

# WHITING LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## Minutes — October 19, 2020

*Present:* Robert Nied, David Lord, Cathy Hasbrouck, Ed Grossman, Lyza Gardner, Vanessa Heybyrne, Colleen Garvey, trustees; Deirdre Doran, Library Director

*Absent:* N/A

### **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Robert Neid called the meeting to order at 9:30AM on the Zoom platform.

### **APPROVE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 14th MEETING**

A motion was made (Cathy/Ed) to accept the minutes of the September 14, 2020, meeting, amended as follows:

- Change sentence under *New Business: Develop Strategic Plan* from “Colleen Garvey stressed the importance of including professional conduct planning...” to “Colleen Garvey stressed the importance of including a professional to conduct planning...”
- Change heading DIRECTORS YOUTH SERVICES REPORT to DIRECTOR’S / YOUTH SERVICES REPORT

Approved by all present.

### **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Treasurer Ed Grossman said donations continue to be strong, and expenses are down. Programs, equipment, supplies and materials spending are all under budgeted amounts. He said the Library may end up with a reserve at the end of the year.

Robert Nied thanked the Library staff for the recent book sale and “keeping the Library relevant during the pandemic...we should all be really pleased at how the Library is being administered.”

### **Review of draft Investment Policy Statement**

The Board reviewed the draft Investment Policy Statement. Ed Grossman reiterated that the purpose of the document was to establish objectives, purposes and performance standards for the Library’s investments.

Both Ed Grossman and Robert Nied suggested a renaming of the current account from “Wealth Management Account” to something that better reflects the account’s purpose. Ideas proposed were “Sustainment Account” and “Preservation Fund.” There was a consensus for “Preservation Fund.”

Ed Grossman mentioned a few suggested changes from Robert Neid that he’d like to incorporate in the next draft. They included adding additional text in Section IV (Investment Authority) regarding the obligation of the Treasurer to report on the fund’s performance regularly to the Board, and lowering the withdrawal amount threshold for requiring the approval of the Board from \$5000 to \$2500.

Lyza Gardner said that the \$2500 amount seems reasonable—this fund is meant for long-term goals and “we shouldn’t be in a rush” for quick withdrawals.

Robert Nied suggested that the obligation of the Treasurer to report on fund activity include a clause about reporting unusual activity, important developments or “unusual circumstances.” He said that he was in favor of lowering the withdrawal threshold requiring Board approval even more, perhaps \$1000.

Cathy Hasbrouck asked a clarifying question about references to “Money Market” and withdrawal restrictions that led to some discussion and confusion over the scope of the document and whether it also pertained to the Library’s Money Market account (also at People’s United Bank).

Ed Grossman explained the history of the two accounts.

It was unclear to Trustees as to whether the withdrawal restrictions in the document prevented transferring money between the Money Market account and the investment fund (Wealth Management Account).

Cathy Hasbrouck asked if the document pertained to both accounts, and if so, was a “safety valve” needed to be able to move money around?

Lyza Gardner suggested another round of drafting and review at the next meeting. She offered to help with formatting and wording to alleviate confusion.

Ed Grossman said he would send an updated draft to the fund managers at People’s United for review once changes were integrated.

A motion was made to approve and accept the Treasurer's report (Lyza/David). Approved by all present.

Update on health benefits discussion

Ed Grossman gave background on the confusion over whether the Library is a municipal library, whether its employees are municipal employees, and, if so, whether they are entitled to some or all of the benefits that Town employees receive, especially health benefits.

Some of the history involves conversations with Lara Keenan, consultant for governance and management with the Vermont Department of Libraries, and Jenny Prosser, general counsel to the Secretary of State. Both agreed that it seemed like the Library was municipal. Ed noted that Lara Keenan is not a lawyer, and Jenny Prosser's comment was unofficial.

There have been ongoing discussions between the Library and the Town about this. There is no response yet from Town Attorney Jim Carroll. Town Manager Julie Hance has been investigating options. As an interim measure, the Select Board agreed to offset half the cost of health insurance for the two librarians through the end of the year.

Ed Grossman says that the Board needs to start projecting the cost of continuing to defray some or all of the cost of healthcare for the professional librarians over the next 3 to 5 years. It needs to be part of our budget-preparation process. Julie Hance has asked for some projections by November.

Update on budget process: Next steps, timeframe

Ed Grossman had a "mini-meeting" with Director Deirdre Doran to talk about budgeting for 2021. This will need to include some of the health benefits projections discussed earlier.

Robert Neid said that a lot of this needs to happen before the next meeting.

Ed Grossman said the initial projections—needed before the next meeting—can be estimates.

**DIRECTOR/YOUTH SERVICES REPORT**

Library Director Deirdre Doran said the big event of September was the book sale and that it was a good month overall. The book sale was successful and "people had a good time." The sale worked on a "pay-what-you-want" basis. Extended appointment hours began at the beginning of October.

### Status of Youth Services and Assistant's evaluation

Robert Nied asked if employee evaluations were scheduled yet and if the Board could get copies.

Deirdre Doran proposed that employee evaluations be done on hire-date anniversaries instead of by calendar year.

There was some discussion about the reconciling of evaluations through the year with the need to budget projected payroll expenses. There was consensus that the budget could reflect a range of merit raises.

Deirdre Doran asked what the order of operations for evaluations was. Robert Nied said that he preferred a flow in which the employee is able to hear the evaluation and respond before salary adjustments were final.

Ed Grossman asked if the updated salaries would go into effect on January 1, 2021, or if they would be staggered through the year.

Lyza Gardner said that it sounds like the plan was to budget for a range of possible raises, but they'd only go into effect after evaluations, which are on hire-date anniversaries.

Robert Nied said that the Board would move forward with developing a range of salary increases in the budget as well as an estimate on health benefits. Actual pay increases will be applied following evaluations and will reflect, at least in part, the content of these evaluations.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### Change of Library hours

Robert Nied said that in the last meeting there was a request for Deirdre Doran to provide some background information about any potential negative impacts from changing the open days of the Library from the current Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday to Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. The motivation for the change is to provide a 2-day "weekend" for Library staff.

Deirdre Doran said she had some limited statistics from the past six months, which are "obviously not the most comprehensive timeframe," but that the current situation is likely to go on for some time. She was surprised to find that Monday is not any busier than other days.

Wednesday and Friday have been more busy. The only regular Monday is the meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Robert Nied asked Deirdre Doran if she would still be comfortable attending Board meetings on Mondays. She said that was fine, as she already does work during times the Library is closed.

Ed Grossman asked if there were any announcements that should be done before the changes take effect.

Deirdre Doran said that she proposes that the changes take effect in 2021, so there is plenty of time to communicate the changes. She said that being open Tuesdays meant that the Library will be open for five more days each year because of the number of holidays that fall on Mondays. There might be a slight change needed in the Personnel Policy to allow employees to take some additional days off to accommodate this.

A motion was made (Colleen/Cathy) to change the opening days of the Library from Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday; to Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, effective January 1, 2021. Approved by all present.

#### Personnel Committee

Robert Nied said the Personnel Committee needs to meet and discuss the Director's evaluation and talk about compensation.

Ed Grossman reminded the Board that it's important and has relative urgency, but the actual evaluation will be made on the Director's hire-date anniversary (in 2021), so the Board's responsibility in the immediate term is to establish the possible raise ranges.

Robert Nied said this meeting can be deferred as it's not as urgent as originally thought.

#### Discussion of CRM solutions

Lyza Gardner presented a proposal for using the Kindful non-profit Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) software platform to manage information about donors and their donations over time. This would replace the single, confusing spreadsheet used to manage both. The Kindful system would integrate with other services like MailChimp and other payment platforms like PayPal. It would not dictate the methods in which the Library does fundraising—physical letters can still be mailed to donors—but it would aid with supporting fundraising.

Robert Nied said that “there is an opportunity for improvement here”, as the Library’s traditional method has worked (i.e. sending physical mailings to a list of donors), but there are technologies that can make this easier to manage. “If we continue going to the same pool of donors twice a year in the same way, we’ll begin to see a drop-off...This approach offers so many more options to how we can do this. It has real practical ramifications as to how we can get this done.” He said that he thinks the change could ultimately also reduce our personal time spent on this work.

Robert Nied asked where the Kindful software would “reside.”

Lyza Gardner explained that it is a web-based platform, meaning that anyone with appropriate access (i.e. an account) and a web browser could access the system, and no installation or maintenance is necessary.

Robert Nied asked if the system could be ready for use for the fundraising drive coming up.

Lyza Gardner said if we can get the funding sorted out—\$1200 for a year—we can probably get the system populated before the Nov/Dec fundraising drive.

Ed Grossman said that there should be some money available because of the conservative spending this year on various budget line items.

Colleen Garvey asked, with all the new home sales, can we get contact information for the new homeowners in the area?

Robert Nied, Ed Grossman and Cathy Hasbrouck suggested the Grand List and the Transfer List (by year) available in the Town Office.

Cathy Hasbrouck asked if the Kindful service can print labels.

Lyza Gardner answered that the system allows you to export data in a format that can be used to print labels, so, in effect, yes.

Robert Nied said that, to summarize, this is a \$1200 per year investment. It will require some work to get ready for the next fundraiser. He said he strongly favors moving in this direction, as it potentially expands our donor base dramatically, and won’t be such a strain on Trustees’ time.

David Lord asked how the Library would handle providing receipts needed for tax purposes to donors.

Lyza Gardner said that the system wouldn't dictate how this is handled: physical copies could continue to be mailed, or digital copies emailed depending on Board preference.

A motion was made to purchase one year of service of the Kindful CRM platform for \$1200 (Cathy/Ed). Approved by all present.

#### November fundraising campaign

Robert Nied said that he didn't see any issue with pushing the fundraising campaign out just a bit until the end of November or early December.

Lyza Gardner asked about printer timing for printing letters and envelopes. Is there enough time after the next meeting for turnaround?

Robert Nied said that printer turnaround is a few days, so it should be fine.

#### Status of library heating system

There is some complexity to the Library's heating systems: there are two independent systems and some proprietary equipment is involved. The Town will cover the expense of getting things resolved. Work is scheduled within the next week to ten days.

#### Strategic planning

Robert Nied said that Strategic Planning is something the Board needs to do, and that it's been deferred because of the pandemic; it needs to get some focus going forward.

#### Other Old Business

Ed Grossman requested a brief Zoom meeting to get the budget spreadsheet ready to go. Robert Nied suggested picking a day to meet.

Ed Grossman said that donations are still coming in from the June fundraising drive, and the total raised amount is currently \$11,665.

Robert Nied said he will provide a draft of the Gift Acceptance Policy for review at the next meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Ed Grossman mentioned that Chester Rotary was interested in asking Deirdre Doran and Carrie King to present at a meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

N/A

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made (Lyza/Ed) and unanimously approved. The Board was adjourned at 11:33AM until the next meeting on November 9, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lyza Gardner, Secretary