



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

Board of Directors Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 9, 2021

Attendance

Members present: Amanda Brouwer (Library Director), Nancy Walsh, (Board Chairperson), Alan Schwarz (Vice Chairperson), Nathan Wise (Treasurer), Susan Mariani, Patricia Horn O'Brien, Michael Cameron. Absent (*notified, **did not notify): None. Others: Mandy Merritt (Board Recorder). Audience of Citizens: MaryAnn Iadarola.

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Walsh called the meeting to order at 6:35pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Nancy Walsh informed the board of the three new board member approvals that were announced at the Board of Selectmen meeting earlier in the day - Mary Delmonico, MaryAnn Iadarola, and Susan Hitchcock Missel. Their first day is officially April 13.

2. Approval of Minutes

The regular meeting minutes of February 9, 2021 were reviewed. A motion was made by Nathan Wise and seconded by Alan Schwarz to approve the minutes with a correction to reflect the number of Board Members in attendance and the number of votes made for each motion. All were in favor. The February meeting minutes were approved.

A motion was made by Nathan Wise and seconded by Mike Cameron to approve the Strategic Planning Subcommittee meeting minutes from Feb 19, 2021. All were in favor.

A motion was made by Mike Cameron and seconded by Alan Schwarz to approve the Strategic Planning Subcommittee meeting minutes from March 5, 2021. Five were in favor. Patricia Horn O'Brien abstained.

3. Public Comment -None

4. Acceptance of Financial Report

A motion was made by Nathan Wise and seconded by Susan Mariani to approve the Financial Report as presented. All were in favor. The Financial Report was approved. Director Brouwer stated that spending is aligned with the collections budget and highlighted a slight reduction to electricity usage. Considering asking for budget to increase Brian's hours this year. Nancy asked about funds that were donated to the Kate last year for gutters. Considering using funds that were set aside to put toward a second boiler. With a vote to approve the Financial Report, all were in favor.

5. Acceptance of Non-Town Fund Report

Director Brouwer informed the Board that the majority of expenditures are for craft supplies and program supplies. The Community Foundation donation of \$1000 was put toward a telescope, metal detector, and binoculars for check-out use. Also noting a committee member's donation to purchase books for the social justice book discussion group with a facilitator. Alan suggested making a presentation to the Rotary Club. Amanda is also talking with the Lions Club.

A motion was made by Susan Mariani and seconded by Pat O'Brien 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 circulation of physical materials is still down but seeing a slight improvement and now more people physically coming into the building. Curbside is still in use. There was discussion regarding directional signage at the entryways. Digital collection use is up from last year, computer appointments, consistent use of the children's room (one family per room), and self-checkout station is in use. All seems to be trending in the right direction. Online programs are active, namely the very popular Pierogi cooking class. Genealogy is well attended. Nancy mentioned Hoopla which is paid for by the library, with an annual spending limit in place. Hoopla is more cost effective and offers a better collection.

A motion was made by Alan Schwarz and seconded by Susan Mariani to approve the Statistics Report as presented. All were in favor.

7. Correspondences

None, but there was mention of a donation for the particular purpose of providing a healthy snack for the staff.

8. Library Director's Report

Director Brouwer provided her report beginning with the notice of extended hours and part time staff has returned. The Assistant Director's role will close this week with anticipation of 10-20 applicants. Director Brouwer is filing the yearly State Grant, ordering more bins for interlibrary loans. Front door podium technical issues resolved and a paint night 'love your library' art was upbeat. Lots of thank you notes to the library with this event and throughout this pandemic. The many adult programs offered have been well attended and there are many March events available online (music, cooking, DEEP presentation and a Frida Kahlo art presentation).

Children's report demonstrated the abundance of crafty items this year. For the Take Your Child to the Library event, blankets were made for Forgotten Felines.

9. Friend's Report

Nancy Walsh made the Friend's report noting there was no February meeting and the March meeting will take place next week on Zoom. Membership drive is delayed by a month to accommodate more people getting vaccines.

10. Old Business

The Child Safety Policy has been proofread, edited and finalized. A motion was made by Alan Schwarz to accept the final changes to the Child Safety Policy and seconded by Susan Mariani. Concerns about the printing were expressed, therefore the materials will be revisited again at next month's meeting. In the meantime, copies will be provided to the new board inductees.

Susan Mariani updated the Board on the Strategic Planning Subcommittee's intentions regarding maker spaces and provided an understanding of the origins of maker spaces. Older adults and kids alike make use of these spaces. Key element is to have staff who know how to use the machines (laser cutter, 3-D printer, for example) in order to help users succeed. Also, in support of small business, maybe consider including a business center. Simsbury has a business center that the committee will visit. Wallingford library's maker space is open to anybody, not just Wallingford residents and supplies are available for purchase at minimal fees. Space can be an issue will bring in a consultant. Susan offered to share articles on the topic for the board members to read.

There was discussion regarding the removal of some Dr Seuss materials that are considered to be biased. The decision falls back to the policy manual, the Library Director and the Library Board. The value of these books has sky-rocked and the books are disappearing from libraries. Nancy complimented the library's recent display regarding banned books over time.

11. New Business

With diversity, equity and inclusion, as themes for the Director's goals and objectives this year, she would like to earmark \$5000 in gift funds for programs - social justice book discussion, microphones for hearing issues, access for differently abled learners, staff training, translation services, video captioning software, braille books, and grabbers for people with walkers.

A motion was made by Alan Schwarz to approve the \$5000 from gift funds for the purpose of obtaining tools and including methods for enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion. Mike Cameron second. Nathan added that funds from the Bernstein fund can also be used for any materials related to holocaust topics. All were in favor.

The staff is scanning, digitizing and storing materials such as historical library materials including articles about the library, bills, and book lists. There is a need for proper archival paper, folders, proper storage and digital back ups of the materials. A camera might be needed. This is an opportunity to involve the historical society. A motion was made by Pat O'Brien and seconded by Alan Schwarz to allocate \$1000 of non-town funds for archival functions. All were in favor.

12. Adjournment

A motion was made by Susan Mariani and seconded by Alan Schwarz to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mandy Merritt,
Board Recorder