

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes DRAFT
March 8, 2023
5:30pm
David and Joyce Milne Public Library

Trustees Present: Bridget Spann (chair), Charles Bonenti, Pat Wilk (secretary), Timothy Cherubini (vice-chair), Micah Manary (treasurer),Tamanika Steward, Robin Lenz

Staff Present: Pat McLeod (library director)

Others Present: Elizabeth Whitney (Friends' liaison), Jane Nicholls (representing the League of Women Voters)

The meeting was called to order by Bridget at 5:30 P.M.

1. Approval of minutes from February 8: (Pat W.)

Charles moved to approve, Micah seconded. All voted in favor, except Pat W., who abstained.

2. Treasurer's Report: (Micah Manary)

Other than custodian expenses, no expenditures were withdrawn. A number have been sent, including the first part of the building evaluation fee. Mountain One agreed to give \$5,300 to the anniversary celebration fund, which we estimate should cover all expenses.

Trustees Annual Fund, balance February 28, 2023	\$55,034.77
February 14, 2023 Deposit	(Donations) +\$3,385.00
February 24, 2023 Withdrawal	(Expenses) -\$1,547.76
February 28, 2023 Deposit	(Interest) +\$35.53

Carpenter Fund

Established in memory of Elsie Carpenter to generate income to purchase books and other learning materials for children and young adults, the annual purchase of which will occur as near to May 15 as practicable.

Balance February 28, 2023	\$10,395.24
February 28, 2023 Deposit	(Interest) +\$6.75

Botsford Fund

Created from the sale of the Botsford House to be used for projects at the town library. After using some principal for a repair, some of which was repaid by the town and some of which was cancelled as forgiven, it was formally split from the House of Local History.

Balance February 28, 2023	\$74,9997.10
February 28, 2023 Deposit	(Interest) +\$48.68

Sara Tenney Osborne Fund

Endowment for Milne Public Library, to be used “for any purpose”, decided annually by the board. We receive the interest from this endowment once yearly.

Balance February 28, 2023 \$24,629.35

Sarah McFarland Fund

Bequest from the McFarland Estate, with no restrictions.

Balance February 28, 2023 \$300,000.00

150th Anniversary Celebration Fund

Checking account for working purchases for the 2024 150th anniversary celebration.

Balance February 28, 2023 \$275.00

Pat moved to approve, Charles seconded, all voted in favor, except Micah, who abstained.

3. Director’s Report: (Pat McLeod)

The CET (Center for Eco Technology) installed several door sweeps and door insulation as part of the Net Zero Study by Williams College and the Cool Comm. The Center also performed a study of installing removable insulation jackets for components in steam, hot and chilled water systems for the boiler room. The induction stovetop from CET has arrived; we will get it cataloged and circulating. We have begun to clear out the Classics Room to house the future “Library of Things.”

Pat M. updated the weather emergency procedure. The draft version will be discussed at the March 10th staff meeting. We will also discuss any equipment that might be needed in order for staff members to produce video tutorials for our patrons.

We have removed all mass market paperbacks because of very low circulation, the condition of the books and our need for shelving for an “oversize” collection. Weeding is done daily. We still continue to buy new paperbacks, but publishers are moving to trade paperback and not mass market binding.

The custodian has been coming in on Saturday mornings to sanitize for COVID protocols that we no longer need. So as of March 11th, he will not be working Saturdays unless needed for snow removal. Library staff will have customer service training in late April.

Programming stats are:

Adult programs

Nighttime stargazing (all ages), 30; Blind Date with a Book, 30 (about 45 BDB books were checked out); Gentle Yoga, 63; Kevin O'Hara talk, 25

Total adult participants: 148

Children’s/teen programs:

Drop-in workshop, pop-up card making, 15 kids, 3 teens; drop-in movies during the school break, Black Panther, 8, Princess and the Frog 5, The Hate You Give, 3; story time, 2.

Total children and teen participants: 36

Winter Wishes on our Rotating Library Tree: 33

4. Friends' Report: (Elizabeth Whitney). All is well. A lot of people on the board and volunteers have been away. We're having pop-up Sunday hours at Chapter Two Books.

5. Building and Grounds Committee update: (Charles)

Charles handed out to us the latest report from Centerline Architects, which summarized their findings about needed repairs to the building. The study identified two major categories. The first affect occupant safety (described as "immediate resolution required"); these include fire separation between level one and level two, water infiltration in the basement, bathroom ventilation throughout, installation of handrails on stairs leading from the building in multiple locations, and the installation of lighting and emergency lighting in the basement. The second category, improvements suggested within one to five years, lists items affecting building integrity and longevity. These include adding insulation to the building, window replacement, repairs and replacement of floor finishes and ceiling tile in the Friends' space, and weatherstripping of exterior doors—which now allow unconditioned air to enter the building.

We also mentioned the Net Zero study done by Williams College student; in their presentation they noted major energy inefficiencies at the Milne Library. We agreed that this is the time for advocacy.

6. Old business:

a. Centerline Building Assessment update (Charles)

We will be making a request for funding to begin these repairs at the March 27 Select Board meeting. We agreed that it would be helpful to have Keenan Chenail, a member of buildings and grounds committee, who is a project manager at Williams College, at this meeting, because he understands issues involving code compliance, is familiar with construction terminology, and would be able to discuss the Centerline findings clearly and answer questions.

Tamanika asked about the difference between a repair and a renovation. Charles explained that the building does not meet current codes; it meets the codes for when it was built. As long as you are repairing, you're not required to go to the level of code compliance. Tamanika raised a question for all of us to consider: do we want a simple fix or something that will take us to our long-term priorities?

Charles made the point that it's important to recognize that the town owns the library building. We are asking the town to accept its responsibilities as the owner of the building. Pat M. said we have the funding to address the "immediate resolution required" list, but the

things on the list for one to five years should be on a capital plan, planned for in advance and funded by the town.

We agreed that we still need a clear overview summary that we can hand to Select Board members on the 27th.

- b. Finance Advisory Committee update** (Timothy) This group was unable to meet, because they did not have a quorum.
- c. Budget Update** (Pat McLeod and Bridget Spann) Specific lines items of the budget were explained to us and discussed. All of the wages reflect a three percent cost of living increase. the custodian's salary is now full covered by the town. We are not requesting funds for training, because the Friends of the Milne Library now pay for staff development opportunities. The cost of utilities is up. Paper supplies are up. We have included in our budget computer needs for staff; the Friends fund computers used by patrons to access library resources.
- d. Strategic Plan update and timeline** (Pat McLeod and Timothy) Pat feels that accomplishing all of the goals of the Strategic Plan, and establishing a timeline for reaching those goals, is challenging, given her existing responsibilities. Tim presented the task as project management, and asked us to consider using a paid person to do this work. We discussed the pros and cons of hiring an outside consultant to oversee the implementation of the Strategic Plan goals. Charles felt it would add an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy and complication. He pointed out that we already have the goals clearly stated, and we already have articulated the steps to reaching those goals. Everything can be broken down into a manageable process. He suggested that somebody could volunteer to work with Pat M. on this, helping to set things up. Timothy pointed out that these goals were established in October, and now it's March—and we have yet to make any real progress. He felt guidance was needed. Charles suggested perhaps somebody on the Strategic Planning Team, who understood the goals clearly, could do this. He volunteered to help, as did Micah. We agreed to revisit this issue at a future meeting
- e. Social Media Policy draft** (Micah/Tamanika/Pat McLeod) We all received a draft of the policy, and agreed to send it to Town Counsel for review.
- f. Banned books program** (Robin and Pat McLeod) Jane Nicholls, of the League of Women Voters of Williamstown, was at the meeting to share plans for a Banned Book Reading that would be jointly sponsored by the League and the Milne Library, to be held on Sunday, October 1, during Banned Book Week, from 3-5 p.m., at the Bronfman Auditorium, Williams College. She shared with us a one-page handout describing the event, which listed an overview of the project, its goals, and the process for organizing it. She talked about the history and the purpose of the League, which is nonpartisan and focuses on voter rights and voter registration. They are especially concerned about the censorship going on now.

The event will involve six or eight readings, followed by short discussions, is free, but the League would like to pay the authors and readers who will be presenters. Readers who are asked to participate can select anything they want to read, as long as it's from a banned book. The League will put together some program notes. Pat M. told us that the library is planning a month of activities and displays around banned books, and this event will be the headliner.

The speakers will receive a \$200 honorarium. The preliminary budget is \$4000—with \$1600 for speakers' honoraria, \$2000 for speakers' expenses, and \$1000 for publicity. The League is asking the library to support fifty percent of their total cost. Elizabeth promised to bring this idea to the Friends; she said this seems in line with the goals the Friends would like to promote.

Timothy moved that we support this project up to \$2000, using funds from the Annual Appeal, with our final amount decided after the Friends have made their decision to contribute. Micah second; all voted in favor, except Robin, who abstained.

- g. LSTA grant** (Pat McLeod) The Dig In! grant was completed on time thanks to writing and input from Pat Wilk and Diane Van Kempen. The next step is the draft is returned before March 27th and the final version of the grant due on April 11th. On July 6th the Board of Library Commissioners approves grant awards.
- h. Trustee terms** (Bridget). Two three-year trustee terms are about to expire. Bridget asked all of us to be in touch with her regarding possible candidates who might want to take out nomination papers.

i.

New business:

- a. Sarah McFarland bequest.** We agreed to postpone this to the next meeting, so that we would have time to have a mindful discussion about how to strategically allocate this funding.
- b. Draft Code of Conduct for public comment** (Bridget) Micah sent to each of us, via email, a letter he wrote expressing his opinion about this draft document. We discussed some ideas, and agreed that individual trustees should submit their feedback by the end of March.
- c. Lee Audio 'N Security, Inc. bill \$2,457.50.** This invoice reflects our purchase of smoke detectors and CO2 detectors. We did not budget for this expense. Micah moved that the trustees pay for it. Tamanika seconded. All voted in favor.
- d. Date for May trustee meeting.** Although we usually met the second Wednesday in May, that meeting would involve two newly-elected members, and would be missing two trustees currently serving on the board. Bridget moved we change the meeting to May 3, the first Wednesday in May, to provide better continuity regarding current issues before the board. Robin seconded. All voted in favor
- e. Other business to come before the board.** Charles noted Judy Ensign's success at getting Mountain One Bank's full financial support of the Milne Public Library's 150th Anniversary Celebration.

8. Adjourn: Micah moved to adjourn. Charles seconded. All were in favor. Bridget adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Next meeting: April 12, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.