

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
KENT MEMORIAL LIBRARY COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 10, 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, Claire Kawalec, Nina Kendrick, Bob Parks, Joe Craven, Christine Sinopoli and Despina Tartsinis

Absent: James Irwin and Michelle Kynard

Also present via Zoom or in person: Selectman/Ex-officio member - Jerry Mahoney and Library Administrator - Beth Chafetz

Public Participation

Kathy Bielonko – Ms. Bielonko expressed her frustration with seeing another FOIA Complaint on the meeting agenda. She feels that enough is enough and the individual or individuals who are making these complaints need to stop and allow the commission to do the work they were appointed to do.

Approval of the minutes from the June 11, 2024, Regular Meeting of the Kent Memorial Library Commission

Commissioner Bielonko MOTIONED, and Commissioner Adzigirey seconded to approve the minutes from the June 11, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Kent Memorial Library Commission as presented. Vote: 11-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the minutes from the August 27, 2024, Special Meeting of the Kent Memorial Library Commission

Selectman Tartsinis MOTIONED and Commissioner Kawalec seconded, to accept the August 27, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes as presented. Vote: 11-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Communications Received

Chairwoman Boutin shared the following:

- Letter of explanation to Suzanne Irwin from Chairman Boutin with regard to Ms. Irwin's FOIA Complaint FIC Docket #2023-0085. (See attached.)
- Chairman Boutin read the new FOIA Complaint filed by Kent Memorial Library Commission member James Irwin against the Chair, Kent Memorial Library Commission, Town of Suffield; Kent Memorial Library Commission, Town of Suffield; and Town of Suffield. Ms. Boutin also read an opinion letter written by Town Attorney Derek Donnelly on this matter.
- Letter from Tess Mawhinney-McCool supporting the need for an MLS in the Library Director Job Description
- Letter from Jen Cioffi supporting the need for an MLS in the Library Director Job Description

Report of the Library Administrator

Library Administrator Beth Chafetz provided updates on the library which included statistics for the months of July and August.

Standing Committee Reports – Sky Investments Group Report

Commissioner Kawalec stated that she had received the report from Sky Investments and sent it to all commission members. She noted that if any commission members had any questions about the report they should direct them to her via email for further detail.

Special Committee Reports – Search Committee Update

Commissioner Sinopoli thanked Ms. Chafetz for her work as the Interim Administrator. She also expressed thanks to Selectman Mahoney, all the commissioners, the members of the Library Director Search Committee, Human Resources Director Karin Ziemba and First Selectman Moll for all their help in finding a suitable candidate for the Library Director position. Commissioner Sinopoli provided a recap of how the search process played out and provided commentary on why she felt so confident with the candidate chosen. Commissioner Kendrick also offered her thoughts on the chosen candidate and why she felt this person is exactly what the library needs. Selectman Mahoney expressed his thanks to all who were involved in the process as well.

Unfinished Business

Commissioner Alexopoulos noted that he had never received some of the documents referenced earlier in the meeting by Chairwoman Boutin. He expressed concerns about the delays in receiving information important to commission members. He would like to see documents made available as soon as they are received in order for him to be able to react to them should he be asked about a certain situation. Discussion ensued as to how best to disseminate information and confirm that it has been received by all commission members.

New Business

None

Public Participation

John Gracey – Mr. Gracey thanked Ms. Chafetz for filling in during a difficult time at the library and congratulated the commission for selecting a new Library Director. He shared his thoughts on not including an MLS in the requirements for the Library Director position.

Adjournment

Selectman/Ex-officio member Mahoney MOTIONED and Commissioner Craven seconded to adjourn at 7:33 p.m. p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary

September 4, 2024

Suzanne Irwin
58 Marbern Drive
Suffield, CT 06078

RE: Irwin v. Kent Memorial Library Commission (FIC Docket #2024-0085)

Dear Ms. Irwin:

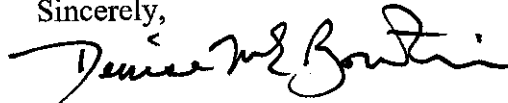
On behalf of the Kent Memorial Library Commission, I am writing to you regarding your FOIA complaint following correspondence between the Town Attorney and Russell Blair of the Freedom of Information Commission.

With regard to the filing of the meeting minutes which was the subject of your complaint. There is no defense. The minutes were filed later than the required seven-day period. I feel a need to share with you that the late filing of minutes was not a case of neglect, but a miscommunication between myself and the volunteer Secretary for that evening. He sent me a copy of the minutes and asked me to review them, which I did. I recommended some changes in the formatting. I assumed he would make the changes and file the minutes. He assumed that by sending them to me that he was finished with his task and that I would file the minutes. Please know that this is not an excuse, just an explanation of what occurred.

As a Commission, we recognize the importance of timely filing meeting minutes and have taken steps to ensure compliance moving forward. We now have a permanent Secretary in place for all of our meetings. I have also undergone FOIA training to better understand the Commission's obligations under the law.

On behalf of the Kent Memorial Library Commission, I thank you for bringing this to our attention and we will work to avoid this issue in the future.

Sincerely,



Denise Boutin

Chair

Kent Memorial Library Commission