

**Groton Public Library Board of Trustees**  
**Monthly Meeting Minutes**  
**April 14, 2020**

*Approved 5/12/2020 Trustees Meeting*

**Attending – Via Zoom:** Marilyn Dabritz, Mark Gerath, Kristen von Campe, Nancy Wilder, Jane Allen (late), David Zeiler and Library Director Vanessa Abraham.

Support and attendance by Town of Groton IT Specialist Michael Chiasson and Bob Colman of Groton Cable.

M. Dabritz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm.

**Vote Summary**

- Up to \$5,000 from State Aid was approved to support services targeted at the Covid19 situation. Kristen moved and Jane seconded. Approved on a 5 to 1 vote with Nancy opposed.
- Draft minutes from March 11, 2020 minutes approved as amended. Kristen moved and Jane seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Meeting was adjourned at a motion by Kristen, seconded by Jane. Approved unanimously.

**Action Items**

- Vanessa to advise the strategic planning consultant and community advisory group of the MBLC decision and that the process is on hold until further notice.
- Vanessa to contact Tom Delaney regarding help with the lawn mowing.
- Vanessa will seek advice from the Chair and Budget & Finance on any new spending needs.
- Vanessa to ask the Endowment to fund three months of a Zoom business license (\$200/month) and for Plannerly (\$84).

**New Business – Current State of Emergency**

*Library Closure Updates:*

Current Library Services. The library is providing a variety of services by all 16 staff members currently working – some in the library and others entirely from home. The level of service GPL is providing is highly unusual in the state. Curbside delivery of books and materials is being scheduled and home delivery has been offered. A community resources page has been set up and online support is available. There is a new teen and children’s reading program. Virtual programs through Zoom are offered. Simplified library card registration is offered. Comments are being collected and are extremely positive. Vanessa advised the trustees that \$7,500 of the books and materials funds provided by the Robbins Fund will be expended on e-books, which are in high demand.

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Safety Precautions by Staff. The limited Staff working in the building are maintaining a distance from one another and are wearing masks and gloves. The building had been empty for three weeks prior to the start of the GPL To Go program, so the collection being given out is considered decontaminated. Staff are being very careful and all touched surfaces are cleaned regularly. Pick ups are scheduled to avoid interaction among customers. Disposal paper bags are being used and Shaws offered to donate bags.

Updates on Library Staff, Staffing, Protocols for Working from Home. Employment of Union staff has been extended through June 30, 2020. Eight non-union staff have been furloughed. Most staff are working from home but are busy and in regular contact with their managers. There is a weekly meeting of the staff via Zoom. Each staff member develops a weekly activity plan and check in at the end of the week. There is one check in call for each staff person. Seven day a week Sunday to Saturday curbside hours have been curtailed to 10 AM to 2 PM with staff staying late to complete tasks/appointments.

Mass. Board of Library Commissioners Updates. The MBLC has issued an emergency statement relaxing FY2020 requirements.

- State Aid library requirements (hours, expenditures) relaxed. The hours opened and materials expenditure through March 10 were deemed to satisfying the accrediting requirements of MBLC for this year. Therefore, the library is not at risk of losing MBLC certification due to the closure or decline in expenditures.
- New Strategic Planning Guidance. The strategic planning process will be delayed by one year with an update expected in December 2020. The strategic planning consultant has expressed flexibility on the timing of the balance of the effort.

Streamlined Process for Signing Bills and Payroll. Vanessa will sign each bill as an interim approval. The bills will be summarized in a cover sheet to be signed by Mimi as chair. Bills will be transmitted to town hall. Timesheets will also be signed by Vanessa and a cover sheet signed by Mimi. Timesheets will be held at the library.

Hiring Freeze. All new hires (adult program coordinator, children's library assistant, summer reading support) are on hold. A promising candidate has been identified for the adult program coordinator.

*Budget Updates:*

FY2021 Budget Updates from the Town Manager. The town has a spending freeze with maintenance contracts subject to an exception. The current estimated budget shortfall is \$426,000. Some planned measures have reduced the shortfall to \$286,000. A current plan proposed by the Town Manager is to institute a salary freeze for the first three months of the FY21 with a reassessment in October 2020. At that point a variety of options may be

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considered (e.g., retroactive pay increase, continuation of the freeze, etc.). The measures affect all of the union contracts and there is a strong desire to reach a consensus with the unions.

Town Manager Guidelines for Operational Expenditures. Under the spending freeze, the landscaper cannot be paid. After discussion, the trustees recommended deferring landscaping to avoid the fee. The Department of Public Works will be asked to help with the lawn mowing until the primary custodian is back.

Report on Impact of Frozen Budget Line Items. Vanessa discussed several items that would be useful in continued public service but are subject to the spending freeze. Potential for requests to the Endowment and State Aid were discussed. The endowment will be asked to fund Zoom and Plannerly (a social media scheduling application). Up to \$5,000 was approved from State Aid for a number of other items (i.e., renewal of online Consumer Reports, acquisition of five new Verizon hot-spots, mileage for staff on deliveries, postage, guinea pig supplies, and paper bags).

Report on Other Funds (State Aid, Robbins, Endowment). A summary of the current status was provided.

*Building and Equipment Updates:*

HVAC Repaired. The cracked heat exchanger has been successfully repaired.

Painting Leak Sites and Unfinished Space Redesign Areas. This effort was completed when the library was closed to the public due to Covid19.

Remaining Roof Projects: Skylight Fixes and Insulation Install. The skylight refit is still pending as the fabricator is closed. The installation of insulation is still pending. The insulation will be purchased by the library and installed by DPW staff.

Postponed Reference Area Furniture Install. The new reference desk will not be installed pending resolution of the Covid19 situation. This has been communicated in writing to MassCor.

**Unfinished Business**

Approval of Minutes from March 11, 2020 Meeting Minutes Completed – see vote summary.

Report on Action Items from Previous Meetings – All were completed

Update on March 15 Alarm Call: An explanation of the early morning entry has been found.

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No charges will be pressed.

Other Library News / Updates: None

Review Trustees' Calendar

- Attend Spring Town Meeting, now postponed to May 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Town Election scheduled for June 9. As of right now, there are no contested races.
- Staff Appreciation Day is postponed until further notice.
- Review of the GPL Endowment request postponed until May.
- Planning for summertime activities is largely complete; planning for the Summer Reading programs is underway.

**Other Business**

Open Session for topics not anticipated 48 hours prior to meeting: No new items were identified.

**Wrap-Up**

Review of Action Items from Current Meeting: Complete

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

- Trustees Meetings: May 12, June 11, July 14, Tue August **18?**, Wed. Sept 16
- Spring Town Meeting: Monday, May 18
- Town Elections postponed to Tuesday, June 9

Meeting Adjourned at 5:45 PM - See vote summary.

Respectfully submitted:

Mark Gerath, Secretary

List of Documents Distributed for Use by the Trustees at the Meeting:

1. Meeting Agenda
2. March 11, 2020 Meeting Minutes Draft
3. Library Services being offered
4. Timeline of changes
5. Memos from the Town
6. Communications from MBLC
7. Zoom Basic Tips