



106 Washington Avenue, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901-4985

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 12, 2020
TO: Oshkosh Public Library Board of Trustees
FROM: Jeff Gilderson-Duwe, Director
RE: Proposed Revisions to Phase One Re-Opening Plan

Before proposing two revisions to the services specified in the Library's Phase One Re-Opening Plan, I want to lay out my understanding of the nature of the re-opening plans and the respective roles of Library Administration and Library Board. If the board directs a different approach, I will comply.

Both re-opening plans articulate a framework of guidelines for services to be offered in that phase. In the Phase One plan, the guidelines on access to the building are limited numbers of people; appointment-driven; needs-based; and with an emphasis on strong compliance with health protocols (physical distancing; proper use of face masks; frequent cleaning of surfaces used by the public). The guidelines embodied in the Phase Two plan allow for significantly greater access to Library spaces, collections, equipment, and services. Notable changes will include unrestricted browsing of collections and use of equipment, and no appointments necessary to enter the building. The main difference between Phase Two and "normal" will be a continued caution about having groups gather or individuals linger in the building. For example, visitors will be encouraged to keep visits to 30 minutes or less in duration, and no in-person library-sponsored public programs will be planned. Diligent adherence to health protocols will also continue to be stressed during Phase Two.

It has been my understanding that, within the guidelines of any plan approved by the library board, it is Library Administration's role to monitor the needs of the community and to adapt our service responses to meet those needs. We have already made a number of minor adjustments to our implementation of the Phase One plan, for which specific library board approval seemed unnecessary. Examples include placing an "Internet Express" computer (15 minute limit) and a device battery charging station on the first floor instead of the second floor; and allowing use of individual study rooms on the second floor for patrons who needed privacy for a virtual meeting or job interview. Due to light volume of use, we have allowed use of the second floor Internet computers on a "walk-in" basis to users with no previous appointment. Also due to manageable volume of use, we have ceased screening patrons about the nature of their computer use need before granting an appointment. We also serve "drive-up" patrons who have not yet been called by Library staff but who hope to pick up held library materials if current volume permits. In sum: within the guidelines, we experience, we learn, we adjust.

"A Library in Every Life"

The two proposals below are more significant adjustments to the services defined in the Phase One plan. In less anxious times, I would proceed to implement these service changes without consulting the Library Board in advance. However, I understand that the public health and safety concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic call for a different approach. I invite the Library Board to give direction on these proposals if it chooses.

1. Hybrid carryout / curbside library materials deliver model:

- Problems with current curbside model in winter weather: wind and snow will make use of library carts for materials delivery infeasible; staff health concerns with constant movement in and out of the building; curbside delivery requires approximately twice the labor of traditional materials fulfillment, amplifying the impact of any employee absence on service continuity.
- Carryout service model: Patron will enter the main lobby and come to the First Floor Service Desk; staff will retrieve items from hold shelf, check them out and slide them under the plexiglass sneeze guard. For patron convenience, no appointment will be needed, and no phone call into the building will be necessary. This will eliminate the need to field thousands of incoming phone calls each month. At times when the lobby area reaches capacity, patrons may need to wait outside. We expect this to happen rarely.
- Curbside service will continue, with materials placed in a vehicle trunk or through an open window. Appointments will still be needed for this service; options are to self-schedule via the library's website or call the Customer Service desk and staff will schedule the appointment for the patron. Patrons who express a health concern or mobility reason for not entering the Library building will be encouraged to sign up for home delivery service.
- For patron convenience, arrival at specific appointment time is less important and no phone call into the building will be necessary. This will eliminate the need to field thousands of incoming phone calls each month.

2. Allow student access to meeting rooms for Wi-Fi virtual learning support:

- To support virtual learning and address inequity in internet access in our community, students will be allowed to use meeting rooms in the Lower Level for school check-ins, studying and other school-related work during OPL's regular hours of operation.
- Service will be offered to students in grades 6 and up.
- Lower Level Meeting Room A/B and the Conference Room will be reserved for physically distanced use by up to 11 students at a time. Using an occupancy calculator created by the Wisconsin DPI Division for Libraries and Technology, we find that 25% occupancy for these spaces is 12 people (i.e., 11 students and one staff person allowed in the space).
- Proper mask use and distancing behaviors will be enforced.
- Students will be able to use the Calendly scheduling software (<https://calendly.com/oshkoshpubliclibrary>) at any time of the day to reserve a spot or may call the library during open hours to get assistance with reserving a spot. Walk-ins may be accommodated if space allows.