Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chair Mary Blanchette. In attendance:
Library Director Susan Phillips, Judy Stomberg, Children’s Librarian Patriciia Grundman, (at HML); via ZOOM: Mary Blanchette, Mary Cone, John Halloran, Pam McCormick, Janet Wieliczka, BOs Liaison Melinda Ferry, FOL President Peg Busse, Recording Secretary/Bookkeeper Rhonda Villanova

Citizens Forum
No citizens to speak.

Approval of Minutes
Moved (Wieliczka), Seconded, (Halloran) to approve meeting minutes from December 14, 2021; John Halloran not ed a correction: vote for chair nomination, he had abstained. Mary Blanchette said they would vote on it next time.

Treasurer’s Report
Mary Blanchette asked what the adjustments were listed on the report. Susan Phillips responded that it reflects the coinage that is set aside until rolls can be made up for deposits of whole dollars.

Current Year Budget Report
In response to a concern previously raised about the expenditures for library materials, Susan Phillips stated that several bills had just been submitted for book orders; supply chain issues have slowed the deliveries. Mary Blanchette asked about the overage on postage. Susan stated that there was an increase in the PO Box fee and there were unexpected costs for passport postage. Peg Busse offered for the FOL shared the cost of the P.O. Box. Mary Cone noted that the December total for programs was higher than YTD costs. Susan responded that there had been a credit on an item.

Director’s Report
Susan Phillips reported the library was closed, along with other Town Offices per the First Selectman due to snow on Friday, January 7. The library continues to distribute masks. One of the after-school Chess Club members tested positive for COVID. The families were notified and Chess Club has been suspended for two weeks. Preschool story hours will begin in February. Mary Blanchette asked how many people were attending the movies; the answer was about a dozen. Susan said some things were catching on, others not yet. The new parking lot project is included in the Capital Improvements budget request for FY22-23. Susan shared the preliminary plans dated 2020, which show 20-25 new spaces being added. There was discussion about possible outdoor program space being a part of the project. Melinda Ferry commented that she is a member of the Capital Improvements Budget committee and is
aware of the idea. John Halloran asked if Susan could email the plan to the Board members; she will. Susan reminded that the library parking was the designated parking area for visiting the Veteran's Memorial.

Francie Berger is working on new themed multimedia kits for families and adults. Activity kits will include things like binoculars, telescope, books, puzzles or games to enhance the family experience with the kit. Armchair travelling kits will contain cookbooks and utensils, language tapes, folklore/cultural books, and games. The FOL has assisted with projects like this in the past so will be asked to fund this new project. Also, some of the lawn games collection (also funded by FOL) needs to be upgraded. Discussion was positive and approval for the request to FOL granted.

A project to reorganize the young adult collection is underway.

Susan reported Public Works has removed the tree from the front planter, along with cleaning up plantings around the Bicentennial marker. There has been discussion of moving the MIA/POW memorial, which was an Eagle Scout project, to the Main Street side of the Library so it is more accessible via the new sidewalk to the Veteran’s Memorial.

VII. Friends of the Library
Peg Busse recapped activity from the past year. Most notable, the Book Cellar sold some “treasures” on Amazon—items that have greater value than normal Book Cellar items. This past year 31 books raised $1,051.00 in profits.

Peg reported good volume of community surveys are being received online. Susan shared that paper copies were shared with people who came in to pick up masks on the initial distribution day. Peg said she has been asked why taxpayer money was spent on the mailers; she informed them it was FOL money and grant money that paid for the survey. They also asked who is going to see the results. The answer is that the results will be public. The data belongs to the FOL because they paid for it, but the Board of Trustees decides what to do with it.

VIII. Old Business
Meeting Schedule 2022: Mary Blanchette presented the dates for the upcoming budget meetings, one of which conflicts with the April 12th Board meeting. Moved (Halloran), seconded (Stormberg), to reschedule April’s BOT meeting to Wednesday, April 13, 2022; all in favor, passed unanimously. Mary Cone noted that November 8 is Election Day - the Board may want to address moving that meeting as well.

COVID Monitoring: The Town has updated the Covid response guidelines for employees, based on the new CDC guidelines. Mary Blanchette asked the Board if they should require patrons to wear masks. The consensus was to strongly encourage the wearing of masks for the time being, but not require. Signs will be posted on entryways. Peg Busse has had conversations with the Book Cellar volunteers about their comfort with working; some will remain, others will take a break.
Furnace Repairs: Mary Blanchette reported that the furnace has been ordered with ActionAir. Installation is estimated at a week to 10 days to put in a new system. Scheduling will depend on need and weather.

At the recent Board of Finance meeting, Peg Busse questioned the process that was used for funding of the new furnace, i.e. no bid process, no BOF involvement and why the library was asked to use trust funds to cover the expense. Mike Purcaro is looking into it.

IX. New Business
Personnel: Susan Phillips announced that a new Page has been hired. Caroline LaMalva, will work Mondays/Wednesdays and one Saturday/month, at $13/hour (minimum wage). Moved (Halloran), seconded (Wieliczka), to approve hiring of Caroline LaMalva; all in favor, passed unanimously.

Homebound Delivery Service: Susan Phillips reviewed the Library’s Homebound Delivery Service that has been provided for many years, and presented updated guidelines and service request form. The use of the service has waxed and waned over the years, but during these difficult times the staff feels that this service could be of great benefit to patrons and should be featured more. Mary Blanchette raised concerns about liability. Susan explained that the Town has a Vehicle Use Policy and agreement form that library employees follow/sign. She will send out. The Board discussed where requests were being made from and ways to advertise to bring in more participants.

Budget Preliminary Discussion: Susan Phillips and Mary Blanchette will be meeting with Finance Officer Tiffany Pignataro to discuss the FY2022-23 budget and the zero-based budgeting process now required by the BOF.

Mary shared that both the BOS/BOF have requested information about the Library’s endowments. By state law, the BOT has complete control of these funds; most of the funds only allow the use of interest. Peg Busse clarified to the Board that they are not asking to use the funds, they are looking into the process regarding the furnace purchase and trying to square how to pay for it properly.

Susan Philips remarked on the discrepancy of the amount of staff raises between the Library and other Town departments. For FY21-22 the library applied the 2.75% increase as directed by the BOF but other departments did not. In fact, some employees received twice that rate for raises. As a result of this ongoing practice, the library staff salaries are behind those of other Town departments, especially as minimum wage is getting progressively higher. Susan asked the Board to think about asking for an amount to equalize the salaries. Peg Busse recommended getting salary numbers from other libraries.

X. Trustees Concerns/Chair Concerns
None

XI. Correspondence
No correspondence received.
XII. Adjournment
Moved (Stomberg), seconded (Cone); all in favor, passed unanimously to adjourn at 8:16 p.m.

Submitted by
Rhonda Villanova
Recording Secretary

[Signature]