIDS EMPLOYEES INDEPENDENT UNION**

    No comments.
11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR REGULAR BOARD MEETING: MARCH 31, 2020
   PLA Report

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS
   No comments.

13. ADJOURNMENT
   No comments.

Meeting adjourned at 5:54 pm.
1. **ROLL CALL**

   Board Members Present: Rachel Anderson, Deborah Bose, Kelly Boston, James Botts, Sophia Brewer, Kathryn Dilley, Kent Sparks

   Board Members Absent:

   Administration Present: Robert Adcock, Jason Hendrix, John McNaughton, Briana Trudell

   Staff Present:

   Public Present:

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

   No comments.

3. **DIRECTOR’S UPDATES ON COVID-19 AND LIBRARY RESPONSE**

   McNaughton told the board that he met with the Management Team and talked about different scenarios regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. The result of that meeting was to ask high-risk staff to go home and then to come up with tasks for the rest of the staff. He stated that so far, it’s been a smooth transition.

   He also told the board about the meetings that he attended with the City of Grand Rapids regarding the virus, essential services, travel, and commissioner meetings. He informed them that the City is working on contingency plans and that they are supportive of the library closure.

   He told the board that he appreciated that they were taking these steps in advance to minimize the outbreak cases in the community. He requested that the board support the library closure indefinitely as he feels the pandemic may not be over before the schools reopen on April 6.

   Sparks commended McNaughton on his efforts, keeping in contact with him, and keeping the board in the loop.

   Bose asked what things are we going to do behind the scenes. McNaughton replied that the library has many orders coming in and they will continue to be processed. Hendrix added that the Management Team created a list of tasks that would engage all levels of staff during the closure.

   The board and McNaughton then discussed what the library will be doing to lessen the negative impact of the library being closed to the public including providing phone references, increasing limits on digital items, asking patrons to hold on to physical materials without fines, and giving patrons and staff information on where people experiencing need can find services.

   Dilley asked about cleaning in the library. McNaughton replied that the library staff have been regularly sanitizing all tables, door knobs, railing, etc. multiple times a day. He added that the Maintenance staff will be doing a complete cleaning of all library locations.
4. LIBRARY CLOSURE

MOTION: By Commissioner Botts, supported by Commissioner Anderson, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids agree to close all Grand Rapids Public Library locations for the foreseeable future and to reopen upon the Library Director's recommendation.

ACTION: AYES 7 – 0

Motion passed.

5. EMPLOYEE SICK LEAVE AND/OR EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION DURING CLOSURE

MOTION: By Commissioner Anderson, supported by Commissioner Botts, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve to provide staff regular compensation and/or supplementary paid leave to support them and public safety for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anderson asked the library how they will handle staff who are sick and out of sick leave time. Hendrix stated that the library has created a new category for this occasion that will allow all staff who are sick to stay home without pulling from their current sick time leave banks. Anderson then asked if we’ll have a process in place for people to work from home. Hendrix replied that the library has a procedure in place. Sparks asked if there was a cap for emergency sick hours. Hendrix replied that there is not yet and it's something that may be reassessed further down the road.

Brewer asked McNaughton what intel he and Sparks used to decide to close the library. McNaughton replied that he had been watching the CDCand Kent County Health Department's websites, and he had talked closely with other leaders in the area, including the City Manager. He continued that he also looked at the trends of what was happening in other cities. With the amount of people that enter the library’s doors daily, the library could play a role in the spread of the virus, and as the leader of the organization, he felt that we would be betraying the trust of the public if the library were to remain open.

Brewer asked McNaughton to provide the board with a list of three to five reasons why the library is closed and what criteria, including sources, needs to be met in order for the library to reopen. They may provide this information to their constituents when asked.

Sparks asked that McNaughton communicate plans to the board well in advance of the next steps that the library is taking in the pandemic. McNaughton replied that he will communicate information to the board every step of the way.

ACTION: AYES 7 – 0

Motion passed.

Anderson asked if the City is taking the same steps as the library. McNaughton replied that they are not and that he’s very grateful for the board's support during this pandemic.

6. BOLC REGULAR BOARD MEETING ON TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2020 DISCUSSION

Sparks stated it would be prudent to cancel the meeting and that they could push everything on the agenda to the next month. He added that the board will still receive the director's evaluation documents.

The board talked about cancelling the March meeting and the possibility of calling a special meeting if there is a chance of reopening when the schools reopen.
MOTION: By Commissioner Bose, supported by Commissioner Botts, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids agree to cancel the Tuesday, March 31, 2020 meeting.

ACTION: AYES 7 – 0

Motion passed.

Sparks told the board that there will be no financial impact during the closure and thanked Adcock for his work.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments.

8. ADJOURNMENT

No comments.

Meeting adjourned at 9:39 am.
Communications [Kristen Krueger-Corrado]

I like to tell my staff, “Well, at least our jobs are never boring.” And true to form, this past month has been one of the most challenging for us to date. With the library’s physical buildings closed, the Communications team sprung into action. We’ve been making sure that the most up-to-date information is available on our website and social media channels, sharing content about our digital resources, and working with all departments to get virtual programming off the ground. Internally, we developed and implemented a crisis communication plan for clear and timely communication to staff.

Our daily tasks involve collecting all the information that is coming from different departments, making it visually engaging, releasing it to the public, and responding to any feedback we receive. Two of our largest projects in the past month have included the launch of the eCard with Customer Service, and the launch of the COVID-19 story collection project with Grand Rapids History and Special Collections. Both projects garnered a significant amount of media attention, and we learned how to coordinate virtual media interviews to accommodate their requests.

With programming teams moving their events to a virtual platform, we assembled a Virtual Programming Task Force to develop best practices in the back end of online programs. We also created a Virtual Programming Play Book to help internal and external presenters record high quality material for us to share.

Customer Service / Circulation [Jen Vander Heide]

The Customer Service Team has been keeping busy despite the closure of GRPL buildings. As of April 13, while working remotely, staff have answered 84 customer service calls, 166 emails, and issued 390 eCards. The response from patrons to these services has been overwhelmingly positive:

- “I am old school like that so I was happy to hear a real voice when I called!”
- “Wonderful!! Thank you so much!! Your resources and services are SO appreciated!!”
- “YAAAAAAAAAAAYY Thank you for your responsiveness. SUCH a great decision and I appreciate it!”
- “Thank you so much!! It is GREATLY appreciated! Truly grateful for your flexibility while we try to fight this virus together as a community. I am looking forward to reading and exploring new hobbies at home during this time of social distancing.”
- “I appreciate all you do to keep us connected to books, movies, etc. during this period of social distancing. You rock!”

The Customer Service team has also engaged in over eight hours of meetings about how to adapt material handling, checkout stations, and service desks when the library reopens, along with developing plans for potential new services such as curbside pick-up.

Finally, members of the Customer Service Team have also been actively engaging in learning opportunities while working remotely, including participating in the following webinars:

- Mitigating COVID-19 When Managing Paper-Based, Circulating, and Other Types of Collections (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Managing Change and Disruption in Our Evolving Reality (Tim Creasey from Prosci, Beth Montag-Schmaltz from 71 and Change, and Daryl Conner from Conner Partners)
- Moving Beyond the Current Crisis: A Plan to Re-open Our Communities (Richard Florida and International City/County Management Association)
- Midwest Collaborative for Library Services’ Weekly Dialogues
Collection Services [Rebecca Near]
Collection Services has remained busy at home adding digital content to OverDrive. The collection development librarians are frequently monitoring holds lists on electronic items and staff are keeping a close eye on patron requests. MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloging) records are still being added to Evergreen remotely to allow patrons to find wanted items quickly through BiblioCore.

Staff are also creating lists in BiblioCore of available electronic items on various topics including “Love Shouldn’t Hurt” and “Armchair Travel” as well as highlighting poetry titles for National Poetry Month.

We are also exploring the ability to do Book Clubs and Books by the Stack titles electronically. We’ve highlighted titles that we have been able to purchase several copies of and have a simultaneous use license.

We’re working with GRPS to give their students access to our overdrive materials through their SORA program. Students without library cards and the means of getting one would be able to access GRPL’s OverDrive titles and check them out by using their student IDs. We have filled out the necessary paperwork and are waiting for Grand Rapids Public Schools to fill out theirs and return it to OverDrive.

Grand Rapids History and Special Collections [Julie Tabberer]
Our priority so far in this new environment is to figure out how we can document what people in our community are experiencing right now. Working closely with Communications, we launched a project to collect stories through a Google Form. Over 60 people have responded and are sharing openly and thoughtfully, telling us their personal stories and highlighting challenges as well as positive moments. We are sharing quotes on our website and through social media and have done several media interviews. We hope for this project to be helpful to our community both now and in future generations.

We are also actively collecting websites and social media through our partnership with Archive-It (through the Internet Archive). They are extremely supportive of public libraries and increased our data budget to make the project possible. So far, we’ve captured over 100 different websites, including news, nonprofits, local politicians, local government, and neighborhoods.

Information Systems [Bill Ott]
We were very fortunate that in the fall and winter of 2019, most managers had been issued laptops. Early in 2020, branch managers had begun transitioning to working solely from a mobile workstation. Little did we know that this would be true for most full-time staff through March and April. In conjunction with equipment purchased through the Junior Achievement grants in 2018 and 2019, we were in an excellent position to have staff work remotely. I've joked that our Strategic Framework tasked us with working outside our walls, and we've fully embraced that.

The first days of the shutdown were a flurry of activity, preparing laptops for VPN connections, planning for external connection loads that we never intended, and trying new software for remote collaboration. A VPN is a Virtual Private Network that allows secure outside access to our internal network that isn't normally available on the Internet.

Staff in all positions were fabulous at adapting and finding creative ways to keep connected.

Our day-to-day has plenty of projects to focus on as departments continue to come up with ideas for reaching patrons virtually. Our work on anything that doesn't require specialty equipment has continued normally. USF forms are still due, although their deadlines were pushed back. USF, Universal Service Fund or commonly called eRate, is a tax levied by the Federal Communications Commission on all telecommunication services. This fund is paid to schools and libraries.

Adult Services [Jeanessa Smith]
The Adult Services team felt the impact of COVID-19 right away in the work that we had planned over the next few months. Our programs and services were severely affected by the library closure and we quickly regrouped and turned our focus onto meeting the needs of our patrons from a distance. We have continued to field reference and BiblioCore support calls and emails throughout the past four weeks. We have also taken on the conversion of our in-person programs and services into a digital format.

Katie Broderick has worked to secure Music in the Stacks performances virtually through social media. Steve Assarian has continued to offer business consultations over the phone and via videoconference. Andrew Coulon has worked to
convert our computer classes into a digital format and to take this opportunity to overhaul computer programming in future seasons. Both Steve and Andrew have worked in conjunction with Amy Cochran to create an economic recovery resource guide for the City Manager’s Office. Jeanessa Smith has worked with the department programming team to move summer programs to a digital format, including moving GR Reads to a weekly online program and to brainstorm ideas for how we can be nimble in our approach to future programs.

Additionally, our Library Assistants have produced trivia and social media engagement content that has been shared with Communications for future social media posts. They have also taken this time to build up our BiblioCore reader’s advisory lists.

**Youth Services [Jessica Anne Bratt]**

Youth Services is working to find intentional and thoughtful ways to support our community during this difficult time. Betsy Zandstra is working on curating a digital resource list of storytime read alouds, play and activities to do at home, virtual field trips (including Check-It-Out institutions), and how to talk to children about Coronavirus. This is to be posted on GRPL’s website. She is also working on a parent-child engagement series called I Feel Like… This content will be posted to social media and will provide GRPL with accessible eBooks, parent tips, and activities to do with kids 0-8 years old dealing with various emotions (especially feelings that may arise because of the current health crisis).

Youth Services is out and about virtually contacting community partners (Head Start of Kent County, ELNC, Great Start Collaborative, GRPS LOOP, and other partners) to see if GRPL can fit into helping them find solutions during the pandemic closures.

Our new elementary librarian, Loa Abreu, is working on Database Virtual Programming “how to” videos in both English and Spanish to help navigate our resources for the rest of the school year’s remote learning. She is also part of the committee helping to plan a virtual program for GRPS LOOP after school program for the summer.

Osvaldo Perez Rios has been working very closely with the Communications department on transferring and/or restructuring our Teen Summer Reading Challenge programming into a new virtual format. We are trying to create programming where tweens/teens can engage with the community, friends, and family in a virtual setting to socialize and share experiences during the COVID-19 crisis. This is a partnership with Cheryl Blackington from the Grand Rapids Center of Mindfulness and Teens Just Breathe to design a series of virtual workshops to help our parents and young patrons cope with the changes of this pandemic. A test run of these virtual formats will happen mid-late April.

In addition, Osvaldo is the lead for Comic Geek Out, part of the GR Reads committee. This will now be a virtual Facebook event with various activities and presentations from local to non-local authors for our patrons to experience. The GR Reads team is motivated to make sure we show our community that we are an adaptable and resilient institution, without having to cancel our well known events.

Jessica Anne Bratt, along with Amy Cochran, have been working with a variety of community partners to revise our in-person Storytime in the Parks model for this summer. This new model would bring a sense of safety to the community without a Coronavirus vaccine, and will still provide support for reading in areas where digital access may not be equitable. Jessica is also working closely with GRPS LOOP to provide weekly summer programming to four sites: Burton, East Leonard, Sibley, and Brookside, which will include a middle school summer program.

**North Region Branches [Kelly Karr]**

The management of the branches in the North Region are working with the Communications department on ways for the Grand Rapids Public Library to reach out to local Neighborhood Organizations during Michigan's Stay-at-Home Order. The goal of this project is to utilize staff who are stationed at locations throughout the city and maintain our relationships with community partners as their needs change due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The group is still in the planning phase of the project, and is currently identifying the priority talking points so that a consistent message is disseminated to the community.

Athena Williams has joined GRPL as the Branch Operations Manager in the North Region. Athena will be overseeing the work of the Circulation and Page staff at the Van Belkum, West Leonard, West Side, and Yankee Clipper branches. Kelly Karr, Jen Vander Heide, and Amy Cochran have taken the lead roles in coordinating Athena’s training remotely, and have created virtual materials to help Athena learn about GRPL’s organizational structure, management expectations, and circulation procedures.
Throughout portions of March and April, the management of the branches in the North Region have attended a number of online professional development opportunities. In hopes of gleaning some useful information for GRPL’s reopening efforts, Kelly Karr has been attending the Public Library Association’s Public Libraries Responds to COVID-19 webinar series. To support her facilitation of Strategic Framework Initiative Workgroup 4, Andrea Cosier has been attending online courses that focus on fundraising techniques. As leader of a Strategic Framework Initiative Workgroup 1 sub-committee, Liz Sterling has been researching the role of Social Work in libraries. In response to the needs of frequent patron groups at the Van Belkum Branch, Bridget Ward attended a webinar on how to use restorative practices with teenagers in a library setting. The managers have been meeting weekly to discuss what they’ve been learning through these independent research projects.

South Region Branches [Zandra Blake]

In this time when the library buildings are closed, our community partners have been at the forefront of our minds. Madison Perian has been working to track our partnerships in the South Region. With input from South Region staff, we created a document outlining where our partners are, when we have last checked in on them, and who we want to reach in the future. We hope that this will allow us to better create, build, and maintain our partner relationships. Madison also reached out to our partners in the schools by offering support and detailing the resources that are available to our patrons while we are closed. We have received positive feedback from these organizations, and are especially excited that Mulick Park Elementary will be doing a short Facebook post series about GRPL’s resources that are relevant to their families.

South Region staff have been meeting twice a week during the library’s closure to remain connected. We have also been using this time for staff across the region to get to know each other through team-building icebreakers. These meetings are something we have all come to look forward to, giving us time to laugh, decompress, share, and learn together.

Staff Submitted Stories

Colleen Alles helped a patron who was interested in the WWI Women’s Defense Cards. Colleen provided background on the collection and brought her a box that contained the patron’s mother’s registration card. The patron was overjoyed to be holding her mother’s card and became a little emotional as she learned some information about her mother she hadn’t known. She was then interested in looking up a few other women and was even more excited to learn the collection is fully digitized. She was so thrilled by her experience that on her way out the door, she asked to speak to a supervisor, letting Meghan Pitsch know what a great experience she had. A few days later, Colleen received a thank you note in the mail. As we work with our collections every day, this patron’s experience is a nice reminder of the joy our archival collections can bring to the community.

A patron visited GRPL several times throughout February and early March after relocating from another county. She asked for assistance with housing, transportation, and cash. Staff attempted several times to help connect her to resources with only limited success because the patron is banned from several local shelters and service providers. There were multiple instances of her becoming agitated and calling staff derogatory names during the visits, which eventually resulted in needing to ban her from returning for a period of time. During the visit just prior to the ban being issued, staff attempted to facilitate a connection with mental health services based on information the patron disclosed in conversation. She came to the library on March 3 and was accompanied by a social worker from an agency providing mental health services. Staff engaged her in conversation, provided the banning letter, and explained the reason for the ban. The patron refused to take the banning letter but the social worker asked her if she could take the letter on her behalf and the patron agreed. Later that week, the social worker called to thank GRPL for the empathetic and tactful way staff interacted with the patron.

The day GRPL announced that we would be closing our doors for the COVID-19 pandemic was a strange and hard one for our staff. Luckily for us, we saw an outpouring of love and support from the patrons that we see come through the doors each and every day at the Ottawa Hills Branch. One patron, after hearing the news, had tears in her eyes as she told us how important the library was for her daily routine and asked, "What will I do without you?" We reassured her that although we had to close our doors for now, our staff would still be only a phone call or email away. She thanked staff for everything that the library provides each and every day for her, and said that she’d be the first one back through the doors when we reopen. Family after family poured into the branch saying, “We came as quickly as we could! We can’t be home without books!” They left with armloads of picture and chapter books to keep their kids reading during the quarantine. By the end of the day, stacks were toppling over on the shelves and displays were dismantled and nearly empty. It was the most heart-warming and hopeful reminder that in times of need, people come to the library for books and for community.
Shortly after we shut the library down, I was at the store and overheard a customer talking to the cashier about the library being closed. They were ruminating on whether or not it was true, so I piped up and let them know that we were closed until further notice. The customer said they regretted not being able to check out books before we shut our doors. I told him we still had a ton of eBooks and eAudiobooks to check out. The customer behind me said she had overdue books and asked if she could still return them. I told her she could, but didn’t have to; due dates are being extended. I then mentioned how I planned on using this time to learn Spanish and told them about Mango Languages. The customer in front of me said he didn’t know the library had something like that, so I told him to look at our website under “Databases and Articles” to find a whole bunch of resources to learn new things, specifically highlighting Mango Languages, Lynda, and Kanopy.

A 10 year old came into the Youth Services department at the Main Library with his dad and they spent an hour looking up books in BiblioCore, finding them on the shelf, and then repeating the process. It was great to see them working together.

Since last fall, the Van Belkum Branch has been partnering with The DAAC (Division Avenue Arts Collective) on an after school program for kids on Tuesdays. The primary target of this program are the teens and middle school kids who come in daily after school. At the last session, Charity Klein-Lytle, our DAAC representative, came to the branch and helped the kids create DIY slime. This became one of the most popular art programs and we had over a dozen kids participate.

A few months ago, the Ottawa Hills branch gained a new regular patron. When the patron first came to the library, he needed help using the mouse and keyboard at a computer station to access his email account. With encouraging help from staff, he started coming in to practice more and more on his own. He is now enrolled in an online class that he navigates almost independently. He told staff that he’s learned more from practicing his computer skills at the library than he ever did in training classes.

Maranda from WOTV/WOOD TV visited a 5th grade classroom at Shawmut Hills Elementary to talk with the students about the One Book, One City for Kids selection *Harbor Me* by Jacqueline Woodson. The students have been working on projects related to the themes in the book in preparation for the author’s visit at the end of March.

GRPL patrons now have access to a huge selection of digital magazines. Recorded Books (RBdigital) recently changed their digital magazine pricing model to a yearly flat fee for unlimited access to their entire collection of titles. It was exciting to review usage statistics for February. Not only did our patrons check out popular titles through RBdigital like *The New Yorker*, *Cooks Illustrated*, and *The Economist*, but they also took a deeper dive into the newly added content with titles such as *Architectural Digest India*, *BBC History Magazine*, and *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*. 