

BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
SPECIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

April 29, 2014

Present: The following Trustees were present: Howard Burrows, Adam Franklin-Lyons, Jerry Goldberg, Jennifer Lann, Tom Murray, Jane Southworth, and Elizabeth Wohl. Also present were Library Director, Jerry Carbone; Friends Liaison, Mary Ide; and Recording Secretary, Dawn Pollard. Absent were Pam Becker and Robert Stack.

**1. Call to Order:**

Elizabeth called the special meeting to order at 5:30, and called on Jerry to give a brief explanation of the budget cuts requested by the Selectboard. He indicated the Town had given him two options: reduce the FY 2015 budget by 5% or reduce one or two full-time positions from current library staff. Jerry highlighted the following impacts to programs and services:

Reduction of staff:

- A reduction of two full-time employees represents 33.3% of full-time employees
- The position of account clerk is responsible for many duties, including clerical work, circulation services, cash reconciliation, purchase order/invoice preparation, supply clerk, office equipment troubleshooting, circulation desk backup, and clerical support for the Library Director. This work would be distributed to remaining staff members.
- The position of assistant children's librarian is responsible for creation, implementation, and promotion of library literacy programs to children, including story times, craft tables, and all aspects of the Summer Reading Program. If this position is cut, most if not all, children's literacy programs would be curtailed or eliminated. In 2013, the children's room hosted 359 programs which attracted over 7,000 children and adults during the year.
- A staff reduction would reduce weekly hours open from 50 to 40, possibly resulting in the library being closed at least one full day and shortened evening hours. This would result in lost services and programs to the entire community, including less public access to computers, less reference questions answered, and less access to meeting rooms, local history and art work collections.

Reduction of FY 2015 budget by 5%:

- A 5% reduction requires a cut of \$30,807, which will reduce part-time salaries by \$18,148 and reduce operating expenditures by \$12,680 (\$8,405 reduction in library acquisitions; \$3,675 reduction in office equipment, book/nonprint processing, conference/membership/training/mileage; and \$600 reduction in special programs).
- Reduction of weekly hours open from 50 to 45, possibly resulting in closing a complete day during the week.
- Potential loss of non-resident revenue due to reduction of open hours.
- Reduction of public access computer use, affecting those citizens who need access to the Internet for various information needs such as applying for jobs, e-government services, etc.
- Fewer acquisition purchases; less money available for emergency replacement of office equipment; less training and conference attendance; less open hours will mean more online holds being placed, creating more work for staff to pull items from the shelves.

**1. Public Comments:**

- Barry Aleshnick questioned the process of adopting a new budget. Elizabeth responded that a new budget needs to be drafted to be presented to Town Meeting Representatives at a meeting warned 30 days in advance.
- Bob Oeser commented that the Town Charter gives the Library Trustees the authority to approve a library budget and asked what the purpose of tonight's meeting was. Elizabeth replied that a

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revised budget had not been brought before the Trustees yet, and that nothing would be voted on tonight. Jane suggested the Trustees could vote on a recommendation tonight.

- Kathleen Dowd asked who made the decisions on the library cuts and how does the homeless population who spend time in the library impact the library budget? Jerry replied that the decisions to make the suggested cuts were very difficult and that he did his best to balance the cuts between the Main Floor and the Children's Library. In response to the homeless, Jerry indicated that the public library is for everyone's use and that a behavior code is in place; the staff addresses violations of that code.
- Veronica Wheelock asked if a self-checkout could be considered and commented that numerous volunteers are working for the town "for free" and should be rewarded, rather than punished. Cuts to the library budget will result in the need to have professionals performing duties now being done by volunteers. Jerry responded that a self-checkout would still need to be monitored by a staff person and could potentially impact the library's security system.
- Kristine Alden indicated she moved here several years ago after checking out our town and being impressed with our library. She commented it is vital to have an active, vibrant library, noting that the library is the heartbeat of a town; it is a gathering place; it is informative, entertaining, safe and compassionate. To remove any services currently being provided to the community is obscene, in her opinion.
- Mary Ellen expressed hope that the Selectboard would restructure the police/fire project. Elizabeth responded by indicating that the police/fire project was approved at town meeting a few years ago and that the vote at that time was not contested. Now that the FY 2015 budget has been defeated, the Selectboard has the right to restructure the budget as they see fit. Elizabeth also indicated that there was no fat in either the town budget, or the library budget, and that conversations should continue with the Selectboard.

The following motion, duly made and seconded at a properly warned meeting of the Brooks Memorial Library Board of Trustees, was passed unanimously by the Board.

**The Board of Trustees of Brooks Memorial Library (in a meeting attended by more than thirty (30) people who provided extensive corroborating comments), while understanding the current financial situation of the town, nevertheless believes that the services offered by the library are essential to the well-being of the community and are currently provided by a maximum of volunteers and a minimum of paid staff. Cuts as proposed are unacceptable.**

**5. Adjourn:**

Elizabeth thanked everyone for attending the meeting, and upon motion duly made and seconded, adjourned the meeting at 6:20 PM.

Dawn Pollard, Recording Secretary

Elizabeth Wohl, President