

# WHITING LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## Minutes —June 8, 2020

The meeting was called to order by Robert Nied, Chair, at 9:31AM on the Zoom platform.

*Present:* Robert Nied, Colleen Garvey, Vanessa Heybyrne, Ed Grossman, David Lord, Lyza Gardner, Deirdre Doran

*Visitors:* Cathy Hasbrouck

A motion was made to amend the agenda: add agenda item for the approval of the June 1, 2020 special meeting minutes (Lyza Gardner/Ed Grossman). Approved by all present.

### **Approve Minutes of May 11, 2020 Meeting**

A motion was made to approve the May 11, 2020, meeting minutes with the following amendment: remove the second clause of the first sentence in the third paragraph of the Director's/Youth Services Report section. (David Lord/Ed Grossman). Approved by all present.

### **Approve Minutes of Special June 1, 2020 Meeting**

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting on June 1, 2020, as written (Colleen Garvey/Vanessa Heybyrne). Approved by all.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Ed Grossman discussed the Profit & Loss statement. Income is down over 2019 numbers; the exact amount is confusing because a \$1000 amount from Springfield GMC was recently moved from the Silent Auction category to Donations. Payroll is \$5200 over the budgeted amount: \$3265 was paid to former Library Director Sharon Tanzer for accrued time off, and both Sharon Tanzer and Deirdre Doran were on payroll in the month of April. These expenses are one-time, but the Board will need to figure out how to budget for them.

Expenses are down—not as many books, materials or supplies have been purchased, and spending on library programs is down.

Neither the \$1500 from the Town, nor the Library's reallocation of \$1500 from another line item—both toward defraying health insurance costs for professional staff—are present on the current Profit & Loss statement. They will appear in June.

Ed Grossman spoke about COVID-19 impacts on the library's finances. The investment account has recovered in large part and is now about \$4500 down from its all-time high in February, 2020. Fundraising this year is key. The Fall Festival cancelation will have an impact on book-sale income.

Deirdre Doran asked how the recent personnel policy changes affecting accumulated time off will affect library employee Will Wilcox. Ed Grossman explained that Will is entitled to what he has accrued (and rolled over to this point), and may roll it into 2021, but must use it by the end of 2021.

A motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made (David Lord/Lyza Gardner) and approved by all present.

### **Director/Youth's Services Report**

Lyza Gardner pointed out that the email to trustees contained the April Director's report instead of the May report. It was decided that Director Deirdre Doran would give a verbal update and that the May report would be approved during the next Board meeting.

Deirdre Doran gave an overview of library operations in May. Front-porch pickup was started. Green-up Day activities went very well and encouraged the idea of additional outdoor programming in the future. She is working on the library's website and re-opening plans.

Deirdre Doran noted that the materials budget spending is down but slightly misleadingly so, as there are orders that have been placed but are not yet fulfilled (the servicing warehouse is not open due to COVID-19). However, there is still about a 50% decrease in materials spending.

A popup library was held out front last Saturday with a tent and some themed, curated book collations. A small sampling of books was displayed for sale.

Children's/Youth Services Director Carrie King has been very successful with her take-and-make craft projects. There has been positive feedback from patrons on the reinstated ability to check out materials.

Lyza Gardner thanked Deirdre Doran and Carrie King for their creative new ideas and Deirdre's work on the library website. Robert Neid also appreciated the work, and praised Carrie King's newsletter, the "Crayon Tribune".

### Status of Re-opening Plan

Robert Nied said that a condition for reopening, per the recently-enacted infectious disease policy, is for the Library Director to write a reopening plan—Deirdre Doran has done that. He asked if Deirdre had a potential timeline for moving to the next phase of reopening, even a theoretical one, and asked how we might communicate updates to the community.

Deirdre Doran said that the state has issued guidelines for library reopenings and that libraries (along with museums, art galleries, etc.) cannot exceed 25% capacity if they open. The guidelines stressed that curbside pickup is still the preferred method of library interaction for now. Every library in Vermont is making its own decisions about how and when to reopen. She said she feels that a critical need for reopening is a Plexiglas shield between the circulation desks and the stacks—the space between the desk and the first bookcase is less than 6 feet. She also mentioned that, at present, no one monitors the front door to control the exact number of patrons in the library at one time. She has proposed that the next reopening phase allow patrons to come to the library by appointment only. Appointments would be limited to a maximum of two at any time—one group could use the children’s library and one group could use the main library.

Deirdre Doran says she’s not sure when the Plexiglas sneeze guard can be installed. The state hopes to distribute the shields as they’re being manufactured (they are being manufactured within Vermont). She posed the question whether the installation of this shield is an absolute must before opening or if there were other creative ideas.

Robert Nied asked if there were any other options for installing a barrier shield. He said he’s seen some businesses locally that simply have a sheet of Plexiglas hanging from hooks. If waiting for the state installation could take months, is it worth looking at alternatives?

David Lord asked how big of a sheet was needed, as he has some scraps of Plexiglas in his possession.

Robert Nied emphasized that the reopening decision is Deirdre’s to make and asked whether the state had estimated when the shield could be installed.

Deirdre Doran said the state estimate was 4-6 weeks, but maybe sooner if they can “get them out as they get them [from manufacturing].”

Robert Neid asked: At what point does it become appropriate to give the community some sort of update?

Ed Grossman said that David Lord may help solve the plexiglas problem if it's a Plexiglas issue (by providing some Plexiglas). Once a shield is installed, what is the timeline for having people in the library?

Robert Neid said that the policy that the Board put in place means that we need to approve the reopening plan and the date of reopening, and that it sounds like there are things to be resolved before the date can be set.

Ed Grossman reiterated that we should keep thinking about how to let people in the Town know that "we're on it" and making progress.

## **New Business**

### *Status of Fundraising Mailings*

Trustees discussed logistics of mailing fundraising letters. Colleen Garvey asked about appropriate personal messages to use on the letters, and whether there was a single date that all of the letters should be mailed. Robert Neid said that trustees should use their best judgment on personal messages, using provided messages on the instructions as a starting point. He said that trustees can mail letters in batches, but should try to get letters in the mail soon as the date on the printed letter is already two weeks out of date.

### *Discussion of Future Fundraising Options*

Robert Nied mentioned some conversations he'd had with Ed Grossman about fundraising strategy. He said that the Library has established a long tradition of a mailed, printed-letter approach and it's important to retain that tradition. He doesn't suggest the Board move away from that, but suggests that techniques be broadened. He said the Board should evaluate options, especially digital options, e.g. email lists, Amazon Smile, alternate payment platforms like Venmo.

Lyza Gardner mentioned that there were a few digital things that could be done in the short term on a tactical level without much work at all, for example a Facebook post with a link to the Library's PayPal donation page, with coordinated messaging to the fundraising letter. She also offered to help manage email lists if the Board chose to go that direction at some point.

Robert Neid set a goal that, by the next fundraising campaign, the Library will have more options for outreach and donation methods.

### Library Building Infrastructure Status

Robert Neid said that a couple of infrastructure issues had arisen over the past few weeks, including two separate water leaks, and it prompted him to wonder if there was a process for a periodic inspection or plan for maintenance instead of reacting to things as they occur.

Deirdre Doran said that specific elements of the building are inspected periodically (heating, elevators, etc.).

Lyza Gardner suggested that perhaps the Town could be asked about this.

Ed Grossman said that there needs to be some kind of system change to be more efficient with heating/cooling, as well.

Robert Nied said that he would feel more comfortable if we had a process for a periodic inspection. He asked Deirdre Doran to reach out to the Town and ask what their thoughts are in terms of being proactive with maintenance. It could prevent large sudden bills.

### Library Building Access/Keys

Robert Nied said that he'd recently obtained a key to the Library, and filled out a form when he did so. He asked if it was known how many keys were out there, and who has them. Deirdre Doran said she has a collection of the forms that have been filled out to obtain keys, but there was uncertainty amongst the trustees around exactly how many keys were circulating.

Ed Grossman said that the Town would know how many physical keys were currently available. He mentioned that it might also be a good idea to verify that the existing keys actually work.

Robert Nied said that, at some point, we need to document the process for controlling physical access, and have a process for the returning of keys.

Deirdre Doran mentioned a conversation that was held about moving to digital keypads for access. She said she thinks it would be a good investment.

Lyza Gardner asked about a ballpark estimate for how much a digital-keypad system would cost for the Library. Deirdre Doran said that the number being discussed was about \$3000, but that maybe other systems could be installed for less.

Robert Nied said that he would have a conversation with Julie Hance, Town Manager, about the key and keypad issues.

## **Old Business**

### *Trustee Vacancy*

Cathy Hasbrouck attended the meeting as a potential trustee. She would fill the vacancy left by Donna Matthews' recent resignation. Robert Nied said that he had spoken with Cathy by phone and that she had expressed interest in serving as a trustee.

Cathy Hasbrouck said that she currently supports the library by "looking after the computers," and making sure they are operational and updated. She said that she wants to make sure that she would still be able to fill that role. Robert Nied said that there shouldn't be any conflict.

Lyza Gardner and Ed Grossman both voiced support for Cathy's appointment as a trustee.

A motion was made for the Board to recommend the appointment of Cathy Hasbrouck as a trustee to complete Donna Matthews' vacated 3-year term (Lyza Gardner/Ed Grossman).  
Approved by all present.

The Board will send a recommendation to the Chester Select Board for Cathy Hasbrouck's appointment.

### *Benefits for Library Staff*

Robert Nied wanted to confirm that Ed Grossman's ongoing discussions with the Town about health benefits for the Library's professional staff were supported by the Board and that Ed's "on point" role was agreed upon for these ongoing discussions. At present these discussions center primarily around the nature of the employment of Library staff (Are they municipal employees? Are they entitled to municipal benefits? etc.). Any decisions would be brought before the Board.

Lyza Gardner said that she appreciated the conversation that makes roles and responsibilities explicit and that she supports Ed's ongoing role in these discussions.

Robert Nied said that it's critical that we build and maintain our strong relationship with the Town and that we should keep moving this forward: the professional staff deserves to be compensated appropriately and receive benefits.

Ed Grossman said he's not looking for a formal motion, just affirmation for him to continue to pursue health benefits for our professional staff.

Rober Nied said that we should continue to move forward.

Ed Grossman made a few additional comments about fundraising. He mentioned the Grand List (nearly 1900 homeowners)—but the mailing list is currently only 500. He also wants to be able to reach apartment-dwellers and others in the community.

### **Public Comment**

N/A

### **Adjourn**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn (Lyza Gardner/Ed Grossman) made and unanimously approved. The Board was adjourned at 10:47AM until the next meeting on July 13, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lyza Gardner, Secretary