

# WHITING LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## Minutes —May 11, 2020

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair/Acting Chair, David Lord, at 9:32AM on the Zoom platform.

*Present:* David Lord, Colleen Garvey, Robert Nied, Ed Grossman, Lyza Gardner, Vanessa Heybyrne (arrived 9:40AM), Trustees; Deirdre Doran, Library Director

*Absent:* Donna Matthews

*Visitors:* Arne Jonynas

### **Approve Minutes of April 13, 2020 Meeting**

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2020, meeting was made (Ed Grossman/Robert Nied); approved by all present.

### **Election of Officers: Chair & Vice Chair**

The Board needs to elect a Chair to fill the vacancy left by the recent resignation of Judi Copping. David Lord, acting chair, explained that he will not accept a nomination as Chair, but would be willing to maintain his role as Vice-chair if he had the full support of the trustees.

David Lord suggested the nomination of Robert Nied as Chair.

Robert Nied expressed caution in accepting the Chair role in that he feels that he is a relative newcomer to the community and the Board, but explained that he does have a background that includes leadership roles both in the private and public sector. With the understanding that he may lack historical context, he is willing to accept the nomination of Chair with the full backing of the Board.

Robert Nied emphasized that it's important to keep a channel open with the Town, especially with Julie Hance, Town Manager, given the current fiscal uncertainty, and that we need to keep reminding the Town that "we're here and that we're important." Robert Nied said that it's important to support the Director and the Library staff, and to make sure "we have policies and procedures in place for what we're about to face."

A motion was made (Colleen Garvey/Ed Grossman) to nominate Robert Nied as Chair. Approved by all, with Robert Nied abstaining.

A motion to elect Robert Nied to Chair was made; approved by all with Robert Nied abstaining.

A motion was made (Ed Grossman/Colleen Garvey) that David Lord maintain the officer position of Vice-Chair for the Board. Approved by all present with David Lord abstaining.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Ed Grossman said that the Library was functioning well, financially, under the pandemic conditions. April, 2020, income was lower than April, 2019, income, but there were also about \$2000 less in expenses. However, donations and fundraising are looming variables.

The \$1000 line item for "Silent Auction" has been moved to "Donations" in light of the cancelation of the Silent Auction event. Springfield GMC's donation of \$1000 will remain—former trustee Kathy Pellett contacted the dealership and they are allowing the Library to retain the donation that had been earmarked for the Silent Auction. Ed Grossman thanked Kathy Pellett for this work.

The intent of the wealth-management account investment is long-term, intended for major projects. The pandemic has had an impact on the account. The account is currently about \$8700 less than its all-time high, but it was about \$30,000 from its high earlier in the pandemic, so it is recovering. Ed Grossman recommends leaving this investment as-is.

Robert Nied asked if Ed Grossman had been in consultation with a financial advisor to discuss the allocation of these investments. Ed Grossman said that he had met with Remus Preda of People's United Bank. Mr. Preda had also offered to attend a Board meeting at some time in the future to explain the investment strategy.

Robert Nied asked about potential funding impacts if the Town experiences a spike in delinquent tax payments. Ed Grossman deferred to Chester Select Board Chair Arne Jonynas, who was in attendance.

Arne Jonynas said the Town will be looking at everything, and that there was certainly concern over a lot of delinquent tax bills. But the Town hasn't looked at anything specific yet; it's still in an analysis stage. There are a lot of unknowns. Hopefully, the Town won't be in a position where it needs to cut essential services in the Town. It's all going to come down to tax collection in September. Until then, it's going to be hard to judge which way things will go.

Ed Grossman said that while Arne Jonynas is present, he, Ed Grossman, wanted to talk about health benefits. “Our library officials should have health benefits...how that is accomplished is what is being worked on.” There are discussions about whether or not Library staff are Town employees, which has bearing on how this funding can be effected.

Ed Grossman thanked the Select Board for entertaining the discussion and being willing to contribute funds (\$1500) to help defray the cost of health benefits in the interim. Town Manager Julie Hance is looking at creative plans for health insurance during budget-development time. At the last Select Board meeting, Board member Heather Chase volunteered to serve as a liaison between the Select Board and the Library.

Arne Jonynas talked about how the relationship between the Town and the Library had evolved in the past several years. He said it has “smoothed out a lot,” and that the Select Board’s goal is to have a better relationship with the Library’s Board of Trustees. The Library is an important part of the Town. “We definitely want to look at our relationship in terms of whether [Library staff] are Town employees or not Town employees. There were some letters from 2010 that tried to clarify the relationships.” These letters clarified some things and made other things more “grey,” he said. A discussion is planned with the Town’s attorney.

Robert Nied asked Ed Grossman if there were things that the Library can do in the interim, while there are so many unknowns.

Ed Grossman said that the VT Department of Libraries’ opinion was that Whiting Library employees were municipal/town employees and may be entitled to the same benefits as other municipal/town employees. This differs from the 2010 opinion by the town attorney. “We need to work with the Select Board, in a positive way, and see what they come up with for new options for health plans.”

### **Director/Youth Services Report**

Library Director Deirdre Doran talked about the Library’s new curbside pickup offering and said that staff is back to work at the Library building. She mentioned state training for health and safety and a safety plan for staying healthy within the building. No members of the public are currently allowed in the building. Deirdre Doran said that she thought that this might be the process for “a while” before libraries open to the public again.

Youth Services Director Carrie King has been putting out projects for kids to take away and do. Free seeds are also on offer. Deirdre Doran said that it was “good to have [assistant librarian] Will [Wilcox] back.” Will Wilcox is handling most of the circulation and answering the phone and emails.

The Library will serve as a pick-up point for Green-up Day bags.

Robert Nied asked Deirdre Doran about a health and safety policy for when the library opens.

Deirdre Doran said that it would be ideal to have a policy in place before the library opens to the public. Would masks be required? Other safety protocols? This would be something for the Board to do some research and discussion about.

Robert Nied agreed that the Board needs to craft a policy. Ed Grossman said that there were a couple of other Library policies that were being modified and adapted, and it was agreed that he and Robert Nied could work together on those and prioritize the drafting of a health and safety policy.

## **Old Business**

### *May/June Fundraising*

David Lord said that he has been working on writing the annual fundraising letter. The Library needs to find a new printer, and he is evaluating a few local printers: Springfield Printers, Red House Printers and Newsbank. He will have prices soon, with the aim of having a mailing ready by the end of May. Trustees will split up the mailings and write their personal notes to accompany the fundraising letter.

Lyza Gardner mentioned that the mailing list is just about ready and she will print out the mailing lists and send them to trustees in the mail.

Ed Grossman mentioned that at some point in the future the Board might consider updating the mailing list using names from the Grand List and additional Transfer Lists. Lyza Gardner volunteered to help with data processing on this when it comes up.

### *Silent Auction*

The silent auction has been canceled for 2020; the Board will revisit the topic of holding such an event in the future.

Colleen Garvey, Chair of the Silent Auction Committee, raised some follow-up tasks. Goods donated for the Silent Auction are currently stored off-site and need to be returned to the Library. They are not insured where they are currently located. Moving the goods is challenging during this time of social distancing.

A discussion was held about ideas for possibly raffling or auctioning some of these items using the Library's website or other platforms.

Colleen Garvey will start tracking down the items now, and will work with Kathy Pellett—also on the Silent Auction committee—and Deirdre Doran on the process, as well as trying to locate some donated gift certificates.

### **New Business**

#### *Employee Medical Benefits*

The Chester Select Board has contributed \$1500 in good faith toward the defrayment of medical costs for the Library's two professional librarians in 2020, conditional upon the Library matching those funds (\$1500) for a total of \$3000. These funds are to be divided equally between the Library Director and the Youth Services Director.

The Board discussed which budget line items to allocate the \$1500 matching funds from. It was proposed that \$1000 be allocated from the equipment budget, and \$500 from supplies.

Deirdre Doran pointed out that certain essential pandemic-related supplies—for example, hand sanitizer—may need to be purchased from the supplies budget. The Board discussed allocating \$500 from materials instead.

It was also pointed out that the hours-worked cited currently for the Youth Services Director was inaccurate (currently recorded as 18, when in fact the Youth Director works 28 hours per week).

A motion was made (Ed Grossman/Robert Nied) to re-allocate \$1000 from budgeted equipment and \$500 from budgeted materials to match \$1500 from the Town of Chester Select Board; these funds will be split evenly between the two professional librarians and contributed to salary over the remaining 7 months of 2020 to defray medical insurance costs. Approved by all present.

#### *Personnel Policy Revisions*

Ed Grossman presented a revised draft of the Library's Personnel Policy. At April's Board meeting, it was verbally agreed that a one-time exception should be made to the policy stating "all employees of 6 months shall receive one week of paid time off" for Library Director Deirdre Doran—making one week of paid time off available to her immediately, in light of the pandemic situation. However, no motion was made at that time.

A motion was made (Ed Grossman/Colleen Garvey) to waive the 6-month waiting period for the Library Director, allowing one week of paid time off to be available immediately. The motion passed unanimously.

A correction to the drafted policy was proposed, as mentioned earlier by Deirdre Doran: the hours worked by the Youth Services Director should be recorded as 28, not 18.

Another proposed amendment to the policy regards the carrying-over of paid time off. The current policy allows the director to carry over paid time off into subsequent calendar years. The proposed revision reads: *PTO is awarded at the beginning of the calendar year and must be taken by Dec. 31 of the same year, unless an exception is granted.*

A minor typo in the proposed draft was pointed out on page 2: *Employees shall charge all days off using eared PTO* should read *Employees shall charge all days off using earned PTO*

The Board discussed adoption and effective dates of the policy. It was decided that the new policy, if approved, will be effective on the date it was approved.

Robert Nied suggested that the policy's time limitation for reporting grievances should be extended from 5 days to 30 days.

A motion to approve the personnel policy as amended (Youth Services Director hours, typo, time off rollovers and grievance time limitations) was made (David Lord/Lyza Gardner) and passed unanimously. The new policy takes effect as of May 11, 2020.

### **Adjourn**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn (Lyza Gardner/Colleen Garvey) made and unanimously approved. The Board was adjourned at 11:10AM until the next meeting on June 8, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lyza Gardner, Secretary