Hall Memorial Library Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, March 12, 2024
7:00 p.m.
Hall Memorial Library, 93 Main Street, Ellington and ZOOM

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I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Chair Mary Blanchette. In attendance: Mary Blanchette, Mary Cone, Pamela McCormick, Janet Wieliczka, Judy Stomberg, Peg Busse (also FOL Chair), Library Director Susan Phillips, YA Librarian/Ass't Director Ashley Dabbondanza, Recording Secretary/Bookkeeper Rhonda Villanova, BOF Liaison Logan Johnson, Cheryl Chamberlin; via ZOOM: BOS Liaison Mary Cardin; Children's Librarian Trish Brudz joined after library closing.

II. New employee Amanda Duhamel, Adult Programming and Technology Services Librarian was introduced earlier.

III. Citizens Forum: no citizens spoke

IV. Chairman's Report

Chair Mary Blanchette expressed her concerns about the elevator as it is out of order again. There are issues with the elderly and infirm, parents with strollers, FOL's basement access, employees are loading up tote bags with books to carry up and down the stairs. Mary Blanchette also mentioned an article she found about Worcester Public Library, "March Meowness" where lost or damaged fines are forgiven if the patron brings in a picture of a cat. Also of note, the South Windsor Public Library has become a town department. They were grant funded and there were questions about how the money was spent. Susan explained that "grant funded" meant that the operating funds from the Town were given to the Library and the library wrote the checks. With the change of library and town staffing, this system was changed. A final note, regarding the planning/brainstorming session that was held by the staff, feedback for the board included: employees feel disassociated with the Board and do not feel known. Judy Stomberg suggested a time should be set to "meet and greet" with the Board and staff. Peg Busse added other feedback from the session: employees enjoyed the session, were appreciative to participate, it was a good session for them.

V. Approval of Minutes

Moved (Stomberg), Seconded (Wieliczka), to approve the February 13, 2024 meeting minutes; all in favor; motion passed unanimously.

VI. Treasurer's Report

The report was reviewed with questions regarding Passport processing time with the uptick in requests. Peg Busse asked Director Susan Phillips if it would be beneficial to train some other staff members to do it. Susan reported that the new Programming person will be trained.

VII. Current Year Budget Report

The current year budget report was reviewed by the board. Chair Mary Blanchette asked about Contracted Services, Computer, and programming funds remaining. Director Susan Phillips said there were bills still to come for contracted services before the end of the fiscal

year, computers are usually ordered at the end of the fiscal year, and programming funds will be used by the end of June.

VIII. Library Director's Report

Director Susan Phillips gave updates on the building/grounds project. The BOS approved the parking lot project – the lights will be replaced, they will repave the parking lot, there will be no outdoor seating. As a part of a larger town project, they will be replacing bushes as they have grown too close to the building. As the outdoor seating is not included, the trees in that area will not be cut down. Peg asked about library hours and parking (closures, access, ADA access) during the work. Susan stated she will be meeting with Tom/DPW to plan it out. The project is scheduled to start around late spring/summer and be completed in the Fall. The director office ceiling repair was completed. Gary Berube will finish the clean-up and things will be put back in storage. During the elevator outage the library has provided a place for strollers, the sewing class and Veterans groups have been moved downstairs. In a a conversation with the previous service company, Susan learned that the equipment in the shaft is fine. The repair/upgrade is to the hydraulic valve system. The tank, oil and valve will be replaced. The valve is backordered and expected next week. They are still on track for the repair the week of March 18th and it should take about 2 days.

IX. Friends of the Library

FOL Chair Peg Busse reported the Book Cellar was "out of business" for now with the elevator shut down. The Book Fair table is still up and running, however, there appears to have been some theft occurring from the donation box. The FOL will replace it with a locked donation box. Also, Peg will be reporting, to include in the minutes, how much the FOL is contributing to the library. So Fiscal Year to date: $ 1,506 for museum passes, $131.25 for Winterfest, $414.00 Book Page subscription, $ 4,818.48 for summer programming, totaling $ 6,869.73.

X. Old Business

Library Funds: The Board discussed transitioning the Library funds, currently held in 2 accounts at M&T Bank, over to the town, which would need to transition before the end of the fiscal year. Reasons mentioned for changing included the amount of interest earned, the town would keep the accounting of transactions, the auditors would be happier. Pam McCormick expressed concern over the cumbersome nature of the process versus the current process. The town does not necessarily pay on a timely basis, the library needs to maintain some independence from the town and if it doesn't work out, it is not reversible.

BOF Liaison Logan Johnson spoke to the process that the State uses for purchasing and payments. He then commented on the proposed funds transfer here, stating that the Town will have "custody of your assets" but not the right to do anything with them. The Town would be stewards only.

Moved (Stomberg), Seconded (Busse), to vote to transfer the funds in the current Library M&T Bank Fines/Savings and Gifts/Checking accounts to the Town STIF account, to be under the stewardship of the Town. 5 members Yes, 1 member No; majority votes Yes. Chair Mary Blanchette, Director Susan Phillips and Bookkeeper Rhonda Villanova will work to make this transition by the end of FY23024. Peg Busse requested the board get documentation for the steps that will need to be taken for the transition.

Safety Concerns Update: Emergency Management Director, Walter Lee and the Town Safety Committee has updated Emergency Evacuation Plans for all buildings. Employees in each building received the appropriate plan, and were to read and sign off on it. Chair Mary Blanchette suggested the Board needed to take steps to safeguard the staff and patrons because there has been no progress with the town's plans to date.

Cash Registers: The register use is improving. The reporting is evolving.

XI. New Business

Town Charter Commission: Tom Palshaw, a town resident who will be serving on the Charter Revision Committee, reached out to Mary Blanchette with the request to speak with the BOT about their thoughts about any changes. Chair Mary Blanchette stated the board should be aware of changes and make suggestions.

Role of Bibliomation vs IT: Director Susan Phillips reviewed the division of duties between Bibliomation and the BOE IT staff concerning service at the Library. Bibliomation manages the Evergreen ILS, associated peripheral equipment, databases and e-books. Bibliomation manages the closed, internal network which is part of the CT Education Network. There are security, update, and Firewall components. The Board of Ed IT works with the cable (Comcast) connections, the phone system, the time clock, the cash register, and provides ground service for computers and printers. There were questions from the board concerning connectivity from one system to the other. After discussion, it was determined they are separate systems that do not cross connect.

Review of By-laws/Personnel Policy: Chair Mary Blanchette requested board members review the bylaws and see if they would suggest any changes. There will be discussion at the next month.

XII. Trustees Concerns/Chair Concerns

Pam McCormick stated she would not be at the next meeting due to Primary Day voting.

XIII. Correspondence

No correspondence.

XIV. Adjournment

Moved (Busse), Seconded (Stomberg), to adjourn at 8:24 p.m.; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by
Rhonda Villanova
Recording Secretary