



City of Homer

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Office of the City Manager

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Memorandum

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
DATE: January 20, 2022
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for January 24, 2022 Council Meeting

HERC Update

The survey is complete; 478 people responded! 68% view a redesigned HERC as an important facility, and would be willing to contribute on average, several hundred dollars a year per household through both user fees and increased taxes. The preferred funding sources are: Reallocate Existing Funds (29%), Sales Tax (24%), and Property Tax (14%). Businesses responded that they would be interested in helping to fund the HERC by renting facilities. The most popular facilities included: Multi-Activity Room, Commercial Kitchen, Convention Center and Fitness Center.

One of the most interesting results of this project was the ability to compare the results from the 2015 Parks, Art, Recreation, and Culture Needs Assessment and the 2022 survey. This comparison allows insight into how the community responses have changed. The support to build a new HERC has significantly increased (from 30% to 70%). While non-significant, opposition has decreased from 40% of respondents to less than 10%; and moderates have decreased from 30% to 10%. The demand for programs and facilities has increased. The concern about the lack of programming/facilities is significantly higher (70% vs 25%) and is cited as the primary item preventing more recreation from occurring.

Next Steps:

- Staff continues to respond to businesses who expressed interest in the project;
- Stantec has begun site and building concept design work; and
- Full survey results and drawings will be available in early March.

FY21 Audit

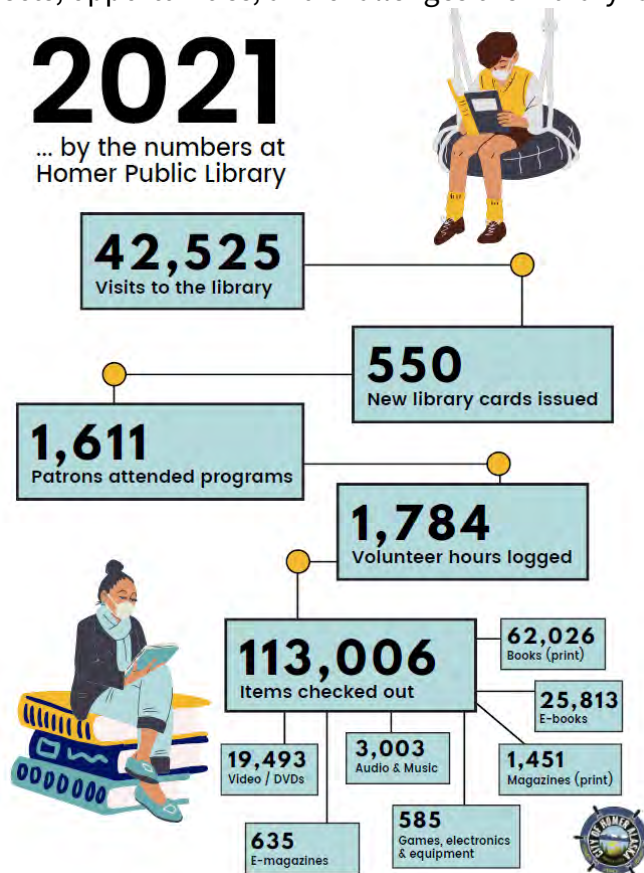
Auditors from BDO have been working with Finance Department staff remotely and in person. There is still a significant amount of work for our contracted auditors to complete, however, the time focused on Homer across the last two weeks is a big step towards closing the books for FY21. Additionally, when the audit is complete, it will allow us to finalize the last pieces of the fiscal year change which was initiated by Resolution 20-112 and integrated into Homer City Code via Ordinance 20-89. The fiscal year change created a significant amount of work for the Finance Department, and we're very excited to be nearing the end of that project.

Mid-Biennium Budget Adjustment Preparation

Budget adjustment forms have been distributed to staff and the Finance Department is meeting with all departments to discuss fiscal year to date spend. I am anticipating that we will be before Council in March with proposed mid-biennium adjustments.

Library Annual Report

Attached to this report is the Homer Public Library's 2021 Annual Report. The report gives a great overview to the various programs, projects, opportunities, and challenges the Library faced in 2021.



Personnel Updates

Volunteer Fire Department: Jaclyn Arndt has been promoted to Firefighter/EMT II. Jaclyn joined the department in 2016 as the Department Services Coordinator where she took on both administrative and emergency response roles. She will now be focused on emergency response and using her skills as a certified training instructor for EMT-1 and Firefighter-1 classes.

Police Department: Tom Kirko has joined the HPD team as a Police Officer Recruit. He will attend the Department of Public Safety Academy in Sitka beginning in February. Tom was previously a dispatcher for the Seattle Police Department for the last five years.

Port & Harbor: Rose Riordan joined the Homer Port & Harbor as the Administrative Assistant this month. She has worked previously for the City in the Parks division as a seasonal Parks Maintenance Technician, where she partnered with Aaron Yeaton to create the Parks Forest Inventory. She is the 2021 State of Alaska Women's Disc Golf Champion.

Enclosures:

1. Library Annual Report – 2021
2. Letter from Kachemak Heritage Land Trust

Homer Public Library

2021 Annual Report



Artist Megan Frost exhibited her work in the fireplace lounge for the last three months of the year.

- Jan. 1: Start of FY 2021, a six-month fiscal year. The building remains closed to the public but patrons can access curbside pickup, outdoor wi-fi and all digital resources. The balance in the Library Endowment Fund stands at \$31,880.28.
- Jan. 26: The Library Advisory Board (LAB) holds a joint worksession with the Friends of Homer Library (FHL) to discuss coordinating fundraising between the two groups.
- February-May: Library staff run a Kids' Book Club.
- Feb. 1: The library building opens by appointment. Library

Calendar year 2021 began with the library building closed to the public and staff on staggered shifts. It ended with most library services back to normal and a few additional services in operation. During the past twelve months the library added or expanded several new subcollections, acquired self-checkout machines and thoroughly modernized day-to-day operations, to cite just a few improvements.

Staff demonstrated extraordinary dedication to their jobs through all the ups and downs occasioned by the coronavirus. HPL also owes a great debt of gratitude to the Friends of the Library and all the volunteers who helped over the past year, always without pay. The Library Advisory Board deserves recognition for its tireless efforts to develop and refine new policies, working to improve HPL's services and ensure the long-term financial health of the institution.

This report summarizes the major events at the library during 2021, capturing the highlights of a busy year.

January

The library doors remained closed due to COVID-19, but the staff served 497 patrons through curbside checkout. Electronic resources saw more usage than before the pandemic.

staff begin inserting Radio-Frequency ID (RFID) tags into all 50,000 items in the library's physical collection, with help from a great many volunteers.

- Feb. 2: The LAB reviews the fines and fees schedule but recommends no changes.
- Feb. 2-23: Artist Skywalker Payne leads a series of storytelling workshops for Black History Month.
- Feb. 3: Author Nadia Salomon reads her book *Heart of a Whale* for World Read Aloud Day.
- Feb. 16: The Homer Seed Library sets up shop at the library's front entrance.
- Feb. 22: Resolution 21-018 supports FHL's application for planning assistance from the National Park Service through the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program.
- Feb. 25: The Library Director assumes oversight of the City IT division.
- Mar. 2: The LAB debates a draft version of a Donation Acceptance and Management Policy.
- Mar. 9: Staff and Friends install a new microphone/speaker system in the fireplace lounge.
- Mar. 16: The LAB holds a joint worksession with FHL to finalize the Donation Acceptance and Management Policy.
- Mar. 29: The library building opens without appointments, on limited hours.
- Apr. 1: The library begins

The LAB and the Friends of the Library focused on planning for the coming year, including a collaborative approach to fundraising. Developing a clear set of priorities and dividing responsibilities took up much of 2021.

February

February saw the launch of the Homer Seed Library. A community-operated project, the seed library encourages patrons to share their own seeds and "check out" seeds from others!

The library received a boost from dozens of volunteers who began inserting Radio Frequency ID (RFID) tags into all 50,000 items in the print collection. This project pulled in helpers from the Friends of the Library, the regular staff and interested members of the community, and went on for months. The RFID tags play a critical role in the self-checkout system and also speed up operations at the front desk.

The LAB and the Friends of the Library exchanged reciprocal liaisons and committed to working together to raise funds for HPL.

March

The LAB held two in-depth meetings with the Friends to develop a framework for a donation strategy and a Donation Acceptance and Management Policy. In a completely unrelated incident, a snowplow knocked over a light pole in the parking lot.



Claudia Haines at the library's grand opening, Sept. 16, 2006.

April

After ten years as an employee and even longer as a community supporter, Youth Services Librarian Claudia Haines left to pursue other professional goals. Callista Faucher also stepped down as a Library Technician I.

The library switched on its new security cameras for the first time.

offering classic video games for checkout.

- Apr. 2: Callista Faucher steps down as Library Technician I.
- Apr. 5: In partnership with the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT), the library presents the Award for Aspirations in Computing to Olivia Glasman, Delilah Harris and Hailee Wallace.
- Apr. 6: The LAB votes to approve the Donation Acceptance and Management Policy.
- Apr. 7: The annual Celebration of Lifelong Learning once again takes place over the radio, as KBBi hosts the Friends' recognition of Larry Dunn and Deb Lowney.
- Apr. 20: New security cameras go live.
- Apr. 26: Resolution 21-025 adopts the Donation Acceptance and Management Policy.
- Apr. 30: Claudia Haines leaves the library after serving as Youth Services Librarian for a decade.
- May 4: The LAB debates a new Donor Recognition Policy.
- May 11: Savanna Bradley joins the staff as a temporary Library Aide.
- May 15: The bookmobile visits the Safe and Healthy Kids Fair. The first StoryWalk® book of the season, *Bear Sees Colors* by Karma Wilson, goes up on the trail outside the library.
- May 25: The bookmobile gets a facelift.
- May 26: Susan Jeffres joins the

The LAB and the City Council approved a new Donation Acceptance and Management Policy, streamlining the process for handling financial donations to the library.

The Friends of the Library stayed busy. For the second year in a row, the Celebration of Lifelong Learning took place on KBBi. The Friends received a grant from the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program, which helps communities plan and implement improvements to outdoor infrastructure such as the walking trail to the west of the library.

May

Savanna Bradley joined the library staff as a Temporary Aide and Susan Jeffres came on board as a Library Technician I.

The Friends of the Library refurbished the bookmobile, adding solar panels and LED interior lights, and varnishing all the shelves. The Friends also collaborated with library staff and City parks personnel to devise a plan for reducing the labor cost of maintaining the landscaping. This plan marked the start of an ambitious effort to overhaul the library grounds, including removing invasive species, replanting some flowerbeds with grass, installing drainage, rebuilding damaged walls, clearing sightlines and simplifying maintenance.

A window on the south side of the building shattered during Memorial Day weekend. Security camera footage showed no snowplows at the scene.



RTCA personnel and City staff toured the western lot on June 21.

June

The library resumed its regular hours and the meeting room reopened. There was much rejoicing.

The Summer Reading Program began with a relatively full slate of activities, in spite of interference from COVID. Thanks go out to the Friends, and particularly Friends Coordinator Cheryl Illg, for putting in the huge number of hours needed to make the program a success. The virus forced many events to go

staff as a Library Technician I.

- May 28: FHL meets with City Parks staff to plan the design of the library grounds.
- June-July: The bookmobile tours the Homer area, visiting baseball and soccer practices 4 days a week. The library hosts the Artist in Their Residence program, featuring virtual tours with Argent Kvasnikoff, Kate Boyan, Arias Hoyle, Vera Brosgol, Lee Post and David Brame.
- Jun. 1: The library resumes all normal operating hours. The Summer Reading Program launches.
- Jun. 2, July 7: The Little Makers Summer Program takes place outside the library, in collaboration with Sprout.
- Jun. 12 and 19, July 6 and 13: Kids make windsocks in collaboration with Homer Council on the Arts.
- Jun. 15: Vera Brosgol's *Memory Jars* goes on display as the StoryWalk® book for the month.
- Jun. 16: Masks become optional in City buildings.
- Jun. 21: The meeting room opens for public gatherings.
- Jun. 21-23: Representatives of the RTCA program visit Homer to tour the western lot and gather data related to expanding the trail network near the library.
- Jul. 4: The bookmobile participates in the Independence Day parade, with a procession of FHL volunteers and kids handing out free books.

online, but we still managed a significant roster of authors and activities.

Representatives from the RTCA toured the western lot and began the conceptual design work of upgrading the trail.

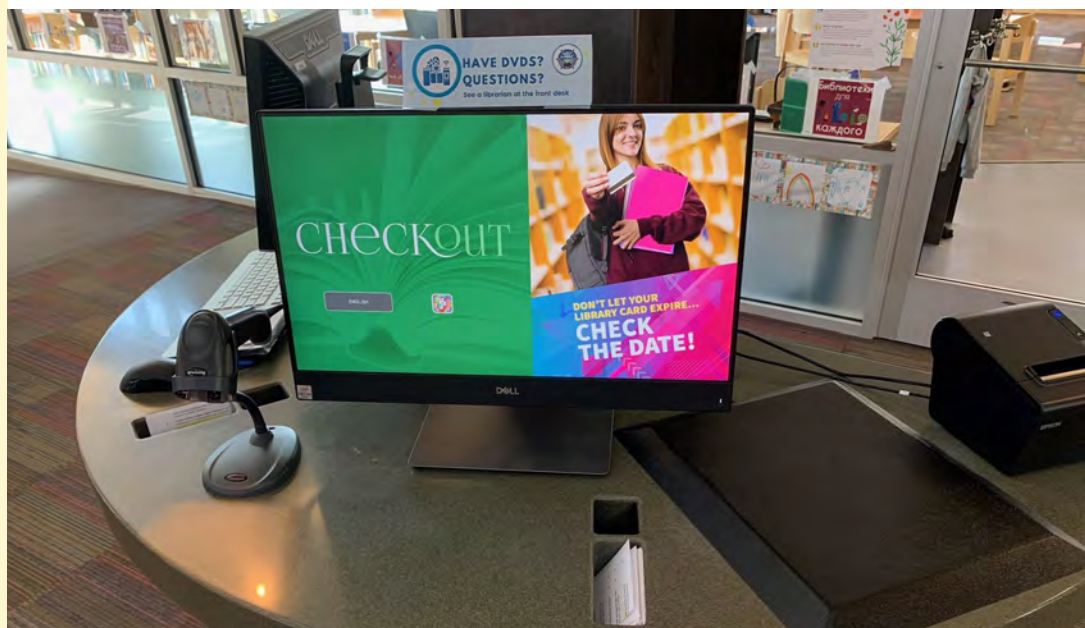


The library's new fiber-optic cable went live on July 22.

July

The July 4 parade featured the bookmobile cruising down Pioneer Avenue with sunglasses on and solar panels charged to the max, leaving books in the hands of young spectators. No synchronized dancing this year, but maybe next...

On July 20, the library marked a milestone as the RFID tagging project officially reached completion. In other collection-related news, the Pratt Museum collaborated with library staff to reproduce some of the historic maps in the museum collection and make the copies available in the library.



Self-checkout machines started up on August 3.

- Jul. 8: Author Vera Brosgol leads a workshop on comics and publishing.
- Jul. 12-16: Author Lee Post leads a series of workshops on comic-making for kids.
- Jul. 15: Minh Le's *Drawn Together* takes over as the StoryWalk® book for the month.
- Jul. 20: Staff and volunteers finish inserting Radio-Frequency ID (RFID) tags in all of the library's physical materials.
- Jul. 22: The library's internet connection speeds up, thanks to a new 400 Mbit/sec fiber optic cable. In partnership with the Pratt Museum, the library reproduces a selection of historic maps of Homer and makes the copies available to the public.
- Jul. 27: The LAB reviews a draft Donor Recognition Policy and votes to support placing a memorial bench for Duffy Murnane on the library grounds.
- Aug. 3: Self-checkout machines go live.
- Aug. 4: FHL volunteers finish the gardening improvements for the season.
- Aug. 7: End of the Summer Reading Program.
- Aug. 9: Molly of Denali visits the library to meet young fans. Ord. 21-45 accepts a \$7,000 grant from the Alaska State Library for purchasing materials.
- Aug. 12: City policy once again requires masks in public buildings.



Molly of Denali visited the library on August 9.

August

The self-checkout machines went live on August 3. Molly of Denali, from the eponymous PBS series, visited the library and met with fans outside in the plaza. The Friends voted to resume the Art in the Library program, which provides display space for local artists in the fireplace lounge for three months at a time.

In the middle of the month, South Peninsula Hospital took over part of the library parking lot for a free COVID testing clinic. Medical staff administered roughly 1,000 tests over the course of a week.

- Aug. 15: *Salmon Boy* by Johnny Marks closes out the StoryWalk® season.
- Aug. 15-20: A free COVID clinic outside the library administers roughly 1,000 tests.
- Aug. 25: Brighter LED bulbs replace the fluorescent lights in the library parking lot.
- Sept. 7: The LAB forwards the draft Donor Recognition Policy to FHL for comment.
- Sept. 9: Author Elena Passarello discusses her process in collaboration with 49 Writers.
- Sept. 18: Tech Help resumes, offering free computer advice to the public every other Saturday.
- Sept. 21-22: Representatives of the RTCA program visit Homer and conduct visioning sessions at the library.
- Sept. 24-25: The Friends of the Library Book and Plant Sale, the first full-size sale since the beginning of the pandemic.
- Oct. 1: Savanna Bradley leaves the library after working as a temporary Library Aide throughout the summer. The library begins offering vinyl LPs for checkout, with a record player in one of the study rooms.
- Oct. 1-Dec. 31: Artist Megan Frost displays her work in the fireplace lounge as part of the Art in the Library program.
- Oct. 7: The LAB votes to approve the Donor Recognition Policy. Jimmy Riordan visits the library with his traveling Art Workshop.
- Oct. 8: Author Jesse Wegman



The Friends of the Library Book and Plant Sale delighted customers Sept. 24-25.

September

Representatives of the RTCA returned to Homer for two days of meetings with local community groups, including the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, Bunnell Arts Center, the Pratt Museum and others. Local citizens contributed their input on how to improve the trail to the west of the library.

The Friends of the Library Book and Plant Sale turned out to be the event of the season. The first full-scale event since the beginning of the pandemic, it harnessed a lot of pent-up demand. All the plants sold out by noon on the first day.

October

Savanna Bradley left the library at the end of her six-month contract. Staff launched a new collection of vinyl LPs in the music section and installed a record player in study room 5. (Just to prove that Homer keeps up with the times, the record player comes with wireless headphones that can pick up the signal anywhere in the building.)

The LAB officially approved the Donor Recognition Policy and Council adopted it. The new policy lays out a process for acknowledging the many Homer patrons who contribute to the success of the library.

Traveling artist Jimmy Riordan visited the Bunnell Arts Center, with a side trip to the library to show off his Art Workshop, housed in a renovated bookmobile from Pittsburgh. The Homer bookmobile put in an appearance to welcome the visitors and compare amenities.

discusses his book, *Let the People Pick the President*.

- Oct. 13: Library staff lead a workshop for children on light and shadow as part of the Leap into Science program.
- Oct. 14: Author Nadia Saloman reads and discusses her book, *Goodnight Ganessa*.
- Oct. 25: City Council passes Reso. 21-074, adopting the library's Donor Recognition Policy.
- Nov. 1: Cinda Nofziger joins the staff as Youth Services Librarian.
- Nov. 1-Dec. 23: The library displays *Illustrating Alaska: Artists Making Children's Books*, an exhibit created by ExhibitAK and the Alaska State Museum.
- Nov. 12: Author Doug Dodd discusses his book, *Hero Unaware*.
- Nov. 17: Author Seth Kantner discusses his book, *A Thousand Trails Home*.
- Dec. 1-31: The annual Giving Tree stands in the front lobby.
- Dec. 8: Hour of Code for kids up to first grade.
- Dec. 10: Storytime for Grownups wraps up after one year and 78 stories by 54 different authors. Recordings remain available on the library's website.
- Dec. 10-11: Authors Tom Kizzia and Richard Chiappone hold a conversation on their books, *Cold Mountain Path* and *The Hunger of Crows*, respectively.
- Dec. 13: Ord. 21-67 accepts two grants from the Institute of



The meeting of the bookmobiles, Oct. 7.

November

Cinda Nofziger joined the library staff as the new Youth Services Librarian.

Local author Doug Dodd kicked off the first in-person reading of the year with his new book, *Hero Unaware*. Several other authors participated in events during November and December. The library also hosted the *Illustrating Alaska* exhibit, showing off the work of four Alaskan illustrators and describing their processes.

The Friends distributed book boxes to local schools, part of a long-standing effort to make sure even our most-distant patrons have access to reading materials.



Illustrating Alaska displayed the works of Alaskan artists Nov. 1-Dec. 23.

Museum and Library Services, funding upgrades to the wi-fi system, hotspots for checkout, little libraries in city parks and purchases of materials. Lunch with a Councilmember resumes.

- Dec. 16: Radio Storytime resumes.
- Dec. 20: In partnership with Community Recreation, the library begins offering sports equipment for checkout.
- Dec. 20-22: Heraldry workshop for kids.
- Dec. 21: A 5.7 quake rocks Homer. No major damage in the library.
- Dec. 23: The library holds its first in-person storytime since before the pandemic.
- Dec. 27: Maintenance staff discover leaks in the roof.
- Dec. 30: A new artist, Briana Hume, puts up work for display in the library fireplace lounge.
- Dec. 31: The unofficial balance in the Library Endowment Fund stands at \$38,708.73.



Many wonderful patrons contributed to the Giving Tree during December.

December

The annual Giving Tree occupied pride of place in the library lobby throughout December. In partnership with the Homer Bookstore, the Giving Tree encourages patrons to donate specific titles to the library by choosing gift tags off the tree. Over the course of the month patrons donated 52 books and \$700 worth of gift certificates to the library collection. In partnership with Community Recreation, the library began offering sports equipment for checkout from the front desk.

City Council accepted two grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, totaling \$25,091. These grants will fund several improvements to library services: upgrading the wi-fi network, purchasing ten hotspots for checkout and five little libraries to be installed in City parks, and providing \$2,500 for new print materials in the library's regular collection.

On December 27, maintenance staff discovered a series of leaks in the roof over the study rooms and in the back workroom. While the collection escaped harm, the wallboard above the study rooms sustained damage.

Thank you!

Our deepest thanks to all those who supported the library during 2021. Many members of the public contributed their time, energy and money to guarantee the success of the institution. We here recognize those who donated to the library's long-term sustainability:

Library Endowment Fund

Anonymous
Dave Berry
Christ David
Brie Drummond and Jeff Williams
Shirley Forquer
Steve Gibson
Marilyn Kirkham
Janet Klein
Ann Oberlitner
Rosie Tupper
Ruth Jean Woodring

Friends of Homer Public Library Endowment Fund

Connie and Kerry Ozer
Mary Sanders
Terri Spigelmyer

Friends of Homer Public Library Stewardship Fund

Marilyn Sigman

2021

... by the numbers at
Homer Public Library



42,525
Visits to the library

550
New library cards issued

1,611
Patrons attended programs

1,784
Volunteer hours logged

113,006
Items checked out

62,026
Books (print)

25,813
E-books

1,451
Magazines (print)

3,003
Audio & Music

585
Games, electronics
& equipment

19,493
Video / DVDs

635
E-magazines





RECEIVED
JAN 18 2022



January 14, 2022

City of Homer
Homer Foundation City Grant Program
491 East Pioneer
Homer, AK 99603

Dear Mayor Castner, City of Homer Council members and Homer Foundation Board of Directors,

I am writing on behalf of Kachemak Heritage Land Trust to thank you for the 2021 grant award from the City of Homer through the Homer Foundation. This grant was used as a 1:1 match for a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Services' Coastal Program and funded staff time and materials dedicated to stewarding land under our care and to assessing the potential for new conservation efforts within City limits.

In addition, funds from this program show our other supporters and grant funders the support of our local city. Again, we appreciate the City's dedication to this program and look forward to continuing to build and maintain a strong connection to the City's goals, including work under consideration in the Beluga wetlands area and on the Poopdeck Trail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marie McCarty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marie McCarty
Executive Director