Whiting Library, Chester, Vermont

Special Meeting of Board of Trustees

Meeting Notes – October 29, 2024

In attendance at the Whiting Library Community Room: Bill Dakin, Gail Zachariah, Matt Gorskey, Marilyn Mahusky, Donna McNeill-Hudkins. Attended via ZOOM – Lyn Smith, Jessie Krust & Lora Cokolot

Public Attendance: None

Bill Dakin called meeting to order at 6:34 PM This Special Meeting is to discuss 2025 Budget and Finances.

There were some problems with Zoom and the Zoom attendees hearing. Initially, only the people on Zoom are being recorded. Gail disconnected "new" camera at library and then it worked. I think we lost Lyn.

Additions to the Agenda – None

Gail distributed copies of her working budget pages. Regarding the Payroll, Gail increased the pay with a "cost of living" and also increased related costs. She gave one employee more as her salary was lower. The money would be put into the budget for when her salary review/anniversary date occurs.

She also increased the Health Stipend. Donna thought we should keep it the same until the details of the Health Care Stipend was never clarified. Marilyn said that this would be the time to have that discussion. The Library is separate from the town. There is no place in the Personnel Benefits policy specifies Health Insurance Options. Just a stipend to help with Health Care Costs.

Lora finally got in to Zoom. The current policy that is being worked on, not approved yet, the Health Care Stipend. We have to look back at what the past board's intent was when they budgeted money for Health Insurance. For the past few years the stipend is given with no restrictions, as additional income.

Marilyn and Matt suggests we keep the stipend base the same until we identify what the original intent was. Marilyn is not opposed to it, and doesn't want to change it until we know what the intent was.

Matt suggests that we not change the current stipend until we understand the policy, it's intent and what we want to do it.

Marilyn doesn't think we have a good handle on what we are looking at. The information given does not show the details. The part time employee doesn't get benefits, other than paid holidays and paid time off as per benefit policy. Yes, the Paid Time Off policy does meet with State of Vermont Statute.

Lora & Gail met last week and thought they should lower some of the material costs to keep the budget down. Last year we asked for $12,950, we are asking for $9,500. This year we paid for quite a few things with grants, we can't guarantee the grants.

We are not meeting the Fundraising/Donations, so we have to watch out for the spending. She has also asked for less for Programs.

Director suggests we open the Library on Thursdays from 1 to 7. This would increase Assistant Librarian's hours 1.5 hours. The regular schedule for the two full time employees would change. We

thought if we open the library it would increase service to the citizens, thus justifying the additional operating costs.

Between Materials and Programs that we offer the community, it comes to 6.9% of the budget, which is not much. 78.5% is Personnel Costs. What we do to increase services to the public, should be part of our long term plans.

Good Library to look at is Brook Memorial Library from Brattleboro when we discuss what to do with financials (interests) and how we put that towards our revenue. That was one of the examples sent to us by the Bank.

We have the revenue for what we need. That's with increasing cost of books at book sale, taking the interest/revenue, donations.

Marilyn asks that we go through the budget item by item so we all understand it. Currently the payroll budget is less than last year.

Keep the Health Insurance stipend as is, not increasing, that would save $2,000. The substitute librarian is budgets for 150 hours/year.

Went though what "Administration" costs consist of. Changing membership fees move to Professional Development.

Fundraising costs – per Jessie, seems reasonable (money for printing & mailing)

Silent Auction – take it off.

Programs – reduced the budget so there is not as much pressure for fundraising. Bill asks how the Grants fit into this. Some grants you have to pay a fee to apply for. Reduced this as Gail doesn't apply for many Grants that you have to pay a fee for.

Technology. Moving forward, we should put money aside to slowly update computers instead of all at once. We have to upgrade the telephone system.

Bank Fees - - that is fund management, so shouldn't put in budget? It has been, probably how it's set up with the town. We should pay the fees from the accounts. Lora will look into it. It may make more sense to account for it in the budget.

Grants – Some have to be spent before the end of the year. Not budgeting for 2025 as we're not sure what we'll get in grants.

Revenue: May not get what we're asking for from Andover. Grants – she's put $5,000 but, she may get more. Book Sales, increase the price of the books.

Lora suggests that when the presentation is done, we show a good visual (like a pie chart) on what the revenue is for the Library and expenses. They need to understand how difficult it is do fundraise.

Taking out Raffle.

Donations and Fundraising are high, but, this is needed to meet our goals. We have to keep it in the budget. We have to ask for at least the Operating Personnel costs from the town.

We meet with the Selectboard on November 20th. We should discuss beforehand, a sub committee of who is going to talk to the Selectboard. Matt, Lora, Gail.

Our next regular meeting is November 12th – we'll finalize that. Gail said we should push back the Andover meeting.

Motion to adjourn approved. Adjourned at 8:27 PM

Submitted by Donna McNeill-Hudkins