

BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 11, 2022 4:45 PM

Minutes

Present: in person: Sirkka Kauffman, Howard Burrows, Starr Latronica, Matthew Wojcik (Electronic services specialist); remotely: Karen Tyler, Leo Schiff, Jane Southworth, John Woodward, Kate O'Connor, Jennifer Rowe, Ann Varilly.

Call to Order / **4:45 PM** Leo

Agenda/Changes or additions: Decision on annual draw from endowment (John)

- Public Comments: Introduction of new Town manager Yoshi Manale. Yoshi looks forward to meeting trustees in person.
- Comments from Lynn Russell about 15-minute limit on patrons in library. She is concerned about this limit. Leo noted that there is a later agenda item on the phased reopening when we can discuss this. Starr noted that staff may use discretion with individuals, allowing patrons to stay longer and/or use a small room with a laptop.

Minutes of December 14, 2021: These had been inadvertently omitted from trustee packet; thus, approval will be delayed to February meeting.

COMMITTEE UPDATES/ DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Friends of the Library- Starr update; Ann attended.

- Activities update: The book sale has netted about \$4,000 so far.
- Annual appeal: They have received about \$11,000 to date. There are fewer donors, but they are writing larger checks.
- Starr will draw up a schedule for Board members for this year. Jane will attend next Friends meeting.

B. Finance/Asset Development Committee—John Woodward, Chair

- Loud funds update: John noted that this is on the list for the year's committee goals. We would like to free up some space and display the art somewhere. A new appraisal is likely needed, as the original is from the 1970s. We do not need to find a living relative to move forward.
- Jenny drew attention to the report on the permanent endowment, and its value at the end of December which is used for our 4% draw. The value is about \$2.5 million, making the draw just over \$100,000. The percentage of stocks had been growing in our portfolio to 55%, so Prentiss Smith has rebalanced that down to 48%, which is more in line with our 50% target for equities. Performance measures will be ready by the February meeting.

C. Technology Committee

- Next meeting will be on January 24th.

D. Buildings and Grounds—Sirkka Kauffman, Chair

- The committee did not meet in December. Next meeting is being scheduled for late January.

E. Advocacy and liaison to library organizations—Howard Burrows

- Howard noted that two librarians had recently visited from Keene; there seems to be regional interest in strategic planning.

F. Strategic Planning Committee

- No meeting since last Trustee meeting. Starr sent a summary of the potential consultants to group. Next meeting is January 18th. Leo asked whether there may be a recommendation to the full Board about using a consultant and the need for an RFP by the next meeting.

G. Department Reports: Director; Electronic Services

Director's Report

Starr reported that staff is working on year-end statistics for Town reports. We are getting the grant for a water bottle refilling station.

Electronic Services

Matt reported that the State is using some ARPA funds for consortia, including the Catamount Library Network to get Aspen Discovery, a better user interface for the catalog. They will fund the start-up cost of this, and possible other technical equipment such as an owl camera that swivels up to \$1,000. In response to Leo's question, Matt said our current interface is open source and not ideal for searching, whereas Aspen is under a layer and gets other digital sources not currently accessed. The annual fee for the Consortium will be based on population, circulation, number of books and number of libraries.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Update on phased reopening and volunteer re-entry, including mask requirement

Starr: While we have instituted a 15-minute time limit for patrons, we do accommodate people who need more time. She asked for Board guidance on this limit, and noted that staff appreciates it, and while there has been little pushback from patrons, there has been some. Jenny noted that we gave Starr discretion to vary opening policies, and this is not the moment to pull back on that, though we may revisit the policy in the future. There was discussion of potentially mandating vaccines for patrons, but the Town cannot mandate employees to be vaccinated, and consensus was to not consider it for library patrons. Starr was unaware of any library vaccine mandates in Vermont, though Matt noted that there are some that are now closed, other than being open for curbside delivery only.

Tool Library update

Starr: There is a demo of another software coming up, and a decision on that will be made soon. We can get the software first, then buy objects, and the building is still expected to be in place by April.

Personnel update

Starr reported a new hire has started, and one staff is still out on FMLA but expected back by

February. She hopes to then restore Monday nights, and staying open until 9 pm on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Committee charges

Finance, Buildings & Grounds, and Technology charges are done. Strategic Planning will discuss theirs at the next meeting.

Nominating Committee

The committee interviewed all three candidate's for the one slot available, and selected Joyce Sullivan who has accepted. The other two candidates were invited to attend committees of choice: Michael Hoffman on Strategic Planning, and A.J. McDonald on Buildings & Grounds.

E-bikes

Starr is working on the insurance issues and should have answers soon.

NEW BUSINESS

- Decision on annual draw from endowment

John suggested that we vote to authorize the total endowment draw now, but wait until later to allocate to line items. The draw two years ago was about \$87,000; a year ago about \$97,000; and now will be \$100,220.73 for the next year. Jenny noted that we may eventually find that the 4% could be lower than in prior years. She also noted that we need to include the draws from the Loud, Legacy and Calista funds.

John motioned to authorize up to 4% of the December 31, 2021 permanent fund for the budget; up to 4% of the Loud and Legacy funds; and \$800 from the Calista fund. Ann seconded; all in favor.

- Library cards for non-resident Town employees

Starr reported that Town employees used to get free library cards, but that was rescinded with harder times. We do have cards for each Town department, and their use is supposed to be related to employees' work. Should we reinstitute the free card policy to Town employees, though not extend it to their families? The discussion elicited widespread support, and Karen made a motion to approve offering free Library cards to Town employees; Jane seconded; all in favor.

Subsequent discussion about whether to extend this to employees of any business in Brattleboro was tabled pending further research.

6:13 pm. Leo adjourned.