



Falmouth Memorial Library Town Council Update – November 9, 2020

Highlights:

- The Library reopened for curbside Library Takeout service on Tuesday, September 15, and then reopened for general browsing on Tuesday, October 13. Currently the Library is open to the public M, Tu, Th, Fr from 9:30 am – 5:00 pm, and open on Wednesdays from 9:30 am – 7:00 pm, with restrictions:
 - Masks are required, and hand sanitizer at the entrance prior to handling collections.
 - There is a patron capacity of 15; with a separate capacity limit in the children’s area of two families or six people.
 - We limit visits to 30 minutes per day and encourage grab-n-go browsing only.
 - We have three public computers set-up for appointments (and allow drop-ins).
 - We have a “quick print” station set up just inside the doors for drop-in use.
 - Library Takeout continues for patrons who remain uncomfortable with inside service.
 - For staff safety, we installed Plexiglas at all four customer service desks, and microphones for assisted hearing.
 - Following state library guidelines, we quarantine returned books for 72 hours after they’re returned via our Book Drops and Inter Library Loan service has resumed.
- Prior to opening, we installed a new RFID self-check system from Bibliotecha. This required adding an RFID tag to each item in our collection and re-configuring our library systems to communicate to the self-check kiosk and security gates. Self-check is an added convenience for patrons wishing to avoid a line at circulation and a welcome feature for providing a no contact form of checkout. We also performed a full inventory of the collection during our closure, so we will be able to better monitor our inventory moving forward with this new system.
- The Library has seen steady traffic since re-opening on 10/13 – according to our new people counters included in the gate system, we’ve averaged 160 people per day (with a high of 244, and low of 109). Although we stay under our 15-patron capacity limit overall, we do sometimes close the children’s room to new entrants for brief periods in the afternoons to limit to two families or six people total. Curbside service has dropped off dramatically since the first week, and especially since re-opening. Library Takeout was very popular in our first week, we had 112 appointments to pick up 325 items. That first Thursday alone we had 50 appointments. We did not have door counters at Mason-Motz (2019) – but for comparison, in the half month we’ve been reopen, we’ve had more traffic (2,267) than the entire month of October 2018 (2,262).
- It’s also been a very busy time for new library cards. We issued 81 new library cards in October (6 of those were non-resident cards), compared to 23 in October 2019 and 33 in October 2018.
- One of the expansion features of the renovation was the creation of a new Information Desk. This desk will help us to be more efficient in providing customer service at circulation desk – by providing more in depth help with opening new library cards and getting technology help – such as help downloading eBooks available via cloudLibrary or help with wireless printing and basic

reference questions. It's designed as a triage between circulation and reference, and during COVID will help us be able to continue to provide Library Takeout service with existing staff.

- ReVision Energy has installed a donor-funded 65kW photovoltaic array with about 200 panels manufactured by REC. The system will produce an estimated 74,954 kWh/year (by comparison, the average household consumes about 10,400 kWh/yr.) We saw our first energy production starting on September 14, and the first month's credit was \$541.
- Goals: Revisiting our fund-raising plans due to COVID-19, expanding and re-energizing virtual programs and planning for future re-introduction of in-person programming next year, developing a more robust communications and marketing plan to help inform the public and keep people aware of all we offer. We've been receiving calls for both volunteers as well as book donations. We are looking at ways we can utilize some of our space for a used book store to provide both a safer space than a large single gathering for fund-raising, as well as to provide a more consistent revenue stream that will help us plan for future programming and program supply costs. I'm also looking for ways to fund expanding our offering of eBooks beyond the state cloudLibrary to add a Falmouth cloud that can cut down on hold times for our patrons. During the pandemic closures, libraries saw an uptick in use of our online platforms, so I expect demand to continue now that everyone has found out how convenient and easy it is to use. Discovering new or expanded ways to reach our community is also increasing access for people who might otherwise have physical difficulty engaging with the library. We'll also be taking this opportunity to review our virtual programming, electronic offerings, and planning for future outreach services.
- For the month of November, Falmouth Memorial Library will receive a \$1 donation from each purchase of the \$2.50 reusable GIVE BACK WHERE IT COUNTS Bag at the Shaw's store located at Shaw's 251 Us Highway 1, Falmouth ME.