

Hall Memorial Library Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, February 11, 2025
7:00 p.m.
93 Main Street and ZOOM

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TOWN CLERK

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chair Mary Blanchette. In attendance: Mary Blanchette, John Halloran, Peg Busse (also FOL Chair), Library Director Susan Phillips, YA Librarian/Assistant Director Ashley Dabbondanza, Recording Secretary/Bookkeeper Rhonda Villanova and BOF Liaison Logan Johnson; via ZOOM: Janet Wieliczka, Mary Cone, Reference Librarian Amanda Duhamel, and BOS Liaison Mary Cardin .

II. Citizen's Forum

No citizens spoke.

III. Chairman's Report

Chair Mary Blanchette shared her concerns about coverage of duties done by the Director when she is not here.

Also, an agenda item needed to be added to Old Business.

Moved (Halloran), Seconded (Blanchette), to add a budget update to the agenda under Old Business; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

Moved (Busse), Seconded (Halloran), to approve the meeting minutes of January 14, 2025; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Moved (Halloran), Seconded (Busse), to approve the meeting minutes of January 29, 2025; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

V. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report was reviewed; there were no questions.

VI. Current Year Budget

The budget was reviewed, BOT members remarked on the new format, confirmed they were reading it correctly.

VII. Library Director Report

Director Susan Phillips highlighted items amid her review of the report. She shared a sample Hot Spot packet the library now has available to patrons. There are four packets ready to be signed out. The kitchen upgrade is waiting for the countertop installation for the remaining work to be completed. Susan reported that she would be taking vacation for 2 weeks at the beginning of July. Arrangements for supervision and coverage of duties will be arranged well in advance.

Peg Busse, in regards to the level of illness within the building and community, asked whether there was some deeper cleaning that could be accomplished by the DPW. Susan Phillips replied they are on top of it, including extra cleaning after the Mini Golf event.

VIII. Friends of the Library

FOL Chair Peg Busse reported the preliminary numbers from the Mini Golf event which brought in about 50% of their very best year, and about 80% of the first year it was run. The Friends will hold a meeting to discuss what went well and what did not, and what to expand should they decide to run it again next year. There were 339 golfers, less than usual, but almost all children with families. There were not as many books given out (139 vs about 200 previously). It may have been due to patrons not knowing about the Book Cellar. Many people learned about the Book Cellar from this event. Peg expressed many thanks to the town, the library and volunteers that made the event possible. Susan Phillips stated there were also 159 patrons served food. Mary Blanchette thanked Troop 96 Scouts and parents for assisting with cleanup at the end of the day. Assistant Director Ashley Dabbondanza asked about the raffle ticket sales. Peg responded they were the highest selling they ever had. There were fewer prizes this year; the #1 prize was the art basket. The baskets did better if patrons could see what was in the basket. Book boxes appeared to be most requested by Young Adult winners.

IX. Old Business

Lego Robotics – Mary Blanchette had questions about Lego Robotics, which is sponsored by a non-profit company. The library is hosting, as are several area libraries, for two age groups of children. Registered participants work in groups on small projects, exploring engineering and other topics, and practicing teamwork. The final activity will be creating a robot. An event for all the libraries comes together at the end. The participants must attend all sessions. There are 30 spaces in each session; both at full occupancy.

Vandalism – An update on the vandalism incident informed the board that the people responsible were identified, spoken to by police, and banned from the library building and grounds.

Budget Update – Peg Busse spoke with Tiffany Pignataro from the Finance Department regarding the Air Handlers upgrade project. Several months ago, the Board voted to contribute \$125,000 over 5 years to fund this. Subsequently, the DPW Director arranged for an Eversource energy loan to pay for this and other projects in town, suggesting that the funds instead could be used to help with the basement waterproofing project. Tiffany requested an update as to which way the BOT wanted to go due to the upcoming budget discussion.

With a possible 2.5 mil increase, Town officials are planning several public sessions, one of which is at the library, to present the budget to the town's people. There will also be three sessions held at the library with the town assessor for citizens to explain the tax breaks and revaluation.

X. New Business

Director vacation – Susan Phillips vacation is planned for two weeks at the beginning of July. The exact dates will be forthcoming.

Request Safety Meeting – Mary Blanchette will be requesting a safety meeting that includes Police, Emergency Management, DPW, the Board of Trustees and Library Director. The library needs a reliable system in place for emergencies.

Basement cleanup – The town has assigned Foreman Taylor Olsen to help with the basement cleanup and subsequent work. Peg Busse pointed to the (3) areas: the old cellar, the middle section with the stairs, and antique storage, in order to tackle each with their own requirements. The old cellar has clearly identified items that may be discarded, including the metal shelving from the

original library. It has been determined they cannot be reused within the library. A usable swing space will be necessary for each stage of the Book Cellar renovation.

State Law vs policy for lunch breaks – Peg Busse supplied information regarding state law and policies for lunch breaks. The law provides for employees to be paid if they cannot leave the workplace. Mary Blanchette also noted the break/meal needed to be taken 2 hours before end of shift. Town Administrator, Matt Reed, said he would look into the topic to see where we need to go with the policy. There would need to be more discussion due to the part time shifts overlapping full time shifts. The BOT needs to determine whether to take on the topic.

Succession Plans:

Discussion/consensus – The Board would like the Assistant Director to learn more about the budget process details including information on when certain contracted fees are paid, whether they go out to bid and when. The Assistant Director needs to be up to speed should anything happen to the Director, to cover during the Director's vacation, etc.

Director documentation – Susan Phillips reported on the status of her documentation which included purchase procedures and listing of vendors, with Bookkeeper Rhonda Villanova assisting.

Peg Busse reported that more departments will be relying on grants as funding may be decreasing. The Finance Office has subscribed to a program to help find grants, including those coming from corporations. The library should explore this resource to see what may be applicable.

XI. Correspondence

No correspondence.

XII. Trustee Concerns

No concerns.

XIII. Adjournment

Moved (Busse), Seconded (Halloran), to adjourn at 7:56 p.m.; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by: Rhonda Villanova

Recording Secretary



