

Whiting Library Minutes
Regular Meeting
December 13, 2022, at 6pm
Whiting Library and Zoom

In Attendance: Trustees Donna McNeill-Hudkins, Matthew Gorsky, Lora Cokolat, John Garison, Bill Dakin, and Sam Comstock; Director Pamela Johnson-Spurlock. Jesse Bailey was unable to attend. No member of the public joined.

Call To Order: Donna called the meeting to order at 6:07pm.

Additions to the Agenda: Donna provided an update on the many donations to the library in memory of Will Wilcox.

Welcome to Pamela Johnson-Spurlock, with this being her first day of work and first meeting with Trustees as the new Director of the library.

There was a luncheon held at the library on Saturday for volunteers as an appreciation of their efforts, with 6 volunteers and some family in attendance.

A **motion in appreciation** of the efforts of Carrie King, Children and Youth Services Librarian, and Deirdre Doran, past Director, who have worked to keep the library operating smoothly while the Director search took place. Moved by Sam, seconded by Bill.

Donna and Lora discussed their meeting with the Select Board regarding a request for increased support in the Town's 2023 budget in order to improve the compensation for the library's professional staff. The Select Board was receptive to the conversation while also acknowledging the all-around increase in costs they needed to be budgeting for. The Select Board asked about the balance of the library's carry-over fund. Previous instructions from the town regarding the carry-over fund were it could be drawn from if the library were to go over budget in a given year. The balance is currently \$330,435. The past three budget years have ended with a surplus, which has been rolled by the town into this fund. The trustees will seek further clarity from the town on the control of this fund. Donna and Lora also provided the town with data from the VT Dept of Libraries for benchmark comparisons to other towns with respect to per-capita support for town libraries. The Select Board also inquired about the library's Strategic Plan. Donna and Lora will be providing additional information to the Select Board at their next meeting.

A **motion to approve minutes for October 11 and November 10 Regular Meetings** as submitted. Moved by Bill, seconded by Matt. Lora noted she had not received them in time to review. Motion passed, with Lora refraining and no objections.

After review, a **motion to accept the Director's and Youth Services reports** was made by Bill, seconded by John. Unanimous approval.

Treasurer's Report: Lora indicated the discussion of the meeting with the Select Board was part of her report, and added the Preservation Fund balance is, in round numbers, at \$150,000, and has improved slightly after several months of decline. She noted having contacted the fund's managers, and being

advised to sit tight in the current market conditions. A **motion to accept the Treasurer's report** by Bill, seconded by Matt. Unanimous approval.

Review and Approve Strategic Plan: The previous board crafted a strategic plan, but did not finalize it. The plan development was supported by grant funding, and included surveys of need, focus groups, demographics research, and more. The current board has been preoccupied with staffing needs, with this being the first discussion of the document. After nearly an hour of discussion, the trustees felt the plan lacked concrete steps to achieve the stated goals, and **no motion was made to approve this plan**. The trustees asked for Pamela to revise the plan, and provided some guidance.

The trustees had chosen to table the previous board's programming committee (June 22, 2022). Matt suggested to remove it from this plan. Pamela noted it could be used for assistance and networking, and Bill mentioned it would best be a wider representation of the community than just the trustees. Pamela said the committee was not needed, and Lora felt responsibility for programming was the librarian's duty. It was noted that advanced communication of programming to trustees was written into the librarian's duties this Fall as the trustees prepared for hiring a Director.

Apart from the programming committee, the trustees agreed with the items included in the plan; further discussion centered on what wasn't in the plan and how missing things best fit within the existing plan and the overall ordered presentation of it. Adult learning was not specifically mentioned in the plan, while youth were specifically mentioned; these could be combined. Lora noted plans she was familiar with had more characterization of the library users. It was re-stated that it could be more concrete (increase number of users, expand hours, improve the technology (bring the technology out of the prior century is a phrase frequently used by the trustees)).

Pamela noted the goal of becoming a 3rd space, and it was noted how this ties back to furniture and technology. Aging technology capabilities is recognized as a weak link (one of the first committees formed was a technology committee). Pamela noted the limitations of the current ILS system and that there are much better options available today. She marveled at the continued stamping of books, as opposed to scanning. Lora noted the need to maintain security of patron data. Donna commented on the current building's security features, and Pamela voiced her concerns from what she has seen. A final note on the technology front was the ongoing need for contracted IT support services (has already been identified and researched by the Technology Committee).

Bill provided suggestions for reordering goals within the existing plan (the secretary's note-taking focus was waning, but Pamela appeared to following along with his intentions).

Public Comment: No members of the public were participating.

Donna to send most recent budget document to everyone.

Sam to confirm with town hall the steps necessary for anyone wishing to run for office of library trustee in March, 2023 elections.

Motion to adjourn, at 7:47pm, by Donna, second by Bill.

Respectfully submitted on Dec 20, 2022 by Sam Comstock.