

BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY
REPORT OF THE CITY LIBRARIAN
March 17, 2021

On March 4, 2021, Governor Lamont announced that libraries will be allowed to open at 100% capacity on March 19, along with certain other establishments including retail shops, gyms, Houses of worship. Many public libraries across the state are concerned that as we cautiously reopen with measured reopening plans that are unique to our own libraries, resuming full capacity while a full vaccine roll out has yet to happen may put staff and the public at risk. There will be some discussions of how Lamont's new plans affect public libraries and some possible guidance to come out of the Office of the State Library. Until then, I will revise our Reopening Plan (5/15/20) to reflect the current state of our resuming of library services as follows:

Currently, the City of Bridgeport's 50% occupancy restriction for government buildings has not been lifted. The Library's North, Black Rock and East Side branches have reopened to the public for limited browsing (no chairs for sitting are being made available) on March 8, 2021. Each location has posted a sign limiting public occupancy to 50% of peak hour occupancy per location. I anticipate that we can consider lifting Covid occupancy restrictions when we engage our new Security firm in July. Computers may be used for up to one hour at these locations, however, we have a reduced number of computers available to the public at this time, due to social distancing requirements, which are still in effect, and our current computer replacement schedule. While I do not think that it is still in the best interests of everyone to have our partners (Friends, Literacy Volunteers) return to the library, I will begin discussions with them to see how we can best plan their return in the near future.

The critical component is staffing, and I recommend that the library go to full staffing as of Monday, March 22, 2021 with some limitations. Branch managers and supervisors should monitor the social distancing among staff and where necessary, staff can be scheduled to telework for a whole or half day if needed to maintain safe distancing. I estimate that out of approximately 64 library staff members, an average of 4 may be teleworking at any given time. As more staff and the public get vaccinated, and we receive further guidance from the city and state, we will continue with our measured reopening and revise the plan as needed.

Wyandanch Public Library has submitted a proposal to borrow our bookmobile. The proposal has been submitted for the Bridgeport Public Library's Board's consideration.

Staff will participate in First Aid training through our vendor, Cintas. Training will take place before the end of the fiscal year. All staff recently undertook mandatory sexual harassment training with the City of Bridgeport.

Computers continue to be upgraded within the library system. Additional computers are needed to replace staff computers and to get the public computer numbers up to pre-Covid deployment. I will submit a replacement plan and request for additional computer and equipment purchases in April.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Braithwaite
City Librarian