



Whipple Free Library

There's Always Another Chapter

Minutes of the Library Board of Trustees February 20, 2024

Present: Marti Wolf, Jennifer Allocca, Dick Backus, Melissa Harvey, Jacob Field, John Fladd, Tanya Ricker (Library Director), Barbara Perry (Friends Representative)

Members of the Public: Susan Hansen, Christa Snyder

Guest Speakers: Frank Fraitzl, Brian Dubreuil, Kevin Leonard

Meeting called to order by Marti Wolf at 7:02 pm

Business carried over from Last Meeting:

Frank Fraitzl, Chief of Operations and Brian Dubreuil, Assistant Fire Chief from the New Boston Fire Department, and Kevin Leonard, from the design firm of Northpoint Engineering, LLC, presented the current design of the new firehouse along with an explanation of the planned alteration of the access road. The road will be altered to make the drive from Rte.13 to the library more direct, allowing for the firehouse access road to safely meet it at a 4-way intersection of the three current roads (to the library, to the post office, to the pizza parlor et al). The firehouse will allow overflow parking for the events at the library. Lighting at the intersection was discussed, and the team agreed it was something that should be included. All Department of Environmental Services requirements and Federal environmental requirements are being met. Since the rear of the firehouse facing Route 13 will have a big sign on it, they do not anticipate working with the library on a sign at Route 13. The structure will be built to accommodate solar panels at a later date.

The Display Policy, including its Waiver form, was approved with the inclusion of minor alterations from legal. Jennifer moved to accept. Jake seconded. All approved.

A revised draft Memorandum of Understanding between the library and the Friends was presented by Barbara Perry and discussed. Barbara's draft suggested some minor alterations be made. The Friends would like to keep all their supplies at the library, if adequate and appropriate space can be configured. No vote was taken as the Trustees were not given sufficient time to review the draft for this meeting.

A draft Memorandum of Understanding between the library and the Town of New Boston is still in the process of being assembled.

New Business:

There was discussion of Marti's submitted "brainstorming" for future projects. There was some discussion of an activity room designation for the proposed addition. There was also discussion of finding a use for the back field (by the memorial ramada) for outdoor activities, which Jennifer expressed an interest in pursuing.

Jake will continue to explore possibilities for a sign at Route 13 that could be adjusted to announce

various library events. The clear sense of the room was that any sign should NOT be glaring. The Fire Department offered possible assistance in putting up the sign if we get details to them

Susan Hansen offered to look into possible ways the library could expand its role within the town. Some suggestions were: expanding connections with other town entities, continuing coordination with the Farmers' Market, and a possibility of teaming with a local restaurant for a day when townsfolk would be encouraged to use the restaurant in exchange for a donation of a portion of the receipts.

A staff appreciation gathering or gatherings will be planned for the Library Week in April. Jennifer will spearhead planning.

Tanya presented her schedule of library closing dates for the year. She proposed closing all the days the town offices are closed plus closing at 5 pm on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and closing on the Saturdays before Memorial Day and Labor Day. Board consensus was to accept this schedule for 2024.

With the town electric plan about to become active, there was discussion of the choice to opt in or opt out. Because the library gets so much of its electricity from solar panels, and the vendor does not recommend their plan for our power configuration, it was agreed to opt out.

Recurring Business:

Friends Report: The scarecrow fundraiser has been postponed. The Friends' mentioned plans to purchase a portable microphone. The library informed Barbara that they have a microphone and one that can be attached to the system in the Russell Room. A second coffee urn has been purchased.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Dick moved to approve the January 9th meeting minutes with the addition of an explanation that the meeting was cut short due to inclement weather. John seconded; vote: unanimous. Jennifer moved to approve the January 22nd meeting minutes. Jake seconded; vote: unanimous.

Treasurer's Report: The library is operating on the default budget while waiting for the outcome of the March vote. The IT system will be transferred in due course from Twin Bridge to a new provider; however, we have a contract with Twin Bridge for 2024. Jennifer will check with the auditors regarding handling of unanticipated revenue and the unanticipated revenue account. Dick moved to approve the report; John seconded; all in favor.

Director's Report: The new bulletin board has been installed and the damage to the wall repaired. Barbara Ballou and Tanya have applied for a \$3,000 grant to help cover some summer programs. Don Day was a huge success. The agreement with Better World Books is working well with six boxes of books already going to them. There is a group of men who regularly take wintry dips into the Piscataquog River. One of them is an arborist who volunteered to help maintain the trail from the library to the river.

Facilities Report: The regular February water testing found no coliform bacteria present. Dick will work with the next trustee to be in charge of Facilities to make sure there is a smooth transition.

Trustee Retirements: Dick Backus and Melissa Harvey are retiring and were thanked for their years of service.

Dick moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50pm. Melissa seconded. All were in favor.

Next Meeting: March 19th at 7pm

Respectfully submitted: Dick Backus, temporary secretary