

WHITING LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes — August 10, 2020

Present: Robert Nied, David Lord, Cathy Hasbrouck, Colleen Garvey, Lyza Gardner, Trustees;
Deirdre Doran, Library Director

Absent: Ed Grossman, Vanessa Heybyrne

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Robert Nied, Chair, at 9:30AM on the Zoom platform.

APPROVE MINUTES OF JULY 13TH MEETING

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2020 meeting (David/Cathy); approved by all present.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Lyza Gardner on behalf of Ed Grossman, Treasurer, who was absent.

The financials are stable and better than expected during the pandemic due to several factors: better than expected fundraising; \$1000 transfer from Silent Auction to Donations; an upward trend with the PUB wealth management account; and conservative spending by the Director.

Income is down compared to 2019 (e.g. book sales, copier use, fines) by \$2114.57. This is offset by increased donations. Expenses are down due to reduced spending on supplies, books and materials.

Fundraising Update

To date, \$9,430 has been raised by the June fundraising drive. Together with the \$1,840 from the November, 2019, drive that was realized in calendar year 2020, the total for 2020 fundraising is \$11,270 to date. This is remarkable during such a challenging time.

Robert Nied and Ed Grossman have written thank-you letters to all donors.

Robert Nied said that he thought the response to fundraising was amazing and "we're very fortunate to have such generous supporters of the Library...given the circumstances, we did remarkably well."

Director Deirdre Doran has begun doing quarterly building inspection. Robert Nied said that it's become clear that there has been a fair amount of deferred maintenance, and that the Board is going to have to begin to address some of that deferred maintenance. It's unclear what will be on the Library's budget versus on the Town's. This will impact the Library's budget going forward.

DIRECTOR/YOUTH SERVICES REPORT

Director Deirdre Doran said that July was pretty busy at the Library, with a lot of time spent preparing for reopening (by appointment)—e.g. training, preparing the space, obtaining supplies. She is currently trying to coordinate with Chris Taft to help assess the HVAC system in the building.

Deirdre Doran performed an initial quarterly inspection of the Library in July. She says she is glad to have baseline understanding of the building from this first inspection.

Report on reopening - issues, concerns, modifications

Last week (the first week of August) was the first week the Library was open by appointment. Deirdre Doran says that the reopening went smoothly and wasn't stressful. Community members were very responsible, wearing masks, etc. She said that she was evaluating opening up more slots, as currently appointments are only offered between 11AM and 1PM, which doesn't fit everyone's schedule.

Robert Nied gave his kudos to the staff for a successful reopening and was glad to hear that there were no issues. He extended his thanks to Deirdre Doran for efforts at outreach: the online newsletter, Library programs, and engaging with the public.

Update on building inspection - issues identified, coordination with Town Manager

Robert Nied said that the inspection showed that there was a backlog of deferred maintenance, and now we need to figure out what issues have been deferred and what's most important, especially things affecting safety. Some things will need to be addressed sooner or later, for example, the Library's front door doesn't have a fire-safe lock. It's not clear where the delineation lies between maintenance that falls under the Library's budget and what is the Town's responsibility. We'll need to clarify that.

Robert Nied also mentioned that the Board and Library staff need to keep in mind that we're a municipal Library and, as such, every document and communication we produce and have is subject to public review. We need to be as clear as possible in this, and consistent in production

and archival. Going forward, it may make sense for Board members to have an official email address, and reduce the amount of personal information that is exposed publicly. It might be better if we had an official channel if there were, for instance, a FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] request.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of library heating system - coordination with Town Manager and HVAC person

Robert Nied and Deirdre Doran have been trying to coordinate a time with Chris Taft to discuss the system. He has looked at it and identified some issues. The system is challenging to control: there are no programmable thermostats at present, so manual intervention is required. Bills are high in the winter.

Town Manager Julie Hance is “fully on board” with the system review and taking appropriate steps. She has asked to be part of the discussion.

OLD BUSINESS

Status of thank you responses to donors

The Board is up-to-date on thank-yous for donors to the June fundraising drive. Robert Nied said that he and Ed Grossman have done their best to give thoughtful responses and thank-yous to the donors.

November fundraising - alternatives/additions to traditional mail campaign

Robert Nied mentioned an idea that Ed Grossman had: “sustaining” donors with an ongoing donation commitment.

Lyza Gardner said that the Board is reaching a point where logistics details are hampering the big picture possibilities. She says that she and Ed Grossman do some contortions to maintain a single spreadsheet that combines donor contact information and financial records. It’s not scaling. It’s likely time to evaluate software for managing this (e.g. a CRM, or Customer Relationship Management tool).

Robert Nied said that the Board should explore that and start to move forward. Lyza Gardner said that one of the criteria is going to be whether the Library can pay for a service and how much it can afford.

Robert Nied said that Ed Grossman should be consulted from a budget perspective and solicited Trustees' opinions.

Cathy Hasbrouck said that she is in possession of a spreadsheet of the Chester Town Grand List, with about 1700 names on it. She said she wonders if, with the wealth management fund performing so well in an otherwise unstable time, if it might make sense to make some investments in the building and infrastructure, including software and management of our current money, such that the recent gains don't disappear if the market falls apart.

Robert Nied said that yes, the Board should carefully address some things now. He asked if Lyza Gardner would be willing to do research on software and management-tool options.

Lyza Gardner said yes and that she'd report back at the next meeting. She asked what system Deirdre Doran is using for collecting emails for the Library newsletter. Deirdre Doran said she is using Mailchimp. Lyza Gardner asked if there were any considerations with respect to adding those people who have signed up for Library communications to a potential donor outreach list. She said she wants to be sure to abide by privacy laws and do the right thing.

Robert Nied said he'd like to run this question by the Town attorney to be sure, given privacy restrictions, and that he would ask Julie Hance.

Robert Nied mentioned that the Library had a Fundraising Committee at one time but no one present could recall the membership of the committee. Robert Nied suggested the committee reconfigure. Lyza Gardner volunteered to be on the Fundraising Committee. Robert Nied also volunteered and suggested asking Ed Grossman to join.

Colleen Garvey said that the Silent Auction Committee had to warn for its meetings, and Robert Nied agreed to follow up on what requirements there were for non-quorum committee meetings.

Silent auction - taking it online

Robert Nied asked if Lyza Gardner would also want to take on figuring out how to take the silent auction online. Lyza Gardner said that it could be done in parallel with researching CRM software if someone else did it, but that she'd rather do one thing at a time.

Robert Nied said that perhaps someone in the community would be interested in helping out. Colleen Garvey said that she liked the way the recent Grace Cottage online auction was held.

Robert Nied said that it's not just figuring out the online details, but cataloguing and uploading photographs, etc.—a lot of work. It'd be great to be able to do it, he said, as it's another source of donations, but he agreed that the Board might not have the bandwidth at the moment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

N/A

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David Lord mentioned that the Board needed to make sure that there was an active personnel committee to organize the annual evaluation of the Library Director. He said he didn't feel that he could maintain a leadership role, but that he could serve in a consultant role.

Robert Nied said that with the recent changes to the personnel policy, the Board needs to "calibrate." He suggested that the Board review the policy, and then at the next meeting establish an approach to the evaluations and who will be on the personnel committee.

Lyza Gardner mentioned that the Treasurer's and Director's reports hadn't yet been approved.

A motion was made to approve the treasurer's report as delivered by Lyza Gardner. (David/Cathy). Approved by all present.

A motion to approve the director and youth services report was made (Lyza/Cathy). Approved by all present.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made (Lyza/Colleen) and unanimously approved. The Board was adjourned at 10:21AM until the next meeting on September 14, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lyza Gardner, Secretary