

The Cyrenius H. Booth Library Minutes
Board of Trustees Special Meeting
Tuesday, February 21, 2024 7:00 p.m.

Present: John Carter, Elaine Corbo, Amy Dent, Elizabeth Litt, Christine McAndrew, Cara Reilly, Donald Schels, David Schill, Jeff Schult, Alexa Skalandunas, Katie Smith, Alex Villamil, Rose Marie Zaharek

Absent: Susan Kealy, Don Studley

Staff: Jennifer Nash, Jordana Bloom, Sara Eisenman, Nora Reilly, Frances Ashbolt, Sherry Blank

Public: Denise Kaiser, Don Lococo, Marisa Rizzo, Allie Shapiro, Nerlande Foote

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the President Elaine Corbo.

Consideration of Minutes:

David made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 12, 2024 meeting, and Amy seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.

Public Participation: Maria Rizzo and Don Lococo spoke against dissolving the DEI Committee.

President's Announcements: Elaine introduced the new Trustee Jeff Shult. She also reminded Trustees that the library will be presenting to the Board of Finance on Monday 2/26 and the Legislative Council on Wednesday 2/28, and encouraged all Trustees to attend to show support for the library.

Treasurer's Report:

Our financial results through January 31, 2024 continue to track favorable to our budget. While I expect our total expenses to come in very close to budget for the entire fiscal year, our fund raising revenues to date exceed budget by \$45,000 due to our very successful annual fund drive and Turkey Trot. This gives us a cushion to cover any unexpected expenses through the end of the year.

The 24/25 budget is now in the hands of the Board of Finance and we expect to make a budget presentation to them on February 26. The budget approved by the Board of Selectmen included \$1,475,000 for the Library (we had requested \$1,479,976). This is an increase of \$173,531 over the current budget.

Acting Library Director's Report:

The library staff thanked trustees for the wonderful staff celebration on February 2nd.

The *Discover Exoplanets* traveling exhibit will come to the library on March 1, 2024, bringing the excitement of exoplanets. It features hands-on, multimedia activities where visitors can build their own solar systems, see the most recent NASA discoveries, and learn whether popular TV and movies are fact or fiction. The exhibit will be open to the public through May 2024 and will be celebrated with science and space themed programming for all ages.

Library cardholders can use the Value Line database to locate financial information about large and mid-cap U.S. public companies, including historical financials and forecasted projections. Access is free with a C.H. Booth Library card.

In January 13,782 items were checked out from the library, 8,847 were downloaded, and 68 new library cards were registered.

AARP free tax preparation has commenced and has been well-received. There are 15 appointment slots available every Thursday through April 11.

In January the Children's Department hosted 43 programs with 1071 children and their families in attendance; 26 teens attended 18 programs; and 36 programs were offered for adults with an attendance of 428. Outside groups reserved library space for gatherings 18 times.

A sublimation printer and 8-in-1 heat press were added to the chbMAKERS' Corner during the month, which will let our patrons put their personal artwork and photos onto t-shirts, mugs, and ornaments.

Committee Reports:

Governance – The Governance Committee will do outreach for possible candidates to fill the vacancy on the Library Board, and discussed creating a “stable” of potential candidates for future vacancies. Amy will create a schedule for reviewing all the existing policies. Sue and Don will assist in creating an interactive digital file so that the committee can edit policies and by-laws that will be under consideration in the future. The committee recommends amending the bylaws concerning trustee attendance to require in person attendance.

Development – The committee reviewed the final numbers from the end-of-the-year push for the Annual Appeal, discussed ideas for an August 2024 Mary Hawley event, and reviewed the staff appreciation event. In addition, a couple of new fundraising ideas, including a wishing well, were discussed. Cara thanked everyone for their contributions to the Staff Appreciation event.

Finance – The committee reviewed the January 31, 2024 financial statements. They also discussed the consolidation of several of the Library's bank accounts that are no longer needed. They voted to recommend to the Board the elimination of several accounts with the balances in those accounts to be transferred to the main operating account. After closing those accounts, in addition to the main operating account, the Library's primary accounts will be an Operating Reserve account, an Infrastructure Reserve account, and a Restricted funds account. The committee finalized and approved the C H Booth Library Financial Procedures Manual. The committee also reviewed the Operating Reserve and Infrastructure Reserve policies as required by the respective policies. No changes were proposed but input from the Governance Committee was suggested to be sure the policies are fully in accord with the Library's current strategic and operational plans.

Building and Grounds – David reviewed the status of the CIP projects for the flat roof, the 3rd floor offices, and the shutters. He reviewed the status of the fund balance projects, giving an updated list of projects, and the projects on hold. He reviewed the projects and development, and the upcoming meetings with the Legislative Council and the Board of Finance.

Art and Historical – The Museum makeover update is done. Discussed strengthening the Library's relationship with the Newtown Historical Society and setting up a meeting to have the two committees officially meet. The Committee decided to keep the STEPS programs going, to achieve Certificates. A governing document is needed for the STEPS program Bronze level; Ben will review the current document and send it to committee members for comments. Photographer David Anderson's photographs were donated to the library. Reviewed exhibits and displays for the NASA project. Future exhibits include a high school student's Capstone project on Fairfield Hills. The committee will start meeting bimonthly.

Friends of the Library Liaison – The Friends approved issuing the second installment of the Annual Grant to the Library, in the amount of \$32,488.00. Denise Kaiser drew attention to Don Studley's transparent wording of the \$105,000 grant in the Library's proposed 2024-5 town budget. \$10,700 of the unencumbered previous "tech" request of \$15,000 from 2022-2023 was applied toward books and programs. The Holiday sale was a logistical and financial success netting \$6,017.78. The Book Sale Committee is busy planning the 2024 Book Sale. The Friends will have Spring Donation Day on April 21. Rose Marie will be the Board Representative on the Vision Projects Committee.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion- Jennifer Nash presented the DEI programs and materials that the library is currently offering and also future materials and programs. Chair Alex Villamil will present at the next Board meeting the purpose of DEI Committee other than programming and materials which the staff currently handles and is not the duty of the Board or Committee.

Executive Committee- The Executive Committee did not meet this month.

Ad Hoc Search Committee- The Committee reviewed all applicants for the position of Library Director, and will make their recommendation to the Board in Executive Session.

Old Business: None

Unfinished Business:

Cara moved to dissolve the DEI Committee and continue to let professional library staff carry out DEI through library programs and materials. Amy seconded.

The Board and DEI committee are still waiting to hear from the Chair, Alex Villamil, what the purpose of the committee is. Library staff are already implementing DEI throughout the library through displays, programs and materials that are in line with our Strategic Plan for DEI under goal #5. While the committee has been quite dormant the library staff have overseen DEI and Board members feel that the staff is doing their due diligence with carrying out the goals of DEI. The trustees also discussed that the DEI committee was an ad hoc committee and was not meant to be permanent as it does not fall under the mandate of the Board. The Board has decided to table the motion until hearing from Alex at the next board meeting. David requested Alex to provide the board with just bullet points on what the committee will be doing that the library staff is not already doing for DEI.

David moved to table the motion until the March 12, 2024 meeting. Amy seconded. All approved. Motion passed.

New Business:

Amy moved to adopt the amended Trustees attendance policy, section 6.3 of the By-laws, as recommended by the Governance Committee, to read: "All Board members are expected to attend all meetings in person. If you are unable to attend, please notify the President or Secretary." JC seconded. All approved. Motion passed.

Rose Marie moved to enter Executive Session concerning Personnel matters from the Library Search Committee to recommend a candidate to the Board of Trustees for the position of Director of the C.H. Booth Library. JC seconded the motion. All approved. Motion passed.

The meeting entered Executive Session at 8:17 pm and returned to open session at 8:24 pm with the following motion:

Amy moved to appoint Jennifer Nash to the position of Director of the C.H. Booth Library at the salary stipulated in the budget currently under consideration. David seconded. All approved. Motion passed.

Cara moved to dissolve the Search Committee. David seconded. All approved. Motion passed.

Amy moved to adjourn the meeting. Alexa seconded. All approved. Motion passed.
Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Corbo, President
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