

Whiting Library, Chester, Vermont

Regular Monthly Meeting of Board of Trustees

Meeting Notes – Tuesday, September 12, 2023 - Approved

- 1 In attendance at the Whiting Library Community Room: Matt Gorsky, Donna McNeill-Hudkins, Chris
- 2 Burks, Sam Comstock, Bill Dakin. Attending via Zoom: Lora Cokolat, absent: Jesse Bailey
- 3 Matt called meeting to order at 6:07 PM
- 4 Discussion on what have we heard from Jesse Bailey as he hasn't been to the last 4 meetings. He was
- 5 travelling. Matt will contact him
- 6 Additions to the Agenda –None
- 7 Motion made to enter into Executive Session to review the candidate interviews. made and approved.
- 8 Entered Executive Session at 6:14 PM.
- 9 Exited the Executive Session on 6:56 PM
- 10 Approval of Meeting Minutes from August. Move to accept. Minutes approved.
- 11 Treasurer Report by Sam Comstock. Does not have a written report. We have the report from the
- 12 town from August that we did not get last month. There is a new Financial Officer – Laurie Roser. She
- 13 lives up near where Will Wilcox used to live. Sam has connected with her and she had sent the reports,
- 14 but, she had the wrong contact email address. Now, she has the correct one.
- 15 On Profit & Loss. At this rate we will spend all of the Grant money. The money from Chester and
- 16 Andover is due to be distributed this month. We are ahead on Donations, but are under in Fundraising.
- 17 The number is not up to date as there is more money upstairs.
- 18 Re: Fundraising, we had budgeted to raise \$22,000. So we are way under projection. A disappointment
- 19 with the Spring Fundraiser. The donations were coming in fast, but it has dropped off.
- 20 Right now there is a little above \$2,500. We had discussed doing another Fundraiser at the end of the
- 21 year for "Giving Tuesday". Should we put an article in the Telegraph that we will send out another. In
- 22 the past there was always two fundraiser mailings per year. Right now we are competing with the
- 23 Family Center and the fact that Flooding has taken many funds.
- 24 We could use the same mailing list for an end of year mailing.
- 25 Equipment and Technology is above budget, but we had voted on increasing that. Much of it is a one
- 26 time cost. We will have to schedule "fixture replacement" set a set schedule to replace equipment.
- 27 Need to get on a rotation of regularly updating equipment. We do after market purchases. We
- 28 purchased the equipment and scheduled someone to install and set up.
- 29 On Repair and Maintenance, is increased. That is what the cleaning is under and that one big clean is
- 30 included. Also included is the shredding.
- 31 On Other Assets, the Trust is slowly coming back. It had lost money when the market was down.
- 32 Lora had asked why the town money wasn't deposited yet. Julie at the town had said that the money is
- 33 deposited in September. Our fiscal year starts in January. The town spending is the same way. The

34 “to/from” fund that the town holds is where the money is put and where the shortfalls come from (or
35 savings stay).

36 We need to see how we balance out. We will be getting \$98,000 from Chester and another \$2,700 from
37 Andover. Currently, if you look at 2022 vs 2023 it looks about the same except for the additional
38 spending we approved.

39 Questions, when does the town money come in, and we need to compare the “to/from” account. Verify
40 that that one notation is a type-o in the report.

41 Do we know if other organizations fundraising efforts are short?

42 Can we move these fundraising questions to the Fundraising Committee Report? Per Matt.

43 Motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Accepted

44 Director and Youth Services Reports - Included. Moved to approve the reports. Approved

45 Fundraising Committee. What’s happening with the Book Sale. Donna is not here for the day of. Carrie
46 and Colleen and Lucy are organizing the books and putting in alpha order by genre. Now that the
47 Trustee room is cleaned out, perhaps we put on the gifts that had been donated in the past and just get
48 donations for them. The other members of the Fundraising Committee are Bill and Jesse. So we need
49 to figure out who can “work” the book sale. Last year, we had a lot of volunteers. This year, no body
50 has any idea of who is doing what. We have tables, we have books and we have a cash box. What we
51 need to know before Saturday – (effective hours are 10 to 4 and Sunday 10 to 2). We need people to
52 “man” the sale. That means we need to show up on Saturday between 8 & 9 to set up. Depending on
53 the amount of books that have come in, the librarians may not finish setting up. This year we do not
54 have as many books as last year. The trustees went back to review the books and what is set up. In the
55 past we have not had to do the sale on Sunday. We’ll see what happens on Saturday.

56 The Trustees will come on Saturday morning to set up and move the books up to the lawn. We have a
57 better handle on what needs to be done.

58 Old Business – Nothing

59 New Business – What will we present to the Selectboard next week. The objective is to let the Town
60 know that we are pursuing ways to get the Library Employees recognized as Town employees so they are
61 eligible for VMERS (Vermont Municipal Employee Retirement). As the Selectboard Meeting is on the
62 20th, we’ll have to move one of the interviews.

63 We should know what we’re going to say. We should have a simple outline. Letting them know the
64 struggle we’re having getting good employees. We should show the Library Benefits. The main issue is
65 that they are not subject to the town employment policies Per Bill - We know that they are going to
66 say that the way we are organized we are not considered part of the town employment registry. We fall
67 under the Municipal Library under Vermont Law. There is a court case that the Town of Hartford Library
68 personnel were made town employees. In Springfield, they have two supervisors. Reports to the Town
69 Manager and the Board of Trustees. The Town hires the Director. In Vermont there is no consistent
70 way to do this. It is up to the town and the board on setting it. We know that the selectboard is going
71 to say, well you have this money you’re sitting on in accounts. We may be able to tap into this if

72 necessary, but, no more that \$4,000/year. We have this money as a preservation trust is not for
73 operating costs.

74 Any donations or fundraising is put into the "To/From" account.

75 We need to be better prepared. Matt thinks that we are prepared. We need to grasp the legal
76 relationship that the Library has with the Town. There is information somewhere. Bill would be
77 uncomfortable going to the town now. Matt is comfortable starting the conversation. He does not
78 know how much we will need. We are asking that the Library employees be treated as town
79 employees. At least access to VMERS.

80 Bill thinks we need a better grasp before we talk to the Selectboard. Matt thinks he has a good grasp
81 on the financials now (that we did not have last year). The argument last year from the town was that
82 we had all this "money" we were sitting on. We asked for more budget to bring the Director up to
83 market salary.

84 What we are focused on is getting the Library employees into a state where they can access VMERS. Are
85 we asking the town to make our employees town employees. What would that roadmap look like?

86 We are not expecting a decision, we want to bring it to the table.

87 Perhaps we should get an independent expert employment legal opinion, not the town lawyer. We
88 need a neutral opinion. We need to have some ammunition as to why we should do this. The town is
89 going to ask why we should do this. Do we have enough substance?

90 In the past, the town "grudgingly" supported the Library. Now they do support the Library.

91 As one of the selectboard members is married to a trustee, then there will only be 4 selectmen. How
92 do we answer the question that if we want the Library employees like Town employee with the VMERS,
93 what about Health Insurance?

94 The Selectboard is going to want to know what the additional costs will be. What do they want from us
95 to do this, what do we need to do?

96 Matt says this is the start of the conversation so that we can retain employees, otherwise the position is
97 a revolving door.

98 What is our legal relationship with the town? There is nothing standard in the State of Vermont.

99 The Selectboard will ask what we use our Trust fund for. We should be prepared to answer that. We
100 don't want to take out more than we make in interest. We, as trustees, may have to make policy to
101 protect those funds.

102 Last year, the town asked what our plan was. We do have an approved Strategic Plan and we need to be
103 prepared to present that. Maybe we need to hire our own attorney to find out what we can do and
104 what the options are. Maybe we take the money from our endowment.

105 At the meeting, we state what our goal is and if they are ok with that, then we hire legal advise.

106 The Selectboard doesn't see all of the details of the spending and where the money comes from (i.e.
107 donations, fundraising, grant money). What we are looking for from the town, money to maintain our

108 employees. We have employees who are highly qualified and in order to keep them we need to
109 support that.

110 We have to emphasize the legal relationship of the Library to the Town. We will look for the legal file,
111 scan it in and send to everyone.

112 We are not trying to upset the status quo.

113 Is there a legal issue, as we seem to have employees in the beginning of their career or the end of their
114 career, as our benefits don't support people in the middle of their career with family. No, it's not age
115 discrimination.

116 Chris – Matt has a plan, and we'll support. Are Bill and Lora OK as they had the most questions. Sam
117 was concerned that it ended up on the Selectboard Agenda before you went to the Board of Trustees.
118 He's OK with Matt going forward. Donna will look for the file and try to distribute. (File was locked and
119 not accessible).

120 Matt will send the packet of what he's presenting to the Selectboard to us before he submits to Julie to
121 include.

122 Next on the agenda is a discussion on Personnel Benefits Policy. We will table that until later.

123 Public Comment: - No public in attendance.

124

125 Motion to adjourn meeting. Approved. Meeting ended at 8:23 PM

126

127 Submitted by Donna McNeill-Hudkins