



Acton Public Library
60 Old Boston Post Road
Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475

Board of Directors Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 13, 2021

Attendance

Members present: Amanda Brouwer (Library Director), Nancy Walsh, (Board Chairperson), Alan Schwarz (Vice Chairperson), Nathan Wise (Treasurer), Susan Mariani,, Michael Cameron, Mary Delmonico, Susan Hitchcock Missel and MaryAnn Iadarola. Absent (*notified, **did not notify): Patricia Horn O'Brien* Others: Mandy Merritt (Board Recorder).

The new Board Members (Mary Delmonico, Susan Hitchcock Missel and MaryAnn Iadarola) introduced themselves to the other Board Members.

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Walsh called the meeting to order at 6:36pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Approval of Minutes

The regular meeting minutes of March 9, 2021 were reviewed. A motion was made by Nathan Wise and seconded by Alan Schwarz to approve the minutes. All were in favor. The March meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

3. Public Comment - None

4. Acceptance of Financial Report

Amanda explained that there is a surplus in the budget due to pandemic-related limitations over the course of the year. As approved by the First Selectman, this surplus allowed the library to increase the Young Adult Librarian's hours to accommodate patrons' needs for tech time assistance, also to pay for extra assistance instead of volunteers and to plan for the purchase of a boiler. By June the library will likely resume regular hours. Susan Mariani asked for clarification regarding Brian's increase in hours and benefits. Amanda clarified as approved by the First Selectman. Nancy Walsh noted the decrease in electric bill.

A motion was made by Susan Mariani and seconded by Mike Cameron to approve the Financial Report as presented. All were in favor. The Financial Report was approved.

5. Acceptance of Non-Town Fund Report

Director Brouwer informed the Board of the DEI breakout in the report and highlighted the Lions Club donation. For the benefit of the new Board members, Nancy Walsh requested details about DEI. So Amanda explained the need for attention to inclusion making the library fully accessible to people of differing abilities. Nancy informed the Board of the town's initiative to put attention on systemic problems regarding diversity and exclusion. Also, the Social justice book discussion series participation, well attended, every couple of months, encouraging a wide range of ages to participate. Raising awareness in our town with the fiction book, 'The Hate You Give.' Alan provided an overview of the story. The story is available in many formats. The library is still purchasing craft materials needed to accommodate for the popularity of the Make and Take items.

A motion was made by Alan Schwarz and seconded by Susan Mariani to accept the Non-Town Fund Report as presented. All were in favor.

6. Acceptance of Statistics Report

Director Brouwer reported on library statistics noting the one-year mark in this pandemic. With a 5% uptick from this time last year, appointments are being made for curbside, for computer use, for room use, and an increase of walk-ins. Nancy Walsh noted the many digital methods of using the library and its materials. Cindy's variety of programs has a good following. Story times will start again soon

A motion was made by Nathan Wise and seconded by Mike Cameron to approve the Statistics Report as presented. All were in favor.

7. Correspondences - None

8. Library Director's Report

Director Brouwer provided her report beginning with news of a hiring offer being made to a Children's Librarian/Assistant Director. On a different note, according to the Health Director, quarantining and cleaning of books can be reduced now. Acton, alike to the other libraries in the LION consortium will be offering outdoor events. Amanda described the depth of benefits of the LION's 30-library consortium and the wide range of services. Amanda then explained an issue with several of the recently replaced windows with mold growing in-between the glass, which will be taken care of within the current budget. Also, two security cameras damaged in a storm will be replaced. Regarding the library's programming, the 25 programs have been well attended. More groups going outside. Poetry night via Zoom will be postponed until mid-May. There was no strategic planning meeting.

Amanda mentioned the Children's Librarian retiring. Recent activities included monthly crafts, Early Childhood Council One Book/One Town, and soon, when warmer, outdoor story time will begin.

Teen report indicated that the schools are not requiring volunteer hours at this time so they have not been as eager to volunteer at the library. Grab and go for the teens and with increased hours, one:one tech time will be offered going forward.

9. Friend's Report

Nancy Walsh made the Friend's report with an introductory overview explanation how the Friend's support the library, including two book sales a year. The annual drive will be mailed soon, raising funds to support programs throughout the year. Summer programs are critical and well attended. The May 27, 6pm Annual meeting will be via Zoom with speaker Elizabeth Petrie of James Pharmacy and discussion of the upcoming documentary about the James family in the area. After cancelling last year's due to the pandemic, the Summer book sale will take place June 24-26 in the parking lot. Amanda highlighted the good quality of the books for the sale this year. Nancy Walsh asked the Board Members for a volunteer liaison for the Friends requiring attendance at their meetings. Nathan Wise volunteered to be the liaison.

10. Old Business

The library's 2004 policy manual has been in review by a Library subcommittee since October 2018, including researching with other libraries. This policy update resulted in a completely new manual, including guidance for the contemporary resources and varied media now offered by the library and the nature of being a community center. A motion was made by Susan Mariani to accept the new policy manual. Nathan Wise seconded. The new manual is available on the website and at the checkout desk. This manual clarifies the rules of the library for the benefit of the patrons, staff and the town. MaryAnn was very complimentary of the policy manual and impressed with the thoroughness. Nancy highlighted patrons' rights of privacy. Nathan Wise commented that the library's security cameras are also not directed at the patrons and he mentioned the age limit for the use of the library along with the responsibility of parent. Amanda will provide a copy of the policy manual to each Board member. Nathan clarified that the library staff are employees of the town and they rely on the policy to clarify any library discrepancies. Policies vary from library to library. Chairperson Walsh asked if there was any further discussion needed. Hearing none, there was a vote to accept the policy manual for the Acton Public Library. All were in favor. The Policy Manual was approved.

11. New Business

There was discussion about the hot spot, laptop and telescope lending policy and agreement. As motion to approve the updates regarding the hot spot, laptop and telescope lending policy and agreement was made by Alan Schwarz and seconded by Nathan Wise. All were in favor. The updates about the hot spot, laptop and telescope lending policy and agreement were approved.

Nancy Walsh reminded the Board of the need to update the library's website, which evolved to a discussion about the library's logo. Nancy Walsh suggested looking at the logo from the perspective of inclusivity and current times. Nathan Wise commented that the logo appears to focus on one period of time and one group on inhabitants. Being in favor of a new image, he suggested reaching out to the public to ask for input. Susan Mariani mentioned the idea of a tag line. Alan supported these comments. Nathan Wise had met the original logo designer. Noting the historical significance of the library's logo and expressing the not-so-inclusive sentiments. Nancy Walsh suggested further discussion on this topic at the next meeting.

Sue raised the issue of the American Rescue Plan. Amanda will be attending a workshop regarding eligibility to apply for this funding. Nathan noted the amount of funds portioned to Connecticut is \$10 billion. These funds are separate from the HEROS Act, but set aside for museums and libraries.

12. Adjournment

A motion was made by Alan Schwarz and seconded by Nathan Wise to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mandy Merritt,
Board Recorder