



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LIBRARY TRUSTEES APPROVE COVID-19 CONTINGENCY PLAN, ENFORCE FACIAL COVERINGS
Patrons ages 2 and up asked to wear a mask within buildings beginning Wednesday, July 15, 2020

Monday, July 13, 2020

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Delaware, OH: -- At their July 13 special meeting, the Delaware County District Library Board of Trustees approved an updated public health advisory system and the requirement of Library users to wear face coverings while in Library buildings.

The COVID-19 contingency plan was created based on Governor DeWine's color-coded assessment system, introduced on July 2, 2020. In a [memo to the Board of Trustees](#), Library Director George Needham explains:

If Delaware County is identified by the state as a Public Emergency Level 3 County (red), the Library will close its buildings but continue to offer curbside or drive through service and electronic access. If Delaware County is identified as a Public Emergency Level 4 County (purple) and a Stay at Home order is issued, the Library will stop all service other than electronic access.

The approved public health plan will take effect immediately and be updated as Governor DeWine makes his updates during his Thursday public briefings. If the Delaware County threat level were to increase (ie. go from Orange to Red), changes would take place the next business day. If the county's threat level were to decrease (ie. from Orange to Yellow), changes would go into effect the following Monday.

"We looked at the environment, the restart of retail and restaurants, and paid close attention to what they were doing," said Director Needham with regard to the Library's decision to reopen its first branch in late-June. "We put a lot of safety precautions in place. We waited until several weeks after everything reopened, and there was no spike. Then after we had reopened, the numbers started climbing again."

Additionally, the Board of Trustees voted by a majority 3-2 vote to require Library users to wear face coverings, unless exempted for specifically documented legal, life, health or safety considerations. The requirement will begin on Wednesday, July 15, 2020, with time allowed for publicity to patrons.

The hour-long meeting, conducted via Zoom and streamed live to the [Library's Facebook page](#), contained much discussion, as well as input from Eric Penkal, the Library's legal representative within the Office of the County Prosecutor.

"I would hate for us to go forward with not requiring masks because of a legality issue or a personal choice," said Trustee President Michael P. Butler during the discussion. "The way that I'm looking at this is, it is my fiduciary responsibility to protect the library system, to protect the staff, and to make sure that the patrons coming into the library behave professionally and are respectful to everyone."

Based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations, patrons in the building ages two and older, aside from those with accepted exemptions, must wear a mask.

All Library locations will have individually-wrapped, disposable face masks available for patrons who do not wear a face covering upon entrance.

Curbside and drive-up services will remain in place for all patrons who prefer contactless or other means of service. Reference assistance, in the form of printing documents, reading suggestions, Internet assistance and more, can be utilized via phone, an email to askus@delawarelibrary.org or by using the website chat feature at www.delawarelibrary.org.

Trustees present at the meeting included President Michael Butler, Vice President Holly Quaine, Secretary Ceena Baker, and Trustees Brenda Eldridge, and Scott Tiede. Trustee Nick McCoy was absent. One board seat remains vacant, which is anticipated to be filled later this month during a session of the Delaware County Commissioners.

All members of the Board of Trustees will meet again for their regular session on Tuesday, August 18 at 5:00 p.m. Unless otherwise notified, the meeting will take place remotely, and be streamed live to the Library's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/delawarelibrary. Public comment will be accepted in advance at board@delawarelibrary.org.

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Delaware Library Mission Statement: *The Delaware County District Library serves as the public information provider for our community, using traditional and innovative technology to encourage curiosity, free inquiry, and lifelong learning in a friendly environment.*