

DIGHTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES
June 17, 2020
1:00 PM

Due to the increasing concern surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic, this meeting was open to the public through the Zoom Conferencing platform. A recording of the meeting was aired on Comcast Local TV 9 and posted on the Town of Dighton YouTube Channel. It can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IU_WQaoduA

Call to Order at 1:07

Council on Aging: Tom Ferry, James DeArruda, Jeff Allie, Council on Aging Executive Director Alice Souza
Board of Selectmen: Dr. Brett Zografos, Nancy Goulart, Kenneth Pacheco, Executive Assistant Karin Brady
Pandemic Reopening Task Force: Town Administrator Mallory Aronstein, Health Agent Todd Pilling, Chief Christopher Maguy, Building Inspector James Aguiar
Library: Trustee Chair Ron O'Connor, Library Director Jocelyn Tavares

The Town Administrator prefaced the meeting by explaining that the Prime Time program and the Library were the town's most public of services offered and faced different obstacles that other departments faced during the covid crisis. Prime Time is unable to offer their specific services to their population within current state guidelines. The library is currently offering curbside pickup and digital offerings within state guidelines, but their physical building limits future phased service offerings.

Joint Meeting with Council on Aging Board of Directors, Board of Selectmen, Pandemic Reopening Task Force to discuss:

1. Prime Time Program: The Executive Director of Prime Time stressed that she was committed to have Prime Time running again when it was safe and allowed to operate. Clients were interested in returning to the program. Specific concerns with clientele that made it difficult to operate in a digital fashion was dementia issues. Mr. Ferry mentioned that the Council on Aging were still providing its services and counseling and needed to continue to do so. Massachusetts guidelines dictate that Prime Time's services are not permissible until Phase Four.
2. Library Services: Currently is offering curbside services, which is what state guidelines allow at this stage. The library has been receiving inquires from the public about computer availability and passports. People are looking for in-person services. The library will advocate for those residents who need those services.
3. Potential move of library services due to concerns of building: Much of this discussion focused on providing town services as safely as possible under current state guidelines. At this stage and phase, it is 25% occupancy.

The Prime Time building is vacant right now, with the exception of employees. There is no end in sight for this scenario. The Pandemic Reopening Task Force thought because the Prime Time building may be vacant for at least 3 – 6 months, the library could temporarily operate out of that location for 3 – 6 months. Questions arising from this: Does Prime Time need to occupy this building? Can it move to another location? The Executive Director of the Council on Aging stressed that Prime Time programming dictates the need for the entire building space.

The occupancy at current allowable levels at Prime Time is 9. The library is 2. The difference is because of the open square footage, multiple rooms and multiple floors, and other aspects of the floor plan.

Also discussed is the types of library services that would potentially be offered at Prime Time. It would be Internet services, one on one patron service. The Library Director indicated it is unknown exactly what could be offered: it would depend on what could fit in that space. Moving into a new space would invoke ADA and may impact what collections could move, spacing for shelving.

The Town Administrator mentioned that of all the available town-owned spaces, Prime Time worked out the best and made the most sense. Also considered was the Upper Level of Old Town Hall, but that would also be a meeting space; the Pavilion, but that is weather permitting; the Lower Level of Town Hall, but that would be undergoing renovations shortly.

Selectmen's comments: Selectman Goulart believed the Prime Time building could be used, but she had concerns about any perceived improvements to the library's facilities would hurt the library's chances about building a new library. The need is for a new library.

Selectman Zografos didn't feel ready to vote on this now. He raised concerns about not knowing the long-term plans of Prime Time, funding for any plans and the library not having a long-term home.

Selectman Pacheco agreed with both board members. He would prefer to see a long-term plan for Prime Time. He would prefer to see library operations moved to the second floor of Old Town Hall.

The Town Administrator asked about moving Prime Time to Lincoln Village, 300 Lincoln Avenue, where the Council on Aging was operating from. Executive Director of Council on Aging reported it was not big enough and residents of Lincoln Village have the first right of that space.

The rest of the meeting was a discussion of the logistics about what was needed to provide Internet at any of the possible locations and how to pay for this.

There would be a continuation at the June 24 Board of Selectman meeting.

Adjournment