

BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

Tuesday—August 11, 2020 4:45 PM

Minutes

Present: Starr Latronica, Leo Schiff, Sirkka Kauffman, Gabriel Sistare, Jennifer Rowe, Howard Burrows, John Woodward, Karen Tyler, Jane Southworth, Matthew Wojcik (staff), Sarah Vincent-Hoag (recording secretary)

Call to Order / 4:46 PM Leo

Agenda/Changes or additions

Jane: Would like to suggest 2 topics for an upcoming meeting

Public Comments

none.

Minutes of July 14, 2020

Starr: Will make 2 months minutes available and these will be up for approval at the next meeting.

COMMITTEE UPDATES/ DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Friends of the Library

- Activities update

Starr: Read from update

1. Christopher Ilstrup, the head of the Vermont Humanities Council, sat in on the last meeting. First Wednesdays is going full steam ahead, but it's still up in the air about whether the lectures will be in person, on-line or a combination of both.

2. Also, instead of paying the usual \$2,900 for the First Wednesdays series, it will be on a sliding scale this year. FOBML will vote on our contribution at the next Friends meeting.

3. Friends discussed fundraising with him. He's looking for a different model, one that does not have us competing for the same donors, and we'll be part of the discussion.

- 4.. We're starting the Annual Appeal early this year. The Finance Committee met a few weeks ago and have kindly agreed to fund our campaign again. Joyce is in the process of writing the letter now. It will be vetted through the Finance Committee and the Friends board.

5. There is discussion about how to do the reach-out of the Annual Campaign. Traditionally, we do it with letters. Should we put it on line? On-line first with a follow-up letter. We're still working out the details, but are open to suggestions.

6. It's possible that we need to rethink role of the Friends in light of the coronavirus. We're open to ideas.

Discussion about how to reach out? Online or letter?

Jane: Appeal letter as an agenda item upcoming? – Jen: Finance com meeting will look at it at the meeting next week. Will show to full board.

Jane: suggestion to send a written letter to get potential donors who might not look at online info

Leo: Contributions could be sent in via Venmo or bitcoin

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

- Treasurer's Report and Update

Treasurers report: email was sent re: status of Schwab accounts at end of fiscal year. QuickBooks online up and working. Schwab online access is sorted out so we are good to go. One page report summarizes what has happened during year July 2019 – June 2020. Total return over the year 6 2/3rd percent.

There are reports every board meeting, you get a printout from town and a report from Quick Books online. One report: The one marked "fiscal year actual versus budget cash basis" shows how much we have to spend this year have we actually spent. So far, we have not spent very much this fiscal year.

C. Technology Committee—Leo Schiff, Chair

- Update

Leo: Met last month and are moving ahead with website. Brooks staff has submitted all info to designer. We expect to see some pages in the next week or so.

Starr: Leo suggested she call Kelly Fletcher in Guilford. She had taken photos already of new library upgrades on behalf of GPI. There are few people in them. GPI said we can use them for free. Have been sent to the web designers. We will ask Kelly to come in when there are people in the library to photograph. We will invite some people in for a special photo shoot.

Next meeting of technology committee will be in a couple of weeks. If anyone wants to join let Leo know.

D. Advocacy and liaison to library organizations—Howard Burrows

- Update

Howard: Re Wardsboro situation. Thinks we need to have a strong response about the role of the librarians/library in the community, the impact of losing staff members etc., and the role of the open meeting law. Will write a letter. If anyone is interested in that or has information, let Howard know.

Jane: Is it our position as trustees to get involved? As individuals, we have interests, but as reps of library what is our position other than privately disagreeing?

Matt: Would like to personally express gratitude to Starr and to the Board for the care and consideration re: planning and the phased approach to reopening. And how much he appreciates the feeling that the trustees and management in the Library and town care for the safety of the staff and librarians.

Jane: Doesn't feel it's our place as a Trustee group to comment in public

Howard: Best thing to do is use this as an opportunity to promote what libraries can do, the role of a place versus the role of librarians.

Compassionate Brattleboro: is very active now, thinking of joining national group. Library will be able to participate.

New England library meetings/ALA did anyone attend?

Every Library: Promoting civic responsibilities, has been very active during pandemic time.

Discussion on open meeting law: When Gabriel sent a note re: Wardsboro, we can talk to Gabriel, but not have a group discussion. We can talk to each other individually, but needs to not be a quorum.

Jenny: Caution about being mindful about talking in such a way that it eventually creates a board meeting item, informs decisions we make as a group. Limit one on one discussions to exploratory.

E. Department Reports: Director; Reference, Youth Services

Starr: People are so grateful to be able to come into the library. Means a lot to them. Thank you for letting us work out how to best open and move slowly.

Leo: Asked Starr to give more of a numbers report on circulation next time

Matt: Jeanne mentioned tech items in her report: helping people with access to online services. With reopening, there is technology use in library. Jeanne and staff have been helping people in the library

with tech needs. Sometimes hard to get tech stuff done in the 20 minutes, but we are being flexible with letting people stay longer.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

- Discussion of phased resumption of services.

Jane: Starr, did we have a target for more opening activities?

Starr: It's still pretty nebulous on how we move forward, depending on health of the community. People are comfortable right now, but there are requests for more computer access. This is under consideration. Example of the guy who needs to do a four-hour exam for a job in Alaska on a computer. Has arranged he can use the Mezzanine Meeting Room while Starr is at the library. We can disinfect space. There are case by case accommodations for patrons. Question from fire chief about whether we can be a cooling station. Starr is willing to open the building on a Sunday if necessary but otherwise no. Karen: re people coming in from court to use library phone. Starr followed up and found out there are phones in the courthouse for people to use.

Leo: Question for Starr re: pace and level of reopening. Starr: Feels we should watch and wait longer to see trend of outbreaks. Look at use of the building. Is there demand? Hardly anyone coming in. However, curbside is really busy. We need to start looking forward to next step in opening up a little more. There are several positions empty, will need to hire from outside. Will need to hire more staff to open up more. There is not a big need to open up, need to expand services to beyond the building. Need to keep reassessing. She spoke with Sally Nix, who will be setting up a series of EAP programs for staff who are feeling stress and anxiety

- Vote to temporarily amend policy for unattended children.

Howard moved. Jenny seconded. All in favor.

- Fine Arts Collection update.

Howard: Contacts on appraisal of collection, they are interested and wanted to know how to proceed. What access is there and what should there be to the collection?

Starr: They may have access. We have a catalogue of holdings (in response to Jane's question). Starr happy to arrange for people to come in one at a time to see collection. Gallery Walk people will come by and make a video of the library's visible artwork.

Howard: Brought up issue of lack of pc in some collection items, talking about some of those issues.

Jane: suggested we put out an RFP to see if there is someone in the arts community here who would be willing to give us an appropriate valuation of items in the collection.

Leo: Need to discuss further before we move on that.

Starr: A pedestal was damaged. Asked Howard if he could give her contacts from his list for info on it. Will also talk to Monument people on South Main Street. Starr will get pictures to provide to Howard for his contacts on this.

Howard: Send the minutes and he will write up the issues that Jane talked about and suggestions for an RFP.

Leo: We will revisit this in next month's meeting

NEW BUSINESS

- Discussion of extending borrowing privileges to out-of-town cardholders.

Leo: Some documents were shared in the board packet on how this is done elsewhere.

Karen: How can we share borrowing resources with surrounding libraries. Looked into central and western Mass CWMars system and it is massive, many libraries, branches, academic and urban libraries etc. The Home Card system is more relevant for us. She is interested in

exploring that more but can't do it at present.

Starr: Next Windham county library get together, good time to float the idea, will chat with other library directors about it.

Starr: Home Card system description: Libraries up north in Vermont agreed that someone can walk into any of the 26 libraries in group and take out a book (must return to that library).

Would be very popular for people in outlying areas to be able to borrow books from Brooks, also very good for library to get our collection used more. If we decided to explore further, can start small: ie: Putney and Dummerston. There is a lot to consider. Thinks it could be a great innovation.

- Jane: Our strategic plan goes till 2021 and she thinks we should think about how we are going to start writing a new plan. She is not going to chair that committee, but wants someone else to be part of that effort. Because of COVID, she doesn't think we can reach out to community. She proposes to extend our current plan for another year to give us time to write a new one. Starr and she have been working on revising the policies. By October there should be a draft that has been through staff review and for board to look at – can be an October agenda item.

- Discussion of format for next month's meeting.

Leo: Is there interest in doing a socially distanced in-person meeting next month or possibly a hybrid meeting with some offsite participants?

Starr: We close the library at 5 so we could possibly use the central reading room. There is enough space there to stay socially distant.

Matt: We have videoconference equipment at the library. Question about how well it would work with people spread out, if it would pick up people's voices?

Jenny: Question about difficulty hearing people at a distance.

Starr and staff: Not a problem.

Some gave thumbs up and some sideways thumbs on in person/hybrid plan, so there was some interest.

Leo: Motion to adjourn 6:30. All in favor.

Thank you.