

BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 9, 2021 4:45 PM

MINUTES

Present: Starr Latronica, Leo Schiff, Sirkka Kauffman, Jane Southworth, Jennifer Rowe, John Woodward, Howard Burrows, Karen Tyler, Dave Cohen, Matthew Wojcik, Sarah Vincent-Hoag (notes)

Call to Order / 4:45 PM- Leo

Agenda/Changes or additions- none

Public Comments- none

Minutes of February 9, 2021 Jane moved to approve. Jenny seconded. All approved, none abstained

COMMITTEE UPDATES/ DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Friends of the Library

Starr: There is still a little bit of annual appeals money coming in. Also, the book sale is bringing in \$30 - \$40 every couple of weeks.

Amity and Lena have joined the Friends and working on planning outdoor event.

Leo spoke to the Teen Advisory board and members were very excited and interested in the Board but live in Dummerston. Possibly they could participate on a Board Committee

B. Finance/Asset Development Committee—Jennifer Rowe, Chair

The Finance Committee met and got together performance benchmarks (5 year) and there are no problems. Actively working on grant possibility so if the Board committees have projects that need funding, the FC can help with application. The strategic plan might give ideas for useful grants.

Jane: Idea for grants for yew tree and garden

Jenny: Volunteers are handling the garden, but if more useful grants money needed, certainly!

C. Technology Committee—Leo Schiff, Chair

Tech committee did not meet but will meet in March

Starr: re Website, kudos to Matt. Tech Committee will continue to meet 2x a week.

Matt, Jeanne and Chloe continue to furnish content of the website and Courtney has joined.

A community foundation grant for \$1500: Matt is working on 11 hotspots around the library that patrons can use.

Leo: Based on his feedback, card renewal feature was added to the website so please look and give feedback

D. Buildings and Grounds—Jenny Rowe

With Gabe not here, Jane, Jenny and Elizabeth Tannenbaum (citizen member) are on committee. If anyone wants to change committees when the time comes, please consider B&G

Jennifer updated on many details. Here are a few:

Yew and garden access- if there was a good reason to move the tree, they would do it (i.e. blocking BML sign etc) but garden access not a good reason to remove a healthy tree (granite endposts might need to be moved).

The committee put together a list of planned improvements including working on the upstairs hallway: carpet, tile stripping/waxing, paint, wallpaper. More ideas included improvements to the staff room, single study spaces in the library and etc.

Starr has spoken to Billy about moving the William Morris Hunt sculpture to make way for work. (Jenny: there might be a better place to put the sculpture e.g.: against a contrasting brick wall)

Put together a list of furniture that can be cleaned and sanitized. They are rethinking the snack station in light of that. New ideas for computer stations with plexiglass barriers as opposed to the “islands”.

When we reopen, most of the furniture is not physically in the library so there will need to be some kind of furniture moving party.

Leo: which changes before library has bigger reopening?

Jenny: The work upstairs, carpet, painting, wallpaper etc. depending on comfort with when contractors can come in

E. Advocacy and liaison to library organizations—Howard Burrows

1st Thursday VLA program- on the subject of “critical whiteness.” Emily Crist gave a great talk on the subtleties of social and cultural bias. “how subtle it is when you have neglected to realize how loaded everything is with social and cultural uncomfort” said Howard.

Braver angels: Inter-library debates, next one is next Tuesday night

ALA: If people want to go to the summer meeting, you can register now.

Karen: Vermont Humanities program - Jessamyn West will be speaking tomorrow (March 10) afternoon. Starr will send the link out.

F. Department Reports: Director; Reference, Youth Services

Director’s report: Starr- We are cleared to request Americorps member, application was accepted – When originally filling out the application we had planned for Matt to have someone help out with training the community on using technology and electronic resources but because we realized that the grant needed to be used for capacity building rather than direct service, the Americorps person would go to community organizations and teach the staff about library resources and impart the info to their clients; we are hoping that this person can do the research to create a database of community info. Had a great Winter Carnival and giving away covid care bags from United Way grant. Patrons are very grateful.

Jenny: Wellness study narrative, how does BML gain from participating?

Starr: Participant gets \$25 gift card and library gains by being involved in research, staff is made more aware of what we could do and should be doing. Partnership with health department and hospital tunes library staff in to research and enhances service

Leo: Recent circulation figures, what is the usage trend?

Starr: Feb slightly less than January, is disappointed with the numbers. Leo: would like to see a few months usage data to see the trend.

Howard: Is there a metric on usage of electronic services?

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Update on current services/staffing

Starr: There have been discussions on the next step

1.) Let people into the building on an appointment basis (family, couple or individual could come in or 20 – 30 minutes) There would be control of how many people are in the building-with one group upstairs and one group downstairs.

MRW is working on getting booking function for spaces.

There is still apprehension from staff but Starr is keeping an eye on the numbers. Will wait till after the Town Meeting and then work with staff to prep for opening, hopefully by April.

Howard: After the second vaccine shot, there are more things people can do and perhaps this should be in the library literature

Leo: Status quo allows Starr to make decisions about phased reopening without Board involvement but she can consult with the Board if needed

Starr: There will be a meet up of librarians on March 25 to update how things are going. Starr will attend. The trustees are invited.

Tomorrows governor's press conference: Some restrictions may be lifted.

Nominations for new Board members

Howard, Jenny, Leo and Starr are handling.

There are two candidates:

Steve Frankel (a returning candidate) and new candidate Kate O'Connor who was the selectboard chair for years and a real neighborhood person. She was invited to apply and Starr is happy to have her

Leo: This Saturday interviews 30 – 40 min each on zoom.

Leo: Attended the teen advisory board and was very impressed with it and Chloe. Was wondering if the teen advisory committee could be a library committee?

Jenny: had questions about the numbers on the committee but could work it out, maybe it could be a liaison.

Jane: Put that on the upcoming board meeting agenda

Strategic Plan Update

Leo: Last month we were sending availability to Starr so Board members could learn more from staff about the library wrt the strategic plan

Starr: We are holding off on that till new board members are in place

Howard: Question about outreach to community members. Leo: We need to "rough out" a shape to the plan before involving community members.

Starr: If you know someone please start talking to them about it now. And we will wait till after the Town meeting on March 20th when the new Trustees are approved.

Tool Library update

Starr and Leo met with Stephen Dotson and his AmeriCorps member re moving forward with the tool library idea. Possibly a slow start with gardening equipment. One suggestion to reach out to the time trade board (potential sponsor of the TL). Might be good to work with them re: collaboration on staffing and physical capacities. They asked Stephen Dotson to research similarly sized libraries in Vermont that have circulation of non-traditional materials (ie snowshoes, telescopes etc).

Starr: We asked them to do research on staffing, space and materials.

Jane: Suggested drafting an MOU for the tool program perhaps using the Bike program MOU as an example

Leo: Had an idea for a shipping container on a trailer in the back parking lot for the tools that might include the electric bikes.

NEW BUSINESS

Electric bike loan program – Dave Cohen

Introductions.

Starr: Sent the MOU out

Dave gave a detailed background, history of and philosophy behind the bike program. The idea is to make it as inclusive as possible for community members. There are cargo bikes with e-assist that can go up hills carrying stuff and people. They have received a Local Motion grant to set up an e bike lending library so this can supplement some of the costs. The State is working on a bill for e bike subsidies and GMP offers a \$300 rebate. There is a great consortium of groups supporting e bikes. This space is growing fast!

Jenny: Re MOU, had some concerns: For the first year shared responsibility between Local Motion and the library and from 2022, all responsibility goes to the library. What is the cost of insurance? She had questions regarding transition of liability to the host that need clarification.

Leo: Interested in the sustainability of this wrt library, staffing etc. Not wanting to take on something we can't continue. MOU needs to work maybe in conjunction with the library.

Dave: After the first year the transfer to the host is a technicality. Need to make it understood that after the first year the consortium takes over. If the library chooses to not stay in, e bikes can find another host.

Leo: The library is the most prominent entity in the sharing community in Bratt, so this will be a compliment to the e bike program

Dave: There is a movie featuring V Bikes in Brattleboro. Makes biking accessible and has an effect on the local bike and pedestrian infrastructure

John: Question re: web reservation software. How would BML present this? Dave: LocalMotion is going to learn it. Dave's group will handle reservation, training, safety and maintenance. One bike will have a belt drive and internal gears. Dave's group has received funding for helmets, paniers, lights fenders and racks.

Leo: We need the MOU to be tightened up. When can the program be launched?

Dave: Mid April/May.

Leo: Please share concerns about MOU to Jen or Starr so revising group will have a list of them from the Board.

Jenny: **Make sure we get a copy of insurance certificate.**

All will be shared with the town attorney.

Jane: Will this go before the board at the next Board meeting? And as always, the Devil is in the Details.

Leo: Won't launch before Board and Town approval – hopes it can be pulled off in a good time frame

Dave: Will still purchase and prep the bikes. The library is his first preference, but can find another host if it doesn't work out.

John: What does insurance cost for a bike?

Dave: Doesn't know

Leo: Thank you Dave.

John: Moved to adjourn 6:12PM

Karen seconded. All in favor.