

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
February 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 (secretary), Bridget Spann (chair), Pat Wilk (Friends liaison)

Trustees Absent: None

Staff Present: Pat McLeod (library director)

Others Present: Elizabeth Whitney (representing the Friends)

The meeting was called to order by Bridget at 5:32pm.

Approval of Minutes from December Meeting: (Micah Manary)

The minutes for the regular December meeting were presented. Tim moved to approve these minutes, Pat seconded, and all voted in favor via a roll call vote, except Micah, who abstained.

Treasurer's Report: (Micah Manary)

Our expenses this month were for the annual appeal mailing, our chamber of commerce membership, and the architectural evaluation.

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Trustees Annual Fund, balance January 31, 2022	\$50,785.40
January 18, 2022 Deposit	(Donations) \$6,255.00
January 18, 2022 Withdrawal	(Expenses) \$2,785.04
January 31, 2022 Deposit	(Interest) \$24.83
Carpenter Fund, balance January 31, 2022	\$10,322.65
January 31, 2022 Deposit	(Interest) \$5.24
Botsford Fund, balance January 31, 2022	\$74,473.44
January 31, 2022 Deposit	(Interest) 37.83
Sara Tenney Osborne Fund, balance January 31, 2022	\$24, 629.35

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

Tim raised some larger questions about the Treasurer's Report: Do we have a budget? Are we on budget? Is this what we expected? He would like an explanation of expenses, and some sort of written summary of what each of these funds are to provide more context. These were new questions for us, and we agreed that more information would be helpful. Bridget pointed out that although we have fundraising goals, and there are some things we know we need money for, we don't actually have an operating budget. Micah pointed out that we approve each expense, and that the financial records the town shares with us lump "expenses" into one sum, and do not reflect financial transactions in a timely manner.

Pat McLeod volunteered to provide a written description for each of the funds. Micah agreed to describe the expenses each month. Bridget asked Tim if he might be willing to work with Micah to revise the format of the monthly financial report so that it's more in line with what he thinks would be helpful. Tim agreed to do this.

Director's Report: (Pat McLeod)

Pat gave an overview of procedural changes from the last month. The library has canceled all in-house meetings and programs for this month—we will reassess and reschedule. She will allow ESOL classes for Thursdays in January, also tutoring Afghan families. The library will maintain hours.

We have tightened up the Circulation desk check out areas for social distancing. We have purchased N95 masks for the staff, and asked all staff to limit chatting with patrons at the desk. We are trying to discourage people congregating and talking at the circulation desks in the Children's and Adult areas.

It's been a challenging time for Pat due to illness. She has been working from home—doing performance evaluations and job descriptions, and finalizing the Best Practices Manual, which will be out next month.

January was a tough month with frigid temperatures and the library running on only one pump for the boiler. DPW Director and Building supervisor visited last week and had no solutions. The pump is still on order. The library has not gotten over 65 degrees as an avg. temp. We have simple thermometers at the three service desks and they have averaged around 68 degrees mid-day. Mornings are cooler. The staff agreed at the January staff meeting that if the average building temp was below 60 (not just one room) then we would close.

The weekly e-newsletter has over 42 % hit ratio, highest ever. Pat talked about the successful "Blind Date with a Book" program, which was featured in this week's Chamber of Commerce Newsletter. She attended a webinar called "We Are NOT Okay: Library Worker Trauma Before

and During COVID-19 and What Happens After”; it was a good panel discussion on burn out, compassion fatigue and solutions.

Friends’ Report: (Elizabeth Whitney)

The Friends have been using the shortened hours at Chapter Two Books to rearrange and cull books. February schedule is back to Wednesday to Saturday 12-4, and their store will be open next Sunday, February 20. Masks are still required in the store. There is a Black History Month display in the window, and they will also have a Valentine’s Day display and a President’s Day display. At the last meeting, Elizabeth brought forward the ideas about diversity and inclusion that were discussed at our recent meeting with the DIRE committee, and in the process of drafting our DEI quarterly report. She said the group had a long conversation about ways they could support inclusion and diversity through their work of Chapter Two, and that representatives of the Friends would like to join the Trustees and the library and to discuss ways we are continuing to ensure that we further our own personal knowledge and awareness of these issues, and also think through efforts that will benefit the community at large. How can we get books into the hands of as wide a range of people as we can? How can we view diversity and inclusion both from an educational standpoint and from a distribution standpoint. We see this as an important part of how we approach our work in supporting libraries.

We also discussed the role of the Trustees Liaison to the Friends, currently held by Pat Wilk, and whether it should be a rotating position, to allow more members of the Board of Trustees to be familiar with the work being done by the Board of the Friends. We agreed **that** there is more collaboration between these two groups than there used to be, but that the consistency of having one person as the liaison was important, too. It was decided that Pat will remain the liaison, but that individual trustees would come to the Friends’ meetings when they had an interest in the topics being discussed, and wanted to share some of our work with that group.

Building and Grounds Committee Report: (Charles Bonenti)

We are still at a standstill with the reference area, waiting for samples of finishes, woodwork, drawings. That’s moving along at a snail’s pace—partly because of supply issues. We are hoping to be able to make some decisions soon. Currently they need to address the need for an AV system. A quality projector will give us more capability in the future to offer different kinds of programs, and therefore we might be able to justify the extra cost. The alternative is a 89-inch smart tv, which no one on the committee wants.

Strategic Plan Committee Report: (Charles Bonenti)

At the February 2 meeting, the committee revised and did a final edit of the questionnaire. We voted to distribute the survey to The Friends’ Board, the Board of Trustees, the Library staff, and the library volunteers before our March 2 meeting. Kirsten has since formatted it into Google Forms, and shared the link. Pat Wilk, who is also a member of the committee, asked respondents to complete the survey, and forward in a separate e-mail their feedback on the format, the questions, and any possible additions we should consider by Friday February 18th.

Old Business:

a. DEI quarterly report. (Bridget Spann)

We discussed the report, and the recent meeting of trustee representatives with the DIRE committee. Deb followed the links in the report, and found them helpful. Pat W thought the writing was impressive and informative. Bridget said it was an important time to share ideas with the DIRE committee. She invited two people from that committee to attend our March meeting.

Bridget said she is seeing many training opportunities involving diversity, equity, and inclusion, and would like a smaller group—a DEI subcommittee—to discuss what training we need, what would be helpful for staff, friends, and trustees, starting with existing resources that are readily available. She would like two library staff members, two community members, and two trustees to serve on the subcommittee. Charles said the Strategic Plan Committee should be working some DEI goals into the plan. Pat McLeod said she is actively looking for some sort of diversity/equity consultant, and would serve. Elizabeth said she and Michael Sussman, representing the Friends, would be also willing to work on the subcommittee. Micah agreed to be a member. Charles moved to approve the DEI quarterly report, Pat Wilk seconded, Bridget abstained. All were in favor.

b. Donation Policy

We voted on the revised donation policy that was discussed at our January meeting. Micah moved to approve, Karen seconded. All were in favor.

c. Bylaws

The new document, discussed at our January meeting, is a simplified version. The goal of the revision was to simplify the bylaws, and to remove from that document any lines related to donations, and put those procedures in a separate “Donation Policy” document. Charles moved to accept the revised Bylaws, Deb seconded, all were in favor.

New Business:

a. 2023 budget (Pat McLeod)

Pat reviewed line items in the proposed 2023 budget that will go before the Finance Committee, which is \$532,860.59. She talked about the factors affecting each item. We discussed the need to improve the salaries of library staff. Micah voted to approve the proposed budget, Deb seconded. All were in favor.

b. Trustee terms ending this year (Bridget Spann)

The terms of three trustees will be ending this year; Deb, Karen, Micah and Bridget. Deb is leaving the board, Karen will be stepping down after serving two years of a three-year term, and both Bridget and Micah are willing to run for re-election. Bridget asked us to think about what skills we might need on the board and what people we might encourage to run.

c. Sarah Campbell McFarland bequest

The first installment of this bequest is \$249,000. The bequest was recently received by the Select Board. McFarland worked as a librarian at Williams College and at Miss Hall's School. We wanted to write a thank you letter to someone, but she has no living family members. There are no specific provisions about how we should use the money. We talked about how exciting this was, and Pat M. said we need to not just put money towards building improvements but instead make a careful plan for spending it on programs and services that would benefit the people of Williamstown. We agreed to do some research about her, and write a piece about her gift to the library. Would the Eagle be interested in this?

d. Update library director job description

This was something we had said needed to be done. Bridget and Tim agreed to work with Pat McLeod on this task.

e. Other business:

Charles moved to allocate \$250 to be spent on books for the children's department and the adult department of our library to honor a departing trustee and valued library volunteer. The books will reflect his interests in animals and rescues, and will be accompanied by a large library display. Pat Wilk seconded, all were in favor.

Bridget reminded us that February 28th is the deadline to submit our required conflict of interest forms to the Town of Williamstown.

Adjourn:

Micah moved to adjourn; Karen seconded. All were in favor. Bridget adjourned the meeting at 7:13.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 9 at 5:30 p.m.

