



## Board of Library Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 15, 2022, 6 pm

### 1. Attendance:

Lynn Coakley: present; Janet Hromjak: present; Jennifer O'Brien-Trafficante (**Jen OT**): present; Kathryn Parenti: present; Jennifer Siegrist (**Jen S**): present; Tracy Swisher : present; John Yule: excused absence

Chris Costantino, Alternate: present  
Betsy Solon, Director: present

Shirley Wilson, Alternate: excused absence  
Board of Selectman member Laura Dudziak: absent

### 2. Regular reports:

#### a. Directors Report 3/15/22:

As we begin a new term together and reach the end of another Town voting cycle, I feel the need to remind everyone of the important role the Library plays in our community. Public libraries like ours are all about information and free access to it. The more information available, the stronger and more democratic our community will be. The Library is also often the only place in town where people from all levels of society – the poor, the middle class, and the wealthy – can come together under one roof and interact with one another while getting equal service.

It's not always comfortable to deal with people outside of one's social circle or to see books and media displayed on topics you find disagreeable, but that's why the library matters so much in times of divisiveness and intolerance of differences. As we watch the spread of censorship and attempts to restrict access to information across the country, it is imperative that we protect the rights of our community. Giving Milford citizens information and the access to it - that's what we do.

### STAFF NEWS

- Library staff members are obviously disappointed in the failed HVAC vote and anxious about Spring/Summer temperatures in the building. There is some confusion about our current service model and why it does not resonate with voters since we get lots of positive feedback on a daily basis. I would like to discuss this under Non-Public at the meeting.
- We are in the process of hiring a new circulation desk assistant and a Saturday morning page. We're starting with our pool of excellent candidates who applied for the Fall openings and will open up the positions to the public if the positions remain unfilled.
- Four staff members will attend the PRIMEX Annual Conference in May.
- Although the Trustees approved a 4.5% COLA in January, the voters approved a 5% COLA for all nonunion Town Employees at the election. I would like to discuss bringing the Library staff increases equal to that percentage as part of the meeting's New Business.
- We are continuing the Performance Review process

### FACILITIES

- We've begun ordering furniture and shelving for the new Teen Area
- Milford Room – Portland Glass replaced 3 windows, the entire room has been painted and the new floor has been installed
- During the March 7<sup>th</sup> windstorm, a tree fell from our parking lot onto the chain link fence and alongside an empty shed on a neighboring property. I am working with Paul Calabria and PRIMEX on an insurance claim for the fence and DPW plans to remove the fallen tree.

- Lincoln Daley informed me that DPW will be repairing the retaining wall along Nashua Street between the Library and Franklin Street in the next few months.
- We expect to erect the 20'x30' tent in the upper level of the parking lot in May so we will have somewhere to offer services should the building become closed due to unsafe temperatures. It will also serve as an additional outdoor programming space for Summer Reading events.
- The Development Funds received a 35K donation towards an outdoor deck or patio to be built outside the Childrens' Room this summer. We have met with NH Custom Builders several times (the donors preferred vendor) to design the project and expect work will begin in May.

**COVID PANDEMIC & REOPENING PLAN**

- HOURS: With Trustee approval, we plan to begin opening on Thursday evenings beginning April 1st. Below is a chart showing how our hours compare to other libraries in the area. We have only one patron who has complained about our hours and they have done so very aggressively, so you may be hearing from them at a Trustee meeting. As you can see from the chart, we are open the most weekday hours!

Town	Days Open/wk	Hours Open/Wk	Opening Time	# Eves Open	Eve closing time	Weekday Hours	Saturday Hours	Sunday Hours
Amherst	7	53	9:30 AM	4	8:30 PM	43.5	5.5	4
Brookline	6	37	10:00 AM	1	8:00 PM	33	4	closed
Hollis	6	45	10:30 AM	2	8:00 PM	38.5	6.5	closed
Lyndeborough	5	20	10:00 AM	0	2:00 PM	16	4	closed
Milford ()=April 1	6	49(51.5)	9:00 AM	2(3)	7:30 PM	44.5(47.5)	4	closed
Mont Vernon	5	37	10:00 AM	3	8:00 PM	34	3	closed
Nashua	6	51	10:00 AM	4	9:00 PM	44	4	3
Wilton	5	36	9:30 AM	3	7:00 PM	32	4	closed

- MASKS: Most staff members are comfortable with making masks optional for all. The Children's Dept. would prefer to keep masks required for their in-person events until April, when they can bring the programs outside. We will abide by whatever decision the Trustees make at the meeting
- SOFT SEATING: Once the Milford Room, Teen Area and new Public Computer areas are open, we plan to restore soft seating to the Magazine and New Book areas. This will also allow us to open another meeting room or two as we remove the furniture from storage.
- PUBLIC COMPUTERS: As we work to transition from PCs to laptops for public use, we must address the ability for patrons to print from the laptops (and their phones). Reference staff is researching print utility options and I will bring those options/costs to the Board at a future meeting.

## PROGRAMS & SERVICES

The Summer Reading Program will begin on June 17th and run for 7 weeks

- In-person story times have resumed and are very popular
- We are lining up a speaker to present on Ukraine
- Passport services are booming and we have processed over 200 applications since January 1st.

## OTHER NEWS

- We've borrowed a scanner from the State Library and have begun digitizing materials from our NH History Collection. We're starting with the Milford property card file and Milford high school year-books and will move on from there.
- Rogers Memorial Library in Hudson will be joining our GMILCS consortium in April. The Circulation software will be down for 3-5 days as we add Hudson's data to our system.
- We've been experiencing "Tween" trouble over the past few weeks as middle school students come to the library looking for a place to hang out. Last week we brought in the school resource officer to help identify some boys who had a physical fight in front of the DVD section. The new Teen Area can't be completed soon enough!
- I will renew the Library's ZOOM account for another year
- The annual State Library report will be complete and submitted by March 31st

Respectfully Submitted, Betsy Solon

### 2. Election of Officers

- a. Motion made by Jen S and seconded by Lynn for Kathy Parenti as Chair. Kathy accepted. All approved. Motion made by Janet and seconded by Chris for Lynn as Treasurer. Lynn accepted. All approved. Motion made by Lynn and seconded by Chris for Janet as Secretary. Janet accepted. All approved.

### 3. Regular Reports:

- a. Directors Report - One additional item regarding issues with the website. It is being worked and should be up shortly.
- b. February 15, 2022 minutes – a motion was made by Chris and seconded by Lynn to accept the minutes. All approved.
- c. Treasurer's Report – A motion was made by Jen OB and seconded by Jen S to accept the \$1,521 in gifts/donations. All approved.

### 4. Old Business:

- a. Mask Policy & Reopening plan update – masks will be optional for the staff, but mandatory for children's programs. The Library is planning to increase hours into Thursday evenings starting in April.
- b. United for Libraries – reminder to take advantage of this free service with many good resources.
- c. Any other old business – none.

### 5. Public Questions and Comments: Jay Duffy from 491 Nashua Street, Milford spoke at the meeting regarding a number of topics:

- a. Appreciation for the Board's presentation at the Deliberative Session and his support of the warrant article.
- b. Questions on the hours being expanded – additional hours will be dependent on staffing (we are bringing a new hire up to speed) and due to the staffing levels,

increasing hours on a Sunday for instance would necessitate cutting hours somewhere else. Opening later in the morning and closing later in the day was discussed.

- c. He took exception to some wording in the February Director's report.
- d. Bigger tables for the laptops – these are planned, but other projects such as moving the teen area are slated first. Laptops can be taken to any area of the library for use so patrons can be more comfortable.
- e. Appointments for use of the room with historical documents can be made with the staff, thereby ensuring the room is available when desired.

**6. New Business:**

a. Capital Campaign – More ARPA money is available which we could use for the HVAC. This will be discussed in more detail next month. Chris suggested checking with John Shannon to see if there was any town money available that we could use.

b. Any other new business:

- Setting up a meeting with the Friends group to discuss fund raising.
- We should avail ourselves of the free surveys from the Public Library Association.
- Taglines should be added to emails and any other places we can to encourage donations to the Library Development Fund including estate planning and life insurance.
- Recognition for donations was discussed including in the Annual Report, using plaques, etc.
- Looking into being able to regularly meet hybrid using zoom was discussed.

**7. Close Meeting:**

a. Next meeting on 4/19/22 at 6pm.

b. NHLTA Spring Conference on 5/10/22 at the Grappone Center in Concord, NH 8am-3:45pm. All Trustees are welcome to attend. Trustees can let Betsy know and she will pay the \$50 fee.

A motion was made by Jen OB and seconded by Lynn at 7:15pm to go into Non-Public session.

**8. Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3; II (a & C) Personnel & Reputation held.**

During the Non-Public meeting the Trustees voted to approve the 5% COLA for staff. The monthly meeting was closed at 7:45pm with a motion by Jen S and a second by Chris. All approved.