

WHITING LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes – October 12, 2021

Trustees Present: Robert Nied, Ed Grossman, and Cathy Hasbrouck via Zoom Teleconference, David Lord, having had difficulty with Zoom joined Deirdre at the library at 8:39 AM.

Citizens Present: Deirdre Doran at the Whiting Library.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Robert Nied at 8:33 AM on the Zoom platform. He noted that Rosamund Conroy would be absent from the meeting until she could work out child care coverage issues caused by COVID.

APPROVE MINUTES

From the September 14, 2021 Board of Trustees meeting

A motion was made (Lyza, David) to accept the minutes from September 14, 2021. Robert had one correction on page 5. He said ARPA funding could be used for furniture, not would be used, as that was not something the library could directly control. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved as corrected unanimously.

From the October 5, 2021 Special Joint Meeting with the Strategic Planning Committee

A motion was made (Cathy, Ed) to accept the minutes from the October 5, 2021 Special Joint Meeting. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ed Grossman pointed out \$3,600 in grants on the balance sheet. That was a one-time grant and should not be planned on for next year's budget. He complimented Deirdre and the volunteers who worked on the book sale, which brought in \$4,200 and the silent auction which brought in another \$669. This exceeded the planned amount in the budget. There is \$74,000 in the payroll line for 2021, and with \$51,000 spent through September 30, 2021, and only 3 months left in the year, expenses would be less than budgeted. Payroll Expense (a different line in the budget) would also be less than budgeted for 2021. Telephone expenses are nearly at the planned \$1,600 for the year with three months left to cover, so that item will be over budget for the year. The telephone budget will need to be increased for next year.

On the balance sheet, Ed offered information that wasn't available when he had to file the treasurer's report. The money market fund value increased by about one dollar. He also noted that the title of the preservation fund has been changed. He said the preservation fund balance was \$3,755 higher on the statement he had just received than the figure listed on the balance sheet. Ed said about \$11,000 of the planned \$18,000 has been raised for the library so far in 2021.

Ed presented a very preliminary 2022 draft budget. He listed items he had changed from the 2021 budget, such as removing the \$1,200 in late fines and adding money from another silent auction.

Ed explained the process that resulted in offering the library director and youth librarian a stipend toward their health insurance. He said the proposed budget includes a 4% increase in the health insurance stipend. He said he would be meeting with the Town Manager that afternoon to discuss the town's offerings for health insurance to its employees and progress toward getting full health insurance for the director and youth librarian.

He said he thought the 2022 budget would have no increase in revenues but could have a decrease in payroll and payroll expenses. This will be discussed at the Personnel Committee meeting on Monday October 18. The Town of Andover had contributed \$2,600 to the library in 2021. The new figure for 2022 would increase to \$2,704. The Town of Chester will contribute \$84,448 to the library.

Robert, Ed and Lyza discussed the complications involved in having the two library employees receive the same health benefits as Chester's other municipal employees, when the library has its own separate governing body and personnel policy. The library's personnel policy does not spell out health benefits. It was agreed that the library employees should have the same class or quality of coverage as the other municipal employees.

Ed said he wanted to have a budget ready to present to the Town Manager by the board's November meeting. He thought the 2021 budget was finalized last year on November 30th. The overall increase of the preliminary 2022 budget is 3.6%. Robert asked the trustees if they had any questions about the preliminary budget. Cathy asked if the trustees would have a chance to discuss the preliminary budget before it is presented to the Town Manager. Ed said he would circulate a preliminary budget to the trustees in advance of the November trustees meeting.

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

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE REPORT

The board decided to change the order of the agenda to accommodate a member who needed to leave at 9:30.

A meeting of the fundraising committee is planned for Thursday October 14. Lyza urged everyone who could attend to be there. The meeting will cover the content of the appeal letter. Lyza said she had cleaned up the library's logo, but she was not able to find a high-resolution version of it or the original artwork which she would have liked to re-scan. She said there would also be a discussion of a possible second silent auction before the end of the year and she hoped board members could join the planning.

Addressing the November fundraising drive, Lyza said that the printing plan dates are settled and the remittance envelope has been redesigned. The kits for the November mailing will be ready by the day of the November trustee meeting (November 9th). The kits will be available for pickup at the library and will include instructions for the trustees on how to prepare the mailing. The letters need to be mailed by November 17th. David Lord asked when the training session for

sending out the fundraising letters will take place. Lyza said that written instructions with an example will be given and there will be no in-person training.

Lyza said a new donor platform to allow online and sustaining donations is still being sought. The payment platform for Kindful now absolutely requires 501 (c) 3 status and the library is not organized under that law. She said there were 2 concerns, one to set up a payment platform to accept money and the second is the not being a non-profit organization and not having 501 (c) 3 status.

Ed said that he and Deirdre had both e-mailed PayPal asking them whether an account could be set up without a social security number, but neither had received a reply. Ed's email had been sent in August. He said he was also having difficulty with an organization called Your Cause. A donor to the library would like to use Your Cause, but so far neither Ed nor Deirdre has been able to log in to accept the donation and complete the process.

Deirdre asked if a Library Friends group could be set up as a 501 (c) 3. Deirdre said there had been such a group in the past. Lyza said she had heard about the group and the impression she had was that it was seen as a bad idea and there were difficulties around who would be in charge of funds. Robert said there was language in the state regulations for municipal libraries that makes setting up a 501 (c) 3 friends organization difficult. He thought it would take considerable investigation. Lyza suggested that the issue be tabled for the moment, but she wondered why the library did not have 501 (c) 3 status and why this is such an impediment when dealing with the outside world. Robert suggested that the town attorney be consulted on this.

Robert also said he had an action item to call the vendors who had donated gift certificates a couple of years ago and see if they will still honor the certificates.

DIRECTOR/YOUTH SERVICES REPORT

Deirdre said the two big events in September were the book sale and the first of 2 community conversations. The minutes for the conversation event have been published. The conclusions drawn at the second meeting are that creating young readers, creating a comfortable physical and virtual space in the library and creating diversity, equity and inclusion are the three goals the community would like the library to focus on. Deirdre said she will be working with the survey data and the comments from the conversation to create a draft of a strategic plan. She was not sure when the draft will be ready, but she was certain she will have something by the end of the year.

Deirdre reported that Control Technologies fixed the broken air handler unit and adjusted the furnace settings for winter use. She said Town Manager Julie Hance proposed that potential ARPA funding be used to upgrade the Library HVAC system. Julie asked Control Technologies to provide a quote for the upgrades. If the ARPA funding is approved, Control Technologies would do the upgrading early next spring.

A painter has painted the walls of the fireplace room a light yellow color, close to the color of the rest of the library. The Suzy Forlie Memorial committee will meet on October 19th to finish planning the project. Deirdre is waiting for grant money from the state to purchase furniture for the room. She expects to hear about the money by the end of October.

Ed proposed that the surplus from the payroll expenses for 2021 be used to pay for furnishings that will make the library a more comfortable place, one of the goals chosen for the strategic plan. He thought the money ought to be spent in 2021. Robert suggested that the Strategic

Planning Committee should propose the surplus payroll funds be used that way. The committee could present a proposal and the Board of Trustees could vote on it.

Deirdre listed Carrie's fall children's activities, including outdoor story time and the dragon's egg hunt, which has created a lot of excitement among the younger library patrons. Robert said the Town Manager thinks some funding for outdoor facilities can also come from the ARPA money. Deirdre said a handicapped accessible patio would be wonderful, but she believed a landscape architect would be needed to plan such a project. Robert said he would discuss the idea with the Town Manager.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

Robert said the Personnel Committee will meet Monday October 18th at 4:00 PM. He said the discussion about coverage for staff vacations, salaries and employee evaluations will be discussed. There is potential for an executive session to discuss evaluation and salaries. David Lord said Jean Waldren will be returning to Chester in January, February and March and could provide staff coverage.

OLD BUSINESS

Suzy Forlie Memorial Committee update

Cathy said the committee will meet on Tuesday October 19th at 6:00 PM, but she did not recall the details of the agenda. Deirdre said the committee will discuss the plaque and make some tentative plans for an inaugural event.

NEW BUSINESS

Ed asked about a date for the next Strategic Planning Committee meeting. Robert Nied suggested Friday November 12 at 9:00 AM. The members of the committee agreed to that date and time.

Robert Nied said the board had not made any firm plans for some way to honor Sharon Tanzer's service. Cathy Hasbrouck asked how people would feel about an indoor gathering, given rising COVID rates in Vermont. It was agreed that Cathy Hasbrouck would call Sharon and ask her what type of event she would be comfortable with.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

ADJOURN

A motion (David, Ed) was made to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:26.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hasbrouck, Secretary