

BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 13, 2021 4:45 PM

MINUTES

Present: Leo Schiff, Ann Varilly, Kate O'Connor, Starr Latronica, Howard Burrows, Jane Southworth, John Woodward, Jenny Rowe, Karen Tyler, Leslie Markey (Library cataloguer), Wendy Collins, Kathryn Turnas, Michael Hoffman, Sarah Vincent-Hoag (notes)

Call to Order / 4:47 PM - Leo

Agenda/Changes or additions- Starr: add land acknowledgement in new business

Public Comments: none

Minutes of March 9, 2021: Jane moved to approve, Sirkka seconded, all in favor, none opposed

Wendy Collins and Kathryn Turnas introduced themselves to the board. They are both interested in joining Board Committees

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Board members introduced themselves to the new Board members, Kate O'Connor and Ann Varilly

COMMITTEE UPDATES/ DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Friends of the Library

Starr: has a solid 26K budget. Joyce said there are 4 new board members, 1 – 2 book sales, upcoming ice cream social, and she was on the zoom call when Bernie Sanders spoke to librarians.

Leo: Friends will meet next week if anyone is interested. Question about a rotating attendance for Trustees at Friends meeting. Agreed to have a calendar so each person could take their turn attending. Starr will generate dates of Friends meetings and put Trustees names on it going forward and will send it out to the Board for people to ok their spot.

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

Jennifer: Committee met yesterday and the minutes are in email. 3rd quarter report on endowment: doing fine. So far in Fiscal Year, the return is up 15.84%. She explained the details of the benchmarks from Prentiss Smith. Other financial reports available, four from the Town and two from the Library. Jenny will explain and educate board on these a little each month.

Michael Hoffman (member from the public) joined the meeting and introduced himself. Said he would like to connect BML with the Eric Carle Library and the Jewish Book Center in Amherst

C. Technology Committee—Leo Schiff, Chair

Leo: Summarized minutes: Website has been up for two months, and favorable comments from the public. Have been working on a room booking software. Starr: had an online meeting about it with Zack and the requirements for this one is complicated. They want patrons to be able to reserve their space and have the info populate without library staff having to do it. Zach will research other products. Starr said this hasn't been resolved but they are making progress

D. Buildings and Grounds—Jenny Rowe

Committee met two weeks ago with the idea of pandemic funds and discussion on how we might use them. Came up with a list of current, near term and long-term pie-in-the-sky projects. And they are:

1.) Sign in front of the building Starr has spoken with Peter Elwell: town arts committee will be involved. Starr asked for the Board's ok to talk to PE about design. There is a need for comprehensive signage inside the library that is in line with the outside sign design (What?! It's poetry month....) Q: Is the Board on board with this? A: Thumbs up Jane: We need to continue with this as a Board project. Has a recommendation of a person who could help. Starr will talk to PE about it.

2.) Adding a third floor to the building. CR is needs the extra space. Need to work with the town to hire someone to assess building plan to see if a third floor is feasible and in line with current building codes and etc. Bob Stevens had given a square footage cost estimate in the recent past that would result in 1.7 – 2M. Kathryn: The information is in the blueprints. Jenny: BP's are 50 years old and may need to be reassessed with today's standards. John: How likely is it to get funding for this? Starr: Federal legislation proposed for America's libraries so funding may be available and it would be great to be prepared for that possibility. Q to the Board: Is this something we would like to pursue? Leo suggested it could be New Business at next meeting. Jenny: Is there community interest – and there was discussion around this. Leo: Is there a consensus to explore this without spending? Starr will speak to Peter Elwell about it. Jane will invite Bob Stevens to the B&G committee meeting.

E. Advocacy and liaison to library organizations—Howard Burrows

ALA Summer meeting is virtual and funding is available
NELA has a tech submeeting Friday and Howard will attend. Also, their annual meeting will be held in three virtual sessions Starting Sept 1. Funding is available if anyone would like to join VLA or NELA

F. Department Reports: Director; Reference, Youth Services

Youth Services – Starr: They are really upbeat and doing a lot of good work!

Directors Report: Big “Poe-tree” for poetry month is in front window

A description for VISTA went up on Friday and there is already an applicant. Starr spoke to Peter Elwell regarding federal funds –must be expended by 2024

Attended mental health and etc issues presentation for small and rural libraries

Leo: Looks like the circulation numbers are going up

Starr: Got to talk with Bernie Sanders who was appalled with the exorbitant cost of downloadable materials and the woefully low pay for library staff.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Update on current services/staffing

Starr: Library open to patrons by appointment starting April 13: Jerry Carbone was the first visitor. Kris Radder took pictures of Jerry and library for the paper. All appts. for today were filled. Karen has signed up, quite a few slots still available going forward. Feels that people are still reluctant to come in. However, some volunteers are anxious to come back. Some are fully vaxxed. Starr wondered what the Board thinks about them coming back? Howard: ok with it. Starr will discuss it with staff. Leo: Does Starr need Board to empower her to act on it before next meeting? Starr: If discretion is granted that would be fine. Karen asked about consistency with town volunteers. Kathryn explained how it works at the senior's center and Starr said there is just one volunteer at the Town who is pretty much walled off behind plexiglass. Leo: there is no objection from the Board

Electric bike loan program

Starr: Consulted with Local Motion, VBike and attorney. VBike ok, stored and run out of library.

Starr was sent the town MOU (from attorney). VBike is on board

Starr spoke with Peter Elwell. If the Board ok's based on MOU, we can move forward.

Jenny: Liked the MOU but had questions about insurance. Starr will follow up with Dave Cohen.

Leo: Do we support MOU provided the insurance is up to snuff? Jane: Is in favor but would like to make sure that the lawyer is satisfied before moving on.

Jenny: Moved to approve. Karen seconded. All in favor, none opposed, none abstaining.

VISTA position update

Covered under Directors report

Strategic Plan Update

Still don't have a new leader but do have an activity plan. There will be a meeting for board to meet with staff members to learn about functions in library

Starr: This meeting will be April 28 from 3 – 4:30PM. Starr will send out GoToMeeting/Zoom info in the next couple of days

Tool Library update

Leo: updated on process so far.

Starr: Hasn't heard any more from Kevin or Stephen. There will be a seed and herb/plant swap April 22 through the Saturday, so may be able to survey gardener interest

Leo: Invited Leslie Markey to talk about her job as library cataloguer and give her opinion about the Tool Library.

Leslie: Explained her job as a cataloguer including nonbook items such as telescope and snowshoes.

NEW BUSINESS

Bonus compensation for website work

This is an executive session item. Jenny suggested that John Woodward could take over the minutes and Jenny will email to SVH after the meeting to be included here.

Elimination of fines for ILL materials

Starr received input from the ILL librarian about this. Seems that it's more trouble than it's worth.

Starr wanted to make sure that the Board is ok with eliminating these fines. It probably would not require a policy change but she will double check to make sure. Leo: Any objection? A: None.

Land Acknowledgement

Starr: We were not the original inhabitants of this area. An idea to include this somewhere on the library website. Starr will ask the town diversity/equity committee to work with local leadership and come up with something. Does the Board support pursuing this?

Leo: BML website is part of the Town so how does this issue work with the town? Starr: It goes through the Town equity committee. There is no urgency on this and feels it's best to go slow and consider it carefully. Starr will put this on Continuing Business for the next Board meeting, she will send out the Vermont Humanities Council statement and material from others ahead of time. All were on board for this.

Kathryn asked if there is a list of committees that she and Wendy could see. Starr will send one out.

Executive session

No further votes were taken and the meeting was adjourned at 6:18 pm.