

Board of Trustees Meeting
Walpole Town Library
November 9, 2021

Present were: Kathy Nerrie (Treasurer), Gail LaHaise, Jean Kobeski, Susan Johnson, Bill Ranauro, Jane Malmberg (Library Director), Peggy Pschirrer (Selectboard Liaison)

Absent: Amy Howard and Tim Lester

Visitors: Erin Bowen, Sarah Mann

Susan Johnson called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. in the library community room. This meeting was being recorded.

Jane and the board welcomed Erin Bowen and Sarah Mann, who have expressed interest in joining the board to replace Jeanne Ramey and Shirley Capron.

Approval of Minutes: Gail moved to approve the October, 2021 minutes. Kathy seconded, and all voted to accept the October minutes as written.

Treasurer's Report: Kathy reported that we received the quarterly payment of \$2,000 for the Library Trust. As board members reviewed copies of the budget report, Kathy stated everything looks good.

Bills: Jane previously emailed copies of the bills for board review. Jane stated there will be a music program in December. She said she won \$100 in a raffle for registering for the the NHLA conference. She will put that money toward that program.

Jane explained that she has an invoice for \$250 for Overdrive. Once this is paid we can spend the money on our own Libby titles. She anticipates doing that in the summer.

Gail moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and bills. Bill seconded, and all voted to approve.

Budget: Jane stated that we voted to accept the budget at last month's meeting and she has no updates. She said she is unsure of what amount we would need to ask in a warrant article for repair of the chimney because she has not received an estimate yet. Kathy said that Barry, or whoever does the work, will deal directly with the town on that.

Jane stated she contacted Countryside about securing the front door. They have come to look at it and take photographs but have not given her any figures yet. She said she would call them Friday if she hasn't heard from them. Gail asked what grandfather status means in Tim's report on the front door. Jane explained that if the latch can be fixed, it will be done without having to replace the historic door and bring it up to code. If the repair requires replacing the door, then it will need to be brought to code with crash bar and would have to open out (instead of in, as it currently does). Gail asked if we would lose our historic preservation status if we had to replace the door, and Jane said no, that would not happen.

Old Business

Goals for the Long Range Plan: Jane emailed a copy of the Strategic Plan to board members. On it she showed what she has done over the last year to meet the goals. Some, like showing movies in the library, could not be done because of covid. Kathy commented that perhaps this plan is too specific because at times (like during covid) you cannot always follow it and meet the goals. Jane said she is aware of other libraries' strategic plans that have more measurable goals. For example, it might state that children's programs will increase by x%. They don't specify what the programs will be. We can revisit the plan and make changes.

Ken Burns Display: Jane stated that nothing has been done with the Ken Burns display, mainly because she does not know what the original plan for it was. It was suggested she contact Jen Fabis from Florentine Films to discuss this.

Mango and Ancestry: Jane reported that the library dropped Mango and Ancestry because patrons were not using them. We will replace Ancestry with FamilySearch, which is free and can be used at home.

Outreach: Jane said they are trying to increase outreach. Jullie does go into the Walpole Village School but is not permitted in the Walpole Schools due to covid. She does promote the library through the school newsletter. Jane would like to collaborate with River Valley Seniors at Home (RVSAH) to provide library materials to seniors. Jean will take this idea to RVSAH. Jane said she has volunteers who are willing to deliver.

Susan stated there is nothing on the Strategic Plan about the website. Jane said she would discuss that when we get to new business.

Jane said she would like to do more with the tweens and teens in the library and states that that is difficult to do here. She feels it is a pocket we have neglected. Bill asked how rich we are in local resources. He offered to reach out to the history chair at the high school to see if there were any projects for which we could offer help. He said that because we are a regional school district with the high school in another town, we just don't see those kids. Jane cited the example of another library that offered study nights, particularly around SAT time. She said we could think about something like that.

Sarah asked if our library has hotspots to lend. Jane said we do not. Jane said they are costly to start and they are on a contract basis. Sarah knows a librarian who is using these, and she offered to talk to her friend about them and report back.

New Trustees Recommendations: Jane welcomed Erin and Sarah and asked them to tell the board a little bit about themselves. Both enthusiastically expressed interest in being on the board. Jane will contact Amy with their names. Amy will send a recommendation to the Selectboard, which needs to approve the nominations. That should be done by our January meeting.

North Walpole Open House: Jane reported that they had a nice turnout. 24 people attended the open house. Some Bridge Memorial patrons attended the open house and were happy to see that there are books in North Walpole that the main branch does not have. They can be checked out then returned to the main branch.

Operations

1. 19 people attended Alice Fogel's poetry reading.
2. Bill Ranauro will present an author talk on November 18th at 6 p.m.
3. There were 10 entries from the community in the pumpkin decorating contest.
4. An additional book club has been added on Saturday mornings at 9:00.
5. The community room had been used for the Co-Op and Friends of the Library meetings. Patrons are using the room for study.
6. Half of the staff has completed the required harassment training.
7. Our library is a site for the Giving Tree.

Jane reported that she will be taking off the Friday after Thanksgiving. Julie will be taking days off in December.

Susan asked if the operations report can also show statistics from the previous month to show possible growth. Sarah also asked if 2019 figures could also be part of the report. Jane said she would be glad to do that.

Buildings and Grounds

In his absence, Tim sent copies of a Building and Grounds Report. Jane stated she and Tim have met and decided that the top priority needs to be the front door repair.

Replacement Trees: Tim stated he has spoken with Jennifer Burr about replacement trees. Gail asked why we need to plant new trees. Kathy echoed that sentiment, stating that salt killed the old trees; why plant new

ones in the same place? Peggy stated she thinks the library grounds look very nice right now. The board decided to discuss this further at a future meeting. In the meantime, we will ask Tim to talk to Jennifer to ask her opinion on whether she feels we should replace the trees. Gail stated there is not a lot of money in the landscaping budget for trees.

Outside Lamp: Tim offered three options for fixing the outside lamp. Kathy feels the light needs to be very bright for safety and solar may not be the way to go. After a discussion of the options, the board chose option #2 - to purchase a new lamp post and have Houghton install it. Tim should contact Houghton and take care of it as soon as possible since the current light is not working.

North Walpole Bench: Jane has contacted the North Walpole Commissioners about painting the bench in front of the library but she has had no response. She will try again. Brad said he has paint for the job.

Outdoor Signs: Tim has tried to contact Frank Hawkins from Bellows Falls but has been unable to reach him. Tim will look at another signmaker. Gail said she would talk to friends from Bellows Falls about getting in touch with Frank Hawkins. Jane suggested another option of getting a sign which has removable letters so information can be changed.

Jane said she will look for exit signs to hang from the ceiling in the library.

Chimney: A warrant article will be needed. Kathy said she connected Peggy with Barry. Peggy suggested that Kathy emphasize the need for this article when she meets with the Selectboard on December 10 to discuss budget. Peggy has not heard back from Barry. Jane said she would email Barry another "nudge."

North Walpole Dropbox: Susan asked Jane to discuss the issue with the N. Walpole book dropbox. Jane reported seepage from the bottom of the box due to its location. There is no covering over the box. Some books have been damaged. It has already been raised but might need to be higher. Jane said it is also difficult to get into. She looked at the price of new ones and said they are very expensive. When Gail asked how much, Jane said roughly \$4,000. She said they may just need to find another location. Erin suggested asking the commissioners to extend the overhang. Jane said she could do that. Maybe they could discuss it at their next meeting.

New Business

Logo/Branding and Website: At the last meeting it was decided that the library needs a logo. They had discussed having a contest but dismissed that at this meeting. The board felt that, with a contest, they might need to settle for a logo they do not really like. The alternative is to find someone to design the logo based on elements the board thinks should be included. Jan Kobeski was suggested. Sarah explained that she could put together a spec of what she thinks we should ask for. Her background is in marketing and branding. She said if Jan did not do it, her husband could. We could talk about it in January. Everyone was asked to come back with ideas for the logo. Bill stated that the it needs to be recognizable. The group at first thought the logo should include the main library building but it was decided that that would exclude North Walpole. Jane asked that it not be simply a book, as so many other logos are.

Jane reported that she, Julie, and Kelli have been working on the website. They have been researching websites. Jane would like something fairly simple that the staff can easily maintain. She suggested purchasing a template into which Walpole Library information can be inserted. Sarah stated that her husband can offer suggestions because he builds websites. He could meet with Julie, who has already done some work on the website, and Jane.

December Meeting: It was decided that the board will forego the December meeting. Kathy and Jane will send out their reports as usual.

Vacation Rollover for Staff: Last year, due to covid, the town rolled over staff vacation time. The library has seven staff members who have accrued several hours of vacation time and Jane explained that it will be impossible for them to use it all by the end of the year. Staffing is such that we cannot let too many people

go at any one time, especially during the holidays. Jane asked if they could roll over just vacation hours until March. Kathy asked Peggy if we could do this. Since the town pays the library's employees, it is all right. The library records part time employee leave, not the town. Gail moved to roll over vacation hours until March, 2022. Susan seconded and all voted in favor.

Friends Report

Jane reported that the October book sale went very well. Final sales totalled \$6,510 before expenses. She also stated that, since April, they have collected \$2,400 from book sales at the reuse center. The plant sale brought in \$1341. The Friends will be looking for new members; Carole Malnahti is stepping down, as is Paul Happ.

Adjournment: Gail moved to adjourn the meeting. Kathy seconded. Susan adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

The next meeting will be January 11, 2022, at 4:30 p.m. in the library community room.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Kobeski, Recording Secretary.

***These minutes are in draft form until approved at the October 12, 2021 meeting.

