

**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
**March 9, 2022**  
**5:30pm**  
**Remote Meeting via Zoom for the**  
**David and Joyce Milne Public Library**

**Trustees Present:** Charles Bonenti (vice-chair), Timothy Cherubini, Debra DiMassimo, Karen Kowitz, Micah Manary (treasurer), Bridget Spann (chair), Pat Wilk (secretary & Friends' liaison)

**Trustees Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Pat McLeod (library director)

**Others Present:** Lisa Hiley and Judy Ensign (representing the Friends), and Andrew Art and Shana Dixon (representing the DIRE committee)

The meeting was called to order by Bridget at 5:31pm.

**Approval of Minutes from February meeting (Pat Wilk)**

Deb moved to approve these minutes, Tim seconded, and all voted in favor via a roll call vote, except Pat, who abstained.

**Treasurer's Report:** (Micah Manary)

We had no expenses this month. The listed expenses are transfers from previous month.

Trustees Annual Fund, balance February 28, 2022	\$49,819.69
February 10, 2022 Deposit	(Donations) \$1,525.00
February 10, 2022 Withdrawal	(Expenses) \$2513.71
February 28, 2022 Deposit	(Interest) \$23.00

**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, 2022	\$10,327.39
February 28, 2022	Deposit (Interest) \$4.74

**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, 2022	\$74,507.62
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February 28, 2022 Deposit	(Interest) \$34.18
Sara Tenney Osborne Fund	
<i>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.</i>	
Balance February 28, 2022	\$24,629

Tim and Charles both thanked Micah for redesigning the format of the treasurer’s report, and said the new information about the history and significance of each fund was helpful.

Karen moved to approve this report, Tim seconded, and all voted in favor via a roll call vote, except Micah, who abstained.

**Director’s Report:** (Pat McLeod)

The boiler continues to be a problem; there were frigid temperatures in February and the boiler was running on one one pump. The library was closed three days because of issues regarding heating the building. We need to do some upgrades; Ashley-Swift, the contractor, suggested we buy a pump that is beyond our budget. At first, Pat thought the trustees would need to fund this improvement. However she now realizes that she will be able to pay for the boiler expenses using encumbrances from last year’s funds. (Because of COVID we were under budget in some areas.) The front door system is 25 years old; all of the keypads are wearing out and we need a magnetic lock that would automatically close if there were a fire. This project is an upcoming expense.

All programs went really well this month. There was a great response to our “Blind Date with a Book” program; we had nice gifts for people who participated (20 adults, 6 teens, and 5 children). The library gave away 31 grab-and-go bags for Valentine’s Day.

The library received a \$250 donation last month.

The staff agreed to downgrade the mask requirement at Friday’s staff meeting. Staff members may wear single masks, or cloth masks, rather than KN95 masks. Masks are recommended but not required of patrons, except in the children’s room, where masking is still required.

The library has added a new streaming service called Canopy to its digital collection. They have a good collection of ebooks, movies, tv episodes, comics, and audiobooks. We are still keeping Hoopla. It’s important for us to have these streaming services.

**Friends’ Report:** (Linda Hiley)

Chapter two books is now open 11-4 Wednesday to Saturday—our normal winter hours. We have begun selling books on e-bay, as well as Amazon and Bookstore.com. The big news is that the Friends upgraded the WiFi in the donations center, paying for a more powerful network that will

make online selling easier. The Friends are also working on a more cohesive social media strategy that will unify their logos across different platforms, and boost their presence on social media.

We discussed whether the trustee liaison should be a rotating position; we decided that Pat Wilk should remain the liaison, for consistency and clear communication, but that individual trustees should come to the Friends' meetings if they had an interest in the topics being discussed, or wanted to present an idea or share some of our work with that group.

### **Building and Grounds Committee Report:** (Charles Bonenti)

This committee has not met in nearly a year. We finished the work in the teen room, did planning for renovating the adult services information area, and are nearing a point where we will have something to look at. Currently they are thinking about how they will relocate the reference service area while work is underway, Charles said he would like to convene the committee again, to determine whether everyone on the committee would like to continue serving, or whether we might need some new members. We discussed last month's proposal to build a bus stop on library property, which we rejected as an inappropriate and unsafe use of library land.

### **Strategic Plan Committee Report:** (Charles Bonenti)

Charles shared the results of our meeting last week, and explained that we had worked as a group to revise the community survey that had been distributed. The revised survey was redistributed to the trustees, with a request that we each look at it again and give additional feedback about what we think by Friday, April 1st. The next meeting of the Strategic Planning committee is Wednesday, April 6th. Charles said the group will also ask their professional consultant from the Massachusetts library system to evaluate the survey and give her advice before the April meeting. The goal is to distribute it—both online to a variety of different groups, and in paper form, at the library and other town locations, in April, and to have the results by May. Right now we are at 20 questions.

Pat M. said the survey was thoughtful but long and might be off-putting to people because of its complexity. Tim asked about other information-gathering mechanisms, specifically in-person interviews or focus groups. Charles said he was envisioning teams of two people doing interviews. Pam mentioned that the group has talked about having some kind of Spring Street presence during the early summer, and about finding ways to reach people who aren't regular library users, but might be. We need somebody to translate the survey into Spanish.

Bridget suggested that might be a wonderful project for Mount Greylock students. Bridget and Micah offered to speak to Mount Greylock teachers about this.

### **Old Business:**

#### **a. Trustee terms ending this year:** (Bridget)

Micah, Tim and Bridget have taken out nomination papers. There is still a fourth position open, and no one else has taken out papers for that. This is an opportunity for us to do some community outreach. Bridget encouraged all of us to think about what other skills we want on the board, and who might be recruited to run for the open slot.

In response to Shana Dixon's question about the lack of minority members on this board, and the issue of how people find out about these openings, we had a discussion about our practices, which mostly involve inviting people we know who have something to contribute. Tim said diversity on library boards was an issue not just in our community, but nationally. It's partly the lack of visibility, he said, and partly a lack of familiarity. We are asking people to work with the library in a different way. Diversity is a problem in library careers and staffing, too, he said, partly because of the educational requirements. We ended by asking our guests from the DIRE committee to think about the opportunity to serve as a trustee, and communicate to others that we are searching for a new member. Drew promised to get the word out about our trustee vacancy to his group.

#### **b. DIRE COMMITTEE** (Drew Art and Shana Dixon)

We started with introductions. Shana, a single mother of two, said the library has always played a big part in her life. "I remember walking to the library as a little black girl and feeling welcome," when I lived in Gardner, she told us, and her sons enjoy our library today. Andrew—the oldest son of Friends President Pam Art, returned to Williamstown in 2017 after 25 years in the Washington area. He explained the role of the DIRE committee, and thanked us for being the only town group that has taken seriously the pledge to report on its activities centered on diversity, equity, and inclusion. "You are the stewards of one of the most popular and accessible institutions in Williamstown," he said, "And you have already done a lot to promote inclusion, and to make books accessible to all people."

He talked to us about the "significant omissions" in the way we've told our history in Williamstown. He discussed historical records of enslavement by the town founders, and the fact that we sit on Mohican homelands. There is no information about these things in the town's history. "This error can't be remedied by going into the library and picking up a local history book," Andrew said. "Original research needs to happen to fill those gaps... The library could play a pivotal roll in raising awareness and provide resources that are currently missing...the way historical omissions are remedied can't be the way they were created in the first place." He wants to add narratives centered on Black and indigenous voices, and discussed a grant that Mount Greylock has received to purchase library materials from a curated list—scholarly works, history, and fictional narratives centered on native voices. Pat M. said she would like to purchase resources from that same list of curated titles. She said the programming committee has been looking at diverse speakers and topics.

We all agreed that our two groups should continue to work together and communicate clearly about ongoing projects.

**Milne Library 150th anniversary sesquicentennial.** (Judi Ensign)

Judi had shared with Pat M. in advance a document several pages long, filled with ideas about ways the town could celebrate the library's 150th anniversary two years from now. Pat shared it with all of us, and during the meeting we praised her creativity and spirit, and said her list was impressive and inspiring. What's the next step? She would like to form a casual planning committee, perhaps made up of six people representing trustees, Friends, library volunteers, and community members. We agreed that we need time to think about whether we are able to make this commitment. Judi told us the committee should start small, meeting over coffee to brainstorm ideas. She told us former trustee Peter Mehlin had already agreed to assist.

**Mask Mandate** (Bridget)

The Trustees voted on August 15 to mandate masks for all who use the Milne library, whether or not they are vaccinated. Now, we are in a changing time; masks are no longer required in public schools. Should we repeal that mandate? Pat M. said she felt masks were still important in the children's room. We decided that is a library policy, and therefore under her control. Micah moved to repeal the August 15 mandate, effective immediately. Charles seconded, and all were in favor.

**Adjourn:**

Micah moved to adjourn; Karen seconded. All were in favor. Bridget adjourned the meeting at 7:22.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 13, at 5:30 p.m.

