

Hall Memorial Library Board of Trustees Meeting  
Tuesday, January 14, 2025  
7:00 p.m.  
93 Main Street

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ELLINGTON  
TOWN CLERK

- I. Call to Order  
The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Secretary Peg Busse. In attendance: Mary Cone, Judy Stomberg, John Halloran, Peg Busse (also FOL Chair), Library Director Susan Phillips, YA Librarian and Assistant Director Ashley Dabbondanza, Reference Librarian Amanda Duhamel, Citizen Cheryl Chamberlin, and Recording Secretary/Bookkeeper Rhonda Villanova. Absent with notice: Mary Blanchette, Janet Wieliczka.
- II. Citizen's Forum  
No citizens spoke.
- III. Chairman's Report  
Peg Busse summarized that it is the start of budget season. Departments have been asked to keep their request as low as possible, to explain increases, and use measurable drivers.
- IV. Approval of Minutes:  
Moved (Halloran), Seconded (Cone), to approve the meeting minutes of November 10, 2024; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.
- V. Treasurer's Report  
Director Susan Phillips reviewed the reports which included a comparison to previous month and previous year as requested. There were questions regarding refunds (usually made for incorrect input and same day), and passport processing increase (typical for this time of year). Amanda Duhamel is handling about 2/3rds of the passport processing and Susan Phillips the remaining 1/3<sup>rd</sup>.
- VI. Current Year Budget  
The board reviewed the current year budget. Peg Busse noted some funds have not been touched yet, including for professional development. Susan Phillips responded that the opportunities for those are usually in the spring and are coming up in April. Peg asked Susan to explain the programming fees line as represented on the report. There have been some changes in how programs are charged and, depending if library staff runs them, whether they are charged at all. The program fee as income allocation is being reviewed. The kitchen renovation will be paid out of the Expenditure Account. Peg noted the Grand Total on the Funds report does not reflect how much can still be spent yet.
- VII. Library Director Report  
Susan Phillips reviewed the report, making note of the new Lego Robotics program, which several libraries in the area are also doing. She also made note of two things not in the report: the doors on the shed have been replaced, and there were a couple of vandalism incidents in one of the main floor bathrooms. The police were notified and said to call should it happen again and they will come as soon as they can. Susan then informed the board of the proposed change to staff meetings, from monthly to quarterly. The length of the meetings will be extended. Staff education will be more of a focus. The meetings will be held until noon; the library will open at noon on those days. There will be a formal agenda and issues can be addressed without rushing through. There are three meetings left this year, each on a different day so as not to affect the same people each time.

Motioned (Halloran), Seconded (Stomberg), to add to the agenda under New Business, Allow late opening of the library to accommodate the change to the staff meeting schedule; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Friends of the Library

Peg Busse noted, pertaining to the vandalism remarks, that the Friends cash box from the reading area was emptied and left in one of the bathrooms on the main floor. A new locked box will be purchased and chained to the book fair table. Peg shared with the Board a Journal Inquirer article regarding the Book Cellar Renovation entitled "Library needs Help." Peg was interviewed and some pictures were taken. In light of the article, three donations came in to assist with the renovations totaling \$400. The Book Cellar was open new hours this past Tuesday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. There were eight customers; all said they saw the new hours on Facebook.

IX. Old Business

Set Meeting dates for start of basement cleaning – The basement area needs to be cleaned out in preparation for the Book Cellar renovations. Public Works agreed to take away items discarded. Peg Busse said she would contact Tom from Public Works to arrange a start date and determine what can be done. Peg has a couple volunteers already lined up to help go through things.

Safety Update and police patrol update – Susan Phillips gave an update on police presence at the library. She spoke with Office Bridge who will be making regular visits. There is no update on the panic button. John Halloran inquired if there is a paging system in the building; Phillips answered that there is not.

New Business

Children's Room Update – Susan Phillips reported on the McDermott Family Trust donation. The past two years the Trust donated \$500 each year which was used for various improvements in the Children's Room including the manipulation activities boards. This year they donated \$2500 targeted to Children's Services and Books. The Children's Librarian is working to update the Children's Collection, weeding and updating worn items. It was suggested this fund be used for this ongoing project, freeing up budget funds for new items.

Motioned (Cone), Seconded (Halloran), to use the McDermott Family Trust donation for the Children's collection update project; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Board Meeting Attendance and Protocol – Peg Busse informed the Board and meeting attendees that she and Chair Mary Blanchette wanted to get back to Robert's Rules for meetings, keeping the Board meetings more formalized. There was a question regarding whether library employees are paid to attend staff meetings. Susan Phillips responded that employees are paid if asked to attend. The Director and Assistant Director are always expected to attend and therefore paid, otherwise employees attending as a "would like to" are not paid.

Meeting Room Policy – The policy was reviewed with edits. John Halloran commented on the "no advertising/selling" and "all marketing/advertising" segments. The "marketing/advertising" was removed. All groups must include a disclaimer if the program is neither sponsored by the library or a library program. Peg Busse had looked into whether other libraries allowed outside groups to book rooms for a whole year; they do not. Susan Phillips explained the need to balance the needs of the community, in this case groups or organizations that needed predictable days and schedule, and the time taken up by staff to find a room and schedule for individual meetings that need a space on a sometimes weekly, usually monthly basis, while also reserving rooms for library programs and needs.

Motioned (Halloran), Seconded (Stomberg), to approve the Meeting Room Policy as amended; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Mini-Golf –Mini-Golf is scheduled for Saturday, February 8, 2025. The library will need to close on Friday, February 7, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. in order to set up. The library will be open on Saturday, but it will not be business as usual. The public will be well notified.

Motioned (Cone), Seconded (Stomberg) to allow the library scheduled hours change for Mini-Golf set-up and event; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Accept resignation of Page

Motioned (Cone), Seconded (Stomberg) to accept the resignation of Library Page, Mia Fiasconaro; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Allow Change of Library Hours for new Staff Meeting Schedule –Motioned (Halloran), Seconded (Cone) to accept late opening of library for staff meetings on quarterly dates established; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Budget Discussion

- a. Minimum Wage Increase – The Board discussed how to handle the minimum wage increase and keep the spread of pay appropriate for longer term employees.
- b. Increase of staff for Saturdays – the extra person on a Saturday would help to handle the busiest time of the day. The staff added would be Library Assistant I.
- c. Other items for future budgets/Book budget – fund requests were reduced on Advertising/Printing due to having a poster printer in house; library used to have contract with Hartford Toner, which has closed, need to find new person. Funds added back to the Book Budget.

The amounts for reimbursement to the town and Friends of the Library stayed the same. Program fees income was reduced from \$2500 to \$2000. The total Budget request is about 4% over this year.

Motioned (Halloran), Seconded (Cone) to approve the FY 25/26 Budget Request in the amount of \$758,323 as presented; all in favor, motion passed unanimously with the understanding if changes are necessary, a special meeting will be arranged.

X. Correspondence  
No correspondence.

XI. Trustee Concerns  
Peg Busse asked the Board members present to look at the goals and come ready to discuss at the next meeting.

XII. Adjournment  
Moved (Cone), Seconded (Stomberg), to adjourn at 8:22 p.m.; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by: Rhonda Villanova  
Recording Secretary



