

WHITING LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes – September 14, 2021

Trustees Present: Robert Nied, Ed Grossman, David Lord, Rosamund Conroy and Cathy Hasbrouck via Zoom Teleconference.

Citizens Present Deirdre Doran at the Whiting Library.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Robert Nied, Chair, at 8:30 AM on the Zoom platform. He noted that Lyza Gardner would be absent from the meeting because she was not feeling well.

APPROVE MINUTES

From the August 10, 2021 Board of Trustees meeting

A motion was made (Ed, David) to accept the minutes from August 10, 2021. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously.

From the September 7, 2021 Special Joint Meeting with the Strategic Planning Committee

A motion was made (Cathy, Ed) to accept the minutes from the September 7, 2021 Special Joint Meeting. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ed Grossman said the pandemic continues to affect the library's revenues. He had hopes for the coming Book Sale and donations were up about \$600. Ed advised that the library continue to expend what is necessary. There continues to be a small buffer in payroll from the overlap of directors.

The Money Market account continues to gain less than 1%. The balance is about \$29,238.00, with a gain of about \$1.70 per month. The Preservation Fund balance has risen \$13,900 since the start of the year.

The board should consider a 3 – 5 % withdrawal to help cover healthcare costs at the October or November meeting.

Ed said he continues to receive notices from People's United Bank about the transition to M&T Bank. It isn't clear who will be handling the library's accounts after the transition, which will take place after January 1, 2022.

The June fundraising drive has raised \$6,363 which includes some overlap from donations to the November 2020 drive which were deposited after January 1, 2021. He said the library is currently about \$11,000 short of its 2021 fundraising goal about a month before the November 2021 fundraising drive starts. The library had collected more donations in 2019 and 2020 at this time, but about the amount of donations in 2017 and 2018.

A motion was made (Cathy, Rosamund) to approve the Treasurer's Report. The report was approved as presented unanimously.

DIRECTOR/YOUTH SERVICES REPORT

Deirdre recapped her e-mailed report. She said she expects the American Rescue Plan grant money will be received in November. The money will be used for indoor and outdoor furniture and some upgrades to computers and the wi-fi system in the building. She said she has submitted the yearly application for a grant for Interlibrary Loans. She has also submitted a grant for a fine-free trial managed by the Association for Rural Libraries.

Deirdre said August was a quieter month at the library than July. Many summer programs wrap up in August. The book club met using new equipment for a hybrid Zoom and in-person meeting, which went well. She also met with the Suzy Forlie Memorial Committee. She said she had planned to make the Fireplace Room a reading room in any case. She approves of the plan to make it a memorial to someone who has done so much for the library. She has moved some equipment around already to prepare for the change.

Deirdre said she expects someone to come Friday to fix the air handler unit in the HVAC system. The town manager, Julie Hance, is going to try to use ARPA funding to make more improvements to the heating system.

Deirdre said one volunteer in particular is helping with preparations for the book sale. She asked the trustees for help with the sale from 9 to 4 on Saturday and 10 to 5 on Sunday.

Deirdre met twice with the members of the Strategic Planning Committee and once with just Amy Howlett, the consultant who is running the study. There was a session on September 7th for a community conversation with eight citizens and four board members.

Deirdre discussed the impact of the rising number of COVID cases on mask wearing. She said about 90% of patrons are wearing masks. The staff wears masks and may leave the room if they feel uncomfortable with someone who is not wearing a mask. Robert Nied asked Deirdre why she was uncomfortable requiring everyone to wear a mask in the library, given the rise in COVID cases in Windsor County. Deirdre said she didn't want to create tension over the issue and didn't want to put her staff in the position of enforcing the mask requirement. Robert said Chester is the only library in the area which does not require a mask. Deirdre said the library association in Vermont shows about 50% of libraries require masks. It was noted that the governor has not implemented an indoor mask requirement. The recommendation from the board was that a sign be posted saying masks are required and the staff would not be tasked with enforcing the requirement. Deirdre said she would update the reopening plan. Rosamund pointed out that masks are required for children in schools and as much as 50% of patrons are children. She recommended that masks be required. Robert offered to help deal with any negative responses from patrons.

No comments were made about the Youth Services Report.

FUNDRAISING

As Lyza was absent, Ed talked about the changes to fundraising brought in by using the Kindful database and support system to raise money. It has brought in more modern ways to raise

money. The committee had discussed the possibility of having one major drive instead of two. Some donors note that this is the only donation they will make for the year on the check they send. Robert said the committee also discussed the possibility of differentiating the drives if the library chooses to continue to have two each year.

Ed and Robert both mentioned the number of out-of-state donors who give substantial support to the library. They mentioned the need to write to those donors to cultivate and honor them in some way. They also explained to Rosamund the thank-you note system that is in place. Rosamund said she had set up a way for people to donate stock to a non-profit she worked for. It had been very successful for that organization. She wondered if that would be possible for the library given the tax status of a municipal library.

Robert and Ed talked about updating some fundraising materials. Ed said the materials do not mention the possibility of bequeathing funds to the library as a part of a donor's estate. The next meeting of the Fundraising Committee will be discussing that task. Robert said the new database has provided a lot of information about fund raising and thanked Ed and Lyza for their efforts to get the system running. He looks forward to using more of the capabilities of the platform.

Deirdre asked how much of her time she was expected to spend on fundraising. She mentioned two specific projects, the book sale and the silent auction. Robert asked Ed how much of this work had fallen on the director in the past. Ed said his experience was limited, but he recalled that a trustee had organized the book sale and the director's husband had helped set up. It was more the community board and the trustee than the director. Robert encouraged the trustees to sign up to work on this year's sale at the circulation desk.

Deirdre also said a lot of merchandise had been collected for a silent auction before she joined the library and the event never took place. Deirdre said a friend of the woman who had gathered the merchandise had spoken to her recently and implied that the library could have a problem if it did not actually hold the auction. Deirdre said she was not able to organize a silent auction. Rosamund volunteered to look at the merchandise with Deirdre and see if an auction could be organized. Ed suggested that an online auction be considered.

Rosamund delivered a quick course in running a silent auction. It was resolved that Rosamund and Deirdre would look at the merchandise collected and form a plan if they think the merchandise would be appropriate for the Fall Festival crowd.

David Lord described the recent concern the Personnel Committee had in the event that both librarians needed to be away from the library at the same time. The committee had decided that the library should be looking for a per diem replacement if both librarians needed to be out at the same time. Robert said Deirdre had given him some information about possible sources of people who could fill in.

Deirdre said the issue came up because if only one of the librarians is out it is difficult to run the library with only one person. The library is open 28 hours a week. The librarians are present 28 hours a week, but the assistant covering the circulation desk works only 18 hours a week, leaving

the librarian to cover the circulation desk for 10 hours a week. She said the Vermont Library Association does have a list of people who could be called on to fill in if a librarian was absent.

Rosamund said she had been working on a Vermont Certificate of Librarianship, which is for people who do not have a degree in Library Science and for trustees of local libraries. The training for the certificate is free. She said she would be willing to cover any gaps in coverage the library would have. Ed said that in the past a trustee who had spent quite a bit of time with the librarian had filled in when the librarian was not available.

As Deirdre was interested in having more circulation desk coverage Ed was able to explain that the extra 10 hours of coverage would cost \$8,300 per year at the current rate, which was a 7.5% increase to the entire budget.

Rosamund said she had worked as a library page as a teenager. It was a much sought-after position. She also said she noticed the topic of inter-generational contact had come up at the Community Conversation held the previous Tuesday. She wondered if some of the 10 hours could be covered by juniors or seniors in high school. It would also get teenagers into the library. The library page position she had held was handled by the library. It was not part of the school curriculum. Robert said the Personnel Committee would need to tackle these issues.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Suzy Forlie Memorial Committee update**

David Lord read the text of a motion for the library to consider:

To accept the recommendation of the Suzy Forlie Memorial Committee to name the room facing Main St., sometimes referred to as the "fireplace" room as the Suzy Forlie Memorial Reading Room to honor the memory and legacy of Suzy Forlie at Whiting Library.

Robert Nied verified that the motion is just for the renaming of the room. David said that was correct. Ed asked if a second motion was needed to accept the proposal. Robert asked about earlier versions of the motion that included work on the room and a budget for painting, a plaque and a framed photograph. Cathy said there was a second version of the motion that contained the sentence, "Further, to use the funds pledged by the committee to ready the room for a public dedication in November, 2021."

David said there will be no fundraising needed. David and Deirdre sorted out that the room would be painted with the pledged money.

After a discussion the motion was made by Ed, seconded by Cathy and passed.

The proposal included only a photo, a plaque and painting of the room.

The funds for the items have been pledged by members of the Suzy Forlie Committee.

The donations will be recorded by the treasurer as normal donations (Code 0604).

The warrant would be paid with the code associated with the donation made for this purpose. Money to purchase furniture to convert the room to a reading room could come from ARPA funds available to the library.

Deirdre had wanted to convert the fireplace room to a reading room independent of any memorial to Suzy.

Other spontaneous donations have been received in the past, such as a group of children's books. Fundraising activity should be managed by the Fundraising committee so that information about donors could be recorded in the database. Ad-hoc fundraising activity will not be allowed going forward.

The library's gift acceptance policy should be reviewed to make it clear what gifts may be accepted with what conditions. The clarity of the gift acceptance policy should foster enthusiasm among donors.

NEW BUSINESS

Ed said Sharon Tanzer left the library after over a decade of service just as COVID closed the library. Normally an event honoring her service would have been held. Ed would like to have such an event now, if possible.

Ed moved that the Board plan a ceremony to recognize the many years of Sharon's service to the library, the method to be determined by what would be an appropriate time and place. David seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ed noted that the library was out of thank-you notes and stamps. Robert acknowledged that the Fundraising committee was looking at revising the materials and it would make the thank you notes a priority. Deirdre said Will could purchase stamps. Ed said 400 stamps were needed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There being no members of the public present, there was no public comment.

ADJOURN

A motion (Cathy, David) was made to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hasbrouck, Secretary