

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 7 pm, Library Community Room
Approved, 10/10/2023

Attending in Person: Library Trustees: Helena Altman, Kate Bettencourt, Mark Gerath, Kristen von Campe, and David Zeiler. Also in attendance: Library Director Vanessa Abraham and Assistant Director Sarah Breen.

Call to Order:

Kate Bettencourt called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Vote Summary:

- Approval of August 8, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Moved by Kristen, seconded by Helena. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 abstention (Kate)
- Approved up to \$6,000 of State Aid to be used to fund 2 staff members to attend the 2024 PLA National Conference in 2024. Moved by Kristen, seconded by Helena. 5 ayes, 0 nays.
- Adjournment. Moved by Kristen, seconded by Helena. 5 Ayes, 0 nays

Action Items:

- Budget and Finance to continue to develop budget tracking tool
- Building and Equipment to continue work on new front sign
- Vanessa to inform Aubrey Theall of our progress in uploading the Town Diaries and Turner's Public Spirit to the new website.
- PPP to review candidates for the vacant Library Trustee position and set up interviews.
- Vanessa to inform Boy Scouts of the no fundraising policy of the GPL.

New Business:

Aubrey Theall from the Historic District Commission sent an email to our GPL Trustee account and it did not get forwarded to the vice chair, Kristen. This caused a delay in responding. He was looking to access the Town Diaries and the Turners Public Spirit, which had been on our previous computer server. The software is so ancient it cannot be loaded online. Staff are working to get it uploaded into a current online digital archive system. Vanessa to updated Aubrey that we are working to rectify the situation.

Unfinished Business:

Approval of Meeting Minutes from August 8, 2023 Meeting

- Completed, see vote summary

Report on Action Items from last Meeting

- All action items reviewed, outstanding items identified and broth forward to new action item list.

Review Trustees' Calendar for Current Month

- Library Bills reviewed

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 7 pm, Library Community Room
Approved, 10/10/2023

Standing Committee and Liaison Reports:

Budget and Finance

- \$2,600 was needed in the FY2024 library budget in order to meet the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) to be certified by the state. Our request to Mark Haddad was approved by the Finance Committee (FinCom) and it will be brought to Fall Town Meeting for approval.
- Mark Haddad shared that the TriCom Budget Group is projecting a \$4 million shortfall in next year's budget, \$1.5 million of that amount would be the Town's responsibility. If there is no resolution to this shortfall, all town departments would have to cut their budget by 25%. The TriCom will continue to work to address this issue and it is expected that they will be proposing an override for FY2025.
- The GPL Trustees value the continuing professional development and educational investment in its key staff. With that in mind, the Trustees voted unanimously to fund the attendance of two staff members to the 2024 Public Library Association (PLA) National Conference. See vote above.
- There was a broad ranging discussion of our budget priorities for next year. It is clear that the timing of personnel reclassification is poor, given the current budget situation, and there is not support at Town Hall. We anticipate Sunday and Summer Reading Assistant hours falling under scrutiny from the Town, as in most years. The GPL Trustees are adamant that these hours are necessary and part of our regularly scheduled opening hours.
- The GPL Budget and Finance subcommittee is working on fully understanding how best to present and report all of the library's funding sources. The B & F subcommittee is working diligently to create a tool that can consolidate all the budget information, both incomes and expenditures, into one readily available and understandable format.

Building and Equipment

- Vanessa has updated and submitted the capital plan for FY2025-FY2029 for the Town Manager and the Capital Planning Advisory Committee. She has updated pricing for various projects to reflect current prices.
- Perimeter projects are getting completed, the final portion of the building envelope overhaul. Windows sealants are being caulked and resealed to keep out water. The work will be done by Niklaus Painting. Water is seeping in the foundation at the front of the library, so that will be addressed and the landscaping regraded to push water away from the building. This will be done by Babin Landscaping. Masonry repointing will be the final step to conclude the multi-year building envelope repair project.
- Sierra Tree Services will trim and thin many trees on the property, focusing on those that overhang Katie's Garden and block all the garden light, but also for trees that are too large and touching the building. After this is complete, we will focus on replanting those portions of the garden that have not survived.
- The annual roof inspection has been completed and we are waiting on the report.

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 7 pm, Library Community Room
Approved, 10/10/2023

Policy, Personnel and Planning

- We have received six letters of interest to fill the vacancy on this board so far. The due date for submissions is September 15. The Trustees asked PPP set up interviews with each candidate.
- The 5 year Strategic Planning process is starting again. We are using the same consultant that we had engaged before the pandemic hit. An advisory board is being created, using many of the persons who had volunteered before.
- The Trustees Annual Director's Evaluation meeting is set for Sept 20 at noon.

Other Reports

Endowment – Financial reporting to the accountant for year-end is proceeding. One Trustee, is currently abroad, but is participating remotely.

Art and Artifacts – no report

Social Media – Sarah reported that the GPL social media presence has been very active as of late, due to her efforts to improve our postings. Facebook messaging is up 134% and Instagram is up 50%.

Other Business

- Vanessa shared about the right of individuals to film at the public library as a public space and building, including staff as well as patrons. Staff work hard to enforce respectful use and behavior for everyone's enjoyment of the library, but understand that filming is allowed even if it makes people uncomfortable.
- A local Boy Scout group wanted to fund raise at the GPL by selling popcorn on our property. Vanessa informed the group of our policy prohibiting fund raising at the GPL, but also wanted to verify that the Trustees still agreed with the policy. The Trustees stand by our policy and Vanessa will reiterate to the scouts that they cannot fund raise on library property.

Library Director

- Several reports were provided and reviewed:
 - o Director/ Library updates
 - o Town Updates
 - o Program Updates
 - o Review Monthly Reports and Statistics

Review of Action Items from Current Meeting – see above

Review of Upcoming Meetings and Events

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 7 pm, Library Community Room
Approved, 10/10/2023

Adjournment: 8:50 pm – see vote summary
Respectfully submitted,

Dave Zeiler, Secretary pro tem