

**Belleville Area District Library Board
Regular Meeting Agenda
September 8, 2020 at 7:30 PM**

Please note that the Belleville Area District Library Board will hold a virtual meeting due to the COVID-19 closure. This is in compliance with the Governor's Executive Orders regarding remote public meetings.

Instructions to join the RingCentral Teleconference:

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android:

<https://meetings.ringcentral.com/j/1488605607?pwd=U0pyQ1pGYU1Ea1B2M1VEWkxmanZnUT09>

Password: 025501

Or iPhone one-tap :

[+1\(773\)2319226,,1488605607#](tel:+1(773)2319226,,1488605607#) (US North)

[+1\(312\)2630281,,1488605607#](tel:+1(312)2630281,,1488605607#)

Or Telephone:

[+1\(773\)2319226](tel:+1(773)2319226) (US North)

[+1\(312\)2630281](tel:+1(312)2630281)

Meeting ID: [148 860 5607](#)

Agenda:

1. Roll Call: Cichewicz, Dawson, Hughes-Grubbs, Juriga, Peters, Priest, Stoudemire
2. Approve Agenda (Roll call vote)
3. Approve August 11, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes (Roll call vote)
4. Public Comments
5. Approve resolutions authorizing millages to the December 2020 tax bill (Roll call vote)
6. Committee Reports
 - A. Building-Cichewicz
 - B. Bylaws-Juriga
 - C. Finance-Stoudemire
 - D. Marketing-Hughes-Grubbs
 - E. Personnel-Priest
 - F. Policy-Dawson
7. Approve Accounts Payable (Roll call vote)
8. Director's Report/Comments/Communications
9. Trustee Comments
10. Chair Comments
11. Adjournment (Roll call vote)

Next Regular BADL Board Meeting: October 13, 2020 at 7:30 PM

Any citizen wishing to provide input or ask questions about any agenda item may speak during the meeting's Public Comments section or forward comments to the Library Director in advance by leaving a message at 734-699-3291 or via the Contact Us link at www.belleville.lib.mi.us.

Any citizen requesting accommodation to attend this meeting may contact the library at least 24 hours prior to the meeting, using the above contact information.

**Belleville Area District Library
Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2020**

Chair Sharon Peters called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm via Ring Central teleconference.

1. Roll Call

The following persons were present: Joy Cichewicz, Mary Jane Dawson, Alma Hughes-Grubbs, Sharon Peters, Linda Priest, and Tanya Stoudemire. Absent and Excused: John Juriga. Also present: Library Director Mary Jo Suchy and Assistant Director Hilary Savage.

2. Approve Agenda

Motion by Stoudemire to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Priest. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Cichewicz, Dawson, Hughes-Grubbs, Peters, Priest, and Stoudemire. Nays: None. The motion carried unanimously.

- 3. Approve July 14, 2020 minutes.** Motion by Dawson, seconded by Stoudemire to approve the July 14, 2020 minutes as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Cichewicz, Dawson, Hughes-Grubbs, Peters, Priest, and Stoudemire. Nays: None. The motion carried unanimously.

- 4. Public Comments:** None.

5. Committee Reports

A. Building: O'Neal Construction gave the committee an update to the contingency fund numbers. The storm water retention system is being repositioned in order to work around the DTE pole relocation project. The poles will most likely be relocated to the traffic islands in the parking lot instead of to the opposite side of the alley as originally envisioned. As a COVID mitigation strategy, the library's ventilation system has been set to run in 24/7 mode.

B. Bylaws: No report.

C. Finance: No report.

D. Marketing: No report.

E. Personnel: No report.

F. Policy: No report.

- 6. Approve Accounts Payable:** Motion by Stoudemire, seconded by Dawson, to approve the accounts payable as presented. A roll call vote was taken: Ayes: Cichewicz, Dawson, Hughes-Grubbs, Peters, Priest, and Stoudemire. Nays: None. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Director's Report: See attached. Curbside service continues and Grab and Go service began at the end of July. With Grab and Go, patrons may browse the collections on the first floor and children's room. In order to maintain the required 25% occupancy limit, the library is asking patrons to limit their visits to a half hour. A comprehensive plan to open the 2nd floor, the branch, and provide computer access is underway.

8. Trustee Comments:

Cichewicz – Gave a shout out to the staff for working together to create an opening plan that they are comfortable with and that works with the Executive Orders.

Dawson – Reported that the Atchinson family, a major donor to the library's Legacy campaign, is looking forward to seeing the inside of the library.

Stoudemire – Mary Jo gave her a copy of the budget. She noted that the library is fiscally sound and that she will get with Mary Jo to discuss further.

Priest – Was in the library to pick up a hold and was happy to be back in the building.

Hughes Grubbs – Wished the Jurigas a happy anniversary and hoped that everyone stays safe.

9. Chair Comments:

Peters – Missed not having John here to move to adjourn the meeting.

10. Adjournment:

Motion by Priest, seconded by Stoudemire, to adjourn. A roll call vote was taken:

Ayes: Cichewicz, Dawson, Hughes-Grubbs, Peters, Priest, and Stoudemire. Nays:

None. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm.

BELLEVILLE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY LEVY #1
RESOLUTION NO. 2020- 02

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE DISTRICT LIBRARY TAX LEVY

WHEREAS, by agreement effective March 1, 2010, the Belleville Area District Library was established in accordance with the District Library Establishment Act, 1989 PA 24, MCL 397.171 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the District Library Establishment Act, a proposed millage in the amount of 7/10 per thousand of taxable value, was placed upon the Ballot for consideration by registered voters of the District on November 2, 2010; and

WHEREAS, the voters of the District approved a 7/10 operating millage for the District Library by vote on November 2, 2010, certified by the Wayne County Clerk's Office on November 19, 2010; and

WHEREAS, to provide for the financial operations of the Library, the District Library Board has determined that a levy of 7/10 of a mill shall be placed on the tax bills beginning December 1, 2010 and shall continue to appear on said tax bills thereafter until January 1, 2022.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Belleville Area District Library hereby resolves that there be levied on the taxable property within the Library District for the year 2020 included on the tax bill for December 1, 2020 for operational purposes a tax of 7/10 of a mill, reduced by MCL 211.34d (Headlee) to 6.896/10 of a mill, on the 2020 taxable value as thereof (real and personal property) said value being \$99,752,258.00 in taxable value for

the City of Belleville, \$357,073,990.00 in taxable value in the Township of Sumpter and \$1,122,120,927.00 in taxable value in the Township of Van Buren, for a total taxable value on all properties of \$1,578,947,175.00 and the total tax in the amount of \$1,088,842.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Belleville Area District Library hereby directs that the Chairperson and the Secretary of the Belleville Area District Library Board execute all necessary documents and file copies with the County of Wayne and each municipality comprising the District.

MOTION:

SECOND:

YEAS:

NAYES:

ABSENT:

VOTE:

Belleville Area District Library
Secretary

Belleville Area District Library
Chairperson

Agenda Date: September 8, 2209

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Belleville Area District Library, at its regular meeting held on September 8, 2020.

Belleville Area District Library
Secretary

BELLEVILLE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY WINTER TAX LEVY #2
RESOLUTION NO. 2020 – 03

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE DISTRICT LIBRARY TAX LEVY

WHEREAS, by agreement effective March 1, 2010, the Belleville Area District Library was established in accordance with the District Library Establishment Act, 1989 PA 24, MCL 397.171 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the District Library Establishment Act, a proposed millage in the amount of 7.5/10 per thousand of taxable value, was placed upon the Ballot for consideration by registered voters of the District on November 8, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the voters of the District approved a 7.5/10 operating millage for the District Library by vote on November 8, 2016, certified by the Wayne County Clerk's Office on November 22, 2016; and

WHEREAS, to provide for the financial operations of the Library, the District Library Board has determined that a levy of 7.5/10 of a mill shall be placed on the tax bills beginning December 1, 2017 and shall continue to appear on said tax bills thereafter until January 1, 2037.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Belleville Area District Library hereby resolves that there be levied on the taxable property within the Library District for the year 2020 included on the tax bill for December 1, 2020 for operational purposes a tax of 7.5/10 of a mill, reduced by MCL 211.34d (Headlee) to 7.388/10 of a mill, on the 2020 taxable value as thereof (real and personal property) said value being \$99,752,258.00 in taxable value for

the City of Belleville, \$357,073,990.00 in taxable value in the Township of Sumpter and \$1,122,120,927.00 in taxable value in the Township of Van Buren, for a total taxable value on all properties of \$1,578,947,175.00 and the total tax in the amount of \$1,166,526.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Belleville Area District Library hereby directs that the Chairperson and the Secretary of the Belleville Area District Library Board execute all necessary documents and file copies with the County of Wayne and each municipality comprising the District.

MOTION:

SECOND:

YEAS:

NAYES:

ABSENT:

VOTE:

Belleville Area District Library
Secretary

Belleville Area District Library
Chairperson

Agenda Date: September 8, 2020

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Belleville Area District Library, at its regular meeting held on September 8, 2020.

Belleville Area District Library
Secretary

BELLEVILLE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY WINTER TAX LEVY #3
RESOLUTION NO. 2020 – 04

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE DISTRICT LIBRARY TAX LEVY

WHEREAS, by agreement effective March 1, 2010, the Belleville Area District Library was established in accordance with the District Library Establishment Act, 1989 PA 24, MCL 397.171 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the District Library Financing Act, 1988 PA 265, MCL 397.281 et seq., a bonding proposition to borrow the sum of not to exceed Fourteen Million Dollars (\$14,000,000) for the purpose of constructing, furnishing, and equipping a new building for library purposes; constructing renovations to an existing building for library purposes; and acquiring, developing and approving sites for library buildings, was placed upon the Ballot for consideration by registered voters of the District on November 8, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the voters of the District approved a millage to be levied for the payment of 20 year general obligation unlimited tax bonds for the District Library by vote on November 8, 2016, certified by the Wayne County Clerk's Office on November 22, 2016; and

WHEREAS, to make its bond payments for 2020, the District Library Board has determined that a levy of 6.2/10 of a mill shall be placed on the December 1, 2020 tax bill.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Belleville Area District Library hereby resolves that there be levied on the taxable property within the Library District for the year 2020 included on the tax bill for December 1, 2020 for bond

repayment purposes a tax of 6.2/10 of a mill on the 2020 taxable value as thereof (real and personal property) said value being \$99,752,258.00 in taxable value for the City of Belleville, \$357,073,990.00 in taxable value in the Township of Sumpter and \$1,122,120,927.00 in taxable value in the Township of Van Buren, for a total taxable value on all properties of \$1,578,947,175.00 and the total tax in the amount of \$978,947.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Belleville Area District Library hereby directs that the Chairperson and the Secretary of the Belleville Area District Library Board execute all necessary documents and file copies with the County of Wayne and each municipality comprising the District.

MOTION:

SECOND:

YEAS:

NAYES:

ABSENT:

VOTE:

Belleville Area District Library
Secretary

Belleville Area District Library
Chairperson

Agenda Date: September 8, 2020

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Belleville Area District Library, at its regular meeting held on September 10, 2020.

Belleville Area District Library
Secretary

CHECK REGISTER REPORT

Belleville Area District Library

Date: 09/02/2020

Time: 11:53 AM

Page: 1

Operating

Check Date	Vendor	Check Description	Amount
08/11/2020	ALERUS FINANCIAL	Retirement Employer	2,805.60
08/11/2020	CAROL JOHNSON	Reimburse for postage	35.00
08/11/2020	CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY	Newspapers on Microfilm 2019	395.00
08/11/2020	CHASE CARDMEMBER SERVICE	Office/Bldg Supplies	236.36
08/11/2020	DTE ENERGY	Sumpter Branch	2,702.39
08/11/2020	GEORGE KELLY	Computer Equipment	197.77
08/11/2020	OFFICE DEPOT	Office Supplies	494.18
08/11/2020	THE LIBRARY NETWORK	Telephone Service	4,486.37
08/11/2020	TILDON DICKENS	Refund on Faxes	26.00
08/11/2020	UNIFIRST CORP	Bldg Maintenance	63.91
08/11/2020	VANTAGEPOINT TRANSFER AGENTS	Deferred Comp Plan	380.00
08/11/2020	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF MI, INC	Waste Disposal	80.10
08/25/2020	A PRODUCTION BUILDING SOLUTION	Janitorial Services	2,550.00
08/25/2020	ALERUS FINANCIAL	Retirement Employee Cont	2,805.60
08/25/2020	APPLIED IMAGING	Copier/printer usage	205.79
08/25/2020	BAKER & TAYLOR	Books & Materials	1,367.78
08/25/2020	BAKER & TAYLOR	Books & Materials	1,083.25
08/25/2020	BAKER & TAYLOR	Books & Materials	190.39
08/25/2020	BAKER & TAYLOR	Books & Materials	85.80
08/25/2020	BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MICH	Health Insurance	563.62
08/25/2020	CITY OF BELLEVILLE	Water & Sewer	94.68
08/25/2020	CLEAR RATE COMMUNICATIONS	Telephone/Fax	260.55
08/25/2020	DEMCO	Office Supplies	994.50
08/25/2020	DOMAIN REGISTRY	Garden Walk Registry	90.00
08/25/2020	DTE ENERGY	Gas Service	64.46
08/25/2020	LIBERTY MUTUAL	Insurance	93.00
08/25/2020	MI MUNICIPAL RISK MGT AUTH	Insurance	5,932.75
08/25/2020	MICHELLE WLOCH	Office Supplies	42.15
08/25/2020	SHARON DUCKWORTH, CPA	Accounting Services Aug.	950.00
08/25/2020	STANDARD INSURANCE COMPANY	Group Policy	223.69
08/25/2020	T-MOBILE	5 lines Annual Fee	1,764.00
08/25/2020	THE LIBRARY NETWORK	July Bookbilling	26,264.81
08/25/2020	UNITED HEALTHCARE	Insurance	8,454.39
08/25/2020	VANTAGEPOINT TRANSFER AGENTS	Deferred Comp Plan	380.00
08/25/2020	YP	YP Listing	58.00
08/31/2020	UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE	Bulk Mail Account	3,000.00
08/31/2020	UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE	Permit Fee PI	240.00

Checks Total (excluding void checks): 69,661.89

Bank Total (excluding void checks): 69,661.89

Capital Project Fund

Check Date	Vendor	Check Description	Amount
08/25/2020	DANIELS AND ZERMACK LLC	Design services	18,897.13
08/25/2020	LIBRARY DESIGN ASSOCIATES	Steel Cabinets	3,545.00

08/25/2020
08/25/2020

O'NEAL CONSTRUCTION, INC
TAKEFORM

Project 1359-00
Signage

34,687.40
9,353.42

Checks Total (excluding void checks): 66,482.95

Bank Total (excluding void checks): 66,482.95

Grand Total (excluding void checks): 136,144.84

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2020

LIBRARY PROGRAMS	August: Adults: 3 Youth: 0	
	August	Fiscal Year
LIBRARY VISITS	2,597	3,563
	August	Fiscal Year
TOTAL CIRC	12,281	23,241
	August	Fiscal Year
ADULT PROGRAMMING	19	34
	August	Fiscal Year
CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING	0	544
ALL AGES PROGRAMMING:	August: 0	Fiscal Year: 0
	August	Fiscal Year
REF. QUESTIONS	1,136	1,990

COVID-19 STATUS: Grab and Go service continues on the first floor and in the children's room, and we are averaging about 70-80 patrons per day. Curbside pickup continues to be available. Staff is preparing for the second phase of Grab and Go which will reopen the 2nd floor for browsing and computer use. Three 15-minute express computers will be available, and three computers by appointment only will be available for one-hour sessions. Plexiglas inserts are on order for the public computer tables. Once these have been installed, the library will be able to make more computers available. The library has purchased screen sharing software so that staff can maintain 6 feet of distance while providing computer assistance. Amy Greschaw is training staff on this software, the appointment features of our computer sign-in software, and updates to policies, procedures, and services. Plexiglas has been installed at the adult service desk and all chairs have been removed from the 2nd floor study tables. Three computers will be available at the branch. Branch hours will tentatively be set for Mondays from 11 am – 4 pm and Thursdays from 3 pm – 8 pm. Evening hours will be added at the main library. The tentative schedule will be Mondays and Thursdays from 11 am – 8 pm and Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 11 am – 6 pm.

We are continuing to work on best practices for enforcing the 25% occupancy limit and may need to adjust our procedures depending on use patterns.

I look forward to the day when the pandemic is behind us and we can resume our function as a place to meet, socially gather, and sit and study.

NEW SERVICES: The library has purchased 5 wireless hotspots that will be available for checkout for three days. A “lucky day” collection will also soon be available and will include extra copies of highly popular books, movies, and audiobooks. Holds are not allowed on these items in order to ensure that we have a good collection of items from which to choose.

STAFF: The library was not fully staffed when we opened in March, so that we could get a handle on training and workflow. Right now, even though we are open for fewer hours, all of the COVID protocols in place are more staff intensive. Once we start adding hours, and definitely when things are back to normal, we will need to add a few more staff members. In short, we are still growing into our new building and branch.

BUILDING: We began this project with a whole lot of dirt being moved around, and as we prepare for the parking lot, much dirt is once again being moved around. I look forward to the new parking lot and offer my thanks to the Methodist Church for allowing our staff to park in their side lot these past two and a half years! Donor signs and location signs continue to be installed inside the library.



State of Michigan Budget...Better "Bad" News

August 27, 2020

In May 2020, Michigan was staring at a \$3.1 billion budget hole in the FY 2020 budget. After a third Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference on Monday, August 24, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 hole is now estimated at approximately a \$936 million loss, based on updated state revenue numbers.

In better news comparatively, the FY 2021 revenue hole is approximately \$384 million in the General Fund with a \$12.4 million hole in the School Aid Fund. But economists are now projecting that the combined FY 2021 and FY 2022 revenue shortage will create a combined \$4.2 billion hole that is unlikely to be fixed without federal support.

What has changed from May to August? Roughly \$43.3 billion in federal COVID-19 assistance through the Paycheck Protection Program, the \$600-a-week unemployment boost and other federal aid. All of these have contributed to the state income tax and sales tax dollars collections.

And at the same time....

- Income tax payments that had been delayed from April 15 to July 15 came back \$200 million better than previously expected.
- Automotive production recovered faster than expected.
- The impact of the federal CARES Act on revenue was underestimated.
- Spending on taxable goods is higher than expected.

But concerns still exist - including a COVID-19 second wave, closed businesses, and hundreds of thousands of people out of work. What concerns State of Michigan Budget Director Chris Kolb most, however, is the budget hole in FY 2022 which is projected to be in the "billions of dollars" barring the addition of more federal revenue.

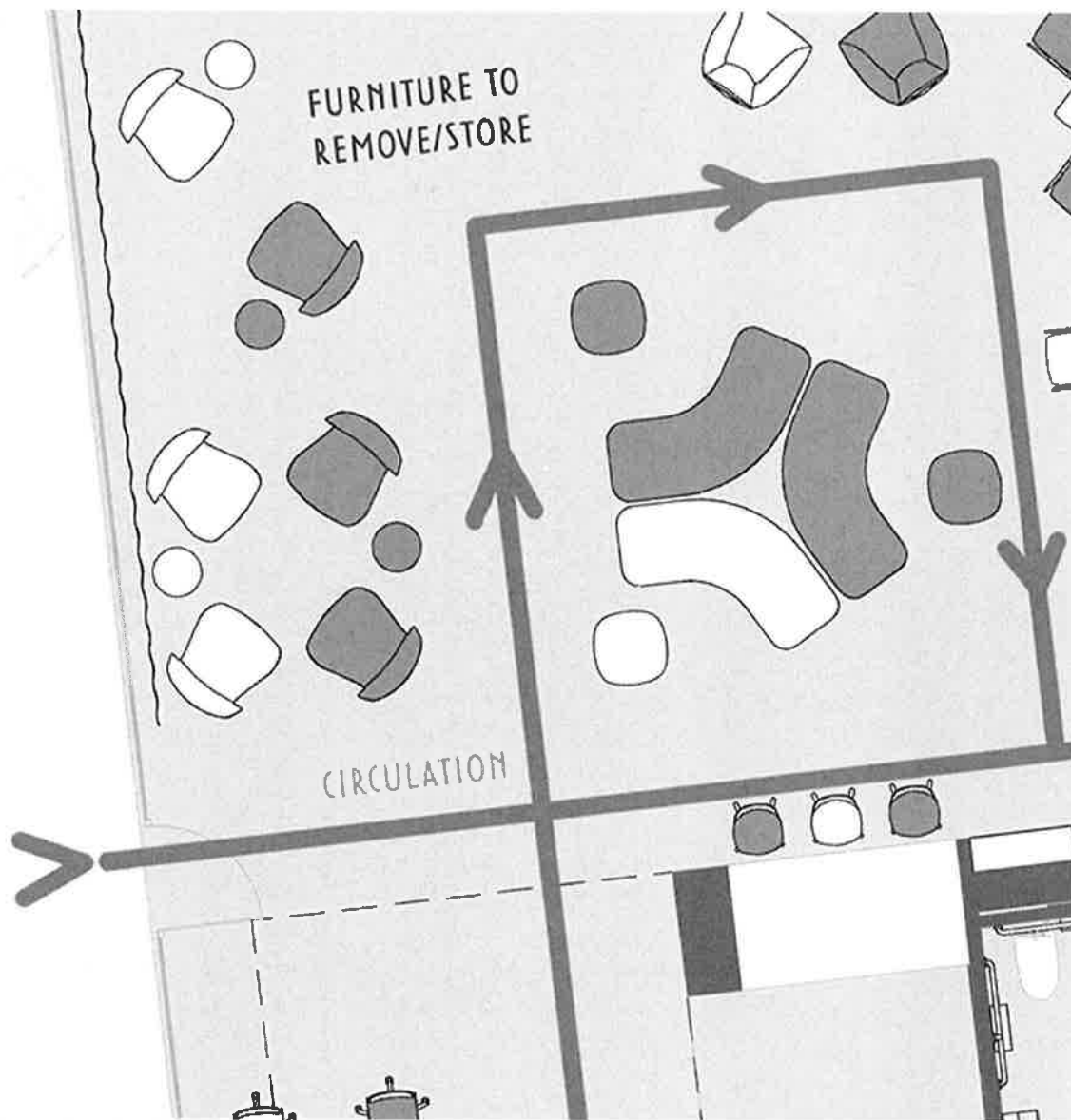
Overall, Kolb said that the combined economic impact is a \$4.2 billion revenue loss for FY 2021 and FY 2022.

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Virus-Responsive Design | American Libraries Magazine

By Lara Ewen |



A floor plan for furniture removal at Hennepin County (Minn.) Library's Eden Prairie branch. Illustration: MSR Design

Libraries have always been spaces for discovery. But in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, they have been tasked with transforming themselves into places that allow users to physically distance while being more digitally connected than ever. As some institutions emerge from months of shutdowns, design and architecture experts seek to meet current health and safety challenges as well as safeguard these community spaces against an uncertain future.

Traci Engel Lesneski, CEO and principal at Minneapolis-based national architecture firm

MSR Design, which has worked with hundreds of libraries across the country, says libraries are ideal spaces for innovative design solutions. “It’s not a stretch to think about the ways that libraries have modeled what’s next in the world,” she says. “Libraries can talk to the public about how important these things are and advocate [for them]. They can provide hands-on learning and access to certain technologies that people don’t have access to in their everyday lives.”

Yet libraries have had to find new ways to provide that access. “[COVID-19] is aggravating the digital divide,” says Susan Nemitz, director of Santa Cruz (Calif.) Public Libraries (SCPL). “There are a number of people who don’t have access to the internet and computers, because we haven’t opened up yet.” She says that effective design solutions will have to bridge not just physical and digital distance, but socioeconomic distance as well.

“We find that, more and more, our community is isolated,” she says. “And we’ve been moving away from being a warehouse of books to being a social connector.” Nemitz, whose library system passed a \$67 million bond issue to replace and remodel all 10 of its buildings before the pandemic hit, says she’s had to reimagine her library’s mission. “The COVID crisis has thrown a wrench into who we are and what we believe,” she says. “Do we build our buildings for the situation we’re in now, or the situation in the long run?”

The answer may be both. “This will not last forever,” says Amanda Markovic, architect and associate principal at GBBN Architects, a multinational architecture and interior design firm that has built multiple libraries and civic spaces around the country. “But there’s a possibility that it will happen again. So I think [design] is about ensuring there’s flexibility, making sure there aren’t as many hard walls in these spaces to allow for the expansion and contraction [of our spaces] that will be necessary when these things arise.”

An early start

Libraries that were in the process of renovating before COVID-19 almost immediately pivoted, repurposing certain design features to address the new normal. “There have been some fortunate coincidences that were not intended to be in reaction to a pandemic but that we can use,” says Markovic. “For instance, at Baldwin Borough Public Library [in Pittsburgh], we put casters on the stacks to make them easy to move around. We can now use them to create little pods. And at Carnegie Library [of Pittsburgh], we’re implementing cleanable surfaces and discussing an HVAC system that allows for increased ventilation.”



Signage, such as these designs by GBBN Architects, can be a playful way to provide visual cues or instructions to patrons for maintaining physical distance or cleaning surfaces that they touch. Photos: GBBN Architects

Some privacy features have been reimagined as safety enhancements. “We’ve been in a debate about gendered versus nongendered toilet rooms,” says Lesneski. “When you put the lens of the pandemic over that, we should be moving toward more privacy, and privacy that allows for parent and child, or parent and older parent, or people who need to use medication, or transgender people. So we’ve been talking more about [creating bathrooms that consist of] roomlets with a sink, where everything is all contained.”

Libraries that have been unable to provide public access during the pandemic may have an unusual opportunity to upgrade. “One of our libraries that was renovated had its entire collection digitized when it was removed for the renovation,” says Thomas M. Hotaling, architect and principal at Ann Beha Architects, a Boston-based design firm that works with education and cultural clients. “I’m wondering if this might be a good time for [other] libraries to digitize their collections. If the funding is available, this is an ideal time to think about that.”

Clean and simple

Certainly funding is an issue. But not all changes need to be expensive. In fact, some of the most effective enhancements libraries can employ involve only elbow grease and motivation. “One of the things that works is just cleaning,” says Markovic. “A good old ‘let’s wipe things down.’ And do that often.” She says that high-touch areas like doors and desks should ideally be nonporous and cleaned often. “I think of gyms,” she says. “You have to wipe down equipment after using it, and that becomes easy, because they put the wipes near the equipment. So putting wipes near furniture and the front desk and near where people might want to go would be a visual cue.”

Lesneski says that library guests should also be a part of that process. “We will have to take personal responsibility to clean up after ourselves and have trust in other people,” she says. “And we might have to start carrying around sanitizer.” She explains that rooms can be designed or redesigned to incorporate built-in receptacles for sanitizing wipes and feature signage that directs visitors to use them.

This will not last forever. But there’s a possibility that it will happen again.
—Amanda Markovic, architect and associate principal at GBBN Architects

Technology solutions can also make spaces cleaner and safer. Touchless lights, faucets, and doors may become more common, and libraries may begin to experiment with automated cleaning protocols. “Maybe there’s an automatic occupancy sensor that turns on a UV light that [could kill] the most recent virus, like task lights at every computer,” says Cindy Kaufman, principal associate at Holt Architects, a New York design firm with offices in Syracuse and Ithaca that has worked on several university libraries and learning spaces. “Or what if it was a little machine that sits right next to you and does a quick cleaning?”

Kaufman cautions against the use of antimicrobials, as those treatments can be largely ineffective and potentially unhealthy. “I think some people are using antimicrobial treatments, but we [at Holt] don’t recommend them because we have a huge focus on sustainable design and healthy design,” she says. Antimicrobials can prevent the growth of microorganisms but won’t always kill them, she says. “If a facility is on top of cleaning, they can kill the virus that way.”

Products and placement

Design can do more than just help keep things clean. It can also provide visual reminders of social distancing, as seen in the large circles painted on lawns in New York City's Domino Park and Chicago's Millennium Park. Indoors, that can translate into strategic furniture placement. "Especially in facilities that don't have money [to remodel], I see the possibility that furniture is arranged in a completely different way, so you spread out how people can sit," says Kaufman. "You could spread out a row or a long table and remove every few chairs. If people need to face each other, you could put up a barrier or a sneeze guard or a panel. Mobile screens can be another way to create separate seating."

Product design is quickly evolving to meet the needs of environments that practice social distancing. "You're seeing products pop up"—such as planters, fabric screens, and marker boards that act as dividers—"[that] feel natural but also keep people at a distance," Lesneski says. Furniture still needs to be welcoming, she adds, because otherwise people won't want to be there. "We can't look like we're living in a surgical ward," she says. "And we don't want to end up in terrible places with windows that are sealed shut and seating that's not comfortable, and furniture that's been bolted into place to prevent people from moving too close."



Dividers at Tulsa City–County (Okla.) Library's Central location encourage physical distancing. Photo: Lara Swimmer

She says comfort is also about control. "The more control we have over our environment, the more content we feel," says Lesneski. "Like controlling the lights, airflow, height of a table, or size of its surface. The more control, the more secure and able to focus we are."

Libraries can also get their communities involved in the design process. Margaret Sullivan, principal at Margaret Sullivan Studio, a New York City–based design firm that specializes in libraries and learning institutions, says that working with local graphics shops and inviting artists and graphic designers to create temporary signage can help libraries find vibrant and playful ways to speak to their patrons. "This is a great time to pay young designers in your community," she says. "A great impact investment strategy would [also] be to hire local architects and designers to come up with cool design solutions for social, learning, and community spaces that foster social distancing in a fun, creative way."

Storage solutions will also need to be developed as spaces become more malleable. "Social distancing will impact the amount of furniture that's in a space, at least for the present," says Hotaling, who suggests libraries might even see a return to old-fashioned reading carrels. "We were asked [by a library client] what to do with all the furniture now there. Where will it be stored, and should library designers be thinking about library furniture that can be easily stacked?" Hotaling says storage considerations will also affect collections, as many libraries now have a process for quarantining materials. "Libraries have to dedicate space for books to sit for three days and then be cleaned too," he says.

Outside the box

As scientists learn more about the transmission of COVID-19, the importance of using outdoor space as much as possible has repeatedly been stressed. “Outside is safer than inside,” says Sullivan. “So are the services going to be curbside pickup? Will there be outdoor programming?” She adds that librarians will need to think about how many people can be inside a facility and what those people will be doing. “Then you can start to get granular,” she explains. “For the first phase of opening, maybe we have this many tables we need to clean every night and this many computers that need to be sanitized. That’s an interesting way to think about the true cost of the work.”

Designers are also thinking about how to better ventilate indoor spaces. “Everyone is looking at improved indoor air quality for HVAC systems, more operable windows, more fresh air, and more air circulation,” says Hotaling. “Fresh air is proven to make for a healthier environment.”

Fostering the impression of a natural environment can also soften spaces and encourage spatial division. “I could see using a mobile system of translucent panels featuring images of greenery and nature,” says Kaufman. “Or what if there were curtains that were able to move around the ceiling on a track to create private areas, and that let light through, and that are cleanable, and that could be drawn from one position to another?”

Outside is safer than inside. So are the services going to be curbside pickup? Will there be outdoor programming?—Margaret Sullivan, principal at Margaret Sullivan Studio

As libraries bring the outdoors inside, they’re also bringing traditional indoor services outside. “There’s a trend in creating outside spaces and leaving our Wi-Fi on,” says Nemitz of SCPL. “Maybe even expanding coverage so we can be a Wi-Fi hotspot, so students can use it at 4 a.m. if they don’t have Wi-Fi at home, whether we’re open or not.” Nemitz is also considering a wireless printing service, so library guests can print from their connected devices for curbside pickup.

“We have a lot of people who love print books and who are suddenly motivated to download books,” says Nemitz. “This kind of thing is going to forever change us. There’s an audience that can’t physically come to our building, and this allows people who previously felt barriers to participate.”

Not all outdoor improvements are tech-driven. “Sometimes the old becomes new again,” says Nemitz, pointing to old book drops located near several branches in her system. “The public loves [them]. The staff collects and quarantines the books. And some of our libraries have a drop-off island, and with curbside pickup it’s ideal.”

Even entrances can become design features. “Our design allows the library to be open and closed in sections,” says Nemitz, who adds that SCPL adopted the concept from a library in Madison, Wisconsin. “We can open just the children’s area or just the adult area, and we can serve different clienteles at different times.”

Looking ahead

Designers say that the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity not just to modify libraries but to improve them for future use.

“This is about so much more than having less seating and different planning,” says Kaufman. “It’s about human-environmental interactions, and how can we affect human behavior with simple design tools. In my mind, it’s imagery and spatial reconfiguration that can help people feel more [connected] to each other. Buildings will need to create

more usable spaces for people to spread out more, and users need to trust the staff.”

Lesneski says that a lot of existing built environments have barriers that hinder inclusivity at multiple levels, including racially and socioeconomically. She cites a [discussion moderated by the Canadian Urban Institute](#). Ironically, a shift to more equitable spaces will happen because the virus has made decision makers “uncomfortable,” she says. “We [should] remember to expand our lens so that it’s not just about the pandemic but also a long-term overhaul.”