

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
KENT MEMORIAL LIBRARY COMMISSION
JUNE 11, 2024
7:00 P.M.
Town Hall Meeting Room, 83 Mountain Road, Suffield CT
Hybrid Meeting**

Chairwoman Boutin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Corbin Adzigirey, Michael Alexopoulos, Klaire Bielonko, Denise Boutin, James Irwin, Claire Kawalec, Nina Kendrick, Michelle Kynard, Christine Sinopoli, Despina Tartsinis, Bob Parks and Joe Craven

Also present via Zoom or in person: First Selectman - Colin Moll and Library Administrator - Beth Chafetz

Chairman Boutin welcomed the two new members of the commission and asked them to introduce themselves.

Public Participation

Bob White – Mr. White welcomed the new commission members and expressed his thoughts on the duties of the commission.

Tess McCool – Ms. McCool welcomed the new commission members and shared concerns she had based on statements made during the May 15th and June 5th Board of Selectmen meetings regarding commission members being selected based on their political affiliation and other concerns pertaining to the commission and the search for a new Library Director.

Kathy Bielonko – Ms. Bielonko welcomed the new members and shared her belief that all members of the commission have good intentions regardless of political affiliation.

Approval of the minutes from the February 13, 2024, Regular Meeting of the Kent Memorial Library Commission

Discussion ensued among the members and changes were recommended by Commissioner Tartsinis and Commissioner Kendrick.

Commissioner Irwin MOTIONED, and Commissioner Kawalec seconded to approve the minutes from the February 13, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Kent Memorial Library Commission with the following changes:

Page 1 – In the Roll Call Section Commissioner Tartsinis’s last name had been spelled incorrectly as “Tartsinas.”

Page 3 – In the Public Comment Section when referencing Commissioner Kendrick her last name was spelled incorrectly as “Kendricks.”

Page 3 – In third paragraph “LDBGQ” should be changed to “LGBTQ.”

Vote: 10 in favor (Adzigirey, Alexopoulos, Bielonko, Boutin, Irwin, Kawalec, Kendrick, Kynard, Sinopoli and Tartsinis) and 2 abstain (Parks and Craven.) Motion passed.

Approval of the minutes from the March 5, 2024, Special Meeting of the Kent Memorial Library Commission

One change was recommended by Commissioner Tartsinis.

Commissioner Tartsinis MOTIONED, and Commissioner Kendrick seconded to approve the minutes from the March 5, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Kent Memorial Library Commission with the following change:

Page 1 – In the Roll Call Section Commissioner Tartsinis’s last name had been spelled incorrectly as “Tartsinas.”

Vote: 10 in favor (Adzigirey, Alexopoulos, Bielonko, Boutin, Irwin, Kawalec, Kendrick, Kynard, Sinopoli and Tartsinis) and 2 abstain (Parks and Craven.) Motion passed.

Approval of the minutes from the April 9, 2024, Regular Meeting of the Kent Memorial Library Commission

Commissioner Irwin requested that a change be made in the Public Comment section on Page 1 relating to the summary of comments made by Eric Harrington. It read as follows: *Mr. Harrington offered words of encouragement to the new library commission members, commented on the recent allegations made by Suzanne Irwin against Selectman Harrington, which were proven to be false, and cautioned the board not to put forward any candidate for Library Director unless they are very confident the individual is the right person for the job.* Mr. Irwin stated that the reference to allegations “which were proven to be false” may be Mr. Harrington’s belief, however, he never actually said that during his remarks. He believes this should be excluded from the minutes as it did not occur.

Discussion ensued among the commissioners as to the interpretation of the summarized comments of Mr. Harrington.

The meeting was unexpectedly paused for a medical emergency at 7:14 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 7:23 p.m. without Commissioner Irwin present.

Commissioner Tartsinis asked that the recording secretary review the audio recording and determine what was said in order to accurately be reflected in the minutes. Discussion ensued as to whether to table the minutes until next month.

Selectman Tartsinis MOTIONED and Commissioner Sinopoli seconded, to accept the April 9, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes with the understanding that the recording secretary will review the audio recording and determine the accurate wording. Vote: 9 in favor (Adzigirey, Alexopoulos, Bielonko, Boutin, Kawalec, Kendrick, Kynard, Sinopoli and Tartsinis) and 2 abstain (Parks and Craven.) Motion passed.

Communications Received

Chairwoman Boutin shared the following:

- Update from Human Resources Director Karin Ziemba regarding the search for a new Library Director as well as other positions within the library that are either in the process of being filled or are still open

Report of the Library Director

Library Administrator Beth Chafetz provided an update on the library and included the latest information available on the security camera installation project.

Standing Committee Reports

Sky Investments Quarterly Report

Commissioner Kawalec provided an update on the Quarterly Report from Sky Investments who manages the endowment. Policy Sub-Committee. She plans to provide copies of the information to the new commission members in the near future.

Unfinished Business

January Meeting Revision

Chairman Boutin provided revisions that should have been attached to the January Meeting Minutes. The changes were already approved but she wants this on record.

New Business

Library Director Next Steps

Commissioner Bielonko would like to see the process for hiring a Library Director move as quickly as possible.

Commissioner Bielonko MOTIONED and Commissioner Sinopoli seconded that the current personnel committee composed of Commissioner Sinopoli, Commissioner Irwin and Commissioner Kendrick work with the First Selectman and Human Resources to do the following:

- 1) Review and edit the Library Director job posting
- 2) Interview candidates using the final revision of questions that were used by the last interim search committee
- 3) Make a recommendation of ranked candidates to the Kent Memorial Library Commission for a vote

In-depth discussion ensued among all members of the commission with each sharing their thoughts and concerns about the process and how to make it as streamlined as possible.

Commissioner Irwin returned to the meeting at 7:47 p.m. and Commissioner Bielonko gave him a brief overview of what the group had discussed and the motion currently on the table. Discussion continued among the group with concerns.

Commissioner Sinopoli MOTIONED and Commissioner Parks seconded to close the question. Vote: 12-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Vote on the motion: 12-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Participation

Bob White – Mr. White shared 3 documents that are provided to the commission to help them with their duties.

Sandra Janik – Ms. Janik provided her thoughts on a number of topics brought up this evening, including a job description and personnel hiring requirements.

Chris Childs – Mr. Childs addressed the hiring of the Library Director, made suggestions as to what should be included in the job description and suggested serious review of the salary.

John Gracey – Mr. Gracey welcomed the new commissioners, discussed his thoughts on the hiring process and expressed concerns over the staff morale at the library.

Eric Harrington – Mr. Harrington shared his position on the hiring process for the Library Director and commented on the same financial issues brought up by Mr. Childs.

Fred Sweitzer – Mr. Sweitzer shared his thoughts on this evening's discussion of the Library Director hiring process and the job description and what it should include.

Tess McCool – Ms. McCool shared her thoughts on the job description and possible salary increase and believes that this is not what is preventing the town from hiring a new Director.

Adjournment

Commissioner Tartisin MOTIONED and Commissioner Kawalec seconded to adjourn at 8:23 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary