



Board of Library Trustees

Gladys E. Kelly Public Library, 2 Lake Street, Webster, MA

Minutes for Thursday, August 8, 2024

In Attendance

Rich Franas, Board Chair, Martina Koziak, Treasurer, Jeanne Mikels, Secretary, Sue Buehler, Mary Chabot, and Susan Veshi. Also in attendance, Sondra Murphy, Library Director, and Evan Hale, Assistant Director and Board Clerk. Guest Jessica Fontaine, Information Services Assistant was also present for the beginning of the meeting, leaving at 5:10PM. Rena Klebart absent.

Meeting Called to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:01PM.

Approval of Minutes

Mary moved to approve minutes as submitted; Martina seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Trustees' Report from the Director

Sondra introduced the new staff member, Jessica Fontaine. Jess provided information about her work experience prior to starting at the Gladys E. Kelly Public Library. Sondra spoke about the new community room tables that were delivered. She also ordered new tables and chairs for "The Nest." She highlighted Jim McGovern's visit to the Library and his speech. She announced that she will pursue the application for the IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Services Award. She pointed out needed repairs for the building for which she will be approaching the Finance Committee to request funding for the repairs. She also highlighted the Summer Eats Program which has provided meals to 600 kids and 200 adults this summer. She highlighted the July Library program attendance of 2,643, compared to 1,067 last July. Evan spoke about the Computer Basics program he ran, with 10 attendees, and mentioned that Jess will be extremely helpful in improving these programs going forward.

Warrants and Financial Update

Martina gave an update on the first month's financials for FY25. Sondra mentioned the annual maintenance contracts for the building which total more than the buildings and grounds budget.

Friends Update

Sondra provided an update on Friends' funding, including income from the yearly book sale. Books, Bites and Blooms is happening in October; the flower arrangements are in place, but the food may need to be catered. A new watering system is in place for the garden. The Friends' annual meeting will be September 19th at 6pm and will have a presentation prior to the business meeting. A few board members' terms are expiring. Sondra shared the Library's goals with the Friends at their last meeting.

Unfinished Business

2024 Grants Update

Sondra reported that bankHometown has reconsidered the grant request and maintained their initial denial until their commitment to the building has been fully expended. The Greater Worcester Community Foundation has also denied our grant request.

The Nest Update

Evan and Sondra spoke about the total budget and expenditures for the Nest. The total cost of the furniture, \$16,000, was higher than the original appropriation. Martina moved to increase the amount appropriated from \$12,000 to \$16,000; Jeanne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Building Update Meeting/Brainstorming

Sondra reported on the brainstorming session regarding building improvements between representatives of Trustees and Friends. Staff space and storage were identified as being the most critical. Also proposed were changing the Children's Service Desk to accommodate 2 staff and making the rear exit more accessible. Another proposal was to bump out the circulation desk and expand the circulation office. There may be a possibility of creating an office by the stairway, or a hidden door to enter the closets behind the staircase. Another suggestion was to put a screen in the Community Room to conceal the chairs and trash cans. Adding a dishwasher in the pantry was also discussed. The limited storage space currently available is not well utilized and efforts continue to rectify that. Sonda also mentioned removing the glass doors from the current periodicals room. Another suggestion was to move the Friends room to the upstairs staff room allowing the current Friends room to be converted to office space. There was a suggestion to put a service desk in the Teen Room. Additional thoughts were to investigate reducing the size of or shifting the donor wall to expand the existing closet and utilizing the lobby space more efficiently. Next steps include soliciting ideas from the Trustees. There was discussion about approaching other architects vs. the original architects with the accumulated ideas due to the possibility the award-winning original architects may be resistant to change. There was also discussion regarding the need to ensure funding is available prior to pursuing any proposed changes.

State Aid Expenditures

Sondra requested to have a yearly allotment from state aid that she can spend every year. This was tabled until the next meeting.

ARIS Report

Evan spoke about some statistics that show the great improvement the Library has seen in the last fiscal year.

Fine Forgiveness

Sondra proposed waiving fines for any items lost prior to 2020. This would reopen Library services to many patrons. Martina moved to waive the fines; Sue seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

September Meeting Date

Sondra proposed moving the meeting date to September 5th. All Trustees agreed although Susan will not be able to attend.

Bylaws Amendment

Per Jeanne's research, the Bylaws do not specifically reference the meeting time, just that it will be determined annually following town elections. Therefore, an amendment to set the meetings at the second Thursday of the month at 5PM is not required. Martina moved to set the at 5PM on the 2nd Thursday of the month. Mary seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Participation by Trustees

Per Rich's research, the ethics commission stated that members of Trustees can participate in or chair Friends' fundraisers, however they cannot direct staff in that capacity.

Ethics Test

Rich suggested that all members of the board should take the online ethics test and stated that he will check with the Town Clerk regarding responsibility for maintaining records of completion.

Adjournment

Martina moved to adjourn; Mary seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:57PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Mikels, Secretary

Evan Hale, Clerk

Exhibits (to be posted on the Library Website)

Director's Report

Financial Reports

Minutes Approved: September 5, 2024