



Board of Library Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 16, 2020 6:30pm

This meeting was held online via "Zoom" pursuant to NH Executive Order 2020-04, Section 8 and NH Emergency Order #12, Section 3.

1. **Call to Order** – Opening Statement and Roll Call

The following statement was read aloud by Kathy Parenti:

"Good Evening, in coordination with the Board of the Library Trustees, I am declaring that an emergency exists and we are invoking the provisions of NH RSA 91-A:2, III (b). Federal, state, and local officials have determined that gatherings of 10 or more people pose a substantial risk to our community in its continuing efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. In concurring with that determination, we also find that this meeting is imperative to the continued operation of Town government and services, which are vital to public safety and confidence during this emergency. As such, this meeting will be conducted without a quorum of this body physically present in the same location.

At this time, we also welcome members of the public accessing this meeting remotely. Even though this meeting is being conducted in a unique manner under unusual circumstances, the usual rules of conduct and decorum apply. Board members should silence, turn off and/or set aside their cell phones since any texting by them during this meeting may be subject to the Right-to-Know law. We ask that no one uses the "chat" feature of Zoom. Any person found to be disrupting this meeting will be asked to cease the disruption. Should the disruptive behavior continue thereafter, that person will be removed from this meeting. This meeting is being recorded for placement on the Town website.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting must be done by Roll Call vote.

Shirley Wilson motioned for Chris Costantino to fill in for Jennifer Siegrist. Janet Hromjak seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Lynn Coakley: **Aye** Janet Hromjak: **Aye** Kathryn Parenti: **Aye**
Jennifer O'Brien Trafficante: **Aye** Shirley Wilson: **Aye** John Yule: **Aye**

Roll Call attendance:

When each member states their name, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, required under the Right-to-Know law.

Lynn Coakley: **present** Chris Costantino (Alternate): **present** Janet Hromjak: **present**
Kathryn Parenti: **present** Jennifer O'Brien Trafficante: **present** Shirley Wilson: **present**
John Yule: **present** Betsy Solon (Director): **present**

Jennifer Siegrist and Laura Dudziak (BOS Rep) were not present.

No members of the Public were present.

2. Regular Reports

Director's Report (May 19, 2020)

COVID-19 News

Curbside pickup continues to flourish so we have added Saturdays from 10am-1pm to the service. We continue to be a resource for other libraries that are looking to start curbside up for their own communities. Our 13 weeks of experience is coming in handy! We have begun loaning out laptops for 30 minutes at a time (followed by a 30 minute sanitizing period), so we feel we are serving those folks without devices and internet at home. (We are also trailblazers in that service). We hope to expand that service over the next few weeks. Several staff members who were reluctant to come into the building have begun working onsite for short periods of time. Once their comfort level has improved, we will schedule them for more hours in the library. To ensure co-worker safety, we set up Plexiglas shields on the reference, circulation and children's room desks, and require everyone to answer a short list of health-related questions before they enter the library. Of course masks, frequent handwashing and social distancing are also part of our routine. We continue to monitor the State Library suggestions for reopening and continue to communicate with other Town Departments regarding public safety and their own reopening plans.

Program Highlights

Summer Reading 2020, "Imagine Your Story", is fully underway. It will run from June 12th to August 1st. There are many reading challenges for all levels and everything will be tracked online via Beanstack software. Those who prefer may also use a paper-based system to participate. This year we decided to use the funds we would typically apply to performers' fees to purchase gift certificates from all of the businesses that have donated prizes to our program over the years. We know that these businesses may be struggling due to the pandemic and we want to support them and show our appreciation for their generosity.

Facilities

Andrew and Kevin are making great progress with painting the Children's Room – none of us are missing those neon yellow walls! We have switched from heat to air conditioning and so far, all seems to be working.

Other News

We tracked the fines that were outstanding before March and the facility shutdown: I will have a final number for the discussion on Tuesday evening.

Additional Items

- We purchased two more refurbished chrome books and now have four (4) to loan out for use in a car or at a table outside.
- The Poppy Project went very well thanks to all the volunteers who helped.
- With the governor's announcement last week, Director Solon posted a letter on the website and Facebook last Friday that the library would not be opening to the public; however, there were quite a few people that came to the door yesterday expecting to come in. We are still educating the public. No NH libraries have opened yet and there is a long list of requirements that we will have to meet before we can do so. We are ahead of the game having done curbside all along.
- Since the closure of the building, we have not been able to take book donations. It's been a problem because residents have been home cleaning out their houses and we had to put a sign on the book drop. The other day two young men stuffed a huge number of books into the book

- drop along with the original sign. We were able to go back and view on the security cameras and have since put a new sign up that states we are not accepting book donations (including those from the two young men in the white sedan). It was frustrating because all those books were mixed in with the returns that we have to quarantine, but we can see some humor in it now.
- Total outstanding fines are at \$17,400; \$7,000 from 2002-2015 and \$10,000 from 2015-2020. Part of the current number includes \$3,000 from people with expired cards in 2020 alone. Almost half the number of patrons who owe us fines were deleted in the recent purge of 1,500 patrons. Fines are capped at \$5 per item but if the item is out long enough we consider it lost and the total cost then gets added to that patron's account. Director Solon brought up a recent police traffic stop that resulted in returned books and fines paid.
 - Statistics during the closure are interesting with eBooks and audio books up 130% from this time last year while circulation is only at 56% for the same time last year. 295 people have used curbside pickup over the past 2 weeks.
 - Patrons have been lovely and have even been buying lunch for staff.

Review and approve minutes from May 19, 2020 meeting

Lynn Coakley moved to approve the minutes as presented from the 5/19/20 meeting. John Yule seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Lynn Coakley: Aye	Chris Costantino: Abstained	Janet Hromjak: Aye
Kathryn Parenti: Aye	Jennifer O'Brien-Trafficante: Aye	Shirley Wilson: Aye
John Yule: Aye		

Treasurer's Report and Acceptance of Donations through May 31, 2020

Lynn Coakley presented the report for May 2020, noting that fine and copier income is down and there is now a system in place for COVID-19 related purchases that will be tracked separately at the town hall for reporting purposes. There was discussion on revenues versus expenditures and impacts to next year's budget. Director Solon explained that money can be reallocated or moved between line items, if needed, and the Trustees can review the budget in November prior to finalizing yearend numbers.

In memory of Bill Stokes	\$100.00
Donation jar (building fund) - curbside service tips	<u>\$ 70.00</u>
	\$170.00

Jennifer O'Brien-Trafficante motioned to accept \$170.00 in gifts and donations. Chris Costantino seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Lynn Coakley: Aye	Chris Costantino: Yes	Janet Hromjak: Aye
Kathryn Parenti: Aye	Jennifer O'Brien-Trafficante: Aye	Shirley Wilson: Aye
John Yule: Aye		

Action items:

Director Solon will send out a copy of Governor's recent reopening guidance document.
 Director Solon to send out staff/trustee listing.

3. New Business

Library open plan - subcommittee report

Director Solon said that the Committee met and is prioritizing services based on staff and public requests. Again, we are ahead of the game with curbside service, as most libraries are just now starting that so we have time to put this together thoughtfully. Our next phase may possibly bring people in on an appointment basis for short periods to allow for cleaning in between and we may test this with senior citizens. Staff has been doing passports all along, but the federal agency is closed so applications are very backed up. We've done 5 applications in the past two days and it is good to keep the revenue coming in. The Children's Summer Reading program is online this summer through Beanstack, with a few in person programs possibly planned for the end of July. No children are allowed in the building.

CIP submission

There was discussion for a capital reserve fund to support future needs. Suggested amounts ranged from \$25,000 to \$250,000. We need to make the initial ask an appropriate number; a number that is big enough to have worth yet conservative enough in a tough economy. \$150,000 would be a good place to start because even though the warrant article didn't pass, the library's issues didn't go away.

Shirley Wilson motioned to proceed with putting a capital reserve fund in the amount of \$150,000 on the CIP plan. Lynn Coakley seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Lynn Coakley: **Aye**

Chris Costantino: **Yes**

Janet Hromjak: **Aye**

Kathryn Parenti: **Aye**

Jennifer O'Brien-Trafficante: **Aye**

Shirley Wilson: **Aye**

John Yule: **Aye**

Kathy Parenti recapped email correspondence from Jason LaCombe of SMP Architecture. SMP can do a smaller scoped plan for repairs and incorporate a few renovations to move the circulation and reference desks, expand the program area and move staff downstairs. We should emphasize that our issues are not going away and just because the building is not open to the public, the library's needs did not go away with the pandemic. If this is pushed out further, the construction costs will continue to rise. The Trustees should bring forward parking and also test the waters to see if the Selectmen would support this warrant article because we would be up against MACC Base again.

Should we wait a year on the warrant article? What happens if the HVAC system fails this year? One of the recurring questions we heard from voters was about the level of repairs and how much would be wasted if we were to renovate in next few years. That was why we had a good comprehensive plan to get us through the next 15 years, but it didn't pass. It's more expensive to piece meal the repairs and although there is waste, spreading the repairs out over multiple years offers smaller hits to the voters which fare better. The precedent was set at the Town Hall with the warrant article for their HVAC.

All were in agreement to submit a second item for the CIP for HVAC repairs. The request will not include the cost of the sprinklers and hence, the safety issue would not be addressed at this time.

Director Solon explained that not all pledged money has been received, but all money received goes into the development fund to be used down the road. Some of the donations came with specific requests like the Kaley Foundation to fix up adult area. We still have other asks too; the Rotary and Keyes Fund.

After a brief discussion on parking, there was interest from the Trustees to participate; however, the Trustees cannot take on this issue ourselves without involvement from the Town and the business community. We want to serve the needs of the entire community.

- Is the Parking Committee still active?
- Can we use the conceptual parking plan?
- What is cost of parking?
- Will there be a separate warrant article for parking that we could support?

Lynn Coakley motioned to submit a CIP request for approximately \$750,000 to be placed on the warrant in March 2021 to repair and/or replace the HVAC system in the Wadleigh Memorial Library. Chris Costantino seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Lynn Coakley: **Aye**

Chris Costantino: **Yes**

Janet Hromjak: **Aye**

Kathryn Parenti: **Aye**

Jennifer O'Brien-Trafficante: **Aye**

Shirley Wilson: **Aye**

John Yule: **Aye**

Action Items: Kathy Parenti will contact Kevin Drew, who gave the prior estimate, for an accurate number with breakdown.

Other New busines

We received an email request from George Hoyt to raise two flags beneath the American Flag on the flagpole; a LGBTQ+ pride flag during the months of June and October and also a Black Lives Matter flag for as long as protests continue.

Director Solon noted that the flagpole was given as a memorial for a soldier who died in the Gulf War and similar to the Town's flagpole, only the American flag is flown.

There are really two separate issues here; LGBTQ+ and Black Lives Matter. While the Trustees may individually support either or both, as a public entity we need to be consistent in how we consider requests. The Library's mission is to provide informational, educational and recreational resources and services to the Milford Community and historically the library has not supported individual movements.

The use of a banner on the front of the building was suggested that way we could invite people inside to learn more about the issue and we could do something each month, but of course we can't bring people into the building right now. We have to be mindful of what we do outside of the building. Inside the library, we can balance all sides of the issue. The library already has rainbow fish flags hanging from the front door and there are community events planned on the Oval for Pride month. The library has put numerous posts on social media for Pride month and last fall we had a discussion on racism. Out of that came the Reading About Racism book group that meets monthly and actually met last night.

Director Solon said she appreciates that there are people in this community who look out for others who are underrepresented and are fighting for causes. Our future is in good hands. The library has to be welcoming to all and has to remain neutral.

A lengthy discussion on racism and Black Lives Matter led to acknowledgement of the importance of Harriett Wilson. It was also noted that her passing was on 6/28/1900. Maybe the library could commemorate that and continue to highlight educational materials.

There was consensus from the Trustees to not honor Mr. Hoyt's request; however, the Trustees recognize that there are issues and appreciate Mr. Hoyt's concerns. The library will keep the rainbow flying fish at the front door, continue to highlight educational materials about racism in America and honor Milford's black author. We will also continue to post LGBTQ+ materials and reference the Juneteenth program hosted by the NH Humanities Council on our social media.

Action items:

Kathy Parenti will send a response to the Trustees for review before sending to Mr. Hoyt.

4. Public Questions and Comment

There were no comments or questions.

5. Expansion

See Agenda item 3 – CIP submission.

6. Old Business

Library fines and expiration dates discussion

Fines and expiration dates are set to go back into effect at end of June. After a brief discussion, it was decided to offer this convenience through the summer as we are still not open to the public. There was consensus to hold fines through August 31, 2020.

7. Close meeting

Janet Hromjak motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:49PM. Jennifer O'Brien-Trafficante seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Lynn Coakley: **Aye**

Chris Costantino: **Yes**

Janet Hromjak: **Aye**

Kathryn Parenti: **Aye**

Jennifer O'Brien-Trafficante: **Aye**

Shirley Wilson: **Aye**

John Yule: **Aye**