

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 14, 2023, at 7 pm, Library Community Room
Approved, 3/14/2023

Attending in Person: Library Trustees Helena Altsman, Kate Bettencourt, Mark Gerath, Kristen von Campe, Nancy Wilder, David Zeiler and Library Director Vanessa Abraham

Absent: none

Call to Order:

Mark Gerath, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Vote Summary

- The Trustees voted to approve the January 10, 2023 minutes as amended. Kristen moved to approve and Nancy seconded. The vote was approved unanimously.
- Kristen made a motion to accept the Assistant Director job description as presented. Nancy seconded this and the vote was approved unanimously.
- Kristen made a motion to approve the expenditure of up to \$6,000 in State Aid for a new strategic planning contract with Barbara Alevras. Nancy seconded this and the vote was approved unanimously.
- Kristen made a motion to have Susanne become the new signatory back up for Vanessa. Nancy seconded this and the vote was approved unanimously.
- Kristen made a motion to adjourn at 8:55 pm, and Nancy seconded. The vote passed unanimously.

Action Items

- Mark to make an appointment to meet with Mark Haddad with Vanessa and Nancy.
- Mark to create a page of talking points for this meeting.
- Mark and PPP to meet with the Town Manager and the HR director to discuss Vanessa's contract.
- Mark and Vanessa to attend Crisis Communication Training.
- All Trustees to complete Conflict of Interest Training

New Business

Trustees Up for Re-Election

- Dave, Helena, and Kate are up for re-election.

Broadmeadow Road

- Dave, Mark, Kristen, and Vanessa were in attendance at the public hearing on January 11, where several options were presented. Trustees discussed the need to maintain access to the library from all parts of town by keeping Broadmeadow open. Any changes will wait until funding is available.

Unfinished Business

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Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 10, 2023 Meeting

- Completed, see vote summary.

Report on Action Items from Previous Meetings

- All action items reviewed.

Review Trustees' Calendar for Current Month

- All calendar items reviewed.

Review Monthly Bills

- All library bills reviewed.

Standing Committee & Liaison Reports:

Budget & Finance

FY 2024 Town & Library Budget: Priorities, Communication, and Advocacy

- Mark reported that the school budget is substantially over what was allocated by the Town Manager. It is very likely that the school and the town will split this overture 42/58.
- Discussed how this affects the library and ways to manage this if the library is required to undergo budget cuts. Trustees are in agreement with Vanessa that hiring the Assistant Director position is essential to the library's future. Vanessa has been planning for this position for years now and this senior staff member needs to be replaced in order to continue to run the library effectively. Discussed the need for a strong foundation in order to manage the programming and hours the library provides. With Jeff leaving, 95% of all technology will be managed by in-house staff (NOT MVLC or Town IT (5%)). Vanessa's planning is also in line with the Town Manager's encouragement to have a succession plan.
- Discussed the option of drawing down LIG/MEG in order to offset some of the cuts. Maintenance of state accreditation is essential.
- B&F and Vanessa to meet with the Town Manager next week.

Other Budget & Finance Updates

- none

Building & Equipment

Building & Equipment Updates

- Dave reported that he spoke with Kevin Kelley at Groton Electric and learned that GELD and its board do not want to install a generator in the historic district downtown. There is the option to research installing a smaller generator. Given that information in the library is stored in the cloud, almost nothing needs to run 24/7, and how seldom the

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library has lost power, this is a low priority. Concern was also expressed for the noise disruption on the library's close residential neighbors.

Policy, Personnel, & Planning

Assistant Director Job Description

- Reviewed the job description that Vanessa created and the roles surrounding this position.
- Reviewed the newly updated library organizational charts.

Technology Transitions Plans

- Vanessa shared that 2/1 was "Jeff's Not Here Day" where staff practiced figuring out all the tasks without his assistance. Staff identified areas they need help with while he's still working here.
- Vanessa and senior staff continue working with Jeff on the remaining technology transitions, updates, information sharing, and final changes.

Strategic Planning

- Vanessa has reinitiated contact with Sage Consulting Services. Discussed a viable timeline for the Strategic Planning and the idea of moving the October 1st deadline back, given that the library is not applying for any State grants. Goal would be to launch the survey and groups in the fall.

Director Draft Contract Proposed

- Mark asked to postpone this discussion until a meeting occurs with PPP, the HR director, and the Town Manager.

Other PPP Updates:

- None yet, PPP will continue to prioritize the review of policies based on the intellectual freedom December staff event.

Other Reports:

GPL Endowment: Report on Jan. 23 Meeting

- Dave shared updates from this meeting; everything is moving smoothly as Endowment Trustees become familiar with their roles.

Art & Artifacts:

- There is a flower exhibition right now, which compliments Groton Reads and Gardens.

Social Media Report & Other News:

- Vanessa posted several articles about libraries being challenged in the news lately.

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- Annual Library Report to the Town reviewed.

Other Business

- Vanessa requested that Reference Librarian Susanne Olson be approved as temporary signatory back up for the Director, as Jeff will be leaving. This will be until the Assistant Director is in place.

Library Director:

- Groton Reads & Gardens
- Library Updates:
 - Discussed how several middle school boys have been banned from the library for 3 months due to their behavior. Explored ways to continue to support staff in their management of these issues.
- Town Updates: none
- Other Updates: none

Review of Action Items from Current Meeting – see above

Review Upcoming Meetings & Events

March 4, 2023 at 8:30 am - Town Budget Meeting
March 14, April 11, May 9, 2023 – Trustees Meetings
April 29, 2023 at 9 am - Spring Town Meeting

Adjournment at 8:55 pm – see vote summary.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Bettencourt, Secretary pro tem