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Pueblo library district monitoring Columbus demonstrations



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Although the Sunday demonstrations at the Christopher Columbus statue in the Mesa Junction have become calmer and less tense in recent weeks, the Pueblo City-County Library District is going to continue to monitor the situation further before deciding whether to reopen the Rawlings Library on Sundays.

Mediation sessions between the opposing sides of the statue dispute did not yield any sort of agreement, which was disappointing to the library district, according to Jon Walker, the executive director of the district.

"So as a result of that, I do intend to reach out to the mayor's office and to (Police Chief) Troy Davenport," Walker said on Thursday. "Because of the breakdown of the talks we will stand pat in terms of our service paradigm for Sundays and we will continue to observe certainly the upcoming Sunday. Since the talks have just broken down, these upcoming few weeks will be important for us to monitor."

The Rawlings Library, 100 E. Abriendo Ave., has been closed on Sundays since July 26 because of safety concerns from the weekly demonstrations.

The library cited the increased presence of individuals who are not readily identifiable as members of law enforcement who are openly carrying assault weapons in the immediate area of Rawlings Library as the reason for closure on Sundays.

"It wasn't the the presence of open carry guns that was our concern. Of course that's the law and the state of Colorado allows for that," Walker said. "It went well beyond that in terms of there were a number of individuals in July... what we were seeing were people dressed in militia gear with helmets, flak jackets, some carrying bats, and the way they acted. There were instances where people were pointing firearms."

Walker, who has gone to the library on Sundays to view the events, did say that the presence of weapons has been largely eliminated during the demonstrations of the past two Sundays and the overall environment of the gatherings has been much calmer than it has been.

He said he'd be comfortable with reopening the Rawlings Library if things stay that way.

"Because the talks broke down this week we're going to monitor and see what occurs over the next few weeks and hopefully that will continue," Walker said.

With the Rawlings Library closed on Sundays for now, the library district has shifted library services to Barkman Library, 1300 Jerry Murphy Road, and Lamb Library, 2525 S. Pueblo Blvd. Both locations are open from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sundays. They were not previously open on Sundays.

"I feel like we're in a good place overall in terms of offering access from Barkman and Lamb. I don't feel an intense pressure to change because we are offering the alternative outlets," Walker said. "However, we do look forward to returning to service at the Rawlings Library as soon as we have some better certainty that the public safety situation is managed there."

Chieftain reporter Ryan Severance can be reached by email at ryans@chieftain.com or on Twitter @RyanSevvy. Help support local journalism by subscribing to the Chieftain at chieftain.com/subscribe



Pueblo library district to expand business hours, browsing and computer use

Staff writer Aug 31, 2020 Updated 20 hrs ago

Starting Tuesday, Sept. 8, Pueblo City-County Library District will return to its pre-COVID-19 business hours and increase patron browsing and computer use to one hour. Additionally, visitors are asked to provide contact information if needed for tracing purposes. Patrons should stay home if exhibiting coronavirus symptoms.

Health and safety measures as outlined in Pueblo County Public Health orders will continue:

- All visitors and employees must wear a face covering while inside the library, children under the age of 10 are exempt. Anyone who cannot tolerate wearing a face covering due to a medical condition will be offered accommodations, but are not permitted to enter any library building without a face covering.
- Employees and visitors are required to follow social distancing measures while inside the library.
- There will be frequent cleaning and sanitization of high touch surfaces.
- Returned library materials will be quarantined for 72 hours.
- Bathrooms are locked but can be opened by staff upon request. Drinking fountains remain turned off.
- Curbside services for picking up library materials will remain. The hours will now be 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Patrons can also make an appointment by calling the branch directly to schedule a pickup time.
- All in-person programs and meeting room use is still suspended at this time.

Prior to the return to regular business hours, all library branch locations were open noon-6 p.m., six days per week. Sunday service will continue at Barkman and Lamb libraries from 1-5 p.m.

As of Sept. 8, business hours are:

Barkman, Lamb and Rawlings

9 a.m.-9 p.m., Monday through Thursday

9 a.m.-6 p.m., Friday and Saturday

1-5 p.m., Sunday at Barkman and Lamb only

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Giodone, Greenhorn and Lucero

10 a.m.-7 p.m., Monday through Thursday

10 a.m.-6 p.m., Friday and Saturday

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Library at the Y

9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. and 4-6 p.m., Monday through Friday

8 a.m.-noon Saturday

The district also has four satellite locations located in: Avondale Elementary School, 213 Hwy. 50 East; Beulah School of Natural Sciences, 8734 School House Lane, Beulah; CSU-Pueblo Library, 2200 Bonforte Blvd., Pueblo Community College Library, PCC Campus Academic Building, Suite 100.