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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. Albert Public Library issues temporary layoff notices during COVID-19 closure

ST. ALBERT — As St. Albert Public Library enters its fifth week of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, temporary layoff notices have been issued to 43 library staff members. The notices were issued on Tuesday and will be effective as of April 25. Those impacted by the temporary layoffs include casual, part-time and full-time staff, and comprise 60% of the library’s staff complement.

“Temporarily laying staff off is a difficult decision, but it has become clear that the closure is not short-term. As a publicly funded institution, the library has an obligation to be good stewards of those funds – the pandemic will take a financial toll on the whole community, and we must play our part in mitigating that,” says St. Albert Public Library Board Chair Janice Marschner. “We will continue to provide benefits to impacted staff during the layoffs, and we are working to help them access the available financial assistance programs.”

The decision to issue temporary layoff notices comes after four busy weeks in which the library rapidly moved to an online program and service delivery model. During the physical closure of St. Albert Public Library’s doors, the public demand for library services and programs remains high. The Library has responded by expanding digital collections and services, issuing free memberships remotely to St. Albert residents who didn’t have library cards, and delivering online programs for children, teens and adults.

“I am very proud of every single one of our hard-working and loyal staff. They are dedicated people who love their work serving the community of St. Albert and beyond. We are committed to supporting the staff impacted by the temporary layoffs, and staying connected to them during this challenging time,” say Peter Bailey, CEO of St. Albert Public Library. “We look forward to reopening the library doors, welcoming staff back, and resuming normal operations as soon as it is deemed safe by health officials.”

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