

Minutes for the Board of Trustees of the Williamsburg Libraries

Monday, May 18, 2019, 7:00 pm

Virtual meeting via Zoom

Present: Pat Billingsley, Ken Borden, Bev Bullock, Joan Coryat, Charlotte Meryman (recorder), Rob Stinson. Guest: Maureen O'Brien.

1. The meeting was called to order by Joan at 7:05 pm.
2. Minutes
 - a. Charlotte designated as recorder
 - b. April 21, 2020 minutes reviewed and one amendment suggested. Charlotte moved to accept as amended, Ken seconded, unanimously approved.
3. Director's report
 - a. **Community connections:** Bev and other department heads are teleconferencing weekly regarding the town's coronavirus response and plan to discuss building reopening plans tomorrow. The library has launched Keep Safe & Keep Strong, an archival project documenting life in town during the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - b. **Senior services:** No update.
 - c. **Staff updates:** The library remains closed to patrons. Staff continue to empty the book drop and receive deliveries from UPS and FedEx, and Laurie is doing deep cleaning throughout the building. Bev is working on plans for reopening in phases. Carl Schlerman, who built the circulation desk, will create movable "sneeze guards" (clear plastic shields) for its computer stations, but Bev says he does not want to cut into the desk to reconfigure the book drop area, as had been proposed. She does not plan to have returns taken at the desk when the library reopens, at least for the foreseeable future. Separately, Bev noted that she has been responding to a host of surveys from regional, state, and national library organizations assessing the impact of the pandemic.
 - d. **Programming:** The library will use an online reading challenge called Beanstack for the summer reading program, which Naomi is setting up. The \$1,100 cost is being paid from the Greta Carey Fund. There will be an adult component, and the program will run for three years. Bev is still unsure about prizes. Separately, Naomi is setting up an Escape Room online using parts of the library. The Hamptons and Hilltowns One Read will launch in September with the book *Station Eleven* and is funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.
 - e. **Technology update:** A new computer for the director has been ordered through the town's Dell representative. Johnson Electric has completed the cabling project and installed new wall sockets in the Riverside Room, at a cost of \$600, paid for by the Friends. The library website will be upgraded soon to a newer format (\$1,500, to be paid from the Greta Carey Fund).

- f. **School program updates:** Principal Stacey Jenkins will share the Summer Reading program information with students and families once it is set up.
 - g. **Friends news and updates:** The Friends have approved up to \$10,000 in secured funding for new shelving for the redesigned Riverside Room, which allows the library to receive free design services from Demco library supply company. The actual cost is expected to be well below that.
 - h. **Maintenance and repair updates:** Servpro has cleaned the library rugs, and Bev says they look great. The \$1,190 cost was covered by the Friends. A window cleaning estimate is expected this week. Peak Performance Roofing has reconfigured the front porch roof, and it is no longer leaking. Building Supervisor Dan Hathaway will fix the wall. Peak Performance also sealed some seams over the Riverside Room, which will be monitored for signs of leakage. There was a slight flood in the basement when the furnace expansion tank overflowed, though Book Sale items were moved in time to avoid damage. Jamrog will replace the leaky valve this week, for which the Finance Committee has approved a Reserve Fund transfer. Bev has acquired a basement water alarm, but it has not yet been installed. Separately, the town will replace the dehumidifier in the vault, where town records are stored. Remaining maintenance issues include the broken window adjacent to the elevator and winter cold air infiltration in the elevator shaft.
 - i. **Other library news:** Bev is one of six Massachusetts librarians chosen to attend the Association of Small Rural Libraries conference this fall. She will receive a full scholarship and participate in a Small Library Planning Forum led by the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC).
4. Financial reports
- a. **Annual Fund status:** No new donations. Current total is \$16,072. Goal is \$18,500.
 - b. **Current budget reports:** FinCom Chair Paul Wetzel has advised that the salary for our regular cleaner (\$6,774) should be included in our labor expenses, not the maintenance line, as Laurie is a town employee not a contractor. This change will be made starting with the FY21 budget and will simplify any future Reserve Fund transfer requests for maintenance.
5. Old business
- a. **Annual campaign:** Due to the constantly evolving coronavirus situation, the board decided against sending a fundraising email at this time. Instead, Pat will draft a small note to be included in Bev's next library newsletter and Charlotte will draft a reminder postcard with a softer message to be sent to regular donors who have not yet given. The magnet design was finalized, but the board agreed to hold off on printing until the library is open regular hours and our normal fundraising resumes, possibly in the fall or winter.
 - b. **Future board members:** Bev said staff suggested a potential candidate, whom Rob will approach to gauge interest.

- c. **Long-range strategic plan:** Bev has reviewed both the current plan and the MBLC guidelines. The MBLC has extended the deadline for a year, until October 2021, due to the pandemic.
- d. **FY21 budget request:** The board has submitted a level-funded budget for the coming fiscal year and the FinCom so far has not requested further cuts.
- e. **Annual Town Meeting warrant articles:** Due to the pandemic, only articles relating to the FY21 budget will be considered in June. Pat will confirm with Charlene that our articles requesting funding to replace the fire alarm control unit and construct a new walkway to the North St. entrance will be included.
- f. **Draft photography & video policy:** Tabled while library is closed.
- g. **Meekins Library Corporation tax status:** Ken has been in touch with Trust Fund Chair Dick Kisloski, who is looking for the information needed to file back taxes for FY '17, '18 and '19. Ken noted that a fee may be owed to the IRS to resolve the matter. Dick has advised we consult a CPA or lawyer regarding the possibility and/or advisability of dissolving the trust, which we will consider doing after the tax matter is settled.
- h. **Staff pay equity project:** Pat and Rob noted that the Board of Selectmen has decided to hold off on a raise for the police chief. According to their April minutes, they felt "it was not appropriate when other departments were not getting raises." The budget uncertainty created by the pandemic further complicates the matter. Trustees discussed the possibility, when a request is eventually made, of phasing in raises over several years.
- i. **Trustees representation at Friends meeting:** Pat will attend the June 8 Friends meeting, to be held via Zoom.

6. New business

- a. **Used book giveaway:** Bev reports that approximately 30 people picked up themed bags of used and withdrawn books at the first Brown Bag Book Grab on May 7. Kids' bags were the most popular and ran out. Staff will have more available at the next Grab on May 20. The Friends have agreed that up to half of their Book Sale volumes may be used instead for the Book Grab.
- b. **Reopening for curbside pickup:** Bev said she may need to buy bags for curbside pickup, which she hopes to begin the week of June 1. The state is allowing libraries to open for pickup only starting May 25. However, Bev noted the state is also advising those age 60 and older to stay home. A number of Meekins staff are in that category.
- c. Rob spoke with Abbie von Schlagell, a nonprofit consultant in Pittsfield, about possible fundraising options. She suggested applying at some point in the future (not during the pandemic crisis) for a capacity building grant from the Community Foundation of Western Mass., which could include money for Donor Search, a subscription service that helps match charities with potential donors. The cost is \$3,500 a year, or \$1,500 if accessed through her account. Any such effort would need to be done in conjunction with the Friends, which has 501(c)(3) status. Rob said she stressed the importance of the Friends, Trustees, and library director working together in synchrony on all fundraising. He also noted that she believes strongly in staying in phone

contact with donors. Separately, Rob noted that the MBLC maintains a useful statewide calendar of virtual events. He sat in on a recent trustee orientation webinar, which he said was informative.

7. Next meeting: Monday, June 15, 2020, 7 pm, via Zoom
8. Rob moved to adjourn at 9:04 pm, Ken seconded, approved unanimously.

P. A. Billingsley