

OFPL's director presents library's reopening protocol

Written by By: Molly Adamson Sun Correspondent
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When the pandemic hit, the Octavia Fellin Public Library was forced to close its doors to the public and was only able to provide curbside pickup and eventually virtual events. But now, as more and more people receive the vaccine, the library is putting a reopening plan in place.

During the June 17 Library Advisory Board meeting, Deputy Director Tammi Moe told the board what the library's protocol will look like while things aren't completely back to normal.

Anyone visiting the library will be required to wear a mask. Library staff has been checking temperatures, but in an interview with the *Sun*, Moe said that would be ending July 1.

The building's capacity limit is currently 52 people.

Blocks of time for patrons will be put in place, with cleaning and sanitizing being done in between. There will be three blocks every weekday, from 10 am-12 pm, 1 pm-3 pm, and 3 pm-5 pm. When the public isn't in the library, the staff will be cleaning and sanitizing common touchpoints.

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People will be able to browse and use the computers. In order to help maintain social distancing, there will only be six computers on the main floor instead of the usual 24.

Any tech questions will now be handled remotely through chat sessions.

When the pandemic hit, the library staff was able to build a production studio in the library to help them film their usual programs, so people could participate virtually. But now, in-person programming is slowly coming back, with Story Time returning to Wednesdays at 11 am in a playground area outside the Children's branch.

Moe said they're currently working with a hybrid of in-person and curbside service and that they're a little reluctant to go back to being fully in-person because their virtual programs were a huge success.

"We were hesitant to stop the virtual programming just because we have a much bigger reach," Moe commented. "Instead of hundreds, it's now in the thousands of people who attend our programs or interact with our sessions."

As the library has returned to offering in-person services, Moe stated that her entire staff has been vaccinated.

After she presented the reopening protocol, Moe turned to another important topic: the new library building.

She announced that the city has approved \$40,000 to help the library find an architect for the new building.

While that search continues, Moe said she is going to be asking people in the community what they want from a new library building.

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"It's my goal to go out to the community and ... kind of, find out what does the community see their library needs, what would they want for that kind of a hub for the community to be," Moe said.

Moe plans to ask people how they want the library to serve them in terms of public education and health and well-being, among other things.

The next Library Advisory Board meeting will be held July 15.

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Sun Correspondent