

# WHITING LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## DRAFT Minutes – February 7, 2022

Trustees Present: Robert Nied, Ed Grossman, David Lord, Rosamund Conroy, Lyza Gardner via Zoom Teleconference.

Citizens Present Donna MacNeil Hudkins via Zoom.

### **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Robert Nied, Chair, at 8:34 AM.

### **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Robert Nied said it was possible some items on the agenda would be deferred until the next meeting. The agenda was full, and a number of trustees and the Library Director could not attend the meeting due to scheduling conflicts. Robert Nied welcomed Donna Hudkins, a citizen who was running for a trustee position, to the meeting. The welcome was seconded by Lyza Gardner, who is Donna's neighbor.

Robert Nied added a discussion with the town on ARPA and grant funds to the agenda.

### **APPROVE JANUARY 11, 2022 MINUTES**

The January 11, 2022 minutes were not distributed directly to the trustees, though they were posted to the town and library websites. Robert deferred discussion of the minutes to the next meeting.

### **DIRECTOR/YOUTH SERVICES REPORT**

Deirdre was not able to attend the meeting, so Robert summarized the highlights of the two reports.

- Some ARPA funds were received, and Deirdre purchased some reading room furniture, new desktop computers and a mesh Wi-Fi network, which will improve the wireless network. Cathy Hasbrouck and Deirdre have set up the new computers and network.
- The community room has been cleaned and reorganized making more space available.
- Deirdre will be attending a program given by the Vermont State Library on records and records retention. This will help the library as it addresses having e-mail addresses for the trustees.
- The library had 579 in-person visits in January.
- Youth Services celebrated National Hobby Month in January. Carrie King makes great use of social media to stay in touch with younger patrons.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Ed Grossman said the finances looked good to start the year. The fundraising balance was \$7,275. Ed pointed out the new line in Expenses called Medical Expenses. He said he would ask to have that line label changed to something like Health Benefit Stipend to make it clear the

1 library was not paying for medical insurance. He said the line was about \$2500 short of what  
2 will be needed to provide coverage and parity with other town employees for the year. Ed  
3 pointed out that the line for fines on the Profit/Loss statement was empty. A grant has been  
4 received to cover unpaid fines in 2021 and cover the revenue that might have been collected for  
5 fines in 2022. There is \$3,117 available from the grant to cover that. Ed will work with Cil  
6 Mathews, the town's bookkeeper, to move \$1,200 onto the profit/loss statement.

7 Ed said the Preservation Fund was almost at an all-time high when the \$3,120 was withdrawn to  
8 cover the health insurance stipend in January. Since then, the balance has dropped quite a bit,  
9 but he is not concerned about its eventual recovery. He recommended waiting on withdrawing  
10 anything further from the Preservation Fund. He will be discussing several issues concerning  
11 health insurance and other benefits with Town Manager Julie Hance in the coming months.

12 Ed has been looking for a web-based payment platform which does not require a social security  
13 number, to no avail. Robert said he had asked the Vermont Library Association about the  
14 problem. Answers posted on their list serve included using a trustee's personal social security  
15 number or a Friends of the Library group organized as a 501(c)(3) to set up a payment platform.  
16 Neither suggestion would work for Chester. Ed said Lyza suggested that a possible solution  
17 would be to write a procedure which used the Treasurer's social security number on the platform.  
18 Each time a new Treasurer took over, the social security number would be changed. Robert  
19 thought that could be a temporary solution but wanted something better.

20 A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report (Rosamund, David) was made, seconded, and  
21 approved.

## 22 **STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT**

23 Robert said the committee was hoping to present a draft of a Strategic plan to the board at the  
24 March meeting. The committee will meet next on Wednesday February 9<sup>th</sup>.

## 25 **PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE REPORT**

26 Robert said the committee is actively looking for additional programs. It has organized a  
27 round table for the community on March 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM on solar energy with three  
28 representatives from three local companies. The roundtable will be moderated by Tim  
29 Roper, a retired solar industry executive. Robert is collaborating with community members  
30 to organize a series of poetry jams for young people in the community.

31 Robert was looking forward to discussing the committee's work with the newly constituted  
32 board at the March meeting.

## 33 **FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE REPORT**

34 Lyza said the November fundraising direct mail program set a record in donations. The  
35 committee is planning a June direct mail drive and will work on building content for the  
36 appeal a little earlier in the process. The committee will start working on building  
37 relationships with local business donors. They are entering information into the Kindful  
38 database on these businesses. A fundraising committee meeting will be held to work on the  
39 list of businesses. Lyza will be contacting committee members to schedule a meeting when  
40 she returns from a trip two weeks after the meeting.

41

1 **NEW BUSINESS**

2 Robert began with the item added to the agenda, discussion with the town about grant and  
3 ARPA funding. Robert and Deirdre met with Town Manager Julie Hance the previous week.  
4 Julie Hance has committed to pursuing ARPA funding to upgrade and update the library  
5 heating and cooling systems. They also discussed possible improvements to the outdoor  
6 space behind the library, particularly given the pandemic experience. Julie Hance agreed on  
7 behalf of the town to be a financial sponsor pursuing a Communities Open Space grant. This  
8 would include upgrades on the parking and drainage and creating a patio in the back with  
9 potentially tiered seating and some type of pergola to provide cover in wet weather.

10

11 **Discussion of library’s policy and response to challenges to books and/or programs**

12 Robert said he had attended a seminar on the topic held by the Vermont Library Association  
13 and the Vermont Department of Libraries. The Association was warning libraries to get  
14 ready for a possible challenge that could disrupt library operation. He would like the new  
15 board to review the existing policies. The state Library Department is firmly against  
16 censorship. The Department of Libraries has a task force to help a local library respond to  
17 challenges.

18 Rosamund asked if anyone had requested a withdrawal from the collection. Robert said no  
19 one had. Rosamund asked if this issue needed to be front and center for the trustees given  
20 the support available from the state and the many other projects in front of the board. She  
21 felt the issue was something of an outlier and distracted the board from other projects.

22 Robert said he felt it would be wise for the board to compare the existing policy to the state-  
23 recommended policy which was developed by South Burlington in response to several  
24 challenges. Robert said the state recommended the procedure appoint someone to respond to  
25 requests from the press for information on a challenge. Whiting’s current procedure does not  
26 address this. Rosamund said she wanted to limit the amount of time the board spent on this.  
27 Ed thought the board could spend a short time at each meeting reviewing policies. Lyza  
28 suggested that one person could be a point person and bring specific ideas to a full meeting  
29 for approval. Robert suggested that Deirdre compare Whiting’s current policy to the state-  
30 recommended policy and make suggestions for changes at the next meeting.

31

32 **Discussion of organizational meeting, new trustee orientation, and response to budget**  
33 **vote.**

34 Robert said the March meeting will take place after Town Meeting and elections. New  
35 members will be present, and an organizational meeting will be held. Officers will be  
36 elected, and committees formed. Robert said he had given thought to the formation of  
37 committees and the number of committees. He noted that there were many committees of  
38 only two or three members. He also did not want more committees than board members. He  
39 thought some items may need to be deferred and that would be discussed at the next meeting.

40

1 Lyza wanted to be sure that the trustees were prepared with checklists and manuals for the  
2 new trustees and the new trustees and reelected understood that they needed to go to the town  
3 office and take the oath in person once the election was complete.

4 **Acknowledgement of the service of Trustees not running for reelection**

5 Robert Nied noted that Cathy Hasbrouck and David Lord were not running for trustee. He  
6 thanked each of them for their service, noting David Lord's particularly long service to the  
7 library and Cathy's service in the technology area.

8

9 **Acknowledgement of Judy Copping's service to the library**

10 Ed Grossman described Judy Copping's commitment and long service to the library which  
11 included everything from serving as a trustee, to manning the desk and organizing the book  
12 sale. He had looked forward to Judy possibly rejoining the board of trustees, but sadly, that  
13 wasn't possible.

14 Rosamund Conroy asked about the possible need for a library cell phone. Robert said he was  
15 discussing the issue with the director and others. There may be more economical solutions to  
16 the issue, such as a fire tablet.

17 Ed Grossman said he had been working with the town office and the town clerk about  
18 increasing the spending limit on the library credit card. He said he discovered that the town  
19 had an account with Amazon that the library could use, avoiding the credit card limit.

20 **OLD BUSINESS**

21 **Transition to official email accounts for compliance with Public Records Law (1 V.S.A.  
22 § 316)**

23 Robert felt the discussion on this should be deferred to the next meeting when the new trustees  
24 can participate.

25 **Other business**

26 Rosamund Conroy wanted to investigate setting up a Friends of the Library organization to  
27 create a federal tax ID number so that a web-based payment platform could be established. She  
28 thought the articles of organization could be narrowly defined to make it clear that no  
29 fundraising activity will take place. Lyza liked the idea of a very narrowly defined organization  
30 whose governing body is the Library Board of Trustees. Robert was concerned that such an  
31 organization would have maintenance overhead which could be a problem for the library. He  
32 wondered whether the board members, who are elected public officials, could also serve on the  
33 501(c)(3) organization. He thought the town's attorney should be consulted.

34 Rosamund moved to adjourn the meeting. Lyza seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the  
35 meeting was adjourned.

36 Respectfully submitted,

37 Cathy Hasbrouck, Secretary