

The Cyrenius H. Booth Library Minutes

Board of Trustees Virtual Meeting

Tuesday, November 10, 2020 7:00 p.m.

Present: Greg Branecky, Amy Dent, Dana Flynn, Beth Hamilton, Elizabeth Litt, Tom Long, Doug Lord, Anne Rothstein, Rose Marie Zaharek, Michelle Brown, Donna Rahtelli, Elaine Corbo, Brynn Cullen, Daniel Patti, Laura Goldstein,

Absent: David Schill

Guests: Denise Kaiser, Amy Schumann, Kaki Taylor

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Amy Dent

Consideration of Minutes:

Michelle made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 2020 meeting and Betsy seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.

Public Participation: None

President's Announcements: Amy announced that Thomas D'Agostino has resigned from the Board. She noted that the Coopersmith's have allowed us to hang the Turkey Trot banner on their fence. As we approach the budgeting process, Doug has offered to lead a workshop for Board members on the budget process from start to final approval. Anyone interested should contact Doug. A letter from the Friends was sent electronically to all Board members outlining some concerns. Amy suggested to the President of the Friends that the two Executive Committees meet and is waiting for confirmation of a date.

Treasurer's Report: Greg Branecky reviewed the monthly financial statement which indicates a favorable balance comparing budget to actual for the month of October. Personnel expenses are lower than expected given that the library is not currently fully staffed. The Annual Fund began earlier than last year and has already raised just over \$27,000. 82% of the initial installment of the Friend's donation to the library has been spent.

Library Director's Report: Doug suggested that professional photographs of Board members be added to the library website. He talked about challenges, opportunities, and successes at the library. Presently, the library is experiencing about 40% of normal in-person attendance and 60-70% of normal circulation. One opportunity is community outreach in the area of homebound services. In his written report to the Board, Doug gave a brief explanation of each of the seven literacies. Given recent issues in Newtown and nationally, Doug highlighted "Civic and Social Literacy". The library mission aligns well with this particular literacy and positions the library to provide leadership in building civic and social literacy in the community.

The Cyrenius H. Booth Library's mission is to promote the joy of lifelong learning, stimulate curiosity, support the exchange of ideas, and provide a welcoming gathering place for our community.

As Amy had noted, the budget process has begun. Doug shared a draft of the budget on screen and provided a quick overview of the various categories and line items. He will email a copy of the budget to Board members for their review prior to the December meeting.

Committee Reports:

Development - Donna requested that all Board members contribute in some capacity to the Annual Fund. Tom reported that there are now 150 runners registered for the Turkey Trot. Brynn has planned an exciting live Facebook event to bring the community together at 8am on Thanksgiving morning. Since the annual Festival of Trees is not happening at the library this year, Kaki suggested festive baskets to be displayed on the main floor and raffled off as another fundraiser. Any donations for these baskets would be welcome.

Finance - Greg reported that the Finance Committee is working on the budget.

Long-Range Planning – Michelle reported that the committee met in October and continues to review the existing Long-Range Plan to inform their future planning work.

Building and Grounds – Amy reported that repair work to the chimneys and flashing has been completed and bids are in for the roof repair. The committee met last week to discuss prioritizing CIP projects still to be completed.

Art and Historical – No report

Friends of the Library Liaison - Anne reported that the Friends have allowed some of the Vision Project recipients an extension given completion of their projects has been impacted by the pandemic. Rose Marie is now the Board representative on the Friends Vision Project Committee. The Friends have clearly defined procedures for the safe handling of donations. This year, the Friends will hold a Holiday Boutique which will be open for an extended period of time to allow for social distancing.

Governance – No report

Old Business: None

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

The Board reviewed the proposed meeting dates for 2021.

A motion was made to accept the proposed meeting schedule for 2021 by Anne and seconded by Michelle. All approved. Motion passed.

There was a discussion about the recent racist disruption at the Newtown Nonprofit Council meeting and potential responses from the library. Doug noted that the disrupter was immediately ejected from the virtual meeting, and the meeting was able to resume. Amy reported that there was a request for the library to sign an open letter condemning the racist actions, but she and Doug were uncomfortable signing before a discussion with the Board. Betsy shared that this letter was written by the President-Elect of the Rotary and ultimately published in the Newtown Bee. She also commented that she believes there are steps that might we can take to make people of color feel more welcome in both the library as well as in Newtown in general. Tom raised the issue of a diversity policy which does not currently exist for the library. Dana suggested a special committee to specifically address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion programming. It was noted that there has already been some good programming in these areas. Michelle encouraged the nominating committee to seek more diversity when interviewing new Board members. The creation of a diversity policy falls within the purview of the governance committee. Laura, as Chair, will make this a priority for the next governance meeting(s). Given that it will take some time to craft a policy and develop additional programming, Betsy expressed that she believes the library response to the racist incidents around town needs to be more timely. It was also noted that a committee to address DEI issues should itself be diverse. The Board discussed inviting the public to participate on this special committee and making it clear that the creation of this committee is in direct response to recent events and the desire to make the library a welcoming place to all members of the town. Betsy, Dana, and Rose Marie all expressed interest in participating on this new committee. Michelle noted that, as Chair, she would include DEI issues in the discussion of the long-range planning committee.

Dana made a motion to create a special committee to develop programs and communications which support diversity, equity, and inclusion. Betsy seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.

Beth made a motion to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter regarding the position of Assistant Director and to invite Doug Lord to attend. Tom seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.

The meeting entered into executive session at 8:35 p.m. and returned to open session at 8:48 p.m. No motion was taken.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Beth and seconded by Rose Marie. All approved. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hamilton, Secretary

C.H. Booth Library Board of Trustees

*THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE C. H. BOOTH LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES AT THE NEXT MEETING*