

Vermont Hartland Public Library
Board of Trustees
Minutes of the November 15, 2022 meeting

Meeting was called to order at 6:02. Present were Rita Boynton, Sarah Stewart Taylor, Becca Warren, Meredith Liben (in person) and Nancy Tusinski (via Zoom). Dana Jacobson-Goodhue was out with an injury.

There were no corrections and only one addition to the minutes: to list the new operating hours:

Tues - Thur 10 - 6
Friday 10 - 4
Saturday 9 - 2
Closed Sundays and Mondays

Rita made the motion to approve October Minutes and Becca seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

Public Comment - None. There were no members of the public present.

Staff Presentation - Erik van Eck gave the Board a description of their responsibilities as head of circulation and technology. This was fun and illuminating. There are lots of systems Eric handles for the library - agreed upon and in some cases, long-standing protocols across large domains (like MARC) and more regional (like CLOVER - Collaborative Libraries of Vermont). Erik is also the volunteer coordinator and handles other things. Erik's enthusiasm for their position and the Hartland library were both contagious and wonderful.

Library Director's Report - we all noted the increase in printing and mailing costs for the annual appeal but will discuss that in scheduled business.

Financial Report - Martin has started accounting for multi-year or cross budget year grants and expenditures against them in a novel way. The revenue from a grant of this sort is all being accounted for in one fiscal year and all the expenses in the following fiscal year. In this case, all grants that crossed fiscal years went onto last year's budget and expenditures into this current year's. There doesn't seem to

be anything anyone can do to shift back to a more aligned system of accounting for grant income, but it is awkward.

Scheduled Business

Budget Discussion - as noted in the Director's report, the health insurance costs initially provided by the town office were not accurate. Martin provided the actual costs after this Board approved the FY 2024 budget. The new number pushes our total increase to over 10%. Health insurance costs for library staff leaped from \$18,979 to \$29,268. Salary costs have also increased with new employees and increased hours in some cases. These two factors are responsible for nearly all the library budget annually.

Dave advised it would be wise to find cuts in the few discretionary spots we have within the budget. We can't do much about benefits and salaries so we needed to dig deep. One of those discretionary areas was the stipend for the weekly tech tutor, a popular and frequently requested program which we had hoped to reinstate.

After much discussion it was decided we would revise the budget as follows: NO increase to book and materials budget, NO increase in new equipment, NO budget to reinstate the tech tutor (though we will try to find someone to volunteer in that capacity to offer the services).

Meredith moved that we approve a revised budget of \$242,256. for FY '24. Becca seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The annual appeal letter was read over and modified slightly. There was discussion about whether or not to have the added expense of the slip and return envelope and it was felt that was part of the necessary investment in making it as easy as possible to donate. We are reducing the number of donation choices to two: the replacement of the flooring in the library (which is original to the building) and an option to donate for programing and books.

Becca moved that we approve the draft annual appeal letter. Rita seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

Meredith moved that the annual appeal expenditure be approved up to a ceiling of \$2200 due to sharp increases in production costs. Sarah seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

Board Recruitment and descriptions of board responsibilities (from the By-Laws)

At the personnel committee meeting, the group found serviceable descriptions of board duties and felt it would be good to circulate those to interested candidates so they could have a better idea of what is entailed. Nancy will also keep a copy of the descriptions behind the desk for interested people when they come in.

Personnel Committee report and Philosophy Statement - with Dana out, we postponed this final adoption of language to December.

Revisit Strategic Planning Process and Board Retreat - this is long overdue because of Pandemic disruptions. With a dynamic new staff in place, the time is right for getting this going more seriously now. Because our agenda is always so stuffed at each monthly meeting, the meaty things never happen. So there is a suggestion that we have a dedicated meeting just for a strategic planning retreat.

Sarah will send out a doodle poll for a date that will work for January with follow-up next steps to be determined at that first session.

One other topic is the staff luncheon connected to the half-day staff development day in December (aiming for the 3rd Wednesday). We divvied up jobs.

Rita is going to decorate the table, Sarah will pick up the food, Meredith and Becca will bake or bring something for desserts.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05.

Submitted by Meredith Liben (in Dana Jacobson-Goodhue's absence)