I. Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chair Mary Blanchette. In attendance: Mary Blanchette, Judy Stomberg, Mary Cone, John Halloran, Pam McCormick, Janet Wieliczka, Library Director Susan Phillips, Children’s Librarian Patricia Grundman, Cheryl Chamberlin, Melinda Ferry, Recording Secretary/Bookkeeper Rhonda Villanova; Reference Librarian Francie Beiger joined meeting briefly at about 7:40 p.m.

II. Citizens Forum
No citizens to speak.

III. Approval of Minutes
Moved (Wieliczka), Seconded (Stomberg) to approve meeting minutes from December 14, 2021 with correction; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Moved ((McCormick), Seconded (Cone) to approve meeting minutes from January 11, 2022; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

IV. Treasurer’s Report
No questions.

V. Current Year Budget Report
Susan Phillips noted that spending is as expected.

VI. Director’s Report
Susan Phillips reported that long-time Library Assistant Kathy Boop has submitted her intent to retire on March 3, 2022. Process is underway to hire a replacement. Ashley Debbondonanza, YA Librarian, is starting a Teen Advisory Board. She is meeting with the school librarians to plan for summer reading collaboration and other projects. A musical program featuring The Jolly Beggars is scheduled for March. The library is working at 75% capacity for meeting spaces; this will allow attendance of 90 people in the main reading room area. Registration and masks will be required. Popularity of the Chess Ninjas children’s chess club continues to grow. The Library is once again hosting the Rec Dept’s Music and Movement for Tots program and the Senior Center Chess Mates.

VII. Friends of the Library
Susan Phillips gave a summary in the absence of Peg Busse. The Book Cellar is still open. The Reading Room book sale continues. The Community survey period has ended. Over 500 online responses were received; the physical copies have yet to be counted.

VIII. Old Business
The suggested position of Assistant Treasurer was revisited. John Halloran stated the back-up usually is the Chair, or the Chair can appoint someone. It was determined to leave the current status as is.
COVID Masking/Masks – Staff continue to wear masks when on the floor. The Governor’s office has announced the mask mandates would end within 4 – 6 weeks. Susan Phillips suggested leaving the signs up encouraging mask usage through cold/flu season.

IX. New Business

Policy for Borrowing New Kits – Francie Berger joined the meeting to discuss the new experience kits being created and presented a draft policy for use that covers damage/replacements of items, liability, etc.. Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

FY2022-23 Budget – Susan Phillips presented the budget for FY22-23, developed within the zero-based budgeting guidelines as requested by the Board of Finance. Category increases and decreases were noted, based on increasing vendor costs and pandemic-related changes. She presented a two-part proposal to address the “salary compression” of Library salaries, due to the State minimum wage increases, and longevity of staff. As has been discussed in the past, with minimum wages rising (scheduled to go up to $14 this July and $15 next year), the starting pay rate for Library Assistants needs to be adjusted. The library has already lost an employee to another library that paid higher wages. Susan research starting pay rates of neighboring competing libraries and consulted the Connecticut Library Association’s Compensation Benchmarking survey from 2021, finding that the Hall Memorial Library has not kept pace with other libraries. With one of the long-time Library Assistants retiring and others to follow over the next year, Susan would like to address this pay scale issue prior to hiring the replacement. She proposed a two-part adjustment plan. The first phase uses remaining budget dollars to increase the scale in this fiscal year, allowing for a more competitive starting rate for the new hire. Motion (Halloran), Seconded (McCormick), to adjust pay scale for library positions (excluding Pages and Director) by 5%, all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Susan then proposed as part two an adjustment of 4% to the pay scale in the upcoming new budget, some of which will be offset by savings and changes in budgeting. Motion (Halloran), Seconded (Stomberg), to approve 4% increase in the upcoming salary budget and a total budget request amount of $718,842; all in favor, motion passed unanimously. John Halloran stated it was definitely justifiable.

X. Trustees Concerns/Chair Concerns

None

XI. Correspondence

No correspondence received.

XII. Adjournment

Moved (Halloran), seconded (Wieliczka); all in favor, motion passed unanimously to adjourn at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by
Rhonda Villanova
Recording Secretary